

Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

January/2017

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On The Farm...

The holidays are over and we hope that yours was as nice as ours! Now we find ourselves in January, a few pounds heavier and a little more behind than we were in December. As I write this newsletter, the snow is falling and we have accumulated about 6 inches overnight. Not a trivial amount for Warren County!

We have a couple of steers to load on Monday morning for processing and we expecting single digit temperatures. We are a bit concerned with how the snow (and by then, ice) are going to impact getting the truck and trailer into position for loading.

Many of you know that our goal at Five Oaks Family Farm is to have locally raised Five Oaks Beef available, on demand, year around. This means that your beef will be deliv-

ered within a few days of placing your order. The 'good news' and the 'bad news' is that business has been so good and demand for our beef has been so high, that we are not there yet. Be assured that we are scaling up our operation but we are doing it

carefully so as not to impact the quality of our beef.



Beef Production Lifecycle...

If you happen to be planning to have a great Five Oaks Beef steak for dinner this evening, it may interest you to know that your steak actually began it's journey to your table almost three years ago! It's a long process and here is how it goes at Five Oaks Family Farm.

Into our herd of cows and heifers (a heifer is a cow who has yet to give birth) we introduced an Angus bull who had been tested to be healthy

and to be of good breeding soundness. He remained among our cows and heifers for a period of three months. Cattle can only become pregnant during their estrous (heat) cycle which occurs about every 21 days. By keeping the bull with the herd for 3 months each cow and heifer had at least 4 opportunities to conceive.

Assuming a particular cow did conceive, she entered her gestation period, which for cows is 9 ½ months. At the end of that period, she gave birth to a calf which weighed about 65 - 70 pounds. The calf, if male, is referred to as a bull calf or if a female, is a heifer calf. The calf's momma nursed the calf, providing about 95 percent of the calf's nutrition through her milk, until weaning time. During this nursing time, the calf learned to eat solid food, which is fresh grass in the summer or hay in the winter, along with milk.

In preparation for weaning, at about 6 months of age, the bull calf that is destined for your table will be ear tagged for identification, vaccinated and castrated.

Once castrated the bull calf is now referred to as a 'steer' calf. At 7 months of age, he will be weaned, which requires separation from his momma for about 6 weeks. This transitions his rumen (one of four compartments of his stomach) from a mostly liquid (milk) diet to solid food.



After weaning, he will be reunited with his momma and the rest of the herd. We monitor his health and physical condition every day. Periodically, he will be weighed. A healthy steer calf will naturally gain a

little less than 2 pounds/day. The calf will remain on pasture, either grass or hay, for about another 9 months to reach a weight of about 900 pounds. At this point, the steer is within about 3 months of 'harvesting'.

During these 3 months, we introduce a controlled amount of grain (wheat and corn), into his diet along with continued access to grass or hay. The grain introduces a small amount of fat into the meat which increases marbling, resulting in better flavor and tenderness. At about 1100 - 1200 pounds, he is ready for harvesting. Harvesting and processing require about 3 weeks, 14 days of which are for the 'dry ageing' that we insist upon. The beef is cut, packaged,

vacuum sealed and quick frozen. Within a day or two of receiving your beef from our processor, we deliver it to your door.

So, as you enjoy that steak tonight, know that during every step of the nearly 3 year process that brought it to your table, through every month of that steer's life, we at Five Oaks Family Farm were, and will always be, committed to raising healthy, happy cattle and providing delicious and healthy beef.

Low Stress Handling...

We speak often about how committed we are to low stress handling of our animals. We always treat them gently and with respect. Most importantly, we do this because we firmly believe that it is the 'right' thing to do, but it also increases the quality and value of our beef!

Here's how that works. Muscle tissue (the beef) in cattle contain a very important natural sugar called Glycogen. After harvesting and during aging, natural processes occur that convert the Glycogen into Lactic Acid. At it's simplest level, the more Glycogen the more Lactic Acid. The more Lactic Acid, the better the taste and texture of the beef!

Unfortunately, causing stress at any time throughout the animals life, but specially just before harvesting, can dramatically reduce the Glycogen levels in the muscle tissue, thereby reducing Lactic Acid levels, thereby reducing the quality of the beef. Low stress, humane handling really matters!



What's new...

As many of you know, we have been using Acre Station as our processor but they are scaling back their operation and their lead times for processing are no longer consistent with our goal of year around beef. Beginning with deliveries at the end of January, we will be using a new processor, Piedmont Custom

Beef you can trust!

Meats in Gibsonville, NC. They have a great reputation and are a USDA inspected facility. We look forward to a long and positive business relationship with them.

Based upon customer request, we will be temporarily increasing the thickness of our Ribeye and New York Strip steaks from 3/4" to 1". All other steaks will remain at 3/4" for now. When you've tried the new thicker steaks, email or call us and let us know what you think.

How Are We Doing...

If you enjoy Five Oaks Beef and would like to help us continue to grow, we would appreciate hearing from you. Your comments are welcome on all aspects of our business from customer service, advertising, quality of beef, etc. Comments of any length are welcome.

We will be beginning a new advertising campaign this month and would like to include excerpts from some of your comments, so if you have a few minutes, email me at doug@fiveoaks.farm and let me know what you think.

On Sale Now...

Premium Ground Beef (80/20) now on special through January 21, 2017 for immediate delivery or pickup. Call (252) 257-5994 to place your order.

**3 pounds for \$9.87 which is a low
\$3.29/pound!**

– or even better –

**10 pounds for \$30.90 which is a low
\$3.09/pound!**

We hope that you will find the content of this newsletter both interesting and informative and we always welcome suggestions for content or style. If you would like to unsubscribe, however, you may do so by clicking [here](#) and typing Unsubscribe in the subject line.

Beef you can trust!