

Subject: Spring, bird flu and other things
Date: March 9, 2006 12:52:31 PM EST
To: Friends of Hawkins Family Farm

Hello, friend of Hawkins Family Farm!

Warmer temperatures today tempt thoughts of Spring! I'm eager to see shoots of asparagus and garlic peek through the soil, and to lift the straw from the spinach sown last Fall for some early Spring fresh greens! I'm equally eager to replenish dwindling supplies of chicken, beef, and pork. (When we sell out in the Fall it means that we don't have a large supply from which to draw for our own family table...)

I wanted to send this note for two reasons.

First, to invite you to order early. I am already getting larger meat orders than last year: people who have our meat on hand tend to like it and use it and, therefore, use it up more quickly than they may have anticipated. Folks who ordered a quarter beef are now ordering a half, and so on. Depending on how they grow, I'll have about a dozen Jersey calves to butcher this year, and a few of those go into "wholly-cow" burger. Since a calf stays on our farm for two years, I have to plan far ahead to add to the availability of meat. Each season, when it is gone, it is gone. (One exception: even though cattle prices are very high, I am trying to work out a deal with a friend to get a couple of Scottish Highland steers to butcher in the fall, to see how they may fare on our place. Highlands are the "hairy cows" with huge horns (see www.highlandcattleusa.org) The meat is fine-grained and lean and, I am told, the only meat that the Queen of England will eat. If you are interested in trying one of the Highland for your quarter this year, let me know and we'll try to work it out.) Also, I am hoping to get pigs within the next week or two for August butchering. Ordering now will help me know how many pigs to get. My plan is to get a second batch of pigs in May for October butchering. There will be NO summer batch of turkeys this year, only a Fall batch. I hope to raise plenty of chickens; check the brochure for pick-up dates. We will sell ONLY fresh birds this year, NONE will be frozen for sale.

Second, you may have questions regarding our outdoor operation and the bird flu threat. If you'd like to read an extensive, well-documented paper on the topic that expresses our view, see <http://www.grain.org/briefings/?id=194>

Here's an excerpt, raising a thought-provoking question: "The main weakness in the migratory bird theory is that the geographical spread of the disease does not match with migratory routes and seasons. "No species migrates from Qinghai, China, west to Eastern Europe," says BirdLife's Dr Richard Thomas. "When plotted, the pattern of outbreaks follows major road and rail routes, not flyways. And the absence of outbreaks in Africa, South and Southeast Asia and Australasia this autumn is hard to explain, if wild birds are the primary carriers." If migratory birds are transmitting the disease, why has bird flu not hit the Philippines or Burma, and why has it been confined to a few commercial operations in Laos, when all three countries are surrounded by bird flu-infected countries?" Read the paper for some of their answers to the questions. Our

simple take on the matter is this: at Hawkins Family Farm, we raise healthy animals that don't get sick, so you won't, either.

Peace and plenty,

Jeff and Kathy