

Mike and Sally Gale
Chileno Valley Natural Beef and Lamb
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Mytty In Focus-#1 Angus bull in the world

Spring, 2014 Newsletter

Greetings from Chileno Valley:

Spring is here with lots of flowers, trees in bloom, and swallows, but very little grass. The drought of 2013/14 has been the most challenging of the 14 years we have been in business. The entire ranching community especially the dairies that use a lot of water are affected. We received 15% of normal rainfall (about 5 in.) during the entire 2013 calendar year, which resulted in the need to re-assess our business plan. We decided to sell a large number (50) of productive older cows, 60 ewes, and over 100 chickens in order to accommodate the available feed and water. The lower numbers will allow the ranch time to rest and recuperate. The extra expense for having to purchase three extra loads of hay and alfalfa this winter and the development of new water systems is the basis for a slight increase in our price for beef. We believe the purchase of beef locally has many advantages, most notably the knowledge of where your food comes from and value. You may have noticed that the price of beef on the retail market is up substantially due to the reduction of herds all across the West.

The decision a few years ago to introduce the genetics of the bull Mytty in Focus-see above--, through artificial insemination, is starting to have an effect. It should have a positive influence in weaning weight for years.

This is the time we let you know about the availability of beef and lamb for 2014: The cost will remain the same for lamb, \$7.00/lb. However the price for beef has gone up from \$3.00/lb. to \$3.25/lb. This translates into a raise of \$31.25 per quarter on a typical 500 lb. carcass. The cost is based on the "hot," or hanging weight of the carcass. The

hanging weight is the weight of the beef carcass when it comes into the butcher shop and is put into the cooler to age. As the carcass ages, and during the cut and wrap, the weight will shrink about 15%. We believe that this is the fairest way to price the beef.

To start the process of purchasing beef, you need to send us a deposit. The amount of your deposit check continues to be \$350.00/qtr, or \$700.00 for a half or side of beef. You will get an email from us letting you know your confirmation # and an estimate as to when your beef will be ready. When you pick up your beef at Ibleto Meats in Cotati, you will leave Vicky Ibleto the second check to make up the difference between the deposit and the hanging weight, and you will also pay her separately for the cut and wrap. There may be a few cases where we owe you the difference and we can either add some additional hamburger or have a check waiting for you at Ibleto's.

PLEASE NOTE: The deposit is based on the expectation that the hot weight of a typical beef carcass will be around 500 lbs. That weight=500 lbs x \$3.25/lb =\$1625. Added to that figure is \$140.00*, which covers the cost of transporting the animal to Petaluma for harvest and the actual "kill charge," for a total of \$1765. With a deposit of \$1400, --for a whole beef--, the balance due would be \$365.00, or \$91.25/qtr. If the weight is significantly higher, as it was last year for a number of animals, the balance can be substantial. There is a small advantage for the customer in a greater weight, as the fixed cost of \$140 is spread over more take-home lbs.

*The problems with Petaluma's Rancho feeding Corporation-the local slaughterhouse-is affecting everyone in the North Bay cattle business. The business has been sold to a friend of ours, Dave Evans, who plans on reopening the facility by April. I do not have a price for the slaughter fee, but when I learn the new price I will let you know if the \$140.00 fee is still accurate.

Our artisan butchers, Ibleto Meats in Cotati, continue to cut and wrap the old way, with double layered butcher paper. Their cut and wrap fee is \$.88/lb, which is also based on the hanging weight. Vicky Ibleto may be reached at (707) 795-1489 or 545-1054.

Our beef is available from May through October, although last year we continued to fill orders through December, as the rains never arrived. Orders are filled on a first paid basis, except for orders of a whole animal, in which case the customer can tell us exactly when they wish to have the order ready for pick up. We usually sell out by the end of summer.

LAMB: Please send us a note or call us if you wish to be put on the list for the lamb. Because of the drought, we are not breeding the ewes until this summer, with delivery in Spring 2015. There is a down payment requirement of \$100.00 if you are ordering a half, or \$200.00 for a whole lamb. Sally thinks she will have at least 45 lambs for sale NEXT Spring. The price will remain the same: \$7.00 per pound, based on the hanging weight, which has averaged 50-55 lbs.

ORDERING BEEF: As before, you may send your checks to:

Mike and Sally Gale (Check made out to "Gale Livestock")
Chileno Valley Ranch
5105 Chileno Valley Road
Petaluma, Ca. 94952

PLEASE INCLUDE ON YOUR CHECK, OR ON A SEPARATE NOTE, YOUR BEST PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL. I HAVE TO SEND THAT INFORMATION IN WITH THE PAPERWORK TO THE BUTCHER SO THAT THEY CAN CONTACT YOU WHEN YOUR ORDER IS READY.

You will then receive a confirmation email stating that we have received your check, and give you a general idea of when your order will be ready for pick up. The next call you get will be from our butcher, Vicki Ibleto. If you have ordered a split quarter, there is a standard cut (described in the brochure we sent you). If you have ordered more than a split quarter, you will be called and asked how you would like your meat cut. The standard order comes with both heart and liver. Since not all customers want it, it is NOT automatically put into the bags. If you wish these organ meats, please let the butcher know; they will be placed in your take-home bags. Based on experience, please check your bag for the organ meats to make sure they are in there before leaving Ibleto's.

ORDERING LAMB: If you wish to be put on the list for spring '15, you may send a check for either a half --\$100.00 deposit--, or whole--\$200.00 deposit--to:

Sally Gale (Please make out the check to Sally Gale)
5105 Chileno Valley Road
Petaluma, Ca, 94952

U-PICK: We continue to enjoy raising our many varieties of organic apples and pears. We will sell them Sundays only at the ranch between 10 AM and 4 PM as U-Pick. We will be opening Sunday, August 31, 2014 and continue thru Sunday, Oct 26, 2014. You can also purchase ground beef, as well as lamb and pork sausage. We will also offer wild honey from Chileno Valley. Due to the drought, we will not be planting tomatoes this year. Families seem to enjoy being on the ranch, climbing on the hay bales, petting the baby lambs, picnicking, and visiting with the animals, as well as picking apples and pears. Sorry, no dogs are permitted. There is a \$6.00/cover fee per family unless the combined purchases are in excess of \$50.00; in which case the fee is waived.

BUTCHER: Vicky and Mark Ibleto; 707-795-1489 or 545-1054
1492 Lowell St.
Cotati, 94931

Thank you very much for supporting our rural way of life, organic and sustainable agriculture, open space, healthy food, compassionate animal care, enhanced wildlife habitat and healthy local relationships between those who produce and those who consume locally grown food. It really is a partnership. We look forward to our continued friendship and will attempt to offer you the best service we can provide.

As we start our 14th year of selling direct to families, we are grateful for the support and loyalty of our customers.

Thanks.

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PS: If you wish to be taken off this list, just email me. Also, if you know someone who might be interested in receiving an information package, just send his or her name and email. mg