

Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

October/2018

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On The Farm...

The temperatures have not caught up yet but the days are starting to 'look' like Fall. The days have an unmistakably different look as we move from Summer to Fall, due I suspect to the fact that the sun is lower in the sky and traverses more of our atmosphere than when it's more overhead as in the Summer.

Fall is a busy time on the farm. Projects that arise in the heat of the summer that were postponed for cooler temperatures now have to be completed. Watering systems have to be cleaned and winterized, hay has to be secured and positioned on each farm, pastures have to be mowed to suppress weeds, tractors and other power equipment require oil changes and of course there's always fencing to inspect and repair.



This fall we will be purchasing additional bred cows/heifers to expand our herd. The Newell Farm has some small amount of additional capacity that we would like to utilize and a small number will reside at Warren Estate as seed stock for our future

grass-fed / grass-finished line of beef and some will reside at one or more of our affiliates farms.

Cattle Affiliates Program...

If you read last month's Newsletter, you know that we are introducing a new Cattle Affiliates Program. This program allows small farms to partner with us to breed and raise beef cattle for us, in accordance with our specifications on their farm.

We've had a pretty good response so far from folks interested in participating and we are currently in the process of selecting one or two farms as prototypes for the program.

The most important aspect of the Affiliates Program is affiliate compliance with our Five Oaks Beef 'process'. As most of you know, our 'process' is the way in which we raise our cattle. We've worked for years refining it and it defines almost every aspect of what we do each day to bring to market a tender, delicious and healthy product. From breeding, to calving, to weaning, to feeding, to harvest, our process is what makes Five Oaks Beef different!

Cattle Temperament...

Some interesting research indicates that cattle temperament may affect both the tenderness and the flavor of beef. What is temperament in the context of cattle? Well, it's pretty much the same as it is in humans and could probably be defined as the reaction to external stimulation.



In cattle, researchers usually use a scale of 1 to 4 to express bovine temperament with 1 being the most docile and 4 being the least. The animal's temperament is subjectively judged by observing the animal while in a standard 'squeeze chute' and 'head gate', which is the equipment typically used to restrain animals for vaccinations, ear tagging, pregnancy checking, etc. An animal that stands in the chute passively is scored as a 1, or most docile, while an animal that bellows and thrashes is scored as a 4. 2's and 3's represent more moderate behavior.

Cattle with calmer temperaments have been shown to produce beef that is more tender and more flavorful than those with a more excitable temperament. This then raises a 'nature or nurture' question of "can you alter an animal's temperament by lowering their background stress level in order to realize better beef"?

There is no clear consensus among the experts but at a practical level, right here on our little farm, we believe that we can alter temperament by minimizing background stress. We are now, and have always been, committed to low stress handling of our cattle. With two notable exceptions, two sibling heifers (from hell ☹), we believe that animals introduced into our herd become more docile over time as a direct result of low stress handling and their exposure to their new, docile

herd mates. It's a fundamental part of our 'process' and something that distinguishes Five Oaks Beef from most other beef operations. There's much more to producing great beef than just having cows in a pasture!

Warrenton Farmers Market...

The Warrenton Farmers Market will be wrapping up within the next few weeks for the season and last week was our last Saturday morning for this year. We really enjoy the Farmers Market and in addition to selling beef, of course, we always look forward to meeting and chatting with friends, customers and 'soon to be' customers! One of the many real joys of life in a small town is the opportunity to meet and interact with so many great, hard working people. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have become a part of such a great community!

With the Farmers Market closing for the season, remember that you can call (252) 257-5994 or email

linda@fiveoaks.farm anytime to order Five Oaks Beef or if you just have questions about our farm or our beef.



We also deliver, at no charge, with no minimum order size, so even if you just need a pound of ground beef, give us a call and we will bring it by for you.

Pre-Ordering Five Oaks Beef...

Our goal is and has always been to be able to keep enough beef in stock at all times to meet the needs of all our customers, but right now we are unable to grow our business fast enough to keep up. I was speaking with a customer at the Farmers Market last week and she made a comment that led me to believe that there may be some confusion about pre-ordering those cuts of beef that are difficult for us to keep in stock.

This very nice woman asked if we had Filet Mignon in stock and I told her that no, unfortunately, File Mignon are our most popular cut and are always on a several month backorder. I explained that she could pre-order the steaks now and we would call her in January when

they would be available. Her response was that she would just wait until January and pick them up then.

I realized that I hadn't explained the situation very well. It's not that we won't be receiving any Filet Mignon until January. In fact, we will be receiving 3 or 4 harvests of beef, between now and then, including Filet Mignon. It's just that those Filet Mignon that we will receive have already been committed to other customers who ordered months ago. So... if she waited to order in January, she wouldn't be receiving her steaks until March or April! She pre-ordered the Filet Mignon! ☺



Did You Know...

On average, a beef cow will spend about 8 hours per day eating, another 8 hours per day ruminating, which is a little like 're-eating and another 8 hours per day sleeping. All in all, not a very exciting lifestyle! ☺

Recipe of the Month...

Five Oaks Gumbo

Yields 8 - 10 servings



Ingredients

1 cup vegetable oil
1 cup flour
2 cups onions, chopped
1 cup bell peppers, chopped
½ cup celery, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
4 teaspoons Five Oaks House Blend
1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon liquid smoke
2 bay leaves
1 ½ - 2 quarts chicken stock, preferably home made
1 ½ lbs cooked chicken, coarsely chunked
1 lb Five Oaks Beef Kielbasa, in bite-sized pieces
2 green onions, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

Five Oaks House Blend

1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon dried sweet basil
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
1 teaspoon garlic pepper
1 teaspoon paprika, sweet
1 teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon dried thyme
¼ teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Mix thoroughly and set aside. This makes a great seasoning for almost all meats and seafood.

Instructions

Heat a medium sized skillet (we like cast iron) on medium high heat and add the vegetable oil. Just as the oil begins to smoke, add the flour and whisk to combine. The mixture will darken as it cooks. Constantly whisk until the mixture reaches a milk chocolate color. Add the onions, bell peppers, celery and garlic and continue to whisk until the vegetables just begin to soften, about 2 minutes or so. Stir in the salt, liquid smoke, House Blend and bay leaves.

Slowly add the stock to the roux, continuing to whisk, to achieve a 'heavy cream' like consistency. Add the Kielbasa to the mixture. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer and cook for about 30 minutes, adding additional stock as necessary to maintain consistency. Add the chicken about 20 minutes into this simmer time to allow it to heat through.

Mound rice in each serving bowl and ladle the gumbo around the rice. Garnish with parsley and green onion and serve.

Beef you can trust!