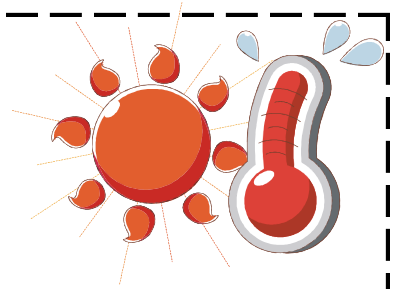


Renaissance Farms Ltd

Emporia, KS 66801 620-343-6757 email: galloway@renfarms.com
<http://www.renfarms.com>

2011: A HEAT ODYSSEY



You probably don't need me to tell you this.... But 2011 really burned us! Mediocre spring rains thankfully got the grasses jump-started, and managed grazing offered some rest to grazed paddocks and stretched that forage chain out a lot further into the season than unmanaged set stocking would have done. But by September things were looking pretty bleak for the pasture, the cattle, and the finances. So the tough decision was made to start selecting mama cows that would have to go. We sent a few through the sale barn, and thankfully cull cow prices were still up. We had to let the bull go as well, as hay was going to be tough to come by, and expensive. In all, we sold off or butchered 9 of our Galloway cows and the bull. We are now pared down to 17 breeding females, plus 30 yearlings and calves. Fortunately the fall 2011 calf crop produced several heifers, so there are some replacements we can raise to production age to begin rebuilding the herd from within as the climate permits.

The good news is that all of the cows did not end up going to slaughter, but 5 of them and 2 heifer calves went to far eastern Kansas as part of a start up grassfed beef operation near Parker. These are females whose demise would have been way premature based on their production history and gentle temperaments!



Along with the pastures burning up, the ponds dried up! All 3 ponds on our 100 acres went dry, as did 1 of the 2 ponds on the leased pasture. The remaining large pond is in desperate need of recharging... by last summer's end I watched a cow walk across it and the upper 1/3 of her stayed dry!

Yikes! In October we began hurriedly installing waterlines and an energy free winter waterer, and approximately 14 hours before we left for California to visit our son, we got connected (See 'Heat' page 4)

ONE TINY CALF

Bawl, bawl, bawl. That was the steady sound on August 20th while I moved electric fencing through a very crunchy paddock. I thought little of it, assuming it was a lazy calf who preferred mom walk to him with the milk instead of the opposite. After 45 minutes or so of tinkering around, I noted the 3 month old bull calf was in the same spot, not really looking to the distance where mom might be, but rather right in front of him. Sigh. Ok, I'll go check him, maybe he's got bad pinkeye (which we had plenty of this year). What he had in his sights, however, was a 20# premature calf that frankly, even as close as 20 yards, resembled a dried cow pie. As I walked up on it I thought it to be dead, when suddenly she blinked two big eyes at me and weakly raised her tiny head.



I knew immediately who the villainous dam was, a high strung, first calf heifer, not due until the fall. By the looks of the extremely dried and crispy umbilical cord, the calf was born the day before (which means it was 105 degrees the day she was born). This little calf had spirit, and loads of it. Mom had cleaned and dried her, but as the events unfolded, it became clear she had not let the little heifer calf nurse, nor was she about to. After 30 minutes of trying to bait mom into the corral to be caught in the squeeze chute, where I intended to teach her to let the calf nurse, it became clear that A), Mom was NOT going into that corral (she was corral-phobic) and B), the little preemie calf was beginning to fade from the exertion of being asked to stand, of being carried and jostled. Her little bones felt so fragile. She began to bleed from the nostrils, and she was getting limp(er). So into the truck she went, and home to the little white (one time) chicken shed with the fence around it. For 3 days we fed her electrolytes, fake colostrum and finally milk replacer, using a tiny lamb tubing feeder - kind of 'direct deposit' style of nutrition.



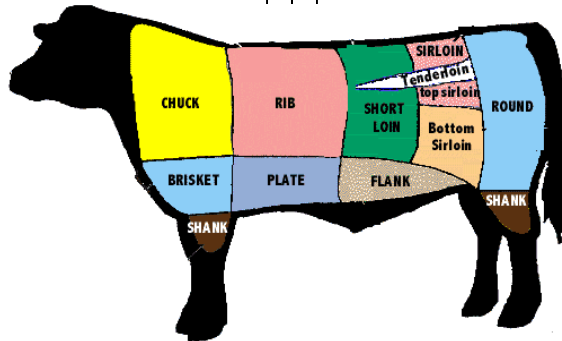
After 3 days of being tubed, we tried her again with the lamb nipple on a pop bottle, and to our delight, she sucked on it, and nursed down 3 ounces of milk replacer. Soon after, we began purchasing goat milk from a friend who had extra, and Babycakes, as we began calling her, (even though we had

BEEF BY THE SIDE: WHAT WE HAVE

Yes! It is time to begin thinking about your 2012 beef needs! We have several steers available for this year.

