

2026 GREETINGS

Princess Beef

*"Each new season grows from the leftovers from the past.
That is the essence of change, and change is the basic law."*

— Hal Borland

In thinking about what to write in this year's newsletter, I looked back at my old newsletters to gain perspective on what I've accomplished, and what still holds value for myself and Princess Beef.

I began writing these newsletters in the winter of 2001. For me, the photos and writings in them show the passing of time — from the start of Princess Beef, when I was a single cowgirl, up through my current life as an empty nester. On the other end of the spectrum, however, there are threads running throughout all of the newsletters that have never changed: buying directly from small pasture-based ranchers, and knowing where and how your food is raised



is still of utmost importance. It is important to our health, the health of the animal and the health of the environment. Healthy, happy cows not only taste better, but help improve the environment, and sustain the western ranching way of life, which is rapidly disappearing.

This year, facing the reality that I need to make large changes to the way I manage the ranch due to the present and future uncertainty of water reserves, and the return of a daughter planning to start her career in agriculture, I've been slow in writing the news this year. Making big thoughtful decisions this past year as well as preparing for the future has felt, and continues to feel, challenging. A couple things are for sure though: Ira, Cynthia, Izzi and CeCe want to continue the family's legacy of agriculture on a little piece of the earth. We want to remain good stewards of the land and be positive members of the world that we are grateful to be part of.

Sincerely,
Cynthia and Ira, Izzi & CeCe, too!

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 ranching business (and that of a small family meat processing facility, Mountain Meat in Fruita, CO).

This year, due to the ongoing stress of the drought on the land, we have had to cut down on how many animals we market, and must raise how much we charge for beef. We are also separating the butchering cost from the cost of the animal. For 26 years we have been adding that price into the price of purchasing the animal because we felt like that was easier for customers to understand. Unfortunately, there have been many years that our butcher raised

his butchering price AFTER we had set our price. We absorbed the additional costs, but are unable to take that ongoing loss anymore. Going forward, we will initially pay for the butchering cost for each customer out of down deposits. It will be added to the final amount owed to us when delivery is complete.

Our 2026 price is \$5.00 hanging weight per pound for the animal. **THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE BUTCHERING.** Butchering will be a second line item on your receipt. It will show a cost of around \$1.35 hanging weight per pound plus the cost of slaughter which was \$85.00 last year for a whole beef (divide that by 2 or 4 depending on how much you order), plus the cost of the boxes which last year was \$3.00 a box.

"...the care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope."

— The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry

Last year our hanging weight averaged 620 per animal. The biggest animal was 724 pounds hanging weight. You should be prepared for either possibility as I don't assign names to a particular animal.

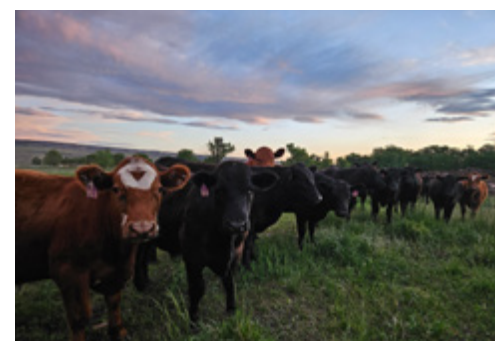
The approximate price for a split quarter (based on last year's average hanging weight of 620 and including processing) in 2026 will be around \$1,000.00 +/- \$250.00. Double that for a half, quadruple for a whole. The down deposit will be \$500 for a quarter, \$1000 for a half and \$2000 for a whole.



WHAT SETS PRINCESS BEEF APART FROM OTHER DIRECT MARKET BEEF OPERATIONS...

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

- owning the mother cows and not simply buying unrelated calves to raise (called finishing) on grass;
- continuous pasture rotations;
- 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.



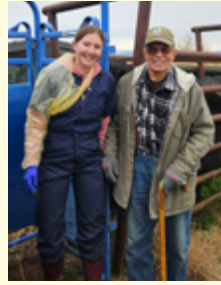
THE NEXT GENERATION



CeCe finished her first year at Colorado State University. Her major is Animal Science with an emphasis on Pre-Veterinarian study. She initially wasn't sure she wanted to go to a large university, but CSU has given her experiences she wouldn't have been able to have anywhere else. Besides her classes, she is a teacher's assistant in Anatomy and Intro to Animal Science classes, works at the Veterinary School preparing animals for teaching labs, and helps a Professor with his research on high altitude pulmonary disease in cattle. She is the treasurer of the College of Agricultural Sciences Council, and she helps in the Sheep Stress Physiology lab. She has to get up early in the morning, draw blood from the sheep, feed them, and watch for problems at lambing time. Last spring she competed in the Animal Science Academic Quadrathalon representing CSU. Her team got 2nd place.

