

2024 GREETINGS



"Life isn't a matter of milestones, but of moments."

– Rose Kennedy

Enjoy,
Cynthia, Ira, Izzi and CeCe

REFLECTIONS ON 2023 RANCH LIFE

We had a successful 25th year of direct marketing. Over 100 families' freezers were filled with 100% grassfed and finished beef!



We had a great year for lush pastures and hay production because of all the snow we received last winter. The snow, which melts and becomes our irrigation water, lasted this past year from the middle of April through September. We were able to cut and bale over two hundred tons of hay. We should have enough left to give us a hay buffer for a few years when we don't receive as much moisture and are not able to make as much winter feed. We feed the older hay first and bank the newer bales.



Photo Credit: Layna Furze

Our calving season went pretty smoothly although we did have one mama cow give birth to triplet calves, only one that lived. Never on the Houseweart Ranch has this happened before. Google says this occurs 1 time out of 105,000. Our little triplet seen here is doing great.

We lost a sweet friend, Dolores, who passed away at 92 years of age in March. Her place was contiguous to our ranch. We have leased her land for many years. We have harvested hay from it and grazed the Princess Beef herd on it. I enjoyed many summer evenings talking with Dolores at her kitchen table. She originally moved here from Ohio, and she and her family started a dairy here in Hotchkiss. I loved our quiet evenings talking about her childhood and how she and her husband raised their 5 children. It felt pretty quiet last summer when I would go to her place morning and night to move the irrigation water and no one was there at the screen door to talk with.



On a positive note, with one of Dolores' sons advocating for us and with some financial help from family, Ira and I were able to purchase the land and the accompanying old farm house. The courthouse records show that the land we now own was homesteaded as one piece in 1889. In the early 1900s it was split and sold to different families one of which was Ira's great, great grandfather. Over 120 years later, it is all back in one piece. We are extremely thankful to all that made this possible.



Ira's blacksmith business is going strong with a continuous amount of work around our North Fork Valley and in Crested Butte. He once again participated on the Forged in Fire, History Channel show and we are anxious to have it aired so we no longer have to keep the results secret! He does post quite a bit on instagram and facebook. If you are curious, you can find his work on both social media sites by looking up Ira Houseweart.



Izzi completed one year of college at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT and is already in the second half of her sophomore year! She is enjoying her animal science curriculum and for fun plays on the club polo team. She has developed a sweet friendship with an older, recently widowed rancher near the college. She credits that friendship for keeping her at a school so far from home. She rides horses at the ranch nearly everyday and

has breakfast at her "Montana Grandma's" house on Sunday mornings. Izzi spent the past summer in the West Elk Mountains taking guests for horseback rides on a private ranch. She will work this summer at the Smith Fork Ranch, a wilderness guest ranch outside of Crawford. I look forward to her helping around the ranch on her breaks from school. This Christmas break she learned to drive the tractor and operate the feed wagon to feed hay to the cows. Who knows, she may turn into the next "Princess of Princess Beef" and take over the management in years to come.



CeCe finished her junior year strong by being awarded junior class girl of the year. She started her senior year even stronger with positive accolades such as playing baritone sax with Grammy winner Jon Batiste in a street band in Telluride and being crowned homecoming queen. She had a lovely summer training horses (including two of her own) for the horse trainer she has worked with the last five years. She is now in the throes of applying to colleges and scholarships which is a full time job in itself. She continued to participate in cross country and swimming and will start into her final sport of track in the spring.



CARPE DIEM! SEIZE THE DAY!



Izzi and Cece finished off their summer visiting our exchange student from last year, Francesca, in Italy. It was a whirlwind of a tour, visiting Bologna, Venice, Murano, Rome and Florence. They couldn't ask for a better tour guide. Our lovely Francesca liked Colorado so much she is now studying film and photography at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction!



I too got some traveling in by visiting Chicago and the Art Institute (and got to see the American Gothic painting) for a few days with my girlfriends. Quite a change of pace, eating deep dish pizza and taking tours of modern city architecture.

CLOSER TO HOME



The girls and I had one of the prettiest adventures ever at a mountain reservoir in the hills close to us. With the fantastically high level of snowmelt, the aspen trees around the reservoir were flooded and we got to paddle board amongst them.



