

Members and Friends,

October 29, 2009

It has most certainly been a busy and challenging summer! Most of our stored feed is of good feed value. The pastures did grow like crazy. Probably the best year for pastures I have seen. Then we have the cool fall.... The leaves were very colorful (as usual). We are busy getting the equipment washed and put under cover for the long winter ahead. Then there are doors to fix and pens to get ready for the cows, pigs, and vealers.

There are a few changes to the sign-up form. We are adding a third route in the Salem/Marblehead area. The two routes are maxed out both because of freezer space and the time it takes to run them. The third route will take the pressure off and add a new area. Also the deposit has been removed but a two payment option has been added. We realize that for some members it isn't easy to come up with the full amount in one payment. The second payment will be due on April 1st.

One of our members asked me to write about E Coli and what we do to prevent contamination. Here goes: first we raise all of our animals in a clean environment with lots of fresh air. Then we transport our animals with our own trailer to minimize stress, to a facility that is only six miles away. The facility is very small by today's standards. The fewer animals processed, the less the chance of contamination. They have a USDA inspector there at all times that checks the animals before hand to be sure they are healthy. He/She also watches the meat cutting operation very closely. I have been there when the inspector checks all of the equipment before it is assembled for use. I can tell you he inspects everything VERY closely.

The meat cutters have many years of experience and are very conscientious about what they are doing. I even know the name of most of them and they know me when I come in to pick up product or leave off animals. Also it is common to see the owner, Pete Roy, there working in either part of the establishment. As a small business owner he takes much pride in what he does. I personally feel that I could eat raw burger off his equipment and never get sick! I feel that strongly about this place! Once the meats are sealed into their packaging they are NEVER opened until the consumer opens them. When the meat leaves the facility it goes right into our freezers where the temperatures are monitored right up to when it is delivered to your door.

A related topic is how you can tell where your product was processed. Any USDA inspected product has a small circle on the package that says: "US Passed and Inspected by Department of Agriculture Est _____" (establishment #). You can go to this site:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations/Meat_Poultry_Egg_Inspection_Directory/index.asp and find the establishment # along with a facility name, address, and phone number.

As always we sincerely thank you for your support.

David & Tina, Houde Family Farm