CeCe continues to be a huge help on the ranch. She is great at moving cows on horseback. Additionally, after taking a class at CSU to learn how to check for pregnancy in cows, she was able to check Princess Beef cows! CeCe loves coming home when she

can, and is looking forward to summer where she will spend most of her time training horses with her two mentors. Last summer she trained and rode her own young mustang, Rocky, but also trained two horses for several new clients.



Unlike CeCe who has a few more years of school ahead of her, Izzi is almost done! She is completing her last semester at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. Our entire family, including both sets of grandparents, are excited to make the trip to her graduation ceremony in May. She will have earned her bachelors degree in Animal Science with an emphasis on Ranching Industry and Management. While at MSU, doing a required



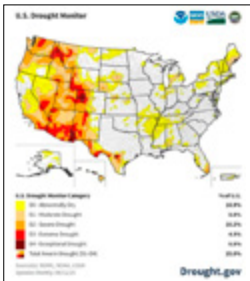
internship at a horse facility, she discovered a love of teaching horseback riding and riding skills. After graduating, Izzi plans to come back to the ranch to learn the skills needed to take over Princess Beef some day, and she would like to start a horse riding

program here on our ranch. It's a little daunting but also exciting to be forward thinking. This is a good time to come up with plans to make both enterprises successful, and to encourage the next generation of Housewearts to begin making decisions regarding the future of the ranch. In the short term, Izzi will continue being a wrangler at the Smithfork Ranch, taking guests for horseback rides, when she comes back in May. It will be her third year working for the dude ranch in the foothills of the West Elk Mountains. It's been a great job for a horse crazy girl!



Speaking of crazy, much to her mother's chagrin (and thanks to her "Montana Grandma", Connie, who loans out her horses, truck and trailer) Izzi is once again participating as the rider in skijoring events in Montana. This year she was able to compete in three different competitions. She tows a very aggressive, excellent skier. Together, they have placed in the top spots and won money at the first two events! Like Colorado, Montana is suffering from lack of snow. All of her competitions so far this year have been run on man-made snow.

DROUGHT



In August of last year Delta County, Colorado was the county listed as having **EXCEPTIONAL** drought. All summer it had been hot and dry and that just accentuated the fact. The uncertain feeling of not

knowing if we were going to have enough water to be able to finish our beef on pasture through September when we took them to the butcher was excruciating. For years I had thought we had the correct number of animals to make it on a drought year but for the first time in my years of ranching, I was not sure. In an average year, with adequate snowfall in the winter, our irrigation water will last from the middle of April to the middle of September. In 2025 our irrigation ended August 11th. With 2026 currently being on track to have the worst snowpack in recorded history, water available for irrigation will be even less this year. Practically speaking, what this means is that our pastures don't grow much after they are grazed or cut for hay. I need pasture through September for



the beef animals and through October for the mother cows and calves before I have to start feeding hay. The less pasture available to graze and irrigate for hay, the more hay I must buy to get the herd through the winter months. We made it, but not without some changes. The fact that we are facing another year of even less moisture will force even more changes.



One of the changes we made was to take half the beef animals to a friend's place to pasture graze for a little over a month. The small ranch we went to is a beautiful place just a couple miles from us. The couple, who have practiced sustainable ranching for years with their herd of Icelandic sheep, wanted to see how adding cows into their grazing rotations would affect their pastures. It has been a positive experience so far, (there were some learning curves on how many animals to take and how soon to take animals there to efficiently graze). We are lined up to graze there again this year. A big THANK YOU to Jim and Diane for sharing their beautiful place with the Princess Beef herd.

Another issue caused by drought is that we are not able to produce enough hay for our horses, mother cows and yearling beef animals. Last year, the land we cut and baled for hay produced only half of what we normally harvest. Adding the remaining bales of hay produced in



2024 with the hay harvested in 2025 it was not enough to last through the 2025 winter season. We needed to buy hay from a custom hay farmer close to us. A shout out goes to the Odle family for having hay so conveniently close to us and for all the help loading it. We know we are facing the same issues again this year.

Hay constantly exposed to the elements lasts around three years and loses nutritional quality every time it rains or snows. Knowing that hay is like "money in the bank" for ranchers, we decided to build a hay barn to protect our investment. We gratefully capitalized on the fact that we have a metal working shop at our house and some incredibly competent and talented helpers that designed and built the hay barn in a little over a month. We are beyond pleased to add that to the family farm assets this past year.



