

The Deck Family Farm

February 2010

The ice has melted off of the creek banks and the daffodils are poking their green heads up through the earth. Although winter is still here, the farm has noticed a change as we begin to look forward to the first signs of Spring. Each morning the goat barn has new members and they wobble around on their little legs learning how to stay close to their mothers and friends. Calves are born each week now and we are all anxiously awaiting our first round of piglets. Our heritage breed Red Wattle Sows will have their first litters any day. We have several varieties of laying hens we have been raising through the winter and they are growing rapidly. They will be ready to begin laying eggs in the next few months. I just noticed three calves (of varying ages) wander across the front yard nibbling the fresh green grass as they went.

Over the past cold months we have had some fun in the kitchen experimenting with recipes, making cheese, and resting for the coming year. We have a new line of smoked sausages available, including an All Beef Nitrite Free Andouilles Sausage, Smoked Bratwurst, and a fantastic Polish. For those of you who have enjoyed our Honey Maple Nitrite Free hams in the past, we now have it sliced. Also available are our Heritage Breed La Belle Rouge Roasters as well as the rounder full breasted Cornish Cross. We will let you know when our eggs available for orders and the markets as the weather warms and our new laying hens join the flock. For those of you who have enjoyed our goat summer sausage, we have a limited supply so be sure to let us know if you want some added to your next order.

Farm Drop Sites

You may remember something about Buying Clubs in the last newsletter. This winter we worked on setting up groups in several areas and our new "Farm Drop Sites" are up and running. We now have two sites in Portland, one in Eugene, and three sites in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Farm Drop Sites provide a number of benefits including availability when the farmer's markets are closed for the season, and dramatically decreasing shipping costs and fees. Ordering for pickup at a Farm Drop Site is easy and can be done online or on the phone directly through the farm.

Find a drop site near you online at <http://www.deckfamilyfarm.com/farmdrops.pl> by checking the map near your home or office. When you click on your preferred drop site, you can see when the next order will be delivered, the order deadline and minimum order amounts, and any other information particular to that site. Once you know where you would like to pick up your order, you can simply go to our ordering page or call us and place your order, indicating where you would like it to be delivered.

Promoting Heritage Breeds

In the food world today we often eat one breed of beef, one breed of pork, one breed of chicken, just as we have one variety of corn or tomatoes or soy beans. This lack of diversity in breeds and plant varieties is dangerous to the future of our food supply. Most of these animals and plants have been bred for characteristics that are attractive in mass production farms and not for the health of the animal or plant, the health benefits of the final food product, or the health of the environment. Breed diversity is something we are committed to working to improve as we strive to focus our efforts on Heritage Breeds that are best suited to living in the Willamette Valley and providing the healthiest meat we can grow.

We have been breeding our beef herd with our Galloway Bull for the past two years and the first Galloway Beef will be available to purchase this Spring. Galloways are the cattle that were used by settlers traveling to the Northwest on the Oregon Trail. They are ideally suited for our climate and environment here in the Willamette Valley with their shaggy winter coats and stocky frames.

Our Red Wattle Pigs are great foragers, plowing up fields looking for roots to eat and cleaning the acorns from under the oak trees. Our first pork from our red wattles will be available this summer.

La Belle Rouge Chickens are a variety of meat chickens that actually have the ability to live long enough to breed and hatch chicks. By raising La Belle Rouge and other heritage breed chickens we are able to help keep hatcheries that focus on these important breeds, in business. Heritage breed chickens such as the La Belle Rouge have fuller flavored meat, and because they are able to continue to move around as mature birds, they are better suited to a farm like ours where they forage on pasture their entire lives. Our La Belle Rouge Chickens are available now in a range of sizes between 3 lbs and 6 lbs.

Farm Visits

We enjoy having visitors at the farm six days a week, Monday through Saturday. Children love to watch our cows in the dairy at chore time begins around 3:30 or 4:00 each afternoon. Come on out to the farm and take a walk around and meet the animals, hike up into the woods, or have a picnic on a pasture. Just check in with someone in the office or the house first, and then enjoy!