Copying our 2020 "Covid" Thanksgiving, we once again packed our dinner and rode with horses and mules into a gorgeous desert canyon near us. This time with turkey sandwiches, pumpkin spice smores and a few extra friends.



Lucky to finally get some snow in January, the girls decided instead of going to watch skijoring (pulling a skier or snowboarder with a horse) they would just try it themselves with friends. We all decided that a sled might be safer than skis, and it was more of a slow trot than a run but pretty hilarious nonetheless.



Izzi and CeCe were photographed in 2013 by Trent Davis Bailey when he was working on a photography project about our North Fork Valley. Low and behold, their picture was the first one at the entrance to Trent's photo exhibition at the Denver Art Museum entitled Personal Geographies. It ran from July 2023 through this February. Here, CeCe recreates the image ten years later.

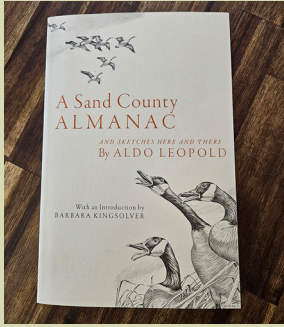


One of the highlights of my year was having lunch with Professor Temple Grandin. Our friend and former intern, Meg, is getting her masters degree in Animal Welfare with Temple Grandin. On a college visit with CeCe to Colorado State University Meg introduced us to her over lunch at the university campus. For those of you unfamiliar with her work, Temple Grandin is a professor and speaker on both autism and animal behavior. She has been instrumental in changing slaughterhouse practices to make them more humane. Her most recently published article and one in which she thought I should share with my customers is titled [Grazing Cattle, Sheep, and Goats are Important Parts of a Sustainable Agricultural Future.](#)

TRACTOR TIME



Farming and Ranching is mostly a solitary job. I love listening to podcasts and stories through my headphones. Some of my favorites that I listened to this year while cutting hay and feeding cows were Legends of the Old West Podcast, Biography of Larry McMurty (he wrote



Lonesome Dove, one of my favorite western shows of all times), Cormac McCarthy's *The Passenger*, and just recently, I listened THREE times to *The Sand County Almanac*

by Aldo Leopold. I listen to quite a variety of things, but the old west, conservation, and country music seem to be my favorites this past year.



"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

—Aldo Leopold

VISITORS AND COW CUDDLING

Here on our ranch we have quite a few friendly cows. I googled cow cuddling just to see what would come up on the internet and was entertained by how many articles have recently been written. Supposedly depression, anxiety and loneliness can all be helped by hugging a cow. Whatever the case, I do enjoy taking friends out to give the cows a hello hug.



My friend Leslie giving some cuddles.

COINAGE, WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Buying directly from us ensures that you know exactly where and how your beef is raised and that every dollar you spend is going directly to a small farming business (and that of a small family processing facility, Mountain Meat in Fruita, CO).

Our 2024 price is \$5.50 hanging weight per pound and this includes the butchering (last year Mountain Meat added a box fee). This is an increase of 25 cents per pound hanging weight which translates to around \$40.00 more a split quarter. My smallest beef weighed 491 pounds hanging and the largest was 767. You need to be prepared for either possibilities as I don't assign names to a particular animal.

The approximate price for a split quarter (based on last year's average hanging weight of 622 pounds) in 2024 will be \$900.00 (+/- \$100); \$1,800.00/half; and \$3,600/whole. This means a price of about \$9.25 a pound for the finished product. Half down is required when placing your order.

WHAT SETS PRINCESS BEEF APART FROM OTHER DIRECT MARKET BEEF OPERATIONS

We are proud of our extremely high standards. These standards include;

- owning the mother cows and not simply buying unrelated calves to raise (called finishing) on grass;
- pasture rotations instead of continuous grazing;
- no antibiotics, no hormones, no GMO feed;
- across-the-fence line-of-sight weaning;
- no branding;
- using a single processing plant (Mountain Meat Packing);
- we raise our beef on a Centennial family ranch; and
- both our animals and our operation are certified through the Animal Welfare Approved label, the American Grassfed Association label, and the Audubon Bird Friendly label.



