

River Run Farms Fall 2008 Newsletter

Greetings From the Farm:

This morning we were greeted by the first frost of Fall. That's an important date when you're a grass-farmer. It marks the end of the growing season for our warm season grasses and places us in a transition phase waiting for our cool season grasses to come on. Those sweaty 100 degree days in August will pay off now as we supplement the cows with that hay that we struggled to put up. The cows love this cooler weather with the younger ones frolicking and playing. The older mama cows just look fat and content. As most of you know, our cows are Angus which is an English breed more suited to cold and rainy than hot and humid. We use them because we think they produce a more flavorful and tender meat on grass. They also have a pleasant disposition, and when you're around them as much as we are, that trait helps keep our disposition pleasant as well.

"Grass-fed" is becoming quite the fad, as I'm sure you've noticed at some of the up-scale health-oriented groceries. Unfortunately, what is advertised as pasture-raised or grass-fed is oftentimes not entirely true. If you question them, you find that a lot of the cows are "given just a little bit of grain the last few months, to fatten." Research has shown that feeding grain any time during the cow's life, reduces sharply, the healthy fats, and increases the unhealthy ones. Also, there's some confusion about "organic" beef. These cows are often fed organic corn which allows them to be labeled "certified organic," but again, the fats are just as unhealthy. It's either 100% grass-fed like ours, or it's not. So don't pay for grass-fed unless it really is.

New things:

Les is finally satisfied with his beef jerky and snack stick recipes. We sold out of our test batches quickly, but should have more soon.

The other thing we've been working on is a way to ship our product. We've gotten so many requests from our out-of-town market friends, that we've come up with an insulated shipping box. We can ship up to 20 lbs of frozen meat anywhere east of the Mississippi for \$25. We ship only on Mondays, so we can be assured of a Wednesday delivery. We're still committed to local agriculture for local customers, but those of you who have asked if we could ship to your friends and family, now we can.

Market news:

The Mt. Pleasant Farmer's Market is closed for the year, and we're already looking forward to April 2009 when the market opens in its newly built permanent location on Coleman Blvd. We will continue to be at the downtown Charleston Market each Saturday through December 20, and will make monthly deliveries to Charleston in January, February, and March provided there is enough interest. Tentatively, we will be in the waterworks parking lot on Vanderhorst Street, two blocks from Marion Square, on at least one Saturday morning each month. We'll notify you of the particulars. We're also attending a new market in Columbia, SC on the campus of USC. The next one scheduled will be Thursday, November 13 at the Russell House from 10 AM to 2 PM. Tell your friends in Columbia to come down and see us.

As we near the holidays, we'll be offering a prayer of thanks for you, our friends and customers, who allow us to be your grass-farmer.

Bless you and thanks,

The Olivers

*Contact us at riverrunfarms@live.com or at (803) 492-9878.