

Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

January/2018

In this issue...

On The Farm...

The Benefit Of Gates...

Grass Fed, Grain Finished Beef

Did You Know...

Five Oaks Farm Fast Flash Sales...

The Wreaths Across America...

A New Years Wish For All...



On The Farm...

It's been so cold that it is very difficult to get much done beyond that which must be done, taking care of the cattle. I believe we set a record for the longest string of consecutive hours with the temperature below freezing. I think we got to about 180 hours or about 8 days!

When it get's cold like this, we are frequently asked about how the cattle handle the cold weather. The consensus among experts is that they do a whole lot better in the cold than humans do! A cow or calf with a winter coat is unaffected by temperatures down to about 32° F. With some shelter or wind block, like a tree line, they are comfortable down to about 0° F. Between 0° F and about -15° F, they are still comfortable as long as they can increase their feed consumption by about 1% per 1° of temperature decline.

The increased feed consumption results in heat generation through digestion processes.

We provide 'free choice' hay during the winter which means there is always hay available and they are 'free' to eat as much as they wish. This basically allows them to control their own comfort. When they start to get cold, they eat!

Hmm.. As can be attested to by my currently increasing waistline, there must be similar instinctive behavior in humans.

☺

Below about -15° F, they absolutely need shelter, but I don't think this area has ever seen temperatures that cold.

Having said all that and knowing that it is true, we still can't help but worry a little about them in temperatures like these!



The Benefit Of Gates...

One of the things that we learned early on about raising cattle is that “it is impossible to have too many gates!” A lot of gates, placed strategically, allow you to segment and reconfigure pastures and corrals and provide a level of flexibility that can’t be achieved without them. Last week, we had a cattle watering system freeze (even though we thought we had adequately winterized it, we apparently had not!). In a few minutes, we were able to reconfigure our pastures to allow the cattle access to water in another pasture. The alternative would have been to carry buckets of water to the cattle while working on finding the frozen area of pipe and thawing it. An unpleasant task in this weather. By reconfiguring, we are not even going to worry about the repair until the weather improves!

If you read last month’s Newsletter you heard me lament a whole host of problems with a group of 17 young calves in our west pasture. They seemed intent on going through fences, climbing (with either two legs or all four legs) into their feed bunk to eat. They also seemed to delight in climbing through the rails of their hay ring so they could stand on top of the hay



bale and eat. It was kind of like watching a bovine version of playing ‘king of the mountain’!

After weeks of watching this new and problematic behavior, fixing fences, cleaning feed bunks and throwing out and replacing soiled hay from hay rings, we began to suspect the cause was a lack of adult supervision! We realized that this was the first time that we had a group of all young calves together without any older cows in with them.

Sure enough, after adding two yearling steers and a very ‘opinionated’ yearling heifer to the mix, behavior

improved both immediately and dramatically! Another one for the ‘lessons learned’ file! ☺

Grass Fed, Grain Finished Beef...

Those of you who know us, know that we are very proud of our process and our product. Our process, the way in which we produce our product, is 100% natural. We use no steroids and no artificial growth hormones to accelerate the growth of our cattle. If an animal requires treatment with antibiotics, we do so but then we remove that animal from our beef production path.

For the first 7 months of their lives, our calves’ nourishment comes completely from their mother’s milk. From 7 months of age to 17 months of age their nourishment comes entirely from grass and/or hay depending upon the season. From 17 months of age to 20 months of age when we harvest, they are offered, in addition to grass and/or hay, a small amount of our proprietary blend of a number of grains that we have found to produce the best possible ‘marbling’ of the beef. This ‘process’ leads to our ‘product’ which we believe is some of the finest beef you can buy, healthy, tender and delicious!

We believe our process positions our product, great beef, right in the middle of two extremes. On one extreme is feed-lot, supermarket beef. Feed-lots are not pretty places. Calves are weaned from their mothers at a very young age, injected with artificial growth hormone implants, put on a diet of exclusively grain. The radical diet decreases the effectiveness of their immune systems and they must therefore be fed antibiotics to keep them alive until they are harvested.



This process is accelerated and unnatural, but it generates a lot of revenue! It only takes about 12 months from birth to harvest.

The other extreme is grass fed and grass finished beef. The animal develops very slowly and is not harvested until they are about 36 months old. The beef has practically no fat and is considered, by some, to be healthier than grain finished beef.

In our opinion, the lack of ‘marbling’, technically known as intramuscular fat, leaves the beef quite dry and with less flavor. Here’s a link to the [American Grass Fed Beef](#) site, with tips on preparing and cooking grass fed, grass finished beef. If you have a moment, please take a look at their recommendations to make grass finished beef palatable.

I can’t speak for anyone else, but I sure don’t want to have to cook my Ribeye in a ‘sauce’ to make it moist if I want it prepared to medium doneness and I don’t want to have to use their recommended ‘Jaccard Meat Tenderizer’ on my Filet Mignon! ☺

We believe our grass fed, grain finished beef offers some great health benefits (more on this next month) and flavor and tenderness that you will not find anywhere else. If you haven’t tried Five Oaks Beef, give it a try and let us know what you think!

Did You Know...

The very popular T Bone steak is really a combination of a New York Strip steak and a Filet Mignon steak with the bone (T shaped bone, of course) that connects them, still in place.

Some have asked about the difference between a Porterhouse steak and a T Bone steak. Both of these great steaks are cut from the ‘Short Loin’ primal and are closely related.

All Porterhouse steaks are also T Bone steaks, but not all T Bone steaks are Porterhouse steaks. The difference between the two is the size of the Filet side of the T Bone. Porterhouses will have a larger Filet side. According to the USDA, for a T Bone to be called a Porterhouse, the width of the Filet, measured from the bone across the widest part of the Filet must be at least 1.25 inches.

Five Oaks Farm Fast Flash Sales...

As most of you know, we have recently introduced the Five Oaks Farm Fast Flash Sale. Aside from being a real mouthful to say, this thing has become quite popular and a lot of fun. All the feedback from customers (except one) has been overwhelmingly positive!



These quick ‘pop-up’ sales offer deep discounts for a particular item that we have in stock, while supplies last! The sale only lasts 4 hours and they are usually announced about an hour before the beginning time so you have to be prepared to move quickly! ☺

The sales are announced via email and on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FiveOaksBeef/>.

Remember, we send no unsolicited email! Those who receive the Farm Fast Flash email are those who have asked to be on the ‘specials’ email list. If you are not on the list, or are not sure if you are on the list, but would like to be, just email me at doug@fiveoaks.farm and I will get you signed up.

Watch for the next Farm Fast Flash coming soon!

The Wreaths Across America...

Last month I mentioned the Wreaths Across America program that Linda and I support. It is just a small way in which we all can express our support and gratitude to the military men and women who gave their ‘last full measure of devotion’ to protect and defend our rights and our proud nation.

We thank all who joined with us in supporting this great cause...

**A Very Happy New Year From Linda
And I To All Of You!**

Beef you can trust!