

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Fall news 2018 from Bone Dry Ridge Farm

Happy Fall

The weather report: Nice Fall. It was lovely to have all this dry weather. Made us go full speed on all kinds of outdoor projects. But it also makes us apprehensive. We know that we always get just about the same amount of rain every Winter/Spring, so we are anticipating a flood this Winter/Spring. It is so much nicer to have the rain fall in the months we expect it, not so nice when it all comes in the Spring.

Meat Sales: The winter piglets are growing like crazy. We are estimating they will be ready in late February or early March. We are also going to have Wagyu Beef ready soon. Be on the lookout for the meat brochures. We have had many people ask if they could buy an 1/8 of a beef cow rather than a 1/4, because they find a 1/4 to be too much meat all at once. Legally we are not allowed to sell you less than a 1/4 beef, but we can group those of you who want smaller amounts together, and "voilà" you can get an 1/8. An 1/8 is about one banana box full of beef.



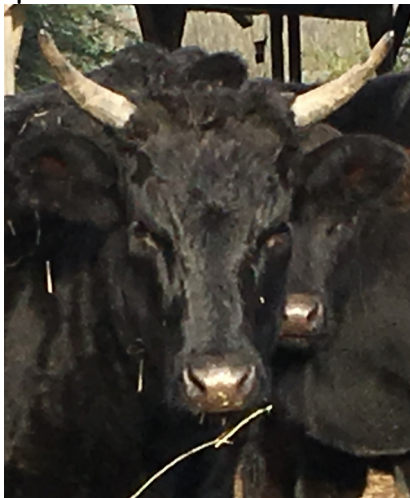
Pigs:

The winter pigs are particularly adorable this winter. Check out this photo. So picturesque. I don't know why it is that I never tire of these animals, perhaps because they are such great characters and have so much fun. Pigs are so full of joy. They just love life: eat, sleep, and play a lot. By the time they come to us they do not have any adult pig supervision, so that may be a reason for the endless play time. After writing these sentences it seems heartless to then say when they will be ready to go to Valhalla. But that is life. They will be ready to be slaughtered in late February or early March.



Sheep:

These lovelies are home now, in the barn next to my house. I love going out, rain or shine, to feed them. I kept only one lamb ewe for replacement this year. I named her Lúisa after my niece who was here with me this last summer. She (the ewe lamb, not my niece) is the daughter of Gunnhildur who is the leader of this flock. Lúisa has a particularly lovely face and I hope she will turn into as good a mom as her mom. That is what it is all about. The picture is of Lúisa and her mom Gunnhildur.



Beef Cattle:



It is hard taking pictures of black animals. It is almost impossible to get their individuality on film. Each one is unique but, in a photograph, they simply look like black cows. But I think I may have managed to capture these two characters above. One has an attitude and the other is mellow. The two Wagyu with horns, use them mercilessly. They strut around like they own the place and make all the others feel inferior. One young heifer is so afraid of these two that she does not come into the barn. We are hoping to not have these horned animals around a lot longer. Hopefully they soon will be in someone's freezer. We have also decided to only breed polled (no horns) Wagyu. Last September we went to a Wagyu ranch near Pullman, Washington to buy Wagyu semen from polled bulls, in the hope of not having to deal with horns anymore. Sure, there may be a horned animal once in a blue moon, but for the most part our wagyu will be polled. The Japanese do not accept polled animals in their Wagyu breed standards, but we don't care about that. We want peace and tranquility in the fields and barns. If all of them had horns there might be an equalizing factor, but we feel no horns is better.

Dairy Cows: Before a heifer becomes a cow, she has to have a calf.



To become a milking cow, she has to learn the ropes of coming into a milking parlor. She needs to line up with the other milking cows and then file single file into the milking stations, eat grain, and stand still while suction cups are put on her tits and she is milked. This is a lot for an animal to learn. This training needs to be done without pressure and she needs to want to do this. So of course, this does not happen in one day. Keith now has 5 heifers in training. Some are easier to train than others. In the very beginning, they don't even come into the holding area. They stand on the outside and look in. Then they are let in after the milking cows have gone through. They have time to sniff at things and just hang out where the older ones so eagerly went into. A bit of grain will get passed their way and they then become more interested. After some days of this, the grain bucket gets put inside the stations. They can back out if they want, but after some days of this the grain gets put into the feed bowl. At some point in time they are not allowed to back up, but have to walk through like the dairy cows. And of course, after they have a calf the suction cups are put on and the pressure of a full udder is alleviated and that feels good. They say there are hormones released when a cow is either suckled or milked, which makes her feel good and she wants to stand still. This whole training process can take weeks. Each animal is different. One of the youngsters in training is called Clementine and she has been particularly cooperative. She has a very sweet personality and one of her unusual characteristics is that she is small. She is by far the smallest animal in the herd and one of the most adorable.

Take care. Your farmers and shepherdess

Keith and Selma