Izzi, home for Christmas, gives a squeeze to a cow.



My friend Layna from the front range of Colorado says she will come every spring to hug our new baby cows to help them become friendly! Here she is taming a cow named Blaze and our white 2 year old named Allison last spring.

POSTS TO BEEF BOOK

"Thank you all for keeping us to date on the family, all those accomplishments and moves made are impressive!! Your time spent doing things the right way make so many wonderful occasions where the beef is central to our gathering at our home. We love it!"

— Jason, Colo. Spgs.

"Touching base to tell you we are so happy with the beef we've enjoyed from you for the last years. The freezer is beautifully filled with Princess Beef again

and that just makes me happy. Love your animals and your way of doing business. Thank you for providing us with delicious, nutritious, happy beef. We're spoiled and healthy and so grateful!"

— Cheryl, Hotchkiss, CO

"We sure enjoy our Princess Beef in all forms and fashions. We feel mighty blessed to buy our beef from your family-owned small ranch in the North Fork Valley.

— Mary, Grand Junction, CO



Here is our friend, Ira Feinswog, all the way from San Diego giving Cow Cleo a friendly pet.

PRINCESS BEEF IS THANKFUL FOR....



We are thankful for Bill and Betty Houseweart for all of their veterinary care over the years. We are extremely proud that this year Bill was named Veterinarian Of The Year from the Colorado Veterinary Board. Bill received his degree 57 years ago from Colorado State University.



We are thankful for our neighbors Brett and Heidi on their Barker-Berger Farm for allowing us to cut and bale hay off their fields.

We are also thankful for two other close-by neighbors (not pictured), Peter Campbell and the Anglevich Family that allowed us to graze their pastures this fall.



Photo credit: Mountain Meat

We are thankful for Mountain Meat Packing for their eighteen years of butchering and packing our Princess Beef. I recently learned that they have FIVE generations in the butchering business!

“Ultimately, the only wealth that can sustain any community, economy or nation is derived from the photosynthetic process — green plants growing on regenerating soil.”

— Allan Savory

DON'T FEAR THE ROASTS!

Recently while visiting a friend who purchases a quarter of beef every year, I learned she had roasts left from 2021 because she was afraid of cooking them. I took them home and cooked THE BEST shredded beef ever. I think sometimes customers don't realize just how easy it is to cook a roast and how you can cook a bunch, freeze it and pull the meat out for meals later. **EASY PEASY and SUPER tasty!**

Here is a simple recipe from *Eating on a Dime* by Carrie Barnard

- Combine: Beef roast (chuck, rump, brisket, or sirloin), beef broth, steak seasoning (I use Savory Spice's Hudson Bay Beef Spice), and some butter in a crock pot (you can also use a Dutch oven)
- Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours.
- Pull meat out, shred and put back into juice.
- If it's tough, let it cook for longer.

YOU CAN THEN:

- Serve over mashed potatoes- Make a gravy with the juices from the beef
- Serve over noodles
- Serve in tacos or enchiladas
- A Houseweart favorite is to put on steak rolls with swiss cheese for French Dip sandwiches. You can buy au jus mix or make it with beef broth mixed with onion soup mix.

Carrie Barnard has some variation ideas as well:

- Add a packet of ranch seasoning while cooking
- Add in taco seasoning and some lime juice
- Add some tomato sauce or Worcestershire Sauce

Making shredded beef in the crockpot allows you to use it for many different meals. This is the perfect meal to cook once and eat twice! If you are using leftover shredded beef for the week, make sure to store it in an airtight container. Place in the refrigerator and it will last about 3 to 4 days.

You can also place it in a freezer zip lock bag and freeze it. The shredded beef will last 3 to 4 months if frozen properly.

UNSUNG HEROS



I'm giving a shout out to these two ladies, Vicki Halladay and Margaret Stockton. They have given me unwavering encouragement for the last 26 years I've been marketing Princess Beef. Both strong, intelligent women who have always cheered me on the side lines but have not received the recognition or attention that they deserve for keeping my morale up in sustainable ranching.

WEBSITES

PrincessBeef.com

AmericanGrassfed.org

AGreenerWorld.org

Rockies.Audubon.org/Ranching

EatWild.com

ColoradoBlacksmith.com

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