

# Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



## Fall News 2019 from Bone Dry Ridge Farm

**The weather report:** Nice Fall. We have managed to get a lot of last-minute projects done because of the nice weather.

**Meat Sales:** We are raising winter pigs again. They should be ready by late February. And after a long wait, we will harvest the Wagyu beef, hopefully at the same time as the pigs. We will be offering delivery options for the beef for the first time. And, please look at Beef Cuts Made Easy. If you would like to order, print and fill out the order form on the brochure and send it back to me with a deposit. I have joined Venmo. So, if you would like to pay that way, my user name is Selma Bjarnadottir.

[Winter pig brochure](#)

[Winter Wagyu brochure](#)

[Beef Cuts Made Easy](#)



**Pigs:** We picked up the winter pigs in late September. The farm we have been buying them from has expanded and now has a few more sows and a new boar. They have a nice set-up in their back pasture where the pigs live. Each sow has a large pasture for herself and her litter, and when her piglets are big enough to be on their own, they get removed and the boar comes and visits her. Pigs are so destructive, tearing up pastures in no time. I'm so impressed how these farmers have been able to keep their pastures in good shape. They must redo them on a regular basis. Our winter pigs do not have access to a pasture. They are in a large open barn with hay bedding. Keith supplements the lack of pasture by bringing the pasture to them. He brings them sod every few days. They eat the grass on top plus the roots. Our vet told us that the pigs get vitamins and minerals from the earth, so by chewing on the roots they eat some soil. We had a big apple crop this fall and never did have time to make apple juice, so these pigs are enjoying the apples instead.



**Sheep:** I brought the sheep home a little bit early this year. Not for any particular reason other than the weather was nice and it was more pleasant to bring them home in nice weather than in the rain, like I usually do. The sheep were surprised to see the sheep barn all fixed up. At first, they were not sure if it was safe to go inside, even though this improvement has made the barn much more secure. They were a bit skittish with me also, being in a small pasture and in close proximity to me. They of course know me well, but if it was up to them, they would prefer to keep a bigger distance. But as I bring them hay every morning, little by little, they like me more. The sheep and I do this same dance every fall. I still have my lovely ram Smári. But he is getting old. This may be his last breeding season. He will be hard to replace. He is huge, jet black and very calm. I only have four ewes from him, so next fall I may want to keep some more ewe lambs to expand his gene pool in my herd.



**Beef Cattle:** We have had a very positive response to the Wagyu meat, so, we bred a couple more dairy cows to Wagyu and will have more mama cows and therefore more meat for sale. This is not a fast process. Keith and I are crossing our fingers and hoping these ladies will have female calves that we can then breed back to Wagyu when they are 18 months old. They will have calves 9 months later (almost the same pregnancy length as women) and then we wait another 18 months until those calves reach a good size for harvesting. The reason we don't just buy full-grown Wagyu moms and shorten this process is because we have a completely closed herd. This is how Keith has prevented disease from entering his herd. He has an unbelievably clean herd of cows, the envy of many. So, we happily stick to the long process. We are so please with having all of our Wagyu polled (no horns). It has brought calmness between the animals. There is a hierarchy of course, but no one uses horns as an advantage.

**Media:** Yours truly now has a published article in the Icelandic Bændablaðið (the farmers newspaper). My entire farm operation is considered illegal in Iceland. No home slaughter is allowed. So, I and another Icelandic, Sveinn, who resides in Iceland, decided to write an article together about how small farmers here in the state of Washington are allowed to sell directly to the consumer, and give their animals the dignity to be killed at home. One would think that in this era of animal welfare awareness, farmers all over the world would be allowed to slaughter their animals at home. But no, that is not the case. The article talks about how a farmer like me is exempt from the USDA regulations, because I sell directly to the consumer, and how the slaughter truck and the butcher shop are regulated under the Washington State Department of Agriculture and not by the USDA. We also talk about how a small farm like mine helps fuel the local economy in the form of supporting other local businesses, like the butcher shop and the slaughter guys. It also mentions the awareness people have regarding how the local economy works and that buying your food locally not only lowers your carbon footprint, but also keeps your local food system strong. Sveinn is hoping to be able to continue this discussion in Iceland, and as a goal, to have the Icelandic authorities allow farmers to sell directly to the consumer. Farmers over there are being faced with many challenges. One challenge is that the European Union has forced Iceland to allow the importing of meat, dairy and eggs. This is likely to be the largest threat to Icelandic farmers and their animals, not just economically but also as the potential importing of bacteria and diseases not found on the island. In a sense Iceland has a closed herd of animals, and has for over 1000 years.

**Creamery:** The jar issue is finally over. The company that I buy my jars from finally sent me replacement jars at no cost to me, but it took some doing. I can be very persistent if I need to be. In these larger companies one needs to find the person with the authority to correct the problem, and that can be a challenge, but the jars are here and we are good. The creamery grew quite a bit this year. It has been a bit of a challenge to get my farm work done at times, but this nice fall weather made up for lost time in the summer.

Take care. Your farmers and shepherdess

Selma and Keith