

Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

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On The Farm...

This morning as I finish up on this month's newsletter, the temperature outside is 63°! I don't ever recall warm temperatures like these in February in North Carolina and I'm hoping they're an indication of an early Spring.

With the warm temperatures has come a significant amount of rain, which is always a blessing on a farm, whether you're growing crops or raising beef cattle. The rain does come at a cost, though, and that cost is mud and we have plenty of that to deal with these days!

The cattle, much like children, seem to enjoy the mud, much to our dismay, and tend to gravitate toward it. They can end up looking quite unsightly! The next rain shower cleans them up, but then of course the cycle continues! ☺

Cattle On The Road...

We've gotten a lot of calls lately from friends and neighbors about cattle on the road from the farm just east of us. It's the farm on the southeast corner of the intersection of Wise Five Forks and Oakville roads.

The farm in question is not ours nor are the cattle but we do appreciate people letting us know and we forward the reports to the owner. Obviously, cattle on a roadway present safety issues, both for the cattle and for drivers and we are hoping that fences will be improved in that area soon.



Calves To Work...

Weather permitting, this Saturday we will be 'working' 20 calves. Of the 20, 3 are larger yearlings and 17 were born last Spring and are just coming up on 'yearling' status.

We will be replacing temporary ear tags with their permanent ones, weighing them and generally inspecting their overall condition. If you read this Newsletter frequently you already know that weight gain is an important indicator of overall health. A calf that is not gaining weight as it should (between 1.5 and 2 pounds per day) may well have issues that need to be resolved.

As you might imagine, the calves are not excited about any of this and would rather just skip the whole thing! ☺ However, it is important for their health, and the quality of our product, that it be done and it is important to us that it be done in a gentle, low stress manner.

The calves to be ‘worked’ will be gathered into the



west corral and groups of 5 or 6 will be moved, single file, into the working area. At the end of the working area chute is a device called a ‘head-gate’.

As a calf

walks through the chute, we operate the head gate to restrain him/her. Once restrained, the calf is less likely to struggle, and injure itself or us. After the check-up, weighing and ear-tagging, the calf is released from the head-gate to the east corral and we start again with the next batch. The whole process for the 20 calves will probably require a few hours.

Did You Know...

An average build, Angus cow weighs about 1,100 pounds and will eat about 120 pounds of fresh grass each day in the summer or about 30 pounds of hay each day in the winter. Why the difference? The difference is the water content of the fresh grass, which is about 75%! When the cow eats that 120 pounds of fresh grass, she is getting about the same 30 pounds of nutrients, fiber and cellulose as with the hay. The 90 pounds of water, though essential, does not contribute to nutrient levels.

Beef Harvesting & Processing...

As most of you know, we don’t process our beef here on the farm. All of our great Angus beef is processed at a dedicated beef processing facility that is USDA inspected. We insist that each and every animal is in-



spected by a USDA inspector before and after harvesting to ensure that only the very best beef available ever reaches our customers. Once harvested, all our beef is dry aged for 14 days and processed into the individual cuts that we specify.

Once processed, the cuts are vacuum packed and flash frozen. According to the USDA, steaks and roasts inspected and packaged in this manner, are ‘safe for consumption’ indefinitely, and will maintain their quality and freshness, in your freezer, for at least 9 months!

Free Delivery...

We still have people ask about our delivery policies. Technically, we deliver, free of charge within a radius of 60 miles of our farm in Warrenton for orders of \$75 or more. Actually, we like to do deliveries as it gives us a chance to talk with our customers, get feedback and listen to suggestions, so we really deliver any size order in our area at no charge! Those of you located in the Durham, Raleigh, Cary area can take advantage of free delivery as well if your schedule is flexible and we can combine your delivery with other deliveries in that area. When you order by phone, or we confirm your web order by phone, be sure and ask about free delivery.

Thanks...

As I think about wrapping up this Newsletter, I want to take a couple moments to thank you all for your patronage. Linda and I believe that we offer a great

product, which is as healthy and nutritious as it is great tasting. What started as a way to put great tasting, healthy and natural beef on our table, while we enjoyed our retirement, has turned into a business for us.

We spend most of our time these days caring for our cattle on two farms and dealing with the tangible, day to day aspects of running and growing our business like sales, marketing and deliveries.

More importantly, however, are the intangibles of the way we spend our days. What could possibly be more fulfilling and gratifying than raising beef that is both healthy and delicious for our customers, so many of whom have also become friends.

Thank you to all for your continued support!



Beef you can trust!