

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Wagyu X Cattle
Icelandic Sheep
Chickens
Pigs

Spring News 2019 from Bone Dry Ridge Farm

Happy Spring

The weather report: We were in the grip of Winter in February and I realized I had not written the Winter newsletter, and then Spring sprung in two days and it just seemed too late for Winter news. So here we are in early May and it is time to talk about Spring. What a lovely Spring so far, nice warm weather and very little rain. We here at Bone Dry Ridge Farm are a bit obsessed with the rainfall, because the house is entirely on rainwater and I can inform you that in the 20 years I have lived here, we have never had so little rain in the winter months. I'm not short on water. The normal winter rainfall more than fills my water storage tanks, but we are about 8" short of normal winter rain. That is a lot.

Meat Sales: We will be offering pork and lamb this fall. We do not have a date yet for the beef. But it may not be until late winter. I do however have one 1/4 in my freezer if someone wants beef right now. I will be sending out the meat brochures in a month or so. Then I take the orders on a first come first served basis.



Pigs: I have 8 pigs again, in and around the barn, seven girls and one boy pig. They are a delight as always, quite frisky and, they love to run around the barn and field. They are particularly happy when I'm driving the tractor past their area. They come running and want to know what is going on. The pigs are the same cross breed as I had last year, Red Waddle and Old Spot. Some of them have the waddle and all of them are spotted. I think it is so much fun to come out in the morning and feed them their treat, which is milk or yogurt-soaked grain. It is quite the active eating time because they all want to eat as much of that as possible. Three gallons of milk-soaked grain is gone in about one minute or less. They have food available all the time, but this morning treat is just the best.



Sheep: My first-time mom, Luisa, did great. I will put her in the category of a supermom. She had two lambs and everything went well. She was overjoyed and was very attentive to her newborns. I'm always happy when the first timers lamb in the middle of lambing season. Then they have seen others have babies and are, I think, better prepared for the job. Being a good mom is a must in this business. Lambing season was going so well. Almost all the ewes had two lambs and two of them had three, but then tragedy hit. Geirprúður, my very skittish ewe had trouble. Her lambs were not coming out the right way and got stuck. I had to push them back in and sort them out. She and I then helped each other bring these lambs into the world, but all three of them were dead. It was a very sad day for both of us. I think she knew they were dead before they came out, because she did leave them after a short time. If something good

has come out of this tragedy, it is that she does not appear to be so skittish anymore. I think we bonded in this struggle. She had regained her joy however, and I see her in the field playing with the lambs. Usually the adult sheep don't play much, they have responsibilities as mothers, but I see Geirprúður sprinting with the lambs in the early evening, when we have what we call "Rodeo Hour." Rodeo Hour is a big play time for lambs, running and hopping all together. It is the last play time before their mothers settle them down for the night. Sounds familiar to you parents out there?

Beef Cattle: Now that all of the horned Wagyu are gone, there is more tranquility. All are now on equal footing. The horned Wagyu we had were not very nice to the polled Wagyu. Now that we are only using semen from polled Wagyu bulls, we are looking forward to having them treat each other better.



Dairy Cows: Instead of writing only about the dairy cows themselves, I thought perhaps I should write a bit about their daily routine. At 5:15 Keith comes out to the barn to clean up their stalls. Each cow has her own stall and most of them like to lie down in the same one every night and on hot summer days. They are not happy if someone takes their spot, not happy at all. Cows poop a lot. I'm not sure how many times per day, but it is a lot. So, often there is poop in the stalls that needs to be raked out. At about 6am, milking starts. There are only 10 to 12 cows being milked these days, so this does not take long, but there is order to this process. Cows love routine and being milked in the right order is what they like. StHelebo is now the oldest cow in the group and she rules. She likes to be the third cow from the front on the right side of the milking parlor. If she is not the third, she acts up and can be most unpleasant. Clementine, on the other hand, is mild mannered and not very picky, but she likes to go in on the left side. She is ok with being number two, three, four or five on the left side of the parlor. She never goes first, and she does not like to be last any more. After being milked, the cows can either go out to the field or hang around the barn area. They get fed hay every day, even in summer. They like to have choices and sometime a bit of roughage is a good mix to the very lush pastures we have this time of year. Spring is the time we have a lot of dandelions in the field. Cows love them and the dandelions are what makes the spring milk so sweet. The cows spend their day between the pastures and the barnyard. The mild spring weather makes them want to just hang out in the fields and eat and chew their cud. At 3pm Keith calls them to come back in to be milked. Sometimes they are very cooperative and come up on their own, but more often they want someone to come get them. They go through the milking routine again and then head back out to the field. Not a bad life when you think about it.

Take care. Your farmers and shepherdess

Keith and Selma