Next year will be radically different, supply-wise. The cattle market has gone crazy, and our steers are nearly worth more at the sale barn than our hanging weight price be-

cause of the weights we typically butcher at. We have to be mindful of expenses, and hay will be tight and expensive again this year. We are trying to keep a lid on your costs too, by being prudent grass managers and utilizing efficient grazing cattle. So for orders placed before June 1, 2012, the price is set at \$2.90 per pound hanging weight, plus the processing, which runs 55 cents per pound hanging weight, plus \$22.50 for the slaughter fee on a side. **Want easy math?** Hanging weight X \$3.45 (plus sales tax.... don't tell me, tell the state), plus \$22.50. This group of steers is the first full set out of the bull we just sold off, and they are running a bit larger. We will still be able to secure some smaller sides for those of you with small family size, but for (See 'Sides' pg 5)



BEEF BY THE SIDE: WHAT YOU GET

When you purchase a side of 100% grassfed Galloway beef by Renaissance Farms Ltd, here's what you get: **Experience.**

We have been working on grassfed beef production since 1998...long before it was fashionable. We have counseled numerous startup producers, hosted two national conferences in Nebraska, and continue to offer guidance and pasture tours to aspiring grassfed beef producers. - because we want grassfed beef to succeed, and the learning curve is steep.

You get beef from animals that live their entire lives on pasture, never in confinement, never implanted with or fed growth promoting hormones.

Optimal Dry Aging: Olpe Locker works with us to allow our beeves to dry age longer. Most plants age your beef for 10 to 13 days, but grassfed beef behaves differently, and maximum aging potential peaks out well into the 2nd week. Typically we request the cut/wrap to commence on day 18 or 19 of aging.

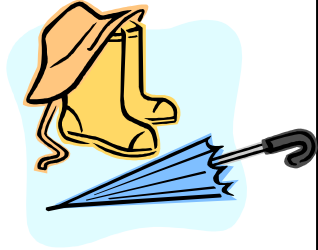
You also get a leaner beef, with a higher percentage of your hanging weight going into packages and not the cutting room floor as waste fat.

We are committed to producing not just healthy beef, but a high quality grassfed beef. And don't forget to visit our Cooking Tips on the *Recipe* page of our website!

Heat, continued

The net effect of the drought, even after downsizing the herd, was the purchase of twice as much hay as normal, and at nearly twice the price. We expect hay to be in short supply again this year, and are making plans to plant cowpeas, which are 🙄 somewhat drought tolerant, and broadcast Korean lespedeza over most of our acres.

We attended the annual Kansas Graziers Conference in January, and the whole program was on drought mitigation. The state climatologist said that the models right now are pointing to rains returning midsummer, which unfortunately is after the time frame that most pasture grasses produce quality grass. Mid summer is the time grasses start thinking about reproduction, so rains at that time will mostly go into making seed heads.... Not so great for a grazing operation! If we do get some rains in the early part of spring, that could be really good news! We'll be keeping an eye to the sky as we blow the dust out of the rain gage.



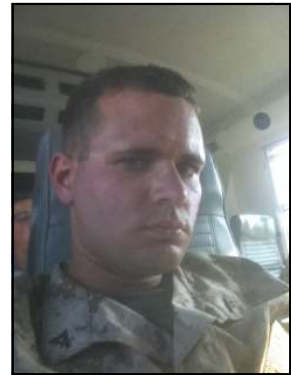
TWENTY NINE PALMS

We squeezed in a quick trip to southern CA in October to grab a visit with our son, who is stationed at the Marine Corps base at Twenty Nine Palms, CA. But when I say Southern California... I'm not talking about what you're thinking about! Instead of Mediterranean climate, sandy beaches, maybe even a light jacket... think desert rat! This is high desert, hot, sandy, and probably '29 palms' is an exaggeration for tourism propaganda!

We hadn't seen Ethan since we watched him board a plane to return to base on January 1, 2011, so the weekend was a real treat for us, just to spend relaxed time touring around the Palm Springs/Palm Desert area and learning more about what life is like in the Marine Corps. We took the tram that ascends nearly 6,000 feet from the valley floor up to the San Jacinto Mountain State Park, elevation 8516 ft, where the weather was a *delightful* reprieve from the scorching temps down in the valley, and spent the better part of a day up there hiking along little trails and just taking in the beautiful scenery.

With the water and cattle issues at home, making the trip happen was a real challenge, but one we were doubly thrilled to have made when subsequently his Christmas leave was cancelled on short notice!

(continues page 5)



A self portrait of Ethan on a return trip from a long week in the field!



Ethan and fellow Marines giving the camera their best 'tough guys' routine in the back of their Amphibious Assault Vehicle.