GRAZING IN THE WINTER



Another positive change was being able to graze a neighbor's fifty acres during December and January. These neighbors, who call their place Immunity Farm, have used organic methods since they began building their homestead. They have not only grown organic perennial pastures but also organic wheat. They have cultivated honey bees, a large farmer's market garden, and the whole gamut of farm animals. They had not cut a second cutting of hay and had a lot of growth of perennial plants. We were able to graze the mama cows and not have to feed hay bales for a month and a half. Not feeding hay has allowed us to stock pile more for the coming winter of 2026. Another big shout out to Anne and Steve Ziemer of Immunity Farms for allowing Princess Beef cows to graze on their beautiful pastures.



2025 was a bittersweet year for me. Early in the summer, Rachel Allen, my good friend and ranching mentor passed. Rachel is a reason I became a rancher, and her encouragement and support helped me start Princess Beef. I lived and worked with her and her husband Steve for 12 years after college. When Ira and I got married, we lived another two years on the Allen ranch. Everyday I think about running ideas by her and I still haven't gotten used to the fact that I can't do that anymore.



At the end of the year I lost another good friend who was instrumental in the beginnings of Princess Beef. Karen Maas, who lived close by the Allen ranch, was the editor of my very first newsletters and gave me lots of business advice I still use today. Her passing has also created a quiet void in my life.



With the drought, and scarcity of hay, we had to critically assess all of the animals we were feeding, and make tough choices on which animals to keep. In the end, we had to make the heartbreaking decision to cull four old horses and one old mule who all had issues that were keeping us from riding them and that weren't going to get better. Izzi once said to us, "Don't have an animal's last day be their worst day" and the family agreed it was time to put them down before an emergency forced us to. Each one of us had a horse that meant a great deal to us. Mine was Walapai. Walapai was the first horse I saved up to buy. I bought him from my horse mentor, Margaret, in 1999 and trained him myself. Walapai was a big, kind, sorrel, quarter horse who took me to lots of places in the mountains surrounding us and many, many times around our ranch. I feel very fortunate to have had 26 years of loving on him!

On a happy note, I bought an AWESOME new quarter horse the color of popcorn. Prince is an eleven year old, already trained, dream of a horse. This spring and summer we rode many, many trails in the mountains and numerous times around our ranch. The girls and their exuberance for riding has reignited my passion to explore the world via horseback. I'm looking forward to many new rides this coming year. Coincidentally, this is also the Year of the Horse in the Chinese Zodiac.



2026 is the Year of the Horse

A shift into strength, momentum, And forward movement. Action with purpose. Freedom with direction. So be mindful how you close this year. We are not carrying old energy Into what's meant to run free.

POSTS TO BEEF BOOK

"Thank you guys for working so hard to feed our communities with healthy, happy beef. We appreciate you!"

— Havens, Goods & McFarland family, Cedaredge & Hotchkiss, CO

"The New York Strips were amazing! The flavor has never been so good."

— Barb, Cedaredge, CO

"I cannot believe the quality of your product. We've ordered from multiple different farms over the past 5 years in the area and nothing compares to yours. It is so obvious just by looking at the meat prior to cooking, the texture, and obviously the taste. I can't commend you enough. Thank you so much. Honestly so impressed by you guys."

— Santiago family, Placerville, CO

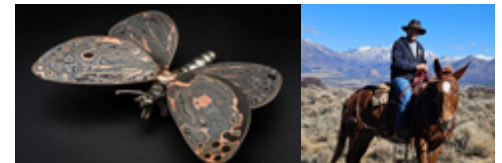
"Thank you for all you do to keep us healthy."

— Stein family, Castle Pines, CO

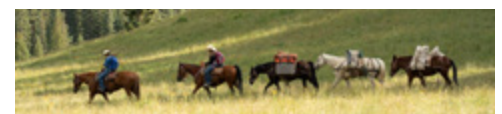
TRACTOR TIME

I really enjoy looking back to see what I listened to during all my alone time in the tractor. For audiobooks, I once again found I really enjoy old westerns. One spring break, Izzi took our horses and rode in the canyons outside of Kanab, Utah. The country she rode in was central to Zane Grey's book *Riders of the Purple Sage*. Her ride sparked my interest in the book and I was thoroughly surprised at how much I enjoyed it. Another old western, *High Wide and Lonesome* by Hal Borland, was on my favorites list. It was an autobiography of Hal's childhood homesteading in Eastern Colorado. Lastly, in the westerns category, I listened to Charles Portis' novel, *True Grit*. When I finished, I immediately watched both the John Wayne and the newer Coen Brothers movies of the same name. Both different from each other but both good. Other books I listened to and really enjoyed were Mark Twain's, *Huck Finn* and Gretel Ehrlich's autobiography, *The Solace of Open Spaces*, about leaving the city and becoming a sheep herder, and ranch hand in Wyoming.

