



Princess Beef Newsletter

WINTER 2010

HOUSEWEART/ALLEN RANCHES

Our fall season was busy taking the animals to the butcher and getting all the deliveries organized and completed. Our big delivery days were stressful but fun. I really appreciate how everyone comes on time and gets to visit with like minded customers! As organic fruit farmer and Princess Beef customer, Wink Davis of Hotchkiss, aptly wrote in his Mesa Winds Farm blog, "This yearly occasion is a great social event as well as a nutritional one."

This season we weaned the calves at the end of October. We felt that our January weaning was putting too much stress on the mother cows' bodies. We decided that they needed to put their extra calorie intake into their last trimester of pregnancy instead of milk production. We also wanted to wean while they were still on pasture before feeding hay. Steve



Just in time for the newsletter...
our first little calf of the year!

Hello,

Our tenth year of producing grass-finished beef was a success. We again sold out in August and fed 75 families.

Grass-finished beef has been getting a lot of attention lately. In a recent issue of Prevention magazine Anne Underwood wrote an article titled "7 Foods that should never cross your lips." One of those was corn fed beef. She explains that cattle evolved to eat grass, not grains and that one should seek out grass-finished beef as an alternative.

Oprah had a show on January 27th called Food 101. One of the guests was best selling author Michael Pollan who explained that when he does eat meat, he chooses grass-fed beef.

With a growing interest in eating a more healthy diet (Oprah has 25 million viewers,) I believe grass-finished beef will become easier to find. Still it's good to be aware that labels, even on organic products, often don't tell the whole story. Not all organic beef is both grass-fed and grass-finished. In essence you can't beat buying directly from the producer.

You are welcome to visit the Princess Beef herd any time of the year. You will *always* see the animals out on pasture eating *only* grass and hay. Remember not only are they grass-fed and finished, but also they are raised with no anti-biotics, hormones, pesticides, or chemical fertilizers.

Enjoy,
Cynthia Housewart

Allen built a wonderful electric fence and we weaned the calves from their mothers but let them be right next to each other across the

fence. Rachel Allen reported that there really wasn't much mooing from either side. This meant the weaning separation was far less

stressful for both the mother cows and the calves. They stood looking at each other for a bit and then went on to eat pasture.

After all the cows stopped producing milk, we merged all the animals back into one herd. They spent the rest of fall and early winter in the Allens' far west field. It had not been cut for hay and, therefore, was abundant with rich pasture for grazing. Since the end of January, Steve has been feeding hay. We are monitoring the cows' body fat which seems better with our fall weaning. They should be in prime condition when they start calving March 11th!

Our plan is to bring our cows that have never had a calf down to our place to make sure they can calve on their own. We'll keep them close to a corral in case they need assistance. The cows that have had successful births we leave at the Allen Ranch. The Allen Ranch is a wonderful place for cows to calve with all the draws and cedar trees that offer protection from bad weather. The nice thing about calving in March and April is that the storms that we do get usually don't last long and snows melts quickly with longer sunny days.

Here at the Houseweart Ranch we are enjoying the remaining

shorter days of winter with their slower pace. Our girls are now old enough to enjoy playing board and card games and love being read to.

Last fall we cleaned up some of the old machinery piles and built a new pen for our miniature horse, Misty, and Baby Goat, who is now three years old.

With the completion of the new pen we were able to take six sheep from Steve Allen's dog training flock and put them in the old goat pen. I have enjoyed working the sheep with our one year old border collie, Rex. I have miles to go before I could ever enter him in a dog trial, but my hope is to make him into a reliable dog for working with the cows.

We also tried to add a pair of geese to our animal family. They had been dumped by their previous owner and Ira took pity on them. After naming them Lander Gander and Lucy Goosey we put them in with our chickens and ducks. They warmed right up to the birds but made me hide behind the tree and run for cover. Needless to say, they have been moved to a home that has more patience for the hissing and charging of very large birds.

With spring fast approaching, Ira and I are looking into some different methods of irrigating our fields. With both time and water becoming more precious, we are considering replacing some of our flood irrigated fields with a more efficient pivot sprinkler. Having helped operate the Allen's sprinklers for years, I know the potential of having better pastures that comes with a big sprinkler. At the moment the system design and financial planning are a bit overwhelming.



GRASS-FED BEEF

The Allen Ranch uses a technique called "holistic management" on all aspects of the ranch operation. It involves forming a goal as a "whole" and continually looking back at it to make decisions. Everyone involved in the ranch takes part in setting this goal. When problems or questions arise on the ranch, you decide what technique you will use to solve these problems and then go back to the goal to see if it complies with it. If it does not, you should find an alternative.

