**Summer 2016 Newsletter**

Greetings from the farm:

If you’re a cattleman like me, the farther away from the farm you get, the more nervous you become.  It just comes with the territory to always be a little worried about your cows.  As somebody’s granddaddy once said, “Cows are always out of something.  They’re either out of feed, out of water, or out of your fences.”  Lord, ain’t that the truth!  Cows as a whole vigorously subscribe to the notion that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence and are damned determined to prove it.

So on a rare overnight trip to North Carolina’s western mountains, I was getting antsy following wife Nancy around the tourist junk-o-tique shop in the scenic little town where we’d spent the night.  As she slowly wandered down each aisle I thought to myself how curious it is that a woman can spend an hour in a shop, carefully pondering its every item, handling most, commenting on them all, then leave perfectly satisfied having bought nothing at all.  It’s a view into the feminine psyche that I’m wise enough not to note out loud.

Just when I thought I might as well end it all by stuffing that whole box of potpourri into my mouth that she just pondered, handled, and commented on before returning it to the shelf, I spotted it.  It was a little hand painted sign on an old barn board that read, “By the time your children are fit to live with, they’re living with someone else.”  I chuckled out loud.  Lord, ain’t that the truth?  For the next hour, I completely lost track of Nancy as I wandered around the shop reading the entire collection of “truisms” on display.  There must have been two dozen at least.  A couple of my favorites were:

“Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit, wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.”  And, “The early bird might get the worm but the second mouse gets the cheese.”

I just love slightly impudent little ditties like these that can succinctly convey a basic truth with humor.  That explains why my favorite writers include Mark Twain, a brilliant wordsmith, Will Rogers, a corn-pone political humorist, and Lewis Grizzard, a pure smart-ass.  Sadly, all are gone on.

The ride home allowed ample time for my idle mind (Nancy says don’t you mean addled?) to come up with an entire “Truism Tour” for our little town of Elloree, SC.  Since our family makes, bags, and sells compost and potting soils, specifically “Stout Ollie Compost” and “Little Lucy’s Pott’n Mix” and if you consider that product description a shameless act of commercial promotion then I resemble that remark, then our family business would be well-placed to sponsor such a “tour.”  What we settled on were planters in the downtown block filled with flowers of all sorts, growing in our soils of course, with each planter sporting a hand lettered truism.  We were already making planters and growing various flowers and vegetable plants as a test garden by our research and development department, me, so it made perfect sense again to that same R and D Department to place these planters downtown where all could enjoy them.  We floated the idea to the Elloree mayor and council and found ourselves with surprising expediency, in charge of the Elloree Flower and Truism Tour.

The fun, of course, has been in the process of collecting and considering truisms.  We found them everywhere and ended up with a hundred or so.  These we pared down to the 35 that went on our planters.  I became so obsessed with them that for a time, I conversed with Nancy in the language of “truism,” much to her chagrin.  It would go something like this:

Nancy:  The garbage needs to be taken out.
Me:  “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.”

Nancy:  Well, if you don’t take out your “treasure,” those tuna cans in there from lunch are gonna stink up the house.
Me:  “The past is the only dead thing that smells sweet.”

Nancy:  in her raised with ire voice-It’s just the trash!
Me:  “There’s nothing so small that it can’t be blown out of proportion.”

Nancy:  Fine, I’ll do it myself.
Me:  The Chinese say, “Happy Wife, Happy Life.”

Nancy:  But here in Elloree we say, “If Mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.”
Me:  while picking up the trash, Yes dear.

As of this spring, April 2016, all 35 of the truism planters were in place with flowers happily growing.  In addition, there are another 100 or so “ground ring” planters flush with blooms of all colors.  We here in Elloree are proud to invite you to visit us, loiter in our pretty little town, read the truisms, smell the flowers, and leave with a smile, or stay.

As for me, I’d better go check on those cows.  As somebody else’s granddaddy once said, “The grass isn’t always greener on the other side of the fence, and it still has to be mowed.”  Lord, ain’t that the truth?

Our grass-fed beef marketing plan:  2016

First, I want to thank those of who bought beef from us last year.  We’ll be selling it again this year in halves and wholes.  A whole beef will be 350-400 lbs. of packaged meat and sell for $6.50/lb.  A side (half) will be 175-200 lbs. of packaged meat and sell for $7/lb.  We won’t know the exact weight of your portion until it’s processed.  We dry-age the meat 21 days after which you’ll be able to pick it up in Kingstree, S.C.  You’ll have a say in how you want it cut but generally you’ll get, in a whole cow, approximately 24 ribeyes, 24 NY Strips, 20 sirloins, 12 filets, 20 roasts, 6 lbs of liver, 15 lbs of marrow, 20 lbs of ribs, 30 lbs of misc (ox tail, heart, tongue, cheeks, brisket) and 100-150 lbs of hamburger.  For a side, divide the above breakdown by half.  A large chest freezer will accommodate a whole cow and a medium sized freezer does nicely for a half.  It will be vacuum-packed and frozen and will last in the freezer 24 months or longer.

So, if you want one of these portions this year, respond with an email to riverrunfarms@live.com including your phone number, your mailing address, which portion you want, and when you want it (Spring, Summer, Fall).  We’ll have a limited number of beeves this year and will take reservations on a 1st come basis.

Thanks for allowing us to be your grass farmers.

The Olivers of River Run Farms