

# Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

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## In this issue...

[On The Farm...](#)

[More On Antibiotics...](#)

[Top 4 Beef Producers...](#)

[Basic Instincts...](#)

[Did You Know...](#)

[Angus Beef...](#)

[Recipe Of The Month...](#)



## On The Farm...

Much of our time over the course of the last month has been spent on taking care of a new heifer calf who will be 7 weeks old tomorrow. She was not getting enough milk from her mother and we have been bottle feeding her. She gets 4 quarts per day of 'milk replacer', which is not unlike 'baby formula'. We feed her 2 quarts in the morning and a friend feeds her 2 quarts in the evening and, for the most part, she is doing well.

Last week she acquired an intestinal, bacterial infection which in cattle is referred to as 'scours'. This condition can be very serious in calves and can result in severe dehydration which can lead to death in just a couple of days. We had our veterinarian look at her and he prescribed antibiotics and electrolytes which we have been administering and she is now well on her way to complete recovery!

In addition to the milk replacer, she is starting to nibble on hay and calf starter feed which means her rumen is beginning to develop and we will be able to wean her off the milk and on to solid food soon. The rumen is one of the four chambers of the bovine stomach and is responsible for processing and digesting grass, hay and other solid foods.

Bottle feeding a young calf offers a unique opportunity to bond with an animal in need and we've had a number of people express an interest in volunteering in the future.



It takes about a half hour per feeding and no experience is required and we provide the milk replacer, bottles and nipples (and the calf ☺). We're putting together a list so if you are interested, let us know.

As most of you know, we sell no beef from an animal who has ever been treated with antibiotics so the calf's bout with scours and subsequent treatment with antibiotics means that she will never be processed as 'Five Oaks Beef' but instead, if she grows and develops well, will provide us with 7 or 8 great calves over the course of her lifetime here on our farm!

## More On Antibiotics...



First, why should you care about low levels of antibiotics in the food you eat? Well, bacteria are all around us and even in us. (See [this article](#) on common bacteria found in the human body).

Many are harmless, even helpful, but some can cause serious health problems, specially if their populations grow to levels above that which can be controlled by our immune systems.

The first antibiotic, Penicillin, was first discovered by Alexander Fleming in 1928. Antibiotics are a powerful tool to fight bacterial infections. However, bacteria exposed to long term, low level doses of antibiotics, like for example if your food contained low doses of antibiotics, will develop a resistance to the antibiotic and the antibiotic will become, over time, less and less effective in fighting the bacteria. This could result in significantly higher rates of death due to bacterial infection.

Beef producers are prevented by law from processing beef from cattle that have received antibiotics within the previous 30 days. This is called the 'antibiotic withdrawal period'. In the opinion of the USDA, after 30 days, the level of antibiotics in the steer's or heifer's body will have decreased to a 'safe level'. If the producer waits the required 30 days, they are allowed to claim their beef is 'antibiotic free', where in fact, the beef is not antibiotic free, but merely contains antibiotics at a lower level.

All of this notwithstanding, the USDA's withdrawal period laws are very good. We at Five Oaks Beef, however, believe it makes sense to go a big step farther. We sell no beef from cattle that have 'ever' been treated with antibiotics! When we need to treat a steer

or heifer with antibiotics, he or she is removed from what we call our 'beef production track'. If the treated animal is a heifer and she meets our standards, she will be shifted to our 'herd expansion track' where she will produce calves for us. Those that don't meet our standards for herd expansion will be sold at auction. Treated Steers will always be sold at auction.

When we claim 'No Antibiotics, No Steroids and No Artificial Growth Hormones', we really mean none, ever! ☺

## The Top 4 Beef Producers...

If you guessed that Five Oaks Beef is not one of the 4 largest beef producers in this country, you're right, and it's a fact that we're very proud of!

The top 4 beef producers in this country are Tyson Foods, Cargill Meat Solutions, JBS and National Beef Packing



and together they account for about 80% of all the beef produced in this country! For me, at least, it's a little concerning that such a large and important segment of our food/beef supply system rests in the hands of only 4 companies, all mega-corporations producing beef on huge 'factory farms'!

We definitely want to grow out business but we at Five Oaks Beef never want to lose sight of the value of farm to table beef, making sure that our customers know how their beef is produced, where it is produced and perhaps most importantly, who is producing it. This provides a level of accountability not available from factory farms!

## Basic Instincts...

With a significant portion of our time spent these days on the care and feeding of our first 'bottle calf', my thoughts periodically go to instinctive behaviors.

A calf is born, hits the ground from a few feet in the air, takes a few breaths and somehow knows that to survive and be healthy it must nurse within these first couple of hours! This alone is amazing in itself but now the calf must somehow know that the only meal source around is going to be momma's udder and must

somehow know where that thing is located. Knowing that the udder is well out of reach, the calf must somehow know that this thing called 'standing up' is required to reach the udder. Within 30 to 40 minutes, sometimes sooner, the calf figures out how to get to it's feet, take a few steps to get to the udder and nurse! This to me is all the more amazing when you consider human babies generally require about a year to figure out how to get to their feet and walk!

Once nursing, the calf also instinctively knows that when the milk supply starts to dwindle, a good sharp head butt to momma's udder will often get more milk flowing. It is amusing, for a while, to see this instinctive head butting behavior occur during bottle feeding, where of course it isn't going to do any good! ☺ Here's a link of our calf head butting a milk bottle to try and increase the milk flow. Check out this [short video](#) of the calf head butting the bottle.

## Did You Know...

That cattle, though not technically color blind see only a very few colors. In addition to black, white and shades of gray, cattle also see muted versions of yellow and blue.

## Angus Beef...

We raise only the finest, commercial grade, Angus cattle which produce some of the finest beef available. The Angus breed has long been chosen by great restaurants and steakhouses across the country. It is known for it's flavor and tenderness and consistently rates better than any other breed for marbling! Marbling is the presence of those tiny veins of intra-muscular fat that give great beef it's characteristic flavor and tenderness!

## Recipe of the Month...

This month's recipe is for home made bone broth made with Five Oaks Beef bones! There is not a lot of data yet on beef bone broth but many believe that the health benefits are numerous. Check out this article ['What are the benefits of bone broth?'](#) On the Medical News Today website! Aside from the possible health benefits, it just tastes great!

## Five Oaks Beef Bone Broth



### Ingredients

8 pounds Beef bones – a combination of marrow bones, soup bones and knuckle bones  
1/3 cup cider vinegar  
8 quarts water  
2 teaspoons Kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 teaspoon whole peppercorns  
2 fresh bay leaves  
1 large onion, coarsely chopped  
3 stalks celery, coarsely chopped  
Handful of celery leaves, coarsely chopped  
4 large carrots, coarsely chopped

### Instructions

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place all the bones onto a baking sheet and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper. Roast the bones for 20 minutes, stirring half way through the roasting time.



Transfer the roasted bones to a large pot. Add 8 quarts of water (or more if needed to cover the bones) and stir in the vinegar, let mixture sit for 30 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon salt, whole peppercorns, bay leaves, onion, celery, celery leaves, and carrots. Bring

just to a boil and skim off any foam that rises to the top. Reduce to a very low simmer, cover and simmer for 7-8 hours.

Let the broth cool and strain it, extract the marrow from any of the bones and stir it into the broth. Refrigerate the broth to allow the fat to rise to the top and solidify. Remove the fat and discard or save for cooking.

Add additional salt to taste. Drink the broth as is, or freeze for use in soups or stews.

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**Beef you can trust!**