While cleaning off some of my bookshelves this winter, I ran across the Allen Ranch quality of life goal we formed in 1998.

I enjoyed revisiting it, and feel that it still applies to Princess Beef.

ALLEN RANCH QUALITY OF LIFE

We want to wake up in the morning with a zest for life, looking forward to the day's activities. We want to enjoy working outside, with others that enjoy what they are doing, in an area that is beautiful and isolated yet wel-



Winter time and eating hay in the far west field.

RECIPE – SLOW-COOKED GRASS-FED RUMP ROAST

(Mark U. Sturges in the March 2010 issue of Acres magazine)

- 1 Princess Beef rump roast
- 1 Tbs. coconut oil
- 1 large leek, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 bottle Pinot, Cabernet or Merlot (your choice)
- 1 quart canned tomatoes
- 5 carrots, cut into 2-inch chunks
- 5 medium beets, quartered
- 5 medium potatoes, halved
- 1 large stalk kale, chopped
- 2 leaves sage
- Sea salt & pepper

It is best to use organic vegetables. I turn on my crock pot and let it warm up while I sauté my garlic, leeks and onions in the coconut oil in a cast-iron pan. Saute these ingredients for about 10 minutes.

Put the garlic, leek and onion sauté into the cooker and add the roast. Once the rump roast is in, add the bottle of wine. Next, add the tomatoes, liquid and all. Turn the cooker on high and cook 4 to 5 hours, until your meat is fork-tender.

Check it after about three hours, which is when I turn the meat over.

For the last two hours of cooking add the beets, potatoes and carrots. In the last half hour add the kale.
Salt and pepper to taste.

coming for family and friends. We want to work with the land in a nourishing manner making a healthier environment for both plants and animals. We enjoy the freedom, independence and responsibilities for the decisions we make. We want to create this lifestyle while providing security for the future and time for individual pursuits such as recreation, travel and education. We

will accomplish this with honesty and patience toward ourselves and those around us.

Princess Beef, which began in 1999, was a result of forming this goal. The Allens had given me Princess, my first cow, in 1996. Her first two calves in 1996 and 1997 were female and I kept them for the start of my herd. Then in 1998 Princess had a male

calf and I had to decide what to do with it. I could send it to a feedlot but that did not fit with the quality of life goal we had set for the ranch. How does putting an animal in a feedlot make a healthier environment for the plants on the ranch? I knew with proper management we could improve the soil and plants with animal impact. For one example, a pile of manure applied naturally could act as a fertilizer as opposed to manure concentrated in a feedlot that becomes a problem to get rid of. How did putting an animal in a feedlot satisfy our goal to raise a healthier animal? When animals are raised in stressful, close quarters, disease spreads quickly. Antibiotics are used to keep animals alive until slaughter. Still, could selling an animal conventionally through a commodity market be more sustainable for me? I researched this financial aspect and determined I could make \$300.00 profit on selling this calf at the sales barn in the fall. Or I could keep it, carefully raise it on the ranch until the following fall of 1999 and market it directly to consumers for a \$600.00 profit. I had my answer and Steve and Rachel agreed. Grass-finished beef, marketed honestly and directly to the consumer was a good business decision that would result in healthier animals and improve the Allen Ranch land.

MORE COOKING INFO

I had an excellent suggestion this year for our recipe section on the web site. It requested that I put a description of the different cuts that come with the standard beef order and then suggest recipes to go with each. I am working on

that and it will be posted on www.princessbeef.com soon!

*Don't forget to check out info@grassfedcooking.com for EXCELLENT cooking advice. You can get on their mailing list and receive great recipes every couple of months.

COWBOY LOGIC

*Always drink upstream
from the herd.*

WILDLIFE

We have two common wild life sights as we drive from Hotchkiss up to Fruitland Mesa and the Allen Ranch. The bald eagles in the bare cottonwoods along the road and the elk that come down

from the mountains in winter to feed on the lower elevation pastures. When we are lucky, we must stop on the road while the elk cross right in front of us.

OF SPECIAL NOTE

Our 2010 price will be the same as 2009- \$3.00 per pound hanging weight. In 2009 our beef averaged 532 pounds hanging weight per animal. The cost was approximately \$800.00 for a half. It should be about the same this year.

Remember there is a \$100.00 deposit required on all orders. You are welcome to make additional payments in order to reduce the final amount due when you pick up your beef.

I will be mailing the latest bro-

chure and order form in May, but you may print one off the web site and send it to me at any time.

WEBSITES

Princessbeef.com
Eatwild.com
Grassfedcooking.com
Vogaco.org

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