

Sonrise Farms
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Dear Friends,

As we sit down to write this newsletter, the snow is blowing outside and school is closed for the day. Hard to imagine that spring is only a few weeks away, but it is coming. We invite you take a few minutes and 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 or antibiotics.

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. 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.

Every spring orders are slow to come in for the June group of chickens so we request fewer from the hatchery. By the time butchering day rolls around, we have more last minute orders than we can accommodate. Please order quickly so we can supply all the chickens you, your family and your friends will need.

Eggs: Eggs are \$2.00 per dozen and we no longer sort them by size. 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: Several of you were disappointed last year when we did not have enough laying hens and we were unable to fill your orders. Well, we'll try again this year. For those who are not familiar with 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: We have decided that we will not raise turkeys this year.

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 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 any time during the year 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. If there is a cut you desire 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.

Lamb: After trying valiantly for many months to contain the sheep inside fencing, we gave up and sold the flock. A big thank you to everyone who tried our lamb last fall. We still have a small inventory of frozen cuts so don't wait if you are interested in frozen lamb.

Special Note: We recognize with tough economic times many families are having difficulty paying the bills. We hate to increase prices, but our chick costs have been steadily increasing the last few years. Therefore, you may have noticed a slight increase in the price of our chickens, but we have kept beef and pork prices the same.

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 needs. 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.

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 friends 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