



What the Almanac Says:

- *Best days to go camping in May are the 20th and 21st.*
- *May's temperatures will be about 1 degree above average with slightly above average precipitation.*

Host a 'Green Party' this season

After being cooped up all winter, we know you're just itching to get outside and what better way than to host a barbeque or outdoor party? As you think about the guest list and food choices, think about the other important factors that affect not only your guests but our environment as well.

At NV Ranch we take our commitment to the land seriously. With five kids we can potential generate a lot of garbage, so we try to recycle and re-use as many items as possible and stay away from using items that will only end up sitting indefinitely in a landfill (it takes about 250 years for one plastic cup to decompose in a landfill.). Nothing adds to those items more than hosting a get together, so what can you do to combat the waste?

Use washable items or biodegradable ones.

It's always best to use items that can be reused. Instead of spending money on plastic 'throw away' utensils, cups

and plates that will sit in a landfill, why not use inexpensive reusable alternatives from the local dollar store that come in fun, seasonable patterns? Or, check out stores that carry recycled and/or compostable items. One line is the 'Green Mission' line of products at Whole Foods Market, made from sugar cane fiber and totally compostable.



Go Fresh!

Rather than rely on pre-packaged, processed foods or ones that have been trucked from thousands of miles away, visit the Farmer's Market and pick up the freshest fare you can find for your gathering. Not only will the

items taste better because they've just been picked, but if you choose a supplier that uses no pesticides or herbicides in the production of their food you'll be eating healthier and saving the Earth from having more chemicals dumped into her soil.

Use natural lighting

Schedule your get together to happen during hours when you can party outdoors and take advantage of the natural light source. If your party goes until the wee hours, use beeswax or soy candles for a light source that saves resources and doesn't pollute. Besides, everyone looks good in candlelight!

Spread the word

Tell your party goers what you're doing. Put recycling containers near the trash bins to encourage them to sort. Let them know you planned your party with 'green' resources. They'll take the information with them; when going 'green', the more the merrier!

What's coming up?

Right now we're keeping a close eye on the cool weather crops that will be harvested for our first weeks of the season. These items include green onions/scallions, spinach, mustard greens, lettuce and radishes. We transplanted broccoli and cauliflower seedlings that we started indoors; however, the torrential down-pour of rains may have knocked them out. We did direct sow seeds of those plants and we're keeping an eye out for the seedlings to come up any day now. We're also watching the peas and beets pop up and getting ready to plant the remainder of the plants and seeds—as soon as we're sure the weather will cooperate!

CSA Deliveries begin the week of May 18

For those of you that subscribed to our produce CSA, you'll begin pickups of your items the week of May 18th on your scheduled day and location. You will also have the option at that time to purchase re-usable grocery bags to bring home the harvest each week and for use

in your other shopping. For those that ordered meat or egg shares, your items will be available on the schedule you chose as part of your share. See page two for additional details on schedules and locations.

Keep an eye on the 'This Week's Harvest' page on our website to see what's coming in your produce basket each week. We will also be posting the harvested items that will be available for general purchase at each Farmer's Market.

Pre-order your Holiday Turkey or Goose

How about a farm-raised turkey or goose for your holiday table? We are currently taking pre-orders on our website at a discounted price. Orders must be received by June 1st for Thanksgiving delivery and July 1st for the December holidays, so don't delay!

Website Updates

What's new this month? We're constantly making changes to our website at www.nvranch.info. So, if you haven't checked us out lately, here are some of the items we've added recently.

[This Week's Harvest](#) This new page on our site will give details each week on what we've harvested and what we will be offering at Farmer's Market. The side bar also gives a description of what to expect in that week's produce share for our CSA subscribers.

[For Sale](#) We sometimes have livestock and other farm items for sale and we've created a new page to display their details. This month we've got an added surprise—puppies! We're also featuring the cutest pygmy goat buckling, who's actually smaller than the pups. Even if

you're not in the market for a new animal, check out the pictures. They are oh, so cute.

[Local Orders](#)

The ordering page on our website has



A few of the goats enjoying lunch. Just one of the new pictures we've posted on our website ... check 'em out!

been updated, to include pre-orders for holiday goose and turkey and sides of beef and pork (see story below).

[New Pictures](#)

We've updated our picture links and added some new shots of the animals on the farm. We'll soon be adding pictures of harvesting when it begins.

[Karin's Blog](#)

If you're interested in what's going on around the farm, check out Karin's blog. Things get pretty busy around here, so there are sometimes gaps in her reports, but she tries her best to keep it up-to-date so you can live vicariously through your personal family of farmers.

Bulk Beef and Pork Available

If you didn't get in on our CSA Meat Program this year or are looking for more beef or pork to stock your freezer, we will have a limited amount available this season.

[Grass Fed Beef](#)

This is the same grass-fed beef we offer in our CSA program. No antibiotics or growth stimulants are ever given to our cattle and we don't finish them on grain—nothing but grass for these guys! This results in lower cholesterol in the meat and a great flavor.

All our beef is dry-aged before packaging. This process is the kind used on steaks served in upscale restaurants. Commercial packers use a wet aging process because it's cheaper and quicker. Our dry aging produces a beefy, nutty flavor and naturally tenderizes the meat even further. After the aging process your beef is cut, wrapped, labeled, quick frozen and ready for pick up.

