



Princess Beef Newsletter

WINTER 2008

★ HOUSEWEART/ALLEN RANCHES ★

The cows residing on the Allen Ranch had a WONDERFUL fall eating some of the tall thick, alfalfa, grass pastures that were never cut for hay last season. After a summer and fall of being intensively managed and grouped together by electric fences (to keep them on fresh, lush pastures and to protect the land from overgrazing,) the herd now has fuller access to the Allen's 1700 acres of pastures as well as sagebrush, juniper and pinon areas. In the dormant or slow growing season for the fields, the cows and Allen's goat herd are turned out into large pastures where they forage through the snow. In January we started feeding additional hay raised last summer on the ranch.

We weaned in January, a few months later than most ranchers do. We believe it benefits the calves to be with the mother cows a bit longer. By January the calves are getting most of their nutrients from pasture and hay rather than their mothers. We separate the calves from the cows so that they can still see each other through a fence. It is a nice way that helps eliminate some of the stress of not being able to nurse. Right now these yearling calves and the cows are back in one herd. It is less labor intensive to feed hay to one group as opposed to two. We'll separate the yearlings and cows again once we start calving in March. We don't want a yearling calf taking advantage of its mother producing milk.

There are so many factors that one must take into account while ranch-

Hello,

It has been nine years since Princess Beef started. That first year we raised beef for four families. This past year we sold to 58 families. We are happy and proud to report that we have received more compliments than ever. My friend Rachel, who with husband, Steve, owns the Allen Ranch where the Princess herd lives, suggested I share some of these comments with you. She has coined this new section of my newsletter "Consumable Reports".

Lately grass fed beef has been getting more and more recognition. The USDA has just developed a label for producers to mark their beef as grass finished. However, a serious problem is the fact that the label is voluntary and anyone can mark their product with it. The label also has loopholes that allow supplementation of non-forage feed such as grain, long term confinement of the animals, and use of artificial hormones and antibiotics. (More information on this can be found on the web at www.americangrassfed.org).

It continues to be more and more important to know where and how food is raised and how it is processed. Princess Beef is not going to pay the USDA fee for this new, optional label. However, we do assure our customers that they are purchasing organic, grass fed and finished beef. No supplements, hormones or antibiotics are used on Princess animals and there are no herbicides or pesticides used at the Allen Ranch. I have shared my philosophy with all of my customers and I encourage you to see the Allen Ranch and the Princess herd. If you are interested, let me know and I'll make arrangements.

I am very excited about the upcoming year. The calves are the best we've raised to date. Every one of them is a son or daughter to Mr. Grassy, our Black Angus bull we bought specifically for producing calves that finish well on pasture. We have started this year with a great deal of moisture and it looks like we'll have an excellent irrigation season. Good irrigation equates to prime pasture for the Princess animals to graze.

I hope you all are enjoying your beef! If you have any questions, comments, or a recipe I can add to our web site please let me know!

Enjoy,
Cynthia Houseweart



The Housewearts (Cynthia, CeCe, Ira & Izzi)

ing. Weather, pasture plants, the way the animals are handled all contribute to its health. Sadly, we lost three Princess calves this year. Two died last summer, possibly from bloating on young alfalfa that was too rich for their systems. The third died right after being weaned this January, perhaps from additional stress caused by the cold. Death loss always is disheartening to me.

It is at times like these that I wonder what we are doing ranching. But then I remember that producing grass-finished beef really is doing something positive for the planet. Using the animals to improve the land and raising healthy animals that in turn create a healthy alternative to industrial beef makes the stress worthwhile. Plus this is one of the few professions our whole family can enjoy together. Checking on the herd at the Allen Ranch is something Ira and I love to do with our two little girls, Izzi and CeCe.

Here at the Houseweart Ranch, we are enjoying a bit of quiet winter time. We had a busy summer and fall full of projects. The chickens we started from chicks last March turned out to be fabulous egg layers and we have not only had enough to feed our family but we give farm fresh eggs to our friends as well. Izzi and

CeCe love collecting the eggs into old Easter baskets. Izzi has become quite good at picking up chickens for hugging. Her favorite is a black fuzzy Silke chicken she calls "Blackie".

Our little vegetable garden was a learning experience for me but turned out great for the girls. For example, we had more cherry tomatoes than we could possibly eat, but because of this, the girls and their friends were given free reign to tromp through them and pick all they wanted. It was a true "hands on" experience in knowing where vegetables come from. We also had so many pumpkins and squash we made happy fall decorations and have been feeding our chickens with them all winter.



A sampling of our harvest creations

Our big project was adding a master bedroom and bath to our little home. Thankfully the job was finished before the snow fell. We now are feeling quite extravagant in what has become a wonderful 1500 square foot house.

Our projects are never ending. For spring and summer we are hoping to continue fixing up sections of our corral with drill stem. Also, we want to build a three-sided calving barn and enlarge our chicken area to allow the birds more access to grass and bugs.



OILY FOOD

Americans put almost as much fossil fuel into our refrigerators as our cars. We're consuming about 400 gallons of oil a year per citizen-about 17 percent of our nation's energy use-for agriculture, a close second to our vehicular use. Tractors, combines, harvesters, irrigation, sprayers, tillers, balers, and other equipment all use petroleum. Even bigger gas guzzlers on the farm are not the machines, but the so-called inputs. Synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides use oil and natural gas as their starting materials, and in their manufacturing. More than a quarter of all farming energy goes into synthetic fertilizers.

But getting the crop from seed to harvest takes only one-fifth of the total oil used for our food. The lion's share is consumed during the trip from the farm to your plate. Each food item in a typical U.S. meal has traveled an average of 1,500 miles. In addition to direct transport, other fuel-thirsty steps include processing (drying, milling, cutting, sorting, baking), packaging, warehousing, and refrigeration. Energy calories consumed by production, packaging, and shipping far outweigh the energy calories we receive from the food.

