

Time for Chicks!

First, I want to thank each and every one of you who have, or are taking a part in our chicken raising adventure. This could not have happened without the support of people who care about what they eat, and where it comes from. Thank you for your support!

Also, let me say that we still have 8 - 10 CSA shares still available. If you have any other friends, organizations, or family who are interested in becoming a share member, please get this information to them. We are not going to take any more members after March 31. Please encourage them to take advantage of our birds and enjoy the benefits of clean and natural food. Ordering information can be found at http://www.getlostoffroad.com/Sunnyslope_Poultry.html

New for 2012

It is now the beginning of February, and we are about to take delivery of our first batch of chicks. With the stable and dry winter so far, I have placed the first order, and we will begin receiving chicks on Feb 21, and again on Feb 28. I was originally going to wait until March, and possibly late March, but I discovered an old article from 1942, and it outlined a heated brooder for starting chicks in the cold weather. After going thru the article, I've built the brooder, and I'm excited to let you know that I am confident that our birds will be warmer and healthier even starting a month earlier than last year! I feel it is important to let each of you know what will happen, and our plan (with your feedback) as to our schedule and choices for the year 2012.

First off for 2012 will be our new feed ration. We have located and decided on a non GMO feed supplier from Weiser. The ration will be custom mixed and we are really looking forward to having this feed for our birds. Secondly, we have some new birds from the hatchery. The Red Ranger from S & G Poultry in Georgia will be a new bird that we are looking forward to. The Red Ranger has been developed specifically for free ranging and pasture grazing designs. The birds are stronger, healthier, and grow just a tad bit slower for a better all around bird. We are going to try a few of these birds mixed in with our standard Cornish X breeds, to see how they fare in Idaho, and to compare their weight gains as well.

Our schedule is still based around the 8-9 week cycle of three weeks in the brooder as they feather out, and then an additional 5-6 weeks over pasture to bring to market weight. I learned last year that overcrowding will lower the overall weights of the birds even if there is enough food. This year I am dropping the numbers of birds per pen in hopes of maximizing the weight gain per bird.

With the initial schedule of chicks arriving the last of February, we are anticipating a pickup at either the end of April, or the first week of May. All of our members who have ordered Half Shares will be receiving their entire order of 20 birds at this time. For our Full Share members, you will be picking up half of your order. If as a Full Share member you would like to have your full order available at this time, please let us know, and we will arrange for that to happen.

There is one other breed of bird that is available this year; the Turken, or "naked neck". These birds are designed to become large roasting birds, with a thick skin designed to enhance the culinary experience. These birds have no feathering on their necks, hence the naked neck moniker. If you might be interested in some of these birds, we are going to raise them on a per customer basis. Cost will be based on a per pound basis, and we would anticipate that 8-10 pound birds would be our goal. The birds are also capable of becoming larger if ordered. This is a truly custom bird, so all of your feedback would be appreciated, and we will work with you in this regard.

Turkeys will not be brought into the brooders until later on in the season. Our goal is to have birds ready for the holiday times, but once again, we would like to have your feedback. If you are interested in more than the turkeys allocated within your share order, please let us know, and we will raise birds for you and your family on a custom basis. Our goal is to raise turkeys that will be between 15-20 lbs. This takes about 16-20 weeks. If you are interested in additional turkeys, please let us know. Otherwise, we will be targeting a mid November date for turkey pick up.

As a final note, we would love to have you come out to visit the birds during the season. It's a great opportunity to see the process, and we enjoy spending time with everyone who is interested in knowing where the food they eat comes from. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a call, and I will be happy to answer any questions, and to work with you in any way possible.

Thanks again for all of your support!

Steve & Jan

Sunnyslope Poultry Co.

PS. This letter, and any communication that we send out, is from us, the folks out here at Sunnyslope Poultry. I don't have any company sending out stuff, and having your e-mail is from you giving it to me. I don't have any designs on sharing it, or using it other than to give you info on our chickens. If you do not want me to e-mail you, please, let me know, and I'll make sure to take you off of our list. Thanks!