Pricing for bulk beef orders is based on carcass weight—the weight at the butcher before the finished product is cut. Here's how it works. The average calf weighs

1000 to 1100 pounds *live weight* before we take it to butcher. Their *carcass weight* is usually 60% of the live weight.

That's the weight our USDA butcher bases his fee on and the weight we base our charges on as well. So, for a 1000-pound calf, the carcass weight is approximately 600 pounds. Once the butchering process is complete, the individual packages are considered the *finished weight* which is how you pay for it in the store. That weight is usually about 50% to 55% of the carcass weight. So, the average finished weight of a 1000-pound calf would be around 320 pounds or 160 pounds per side.

This year's price for a 1/2 side or full side of beef is \$3.15 per pound *carcass weight*, including tax. A 1/2 side will average between 80 to 100 pounds of mostly boneless meat; full side will be 160 to 200 pounds. Since each animal grows differently, you will be charged based on the actual carcass weight at time of butchering. Although the size, number

and types of cuts will vary based on the size of the animal, you'll receive a variety of standard cuts in each order. For 1/2

Americans consumed an average of 67 lbs of beef per person per year over the past 14 years; the Midwest averages 73 lbs.

side orders we do a "split half" which guarantees cuts from both the front and back half of the beef. An average order will contain approximately 40% steaks, 35% ground beef, 15% roasts, and 10% stew meat.

According to the USDA, Americans have consumed an average of 67 lbs of beef per person per year over the past 14 years—the Midwest average is actually higher, at 73 lbs per year. So, a full side should be more than enough for a couple or a family with small children for the year. Just remember a full side of beef will take up about 6 cu. ft. of freezer space ... so be prepared! If you're afraid it will be too much for you, consider sharing with a friend or family member.

[Farm Fresh Pork](#)

Our hogs are raised on the farm on hay,

Bulk Beef and Pork Available ... continued

grains, fruits and vegetables without antibiotics, growth hormones or other unnatural chemical stimulants. The meat is wonderfully tasty.

The pork is aged at the butcher prior to packaging. You can also opt for a mild cure for an additional fee.

We're offering half hogs and full hogs in limited quantities. Just like our beef, hog prices are based on carcass weight. Hogs lose less in the butchering process, though, so a 200 pound hog will yield around 135 pound carcass weight and 125 pounds packaged.

Pork is offered at \$3.10 per pound carcass weight, including tax. A half hog

will equal about 20% ham, 18% chops, 18% roasts, 10% bacon, 4% spare ribs and the remainder in ground pork.

How to Order

To reserve your beef or pork, a \$50 deposit is required for each 1/2 side of beef (\$100 for a full side) or \$50 for a full side of pork (\$100 for a full hog). Your deposit will be applied to the final purchase price. We will send your invoice once your meat has been delivered to the butcher and we get the carcass weight. You will be given a pick up date at that time as well. Orders must be paid for prior to pick up and can be picked up on the farm in Peculiar or you can arrange to pick it up at one of our Farmer's Market

locations. If you live in Peculiar, we will deliver your meat order for a \$10 fee.

This is a once-per-year offering with limited supply, so place your order soon. We will also begin taking pre-orders for 2009 deliveries soon. We may have a selection of beef and pork in individual cuts available for purchase on our website and at Farmer's Market each week.

To reserve your beef or pork either email us at farmfresh@nvranch.info or check the Local Orders page on our website where you can pay for your deposit online. We'll email you and let you know when your order is ready for pick up.

CSA Share Schedule, Locations—Important Notice

Our CSA Program begins on May 18th with the first week of produce deliveries. We will be at these locations each week:

Grandview: Tuesdays, 3 to 7

On the Farm: Fridays, 4 to 7

Pleasant Hill: Saturdays, 8 to 11

Lee's Summit: Saturdays, 7 to 11

Check your subscription agreement for your chosen pick-up location.

Important Notice

The markets are opening later in Grandview and Pleasant Hill than expected this year and will not be open before our season begins. We are offering several options to alleviate this problem until the markets do open (June 7th for Pleasant Hill and June 10th for Grandview).

You may choose to pick up your shares on the farm on Fridays or in Lee's Summit on Saturdays if it's convenient. For Grandview subscribers, we are happy to

drive up and meet you during a mutually agreed upon time for pickups on Tuesdays after 5pm. For Pleasant Hill subscribers, we are happy to come to town on Saturdays at noon.

Please email Karin at farmfresh@nvranch.info with your choice before May 15th so we can plan. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience or confusion this may have caused.

Share Schedule

Week of 5/18:

All Produce shares begin,
weekly

Egg Lovers shares begin,
weekly

Week of 5/25:

Partial Egg shares begin,
every other week

Full Meat shares begin,
every other week

Week of 6/8:

Individual Egg shares begin,
every four weeks

Partial Meat shares begin,
every four weeks

Ask Your Farmer

Beginning this month, Karin will begin posting some of the common questions we get asked.

Q. What is the hardest part of what you do?

A. Physically, I think it's the removal of pests and weeds. Since we don't use pesticides or herbicides, everything is done by hand—including plucking bugs from the leaves of the plants. Mentally, the toughest part may be taking animals to butcher. Even though we try not to get

attached, we have raised them and tended closely to their care so it's sometimes hard not to feel a fondness for them. We always keep in mind, though, that we're raising these animals as food and the care and concern we take with them benefits our family and yours.

If you have a question for Karin, email us at farmfresh@nvranch.info. She'll answer each email directly and will post the most frequent questions and their answers in future newsletters.