

# Five Oaks Beef

Five Oaks Family Farm Monthly Newsletter

September/2018

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## On The Farm...

Here on the farm, hurricane Florence is still bringing us a significant amount of rain but we are thankful that we were spared any serious damage. The folks on the coast still have it rough and are in our thoughts and prayers.

Other than feeding and inspecting cattle each day, both here and at the Newell Farm, we've been focusing on inside chores.

The cattle are all fine and, I believe, actually enjoying the cooler weather. The rain seems to have very little impact on their lives and much to our chagrin, they seem to thoroughly enjoy the mud!

We are putting the finishing touches on an exciting new Cattle Affiliates Program that we will be introducing soon. The program will allow us to increase production capacity without compromising the quality of our beef.

## Cattle Affiliates Program...

As many of you know, we have been trying to find additional rental pasture to support expansion of our operation for almost a year now without success.



The new Cattle Affiliates Program does not involve renting pasture but instead encourages people to raise cattle for

us, on their pasture, to our specifications. For some, this program will be a great opportunity for people who have not raised cattle before to learn.

Within the program, we provide all the 'hardware' and 'software' and the affiliate provides the pasture, source of water and labor. The 'hardware' we provide includes feed and feeders, minerals and mineral feeders, hay

and hay feeders and waterers. We also provide the 'software' which will be a group of pregnant cows / heifers.

The affiliate will call the cows each morning and inspect them as they arrive and as they eat. They will look for limps or other unusual gait, cuts or scrapes, runny noses, dull eyes or listless behavior. If these, or any other unusual behavior is noticed, they will let us know and we will deal with the problem. We believe that a group of 10 cows will require the affiliate to spend, on average, about 10 minutes per day. The affiliate will be paid on a monthly basis for their time

and will also receive a completion bonus when the calves reach their target weight which should require about 16 months.



Having reached a finishing weight of about 900 pounds they will return to Five Oaks Family Farm

and enter the 'finishing' phase.

We believe that requiring only 20 minutes per day will make this program very attractive, and financially rewarding. The program can be a great source of additional income, without interfering with a primary or even a part-time job.

Rate of compensation varies with the number of calves being raised but as an example, raising 10 calves, to our specifications and to our target weight of about 900 pounds, the affiliate will earn about \$5,000 and have expended about 160 hours of labor over the 16 month period, resulting in a compensation rate of over \$30/ hour!

## Five Oaks Beef And Warren Estate...

Great news! Five Oaks Beef and Warren Estate / Taber Farms have signed a Phase 1 agreement which initiates a partnership that will ultimately lead to a new grass fed / grass finished product line for Five Oaks Beef. This product line will compliment our existing, very successful grass fed / grain finished product line.

We will be pasturing pregnant cattle at Warren Estate shortly after the first of next year taking advantage of the Spring calving season. Calves born from these cows will be the first to be harvested as grass fed /

grass finished beef.

Raising cattle, done properly, is a long and slow process so it will be some time before these calves, and those that follow, will be ready to harvest but we are very excited to have taken the first step!

Zayne Taber and Kristen Baughman of Warren Estate / Taber Farms will be great to work with and will bring to the partnership their collective knowledge of, and a strong commitment to, 'sustainable agriculture' techniques and also their expertise in the marketing of 'farm to table' products! We will bring to the partnership our experience and expertise in raising cattle in a low stress and humane environment and producing delicious, all natural and healthy beef!

## Breeding Season...

Breeding season is just about over and the bull we leased will be heading home to Oxford in about a week. All indications are that he has done a good job and 'earned his

keep'. Our cows and heifers appear to have 'settled', which in the vernacular of the cattle business, means that there is a good chance they are

pregnant. We are always working to achieve a 100% conception rate though it is rare to achieve it. The national average is closer to about 93%.



The American Angus Association rates registered bulls on 20-30 characteristics. These characteristics are expressed as a difference between the offspring of this bull and the offspring of other similar bulls and is called an EPD (Expected Progeny Difference). Some examples of EPDs are Calving Ease, Birth Weight, Weaning Weight, Average Daily Weight Gain, Docility, Marbling, Ribeye Area and many more. Of these Calving Ease, Average Daily Gain, Ribeye Area and Marbling are the EPDs that are most significant to us in bull selection.