(29 Palms, continued from pg 4)

One thing we have learned about the Marine Corps... theirs is truly a Spartan lifestyle! We met several of Ethan's buds when we returned him to his barracks on Sunday afternoon (because, he said, "I need to get my laundry done." Wow.) What a great group of young men... fun loving and with a camaraderie that is palpable.

Semper Fi, Marines.

EMPTY NEST?

It may be here before we are ready for it! Daughter Mattie, who has been Judy's top cowhand for years, is a senior this year, and is in the process of submitting paperwork and medical records to the Air Force! Needless to say, we are very proud of her desire to serve her country in this way. She is interested in hands on work, such as helicopter or jet engine mechanic. She has Bill's mechanical aptitude, and is an excellent three dimensional problem solver. She also has an interest in photography, which believe it or not, is a specialty in the Air Force, but the recruiter has indicated those slots come open very rarely.

So for now, we are just enjoying her senior year with her, and watching her blossom into a delightful young woman.



Mattie with her favorite 'kid', Lance.

("Sides", continued) those with larger families who have preferred to take home more meat at a time... we can better meet that need. We expect sides to average in the 275# to 325# range.

2011 IN PICTURES



Left: January 2011
Denver Stock Show, in
the Yards

Right: My office one
early morning in Feb!



March: 2 chilled newborn goats warming up in the kitchen. Left: Fire time!



April: How long does it take to do spring cleaning on a 130# Great Pyrenees?



June: Grass is still great for the steers and bulls.



July: Rocky Mountain escape!



Sept 11, 2011



October: The Water Project



One Tiny Calf, continued from pg 2 named her Cocoabean), began receiving bottles 4 times daily, mixtures of half milk replacer, half goat milk.



During the first couple of weeks she was home, the extremely high heat meant we cooled her down once or twice a day with a bucket of water, as newborns, and especially preemies, are not well equipped to regulate body temperature.

Every 6 hours for several weeks, Babycakes received her milk through the lamb nipple, and along the way she graduated to bigger bottles, from the 20 ounce pop bottle to a 1 liter water bottle to a 1.5 litre Fiji bottled water bottle, (purchased just for her: the square geometry, we discovered, helped prevent complete bottle collapse as she zealously inhaled her feedings!)

Finally, she graduated to a regular calf bottle and regular calf nipple, and happily consumed a gallon of milk per day.

And she grew. Slowly at first. We weighed her every week to 10 days, celebrating even her miniscule gains. After a couple of months, she was gaining well and filled out nicely, so we began offering her grain, knowing that milk feedings must one day come to an end. She laughed at us and demanded more milk! Spoiled girl. But eventually we began to decrease her milk offering, timing it to the projected end of the goat milk supply, and with time located a calf feed that she found acceptable. By



Thanksgiving she weighed 124#, and weighing her obviously now required the livestock scale. By New Year's Eve, 210#, and completely off of milk. And as of January 26th, 262#.

Along the way, we began putting Babycakes in the pasture with the goats and guard dog, Atticus, during the day, returning her to her lair in late afternoon. She has taught Atticus how to play baby calf games, such as pushing heads with each other. And he has taught her how to be a guardian, how to run to the fence by the road when bikers or joggers pass by. We are relieved



Babycakes meets goats!

Heat Odyssey, cont from pg 1

up to the rural water system. Phew... that was close!

In April 2011 we had a neighbor drill in a mixture of turnips, kale, Korean lespedeza and annual rye grass into our existing pastures, but the weather pretty much stomped the project, and we saw no return on that investment! This year we will drill in some heat tolerant warm season annuals, including cowpeas and buckwheat, to help build up a forage supply for the cattle. In the meantime, if you are a praying sort, there are thousands of producers from here to the south of Texas who covet your prayers for rain!

As always, thank you for partnering with us in this endeavor. You are the reason we do what we do. We strive to produce the finest grassfed beef available. The process is part science, part art, with some strange sort of synergy involved. We value your feedback. Judy is on hand for the processing of every beef, and evaluates overall meat quality, tenderness and fat content... but you are the end consumer! Only you can evaluate the whole eating experience. If you have questions or concerns, contact us! And as we like to say:

“If you like your beef, tell a friend. If you don’t, tell us!”

(Tiny Calf, continued from pg 7)

that she still bawls, and does not bark.

So what’s in Babycakes future here at Renaissance Farms Ltd? You can bet it won’t be on anybody’s dinner plate :) We sure hope that one day she’ll be a fine mother to her own baby calf, hopefully the mother she never had!



DO YOU FACEBOOK?



We do! And we sure appreciate you sharing our Renaissance Farms Ltd Facebook page with your FB friends. Social networking is playing a bigger role with each passing year in getting the word out about grassfed beef and the Local Foods Movement. Thanks!