

## **We Moved the Bison to Summer Pastures**

Dear Friends, Neighbors and Customers

This message is about moving bison and the Spring Farm Day which was last Saturday.

I will try to get a second message off today about an offering of ground beef for summer grilling.

The Spring Farm Day was great fun.

The weather was excellent.

The turnout was high. Lots of people here from noon until six.

Thanks to all of you who helped, especially Lisa Padden. Lisa's bison hair "show and tell" was a big hit.

We moved the bison herd south across the gravel road to their summer pastures this morning.

Moving the cattle herd is easy. I will probably do that by myself tomorrow morning.

The bison herd is more challenging.

Moving the bison from pasture to pasture is simple enough but moving them across the road is a different matter.

In order to minimize the chance of a breakout, which you would probably see on the evening news, we build a temporary fence right through the road.

I actually drill holes and put heavy steel posts into the road. We then fasten two rows of interlocking steel gate sections to produce an alley about 120 feet long and 20 feet wide.

I started about 5 o'clock. A couple of good neighbors, Joe St Dennis and Kory Wells showed up a little after six. My daughter Sarah followed closely behind and brought fresh strawberry muffins.

With all that good help we were ready by seven.

Although the gates can be opened to allow vehicle traffic through, we seldom need to do so early on a weekend morning.

Today, one pick-up truck came along about 5:30. That was it for road traffic.

When all was ready, I drove the small Farmall off to find the herd. You cannot lead a bison herd on foot. Unless of course, you are made of iron or can run faster than 35 miles per hour.

I located the herd over a rise about a ¼ mile to the north.

They followed me when I called. I lead them in a circular route to the temporary crossing.

It is a pretty dynamic event and would be hard for me to describe well.

I drive the tractor slowly to try to keep them from running. Once they start to run, a stampede is only seconds away.

If the stampede were to start before the herd was at least well headed into the fenced alley, that would be a lot of trouble.

Animals in the back of a stampede run blindly. In that mode they will tear up fences instantly.

Sarah filmed the crossing. All 27 seconds worth. She will post it on the facebook page. Snake River Farm Minnesota, should locate it for you.

Darrel Tucker, who will do the blessing before the fall harvest, showed up about five minutes late.

All we could do was show him the tracks.

It took less than ½ hour to disassemble the fence.

Gail brought us fresh homemade donuts and coffee as a storm approached.

What a beautiful morning.

It is raining now so I should have time to get the ground beef message off to you today.

Best regards.

Tom