That's right, some bulls are more likely than others to sire calves that upon reaching maturity, will have a larger Ribeye Area, in square inches, than others!

It's always exciting to bring the bull in for the 3 month breeding season but it's just as exciting to have him leave. Bulls are unpredictable, much more so than cows, steers and heifers! Some of the first and best advice that we ever received when we started out in this business was 'don't ever turn your back on a bull'!

The advice continued as "It doesn't matter if the bull was rejected by his mother and you bottle fed him twice a day for seven months! It doesn't matter if you named him and he comes when you call! It doesn't matter if you pet him everyday and he licks your hand!"



Natural, but complex, hormonal cycles and interactions in a bull make him unpredictable and when coupled with about 2000+ pounds of weight makes him potentially dangerous!

## Robinson Ferry Is Serving Five Oaks Beef At Chefs On The Farm Event...

We are very honored that in addition to pairing with G&D Produce (Danylu Hundley), Michael Ring, co-owner and general manager, and AJ Garrelts, Chef de Cuisine of Robinson Ferry have chosen to serve Five Oaks Beef at the upcoming Chefs on the Farm event to be held on October 7 at Warren Estate.



Those of you here in Warren County already know how fortunate we are to have a restaurant like Robinson Ferry in downtown Warrenton.

Great fresh 'farm to table' offerings, expertly prepared and presented and a strong commitment to support our community!

For those of you a little farther away in Wake Forest, Raleigh, Durham or Cary who may not be familiar with Robinson Ferry, a visit is definitely worth the drive and we highly recommend it! Reservations at (252) 257-1991 are recommended. Check them out!

## Did You Know...

A cow's stress level is easily determined by how much of the white of her eyes you can see. Cattle tend to open their eyes much wider, exposing more white, under stress. We here at Five Oaks Family Farm want to see as little of the whites of their eyes as possible! ☺ We are committed to low stress, humane cattle handling, not just because it results in better beef but just because it is the right thing to do...

## Buying Local...

Not only do we sell locally, we also buy locally, whenever possible, and we want to extend a special thanks to all of you who do the same. We are fortunate to have so many great small farms, producers and small retail businesses in our community!

When you buy local, you get the freshest, best tasting products, you support our local economy and you benefit the environment because local products don't require long distance transport, either by land, sea or air. Less fuel is consumed and less emissions are produced in bringing fresh products to your table! Thanks for your support. You do make a difference!

## Happy Birthday To Us...

We are very pleased to announce that Five Oaks Beef has just celebrated it's second birthday on 9/6/2018. We are now 2 years old and thanks to all of you, doing very well! It is a pleasure to be a part of such a great community!

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## Recipe of the Month...

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### Swedish Meatballs

Yields 6 generous servings  
About 45 Meatballs

#### Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1/2 cup onion, diced  
2 pounds ground beef  
3/4 cup Panko bread crumbs  
2 large eggs  
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

**For the gravy**

1/4 cup butter  
1/3 cup all-purpose flour  
2 – 2 1/2 cups beef broth  
1/2 cup sour cream  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
Pinch of ground nutmeg  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

**Instructions**

Preheat oven to 350°. Heat the 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add onion, and cook, stirring frequently, until onions have become translucent, about 2-3 minutes. Set aside to cool.

In a large bowl, combine ground beef, Panko, eggs, allspice, nutmeg and cooked onion; season with salt and pepper. Stir until well combined. Roll the mixture into about 1” inch meatballs.

Place meatballs on a cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for approximately 20 minutes, stirring them at about 10 minutes so they brown evenly.

To make the gravy, melt butter in the skillet. Whisk in flour until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Gradually whisk in beef broth and cook, whisking constantly, until slightly thickened, about 1-2 minutes. Stir in sour cream; season with salt and pepper, a pinch of nutmeg and browned bits gathered from the cookie sheet, to taste.

Add the meatballs to the gravy and cook, stirring occasionally, until heated through, about 8-10 minutes.

Serve over a bed of egg noodles or rice, garnish with parsley.

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**Beef you can trust!**