

Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

December/2018

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On The Farm...

This morning, December 4th, brought our first snowfall of the season. It was a gentle snowfall and it would have been great to see it, sitting in front of a fire with a good cup of coffee. Linda and I saw it, however, bouncing around in the cab of an old pickup truck, heading over to the Newell Farm (the 40 acre farm we rent) to load up nine heifers to bring back to Five Oaks. Not quite the same as sitting in front of that fire, but the snow was pretty nonetheless. ☺

These nine heifer calves will be large enough to have an opportunity to breed next summer and both they, and we, are looking forward to it.

Loading them into the new stock trailer got off to a rocky start. The new trailer is a little higher off the

ground than the old one and they balked a little at having to step up a little higher than they are used to. Fortunately, 2 of them volunteered ☺ to jump up into the trailer and, not to be outdone, the rest followed right behind!



Back at Five Oaks, they were joined by four steer calves that are targeted for our 'beef track'. All thirteen were vaccinated and weighed before they were released back into their pasture.

As a quick aside, we maintain two roughly parallel 'tracks' here at Five Oaks Farm. One is for heifer calves that look promising for the 'herd expansion track' through breeding and the other, our 'beef track', is for steers primarily, but also for heifers that for some reason or another, are not suitable for herd expansion.

We are very excited about having recently purchased two new trailers to support our operations. One is the new stock trailer I mentioned above

which is larger and lighter than our old one and the other is a new flatbed trailer that we will use to move hay between our four locations and may occasionally be used to move one of our tractors between those locations.

As we knew it would, our old ½ ton Ford F-150 farm truck is struggling a little under the load of these new trailers so we are looking for a used ¾ ton pickup truck



to replace it. If any of you happen to have, or know someone who has, an older Ford F-250, or Chevy Silverado 2500 or a Dodge Ram 2500 pickup truck for sale, please give me a call at (252) 257-5994. Thanks!

Farmer's Christmas Event...

We were very proud to have had the opportunity to participate, and had a great time at the Farmer's Christmas event at the Old Cotton Gin in Warrenton last month. We sold a lot of beef, talked to a lot of friends and customers and made a lot of new friends and customers! The event was very well organized by Deborah Phillips and graciously hosted by the owners of the Old Cotton Gin, Tommy and Anne Satterwhite. Our sincere thanks to Deborah and the Satterwhites! We can only imagine the effort that went into making this event so successful!

Thoughts On Leadership And Bullying...

If you watch cattle for any length of time, you're sure to see behavior that looks a lot like bullying and I guess, in some ways it is. The cattle herd is a very structured environment where every member must establish themselves at a particular point in the hierarchy. The herd is also very dynamic in that rarely is an individual member content with their current position, specially at the lower levels, so they are often vying for a higher position. You will often see a heifer or steer challenge another member for their higher position in the hierarchy. This usually begins with a kind of lifting head butt by the challenger to the flank area of the challenged, sometimes with enough force to lift the challenged hind legs off the ground. Once challenged, challenger and challenged will face each other

and a pushing contest, forehead to forehead will ensue. If the challenging animal tires first then there is no change to their relative positions in the hierarchy. If, on the other hand, the challenged animal tires first, the challenger will now assume the challenged position. The good news in all this is that it is non-violent. Each animal has the strength and ability to inflict serious harm on other animals, but they never do.

A cow at a higher level, usually meaning larger or stronger, will often go out of her way to push a lower level individual out of the way at the feed bunk, even if there is already an opening that she could take. Bullying... maybe. Asserting her position in the hierarchy... maybe.

Unlike pure bullying however, cows at the higher levels of the hierarchy tend to also provide leadership to the herd. They will tend to lead the way to new pastures and move to the front of the herd when they sense some type of danger.



Do Cattle Get Cold In The Winter...

No, amazingly cattle are able to control and maintain their body temperature quite easily down to about -15° F. Cattle that have been conditioned for cold temperatures do quite well even on the plains of North Dakota down to temperatures of -40° F, breeding, calving and growing and leading quite normal lives. You certainly can't even say that about many people! ☺

Shelter from the wind, perhaps along a tree line, helps but most significantly, cattle are able to adjust their food intake, and therefore their digestive processes to control temperature. They will eat significantly more when the weather is cold than when it is warm. We make sure they have access to plenty of hay in the winter and they do the rest!

Gift Certificates...

Remember that if you would like a very special gift for that very special 'someone', a Gift Certificate for Five Oaks Beef might be just the thing! Your special someone will be able to choose from any of our great steaks, roasts and beef sausages that are 100% natural,

locally raised beef containing no antibiotics, steroids, preservatives or artificial growth hormones! It's Beef You Can Trust!

Gift Certificates are available in increments of \$25, \$50 and \$100 and at a sale price of 10% off the face value, are a bargain too! Call (252) 257-5994 or email [Linda](#) to order!

Did You Know...

Cows have a 9 ½ month gestation period and, more often than not, will deliver their calves during the nighttime hours. Some researchers believe, however, that feeding schedules can affect delivery time of day but that is yet to be proven.



Heavy Snow...

When I started writing this month's Newsletter on December 4th, we were experiencing our first snowfall of the season. As I finish writing this morning, December 9th, it is snowing again but this is a much more significant snow. When we awoke, there was already about 5" on the ground and we just got back in from putting out hay and there seems to be about 7" of accumulation and it is still coming down!

Our primary tractor, a John Deere 2150, got the job done but it was on the edge of being able to maintain traction in the deepening snow. The hay we put out this morning, however, should be good for a few days and some melting of the snow in the next few days should make putting out the next bale easier.

Merry Christmas...

Linda and I are truly blessed to be a part of this great community! Thank you to all of our friends and neighbors for making our business a success and we wish everyone a very Merry Christmas!

Doug & Linda

Recipe of the Month...

Slow Cooker Beef And Gravy

6 generous servings

Ingredients

2 pounds London Broil (Top Round), cut into 2" cubes
1/2 pound sliced mushrooms
1 medium onion, cut in half and then sliced
2 small cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/3 cup dry red wine
2 cups beef broth
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1/4 cup cold water

Instructions

Place mushrooms into a 3 quart slow cooker. Dry the cubed beef with a paper towel and then sprinkle with the salt and pepper. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium high heat; brown the meat in batches,



adding additional olive oil as needed. Place the browned meat into the slow cooker. Add the sliced onion and garlic to the skillet and sauté until the onion is tender and lightly

browned. Spoon the onion and garlic on top of the meat in the slow cooker.

Add the wine, beef broth and Worcestershire sauce to the skillet, stirring to deglaze, when heated through pour mixture over the meat in the slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours or until the meat is tender.

In a small bowl, mix the cornstarch with the cold water until smooth. Remove the meat to a large serving bowl and set aside. Place the juices into a medium sauce pan and bring to a boil. Gradually stir the cornstarch mixture into the juices to desired consistency. Taste and adjust salt and pepper as needed. Serve over a bed of mashed potatoes, egg noodles or rice.

Beef you can trust!