

Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

March/2018

In this issue...

On The Farm...

Calves to Work...

Did You Know...

Five Oaks Beef and Zelle...

Just A Reminder...

Rate Five Oaks Beef On Facebook...



On The Farm...

Last month as I was finishing up February's Newsletter, I commented on the temperature outside being about 63°. Today, as I begin writing, the temperature is about 28° with a forecast of sleet and snow for this afternoon continuing into tomorrow morning! It really has been a strange winter but one thing is for sure, Spring is just around the corner.

Spring on the farm is a busy time. We removed a couple of overgrown fence lines this winter and there is a significant amount of debris to deal with. There is a pile, nearly 15 ft tall and about 30 ft in diameter of small cedar and pine trees, branches, brush and tall weed in the middle of our west pasture that will need to be burned soon.

We will be de-winterizing our livestock watering systems, which means removing tank water heaters and re-

moving de-icing heaters on the water lines themselves.

Next to our cattle, our pastures, both here at our Five Oaks 'home place' and over at the Newell Farm, which we rent, are our most important assets. Great grass and clean water are the 'raw materials' in the production of great beef! We will be fertilizing and liming our pastures in the next couple of months.



In anticipation of summer and 'fly' season, we will soon be shifting the herds free-choice minerals to one that contains fly control. In the summertime, flies are a very real an-

noyance to cattle and raise their stress levels to a point where their health and weight gain can be negatively affected, which is why we use the fly control minerals in the summer.

Minerals for cattle are essential to provide the necessary vitamins and

minerals that are not available in forage grasses alone. The minerals that we feed are very similar to ‘one-a-day’ vitamins that many people take. They contain over 20 essential vitamins and nutrients. We feed them ‘free choice’ which means they are made available to the cattle 24 hours a day, 7 days a week but the cattle decide when and how much they eat. They instinctively know what their nutritional requirements are and consume them accordingly.

Calves To Work...

I mentioned last month that we were about to ‘work’ our cattle but that has not happened yet. We are still waiting for 4 or 5 consecutive days with no rain to dry up the ground a bit. When the ground is wet, it is slippery and dangerous for working cattle.



Our latest reschedule day was this Wednesday but I am afraid that’s not going to happen either with the weather the

way it is today.

‘Working’ cattle is a broad term that includes just about anything you need to do to them (weighing, vaccinating, inspecting, etc.) after you gather them up. We currently have 20 calves to ‘work’. 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 health 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...

The majority of calves are born at night. Those who actually get paid to study such things believe this occurs because ‘labor’ is more likely to begin at a time when there is less external pressure on the uterus. The primary organ that exerts pressure on the uterus is the rumen (one of the 4 chambers of a cow’s stomach). Because cows graze primarily during the day and digest primarily at dusk, the rumen begins to contract somewhat as digestion completes going into the evening and it therefore exerts less pressure on the uterus. If the cow is close to beginning labor anyway, this lower pressure on the uterus is enough to get the process going.

You might be wondering why anyone would care whether a cow calves at night or during the day. Well, actually we do care and we care for three reasons.

The first is that for ‘Spring Calving’ cows (cows that will calf between March and May) the night can be quite cold and cold-stressing the calf is a real possibility. Cold stress can retard early calf development and lead to other long term health issues.

Second, predators are generally more active at night which can put the newborn calf at greater risk.

Third, approximately 2.5% of cows and 7.5% of heifers (remember that heifers are cows who have not yet had their first calf) require assistance to successfully deliver a calf. Being available to provide this assistance and being able to see enough to determine if assistance is required is much more difficult at night.

Five Oaks Beef and Zelle©...

Zelle is a new service being offered by many banks to simplify individual-to-individual and individual-to-business transfers of funds. We at Five Oaks Beef are enrolled and will be accepting Zelle payments for beef



purchases soon. Zelle is bank sponsored and seems like it will be a great service. If you haven't already done so, I would encourage to speak with your bank or check it out on-line at <https://www.zellepay.com/>

Just A Reminder...

We have recently started including a copy of our 'Individual Cut Sheet' with the paperwork we deliver with your order and this list of Individual cuts is also available on our website. This list has all our regularly available cuts of Five Oaks Beef along with the approximate weight of each cut.

If you would like, however, a particular cut of beef that does not appear on our Individual Cut Sheet, please just give us a call and we can talk about getting it for you, when it might be available and how much it will cost. For example, we have never advertised it, but we took orders and delivered quite a few Standing Rib Roasts in the months leading up to Christmas last year. So, if you have any special requests, please call so we can see if we can accommodate you.

Rate Five Oaks Beef On Facebook...

We have been posting for Five Oaks Beef on Facebook for about a year now and it has become a significant marketing channel for us. We bring in new customers and maintain contact with many existing

customers. We announce sales, both the really well received Farm Flash sales and our regular sales.

If you like Five Oaks Beef and you are on Facebook, we would very much appreciate you taking a minute or two to rate Five Oaks Beef and write a short review.

You can find us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/FiveOaksBeef>. Even a sentence or two would be great! We appreciate you as a customer and thank you for your support.

Beef you can trust!