

2022 Mid January Update

From: SNAKE RIVER FARM <Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

Sent: Monday, January 17, 2022 5:48 PM

To: SNAKE RIVER FARM <Tom@snakeriverfarmmn.com>

Subject: Mid- January Update

Dear Friends and Customers

Welcome to a normal, old fashioned Minnesota winter.

Here is hoping we have a normal spring and summer too.

Gail and I took a week-long drive to warmer weather soon after Christmas, but we have been home for some good 25 below nights.

It is good to have those super cold nights and days. The extreme cold defines the Minnesota plants and animals.

My personal favorite example is that long spells of extreme cold drive the possum range back toward the Iowa border.

Possums occupy the same biological knitch as racoons. They did not live north of Iowa seventy years ago. They have been moving north with warmer winters.

Racoons are able to survive prolonged periods of extreme cold but possums are not.

2022 Orders

You should have recently received my notice to place your 2022 order.

Over 150 of you have already ordered. That is very helpful to us for planning. Thank you.

Remember that you can always cancel if your situation or desires change.

That policy is easy for us to manage as far less than 5% of you do cancel each year.

Winter Education

In the farming world, winter is the time for seminars and conferences.

I try to take in at least one each week.

This week I will travel to Verndale, Minnesota, for a forage seminar. Last Monday I attended a seminar in Hinckley and took in a ZOOM session on hogs Thursday evening.

Monday will be a Soil Health meeting, followed by a bison ZOOM seminar on Thursday.

Granddaughter Samantha and my helper Janelle are taking some of these educational sessions also.

There is a terrific amount of new science emerging in recent decades, especially related to soil building and soil organisms.

On the animal side, there is a lot for us to learn and know because we raise so many different species.

The mixed terrain of our farm and the many animals we raise give us reasons to learn and the need to apply that learning.

That is not a burden, but rather a joyful opportunity.

A customer couple wrote to me just before Christmas.

I have pasted their letter and my response below.

The letter mentioned a photo. I have attached that photo to this letter.

Winter Farm Day is Saturday, February 26th, from 1 to 5 pm.

The horses in the photo are Silver and Blue, both mustangs.

The photo was just a few years ago.

Maybe five or six or seven. You know how the years fly by.

In any case, Silver, Blue and even the old teamster are getting too old for such vigorous work.

Put the Farm Days on your calendar. Always on Saturday. February 26, May 21, September 17.

Janelle and I spend some time each week tending to the ewes, goats, horses, bison and chickens.

The bison and horses are in large pastures where they can satisfy their urge to dig grass out of the snow. We give them plenty of good hay but they enjoy digging nevertheless.

Horses can move the snow with their one-piece hooves.

Bovines have cloven, two-piece hooves. Such split hooves are not useful for snow removal. The snow would pack between their toes, become compacted as ice and damage their hooves.

Bison have adapted to winter prairie life by swinging their massive woolly heads from side to side while sweeping the snow with their muzzles. In fact, this unique bison behavior defines their morphology. The massive woolly heads require a supporting super structure. That structure is their extra-long thoracic vertebrae. The bison "hump".

In order to balance their body, based on their hump, they developed smaller hindquarters.

The difference in appearance between bison and cattle are almost totally caused by their snow removal strategy. Bison are bovines of the northern plains.

Warmer days are coming.

Email me if you have questions.

Send your 2022 orders.

Stay warm and healthy.

Tom

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Snake River Farm Website www.thesnakeriverfarm.com

Snake River Farm Facebook page [here](#).

Hello Tom,

We recently visited the Mall of America with some friends to spend a day catching up. We entered the "Minnesota Store" there at the mall and I paged thru a cook book for sale. Your farm was featured in the cook book along with some recipes--of course--and a lovely picture of you during the winter proudly at the reigns of two beautiful horses pulling the sleigh. I believe the horses were one, dark brown, and the other, white. I cannot recall exactly their colors and I do not recall the name of the cook book. I assume you might know.

I told my friend that this is where we get our grass fed, ground beef. How wonderful to see you in print! Thank you for all you do and enjoy your retirement. We look forward to our continued relationship with Snake River Farm.

Gus and Irene

Hello Irene and Gus

Thank you for writing.

The book is "Dishing Up Minnesota", by Teresa Marrone.

The horses are Silver (dark) and Blue (light).

They are mustangs. They were both "roans" when younger. A "silver roan", and a "blue roan".

<https://www.storey.com/books/dishing-up-minnesota/>

I think it was very gracious of Teresa to give us two pages at the center of the book.

Merry Christmas to you.

Tom