Podcasts are also great for passing the time. I like the Hidden Brain podcast which explores the "unconscious patterns that drive human behavior" and recently discovered the podcast Heavyweight that explores going back to change things that have weighed on a person's conscience.



Ira is consistently busy in his metal working shop producing incredible art. Along with rails and hardware for custom houses, he has created some fantastic public art pieces. One of my favorites is an entrance rail to a bridge across the North Fork of the Gunnison River in Hotchkiss. He sculpted metal scenes that represent the economy in our area- such as fruit trees and gardens, artists, recreationalists, and my favorite, ranchers! I didn't realize, until it was finished, that he made the rancher into a cowgirl (representing his wife and daughters) and the cow with our brand. Although he remains busy he does make time for annual pack trips with the girls into the wilderness areas around us. Those times are highlights in their life where they can escape from the pressures of school and work.



STEAK SALAD

Sent by Nicole Sacchitella - friend and famed caterer of the Forage Sisters (<https://www.foragesisters.com/>)

Steak Marinade

2 pounds of any kind of Princess Beef steak
6 Tbsp tamari
6 Tbsp maple syrup
3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Mix together and marinate steak, ideally overnight. Grill to medium, slice and serve with:

4 cups of greens
1 ½ cups thin sliced cucumbers
½ cup torn mint
½ cup thin sliced red onion

Toss above ingredients with lime juice, tamari, olive oil, honey, and sesame seeds.

Unsung Hero



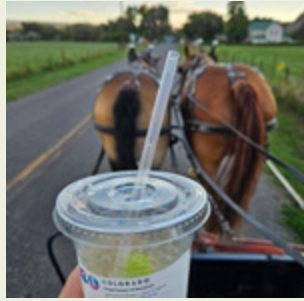
Layna helping put a tag in a new calf's ear so we know who its mama is. We purchased a special "cage" that hooks onto our UTV and allows us to catch and tag calves in the field, safely. (Mom cow can't attack us through the cage.)

I need to give a hearty shout out to our family friend from the front range of Colorado, Layna Furze! She came into our lives when she reached out to visit a ranch (ours) that was animal welfare certified. She came by once, then asked to come a second time and then asked if she could stay a bit and help out. Our family adores her. This past year she was especially helpful when she came out for a week to help with calving and another week to help set up the irrigation system. We have already reached out to have her come help me while I recover from meniscus surgery! I would say my only complaint about Layna is that she is so calm and sweet with the cows, she has turned some of them into ultra friendly, very large pests!

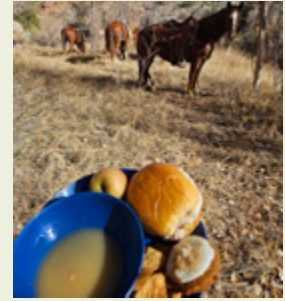
"If you stop buying from a large company it will be unnoticeable. If you start buying from a local farmer they will notice."

— Layna Furze

FUN CLOSE TO HOME



Cynthia drinking a "to go" margarita while taking a carriage ride around the neighborhood with friends



Annual Thanksgiving horseback ride and picnic dinner



CeCe and I helping our neighbors give carriage rides in Georgetown for an annual Christmas fair



Girls riding their horses through a drive through mexican restaurant in Hotchkiss Colorado

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

Thanks to all that play a part in Princess Beef

Bill and Betty Houseweart for veterinary advice and a lifetime of experience on the Houseweart Ranch.

Cody Houseweart for use of his "back field" for the mother cows and calves in the spring when we are preparing our fields for irrigation, and for putting escaped cows back in when they have walk-about out on the road.

Brett Barker and Heidi Berger for their fields we hay and the horse hay bales we buy.

Peter Campbell for his fields we hay and graze.

Jim Firor and Diane Perry for the fields our beef animals graze and all the time it takes for putting up and taking down fences in a rotational grazing system.

Anne and Steve Ziemer for the fields we grazed this past winter.

WEBSITES

PrincessBeef.com

AmericanGrassfed.org

AGreenerWorld.org

Rockies.Audubon.org/Ranching

EatWild.com

ColoradoBlacksmith.com



Barn owl box made by my dad for our new hay barn

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO VISIT PRINCESS BEEF

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MANY THANKS TO

Laura Arciniegas, Editor
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Picture of Princess the cow that Cynthia painted while taking a painting class taught by famed western artist, Peggy Judy.