

October 29, 2008

Dear Friends,

We sincerely hope that you have all had a fun summer! The weather has certainly been a challenge at times. The fall foliage was about as colorful as I can ever remember with some very bright colors. We had a couple members visit this fall they had a good time (as did we). In the future we hope to see more of you!

There are some changes that we wanted to let you know about. First, we have exceeded our self imposed limit of 70! We will still take new sign-ups (starting in January) until we have reached our capacity for freezer space. This means that we may have to juggle some of the deliveries if one route gets bigger than the other. The total number will probably around 80 to 90. After we reach capacity, we will not take any new sign-ups until the July session. We sincerely thank all our members because word of mouth has been our best advertising.

Second, we are going to have to raise our rates. It isn't an easy thing for us to do (we are consumers too) but the cost of grain has gone up 30%, the processing fee has gone up twice, and everyone knows about the cost of fuel. Hopefully the price of fuel and grain has leveled off for now. We will be going up \$.50 per pound for the shares. At this time we will keep the extras at current prices.

Third, the beef is going to be raised by a family that lives 6 miles from us. The calves come from our dairy herd. The reason for this is because they have way more pasture than we do and they have all kinds of room in their converted dairy barn. Troy and Peggy, and their daughter Tashia take very good care of their animals. Tashia loves to spend time with the small calves. These animals couldn't have better care and this will hopefully allow us to even out our supply so that you will not have to go several months without beef steaks. It will take time for the supply to be built up but it will be worth it in the end. They will not use any hormones and will only use drugs or antibiotics if necessary to save the animals life.

Fourth, we do have some lambs, however, we don't know how soon they will go for processing since our processor is extremely busy and getting an appointment is difficult. When we do get them in we will offer them in individual cuts as an extra only. We don't have enough to offer them in the shares. In the future we will be trying to set ourselves up to be able to raise enough for shares.

Going ahead we are going to be starting deliveries earlier to take advantage of the daylight. If there isn't any cooler there or no one home, we will leave your share in a box insulated with newspaper, so please make sure to make proper arrangements. Jeff will make every effort to contact you but he can't keep doubling back to re-deliver shares. His route is taking him around 6 hours already (not counting travel from and to Vermont) and every time he has to redeliver it costs him a lot of time.

It seems early to start signing up for the next session (only two deliveries left), but we have had several people ask, so we will send out new sign-up forms for the January to June 2009 session. Again, current members will get first chance.

The last newsletter we sent out in print but it used a whole ink cartridge! So we will be sending them electronically and they will be posted on our website.

With our Sincerest Thank-You for your support,  
David & Tina and Family - Houde Family Farm

