

## Sonrise Farms

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Dear Friends,

Greetings from Sonrise Farms. Spring is just around the corner so it is time for our family to make plans and time for you to take an inventory of your freezer. We also ask that you take a few minutes to read our annual newsletter.

**Chickens:** We will continue to raise our chickens in portable pasture shelters where they receive plenty of fresh air and sunshine. All grains for our poultry feed are usually raised here on the farm and blended with an organic mineral supplement. Our feed contains NO hormones, antibiotics, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or meat and bone meal.

Our chickens do not have the stress of being transported to a processing facility. Poultry processing is done right here on our farm. After we process in the morning, you can pick up your *fresh* chickens in the afternoon. Due to difficulties in scheduling and the extra time demands of four groups, we plan to only do two larger groups this year. Processing dates are listed on the order form. If a pickup date does not fit your schedule, we will be happy to freeze for a fee of \$0.15 per pound and you can pick up at a more convenient time.

**Eggs:** Our oldest son, Caleb, purchased our laying flock a couple of years ago . This is now his part-time job and he is using his earnings for personal expenses and to save for college. Eggs will be sold the same as they were in the past. Just give us a call or email if you would like to stop by and purchase eggs. Remember that egg production is seasonal and can fluctuate greatly.

**Stewing Hens:** These are the egg layers that have "served their time." The meat has a very rich taste and the broth is especially flavorful. Please remember these **MUST** be cooked long and slow to be tender. They are great for chicken soup or chicken and dumplings.

**Turkeys:** Our turkeys are raised on pasture and fed the same ration as the chickens. We will only be processing on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, which is a change from previous years. Order extras to freeze for Christmas or just to enjoy later.

**Beef:** Our Murray Grey beef cattle calve in the spring when the deer are fawning and receive a new section of fresh pasture every day of the growing season. We do our best to raise our cattle the natural way God intended. By doing things the correct way, our cattle have NO need for antibiotics, hormones or grain supplements. We process beef twice a year when the cattle are at their best growth rates and the grass has just come off peak production. Therefore, June and November are your choices again this year for freezer beef (quarters, halves or a whole).

**Pork:** These are our “hard-working” Berkshire hogs that do our composting. Since they are barn-raised and not confined the meat is juicy and flavorful.

**Beef and Pork Processing:** We will continue to use Chenoa Food Locker in Chenoa, Illinois for all processing. A few customers called last year and expressed a preference for Chuck’s Locker in Ivesdale. Please indicate on your order form if you prefer Chuck’s and we will see if we can arrange it. Otherwise, we will take the animals to Chenoa and notify you so you can place a cutting order. If you need an estimate of costs or have general questions, please feel free to call.

**Frozen Meat:** We continue to carry a wide variety of beef and pork cuts, which are individually packaged and frozen. These items can be purchased at any time here on the farm, as long as supplies last. They will also be available during poultry pick up days. Enclosed is a price sheet stating the current prices of all cuts that we have available. If there is a cut you are wanting and it is not listed on the sheet, give us a call and we may be able special order it for you the next time we have beef or pork processed.

**Free Chickens:** You may have noticed a bright colored flyer in the envelope with your newsletter. We are once again asking you, our faithful customers, to spread the word around about our business. Telling others is now easier than ever, you can simply refer folks to our website which is [www.sonrisefarms.net](http://www.sonrisefarms.net). If you haven’t visited it yourself, you may enjoy the information and pictures of our family.

We have never required deposits with meat orders and we have no plans to change our policy, but we have had problems in the past with last minute cancellations. We understand that there are unforeseen circumstances that come up during the year and we have always and will continue to do our best to accommodate every customer’s need. We hate to even mention this, but those cancellations put us in a major bind a few times. So when you place an order with us we take it as a commitment from you and we will gear our production accordingly. If something unexpected comes up, please call us and give us some time to work things out on our end.

**Special Note:** We really hate to write this, but we must. Grain prices have skyrocketed, which in turn has dramatically raised our feed costs. Input costs for nearly everything in our farming operation have risen as well. The poultry enterprise has been profitable, but to keep it that way we need to increase prices so that we can still get a return for our labor.

The beef, on the other hand, has not been profitable for us over the last year. We are making adjustments to our management to try to increase our carrying capacity and decrease our costs. Hopefully, we can turn this around because we do want to keep providing good wholesome beef for you and your family. We have no choice but to increase prices to help cover our costs.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We appreciate each of you, our faithful customers. Thank you for encouraging and supporting our business and family. We enjoy visiting with each of you when you come to the farm. Many of you have become very dear to us over the years. Now take a few minutes, fill out the order form and fire it back to us in the self-addressed envelope. Remember, "first come, first served" has always been our policy. Please call or email to make an appointment if you would like fresh eggs or frozen meat cuts. We look forward to seeing each of you this summer.

*The Hesterbergs at Sunrise Farms*