A quick way to improve food-related fuel economy would be to buy a quart of motor oil and drink it. More palatable options are available. If every

U.S. citizen ate just one meal a week (any meal) composed of locally and organically raised meats and produce, we would reduce our country's oil consumption by over 1.1 million barrels of oil every week. That's not gallons, but barrels. Small changes in buying habits can make big differences. Becoming a less energy-dependent nation may just need to start with a good breakfast.

— Steven L. Hopp, in Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle A Year of Food Life*.

★ ————— ★ **GRASS-FED BEEF**

In the past I have written about CLA in grass-fed beef, but I thought I would again talk about it because of two comments I had regarding the fatness of the beef.

CLA or Conjugated Linoleic Acid is a newly discovered "good" fat found in ruminant animals. When these animals are raised exclusively on grass, their meat and dairy products contain 2-5 times more CLA than animals raised on large amounts of grain.

To date, CLA research shows promise of helping fight both cancer and cardiovascular disease. In the *The Stockman Grassfarmer* magazine this month, the editor Allan Nation wrote, "It is my belief that we should get off the lean hamburger kick and sell a 70/30 high-fat "gourmet" hamburger. Remember, the CLA is in the fat. Not in the lean." Although I am going to stick to my 90% lean unless a customer has a special request, it is a thought worthy of contemplating. Look up more info on CLA research and results at <http://eatwild.com/references.html#fattyacids>.

★ ————— ★ **CONSUMABLE REPORTS**

"We want to convey our sincere thanks to you for your dedication and love of what you do for the community here. We had the first rib-eyes and NY strips for X-Mas dinner. That was the most delicious meat I have ever eaten, and I've been to some



RECIPE – THE COOKING OF A BRISKET AT 200 DEGREES FOR 24 HOURS

(contributed by Mickey Smith)

Season to taste (I "baste" the raw meat with toasted sesame oil, season and then set the seasoning with olive oil spray.)

(Optional) Smoke brisket for four to six hours

Put it into the oven for another 18-20 hours at 200 degrees

The oven part requires the brisket to be wrapped (sometimes double wrapped), placed in a pan and voila....perfecto grande upon the ceremonial unwrapping. This produced the kind of brisket that you can peel apart with a fork.

Of course...one doesn't have to smoke it...just season to taste, wrap in foil and pop in the oven for 24 hours at 200 degrees. The way to do this is start smoking at 3:00 in the afternoon and then put it in the oven at 7:00 p.m. or 9:00 p.m. depending on how long you want to smoke. The meat will cook overnight and into the next day. On newer stoves, be sure to check the oven after 12 hours because many newer models automatically turn off after 12 hours. If you don't want to smoke the meat, just put it in the oven at 6:00 p.m.

We've had great luck with the slow cooking process. I'll even do it once in awhile with a big roast. In the summer I'll smoke it for a few hours, wrap it in foil and cook it another 6 or so hours. It's always fantastic.

To go along with this I cut up a potato or two, an onion, and some carrots...spray or drizzle with olive oil, wrap in foil and let'er cook in the oven during the last 6 or 8 hours the brisket is cooking. It's always fantastic.

fancy beef joints from NY to San Francisco. Awesome — even better than last year, when I thought I'd died and gone to heaven!!"

— Hugh - Crawford, CO

"We appreciate the wonderful work and the great beef you provide (the recipes and news updates are great too)!"

— Sharon - Rigby, ID

"Gordie and I just finished another great dinner of Princess Beef and want to let you know how much we appreciate you. We've been buying

your beef for 4 years now — this is the BEST. Good for our health and good for the environment."

— Cheryl - Montrose, CO

"We decided we needed to write again to tell you how great our Princess Beef is this year! All the meat is "lovely" and has fabulous flavor. The steak is big, thick and juicy like the days of yore."

— Mick - Crawford, CO

"The beef this year is as good as ever. The steaks are thicker and better than we've had before!

Deeeelicious! Wish there were more of them. Thanks so much for doing what you do, it certainly makes our lives a notch higher."

— Carl and Gretta – Louisville, CO

WILDLIFE



We saw something amazing in January just outside our front door! Ira spotted a very tiny owl. After Izzi (our four year old) grabbed the bird book and found the owl section by herself, we figured it to be a Saw-whet owl. Nobody from around here

whom I have talked to has seen one before.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

This year we took all the Princess Beef animals to Mountain Meat Packing in Fruita, Colorado. We simply outgrew our small butcher plant in Crawford. Mountain Meat Packing is privately owned. Also it is U.S.D.A. inspected and large enough to process more of my animals at one time. This is especially helpful for both my larger local and Denver deliveries. Mountain Meat Packing dry ages the meat for 21 days as I request and has done an excellent job with all the cuts. If you have any specific or different processing requests, please let me know.

In 2007 our beef averaged 546 pounds hanging weight per animal. At \$2.75 per pound hanging weight, the cost was approximately \$375.00 for a split quarter. Due to continued increased costs, this year our price

is increasing 25 cents to \$3.00 a pound. A split quarter will average \$409.00. This makes the actual price of meat about \$5.50 per pound which is for the finest steaks as well as the finest hamburger.

WEBSITES

Princessbeef.com
Eatwild.com
Grassfedcooking.com
Vogaco.org (lists local sustainable, organic growers)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact:
Cynthia Houseweart
32282 J Road
Hotchkiss, CO 81419
970-872-2144
CynthRanch@aol.com

THANKS TO:

Karen Smith, Editor
Cassi Cooper, Graphic Design



Cynthia Houseweart
32282 J. Road
Hotchkiss, CO 81419