

Spring Newsletter 2013

Greetings from the farm:

It's past 6:30 and I'm running late. She's not gonna be happy. She's not accustomed to waiting on men, they wait for her. And why not? She's knock-out good-looking with brown eyes that look right through you, a brick-house bod, trim, taut and tan, that glowing coloring of broomstraw sedge in the afternoon sun. She's a Jersey girl for sure, with a countenance and swagger falling somewhere between Snooki and Chris Christy. That is to say, a little horny and a lot pushy. But I'm drawn to her for something else. It's those big "breasteses" as those Wayan's Brothers used to say. I can't get enough of them...wait, you do realize I'm talking about my milk-cow "Sweet-Pea" don't you? Hey, this is a family farm!

Sweet-Pea is our Jersey breed milk cow and she and I have a standing date every morning at daylight. This time of year that's around 6:30 AM. She comes for the sweet feed, I come for the sweet milk. It's a mutually beneficial affair. She's actually the only cow on the place that gets any grain at all and she gets very little. Her diet is almost all grass which is the only raw milk I'm willing to let my family have. That little bit of grain is the only reason she's willing to come into that stall on these frosty mornings and let me place a cold hand on her "breasteses." And I'm still likely, if I'm not paying attention, to get kicked, horned, or at a minimum, a tail-swat across the brow. (Come to think of it, that's the same reaction the wandering hand gets from the wife). But, it's so worth it to have that sweet and pure living nectar in your fridge or better yet in your kids' and grandkids' fridge. I have, however, developed a lot of respect for dairymen. It's a seven day a week job with no days off. Sweet-pea observes no holidays. For those who sell raw-milk, it's a nightmare of regulations enforced by a hostile bureaucracy that's out to save us from ourselves. Thank goodness there are those willing to fight the fight. Those small family farms set the benchmark for purity and sustainability for foods including milk that agribusiness just can't match. And there it is! Without the family farm, then corporate sets those not so high watermarks for what the public should accept. They include things like pink slime, estrogen implants, feedlots, irradiation, salmonella, the list is endless. P.R. for mediocre is much easier if that's the only food on the shelf. I'm sure they would much prefer that we, the small farms and those who support them, just go away. Proof of that is in all those regulations of which only the large corporations can afford to comply. If not for your voice, that of the informed buying public, demanding access, direct farm sales would have been regulated out of existence by now. That effort is on-going however, so please continue to be heard. The choice for pure and sustainable is your right.

Now, off to the barn, and Sweet-Pea. Note to self; try warming the wandering hand before approaching Sweet-Pea...or the wife.

“For all those men who say, ‘Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?’ here’s an update for you. Nowadays 80% of women are against marriage. Why? Because women realize it’s not worth buying an entire pig just to get a little sausage.”
-Andy Rooney

Our grass-fed beef marketing plan:

First, I want to thank those who bought beef from us in 2012. We’ll be selling it again this year in halves and wholes and will also be offering it in quarters as well. A whole beef will be 350-400 lbs. of packaged meat and sell for \$6/lb. A side (half) will be 175-200 lbs. of packaged meat and sell for \$6.50/lb. A quarter will be 75-100 lbs of packaged meat and sell for \$7/lb. For those comparing prices, our \$6.50 per pound packaged price is roughly equivalent to a \$3.50 per pound hanging weight price. We won’t know the exact weight until it’s processed. We dry-age the meat 21 days after which you’ll be able to pick it up in Kingstree, SC. You’ll have a say in how you want it cut but generally you’ll get, in a whole cow, approximately 24 rib-eyes, 24 NY Strips, 20 sirloins, 12 filets, 20 roasts, 6 lbs of liver, 20 lbs of marrow bones, 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, and by four, of course, for a quarter. For a little extra you can have some of the hamburger turned into brats, breakfast sausage, or hot dogs. A large chest freezer will accommodate a whole cow and a medium-sized freezer does nicely for a half. A quarter will fit in the freezer portion of most fridges. It will be vacuum-packed and frozen, and will last in the freezer for up to 2 years.

So, if you want one of these portions this year, respond with an e-mail including your phone number, your mailing address, which portion you want, and when you want it (Spring, Summer, Fall).

Thanks for allowing us to be your grass farmers,

The Olivers at River Run Farms