



Morris Grassfed Beef[©] Newsletter—Spring 2009

T.O. CATTLE COMPANY

January, 2009

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Taking Orders—*Online in 2009!*



Wildflowers on the Fatjo Ranch, atop Pacheco Pass on Highway 152. This is what cattle can do for the land!

Greetings Friends!

It has been too long! I began to write to you last fall, but no luck. When I received a phone call from a concerned customer inquiring whether we were still in business, I knew that my task was long past due. I apologize for the long intervals between news-

letters. Communicating with you is a special privilege for me. My problem is that I often allow “the perfect to be the enemy of the good.” In this case, not finding the time to write the “perfect” newsletter, I am dissuaded from writing any at all: human folly at the keyboard.

We are now taking orders for the 2009 harvest!

One of our customers, SunMie Won, like the Wizard of the fabled Oz, can do magical things behind the curtain of a computer screen. Unlike Oz, SunMie is the real deal, and the new online ordering system she has developed for us is going to be of enormous help to all of us as we try to organize the complex connec-

tions between people, place, time and, of course, delicious beef into a workable system. Orders will now be submitted online directly into a secure data bank. This means that you won’t have to fill out an order form by hand. It also means that any information that is new this year will automatically update last years out-dated information. No more errant emails to old email accounts. If you haven’t seen it yet, just click the link: <http://www.morrisgrassfed.com/order.php> to see how it works. Many thanks, SunMie! One more note: we value your privacy and will not share your information, ever. To sum it all up, we hope our grass finished beef satisfies both your belly and your

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heart: there is reason to be hopeful!

Peace and all good!

The Morris Grassfed Beef Team:
Joe, Julie, Everett, Liz and Pattie

Less with Less

In spite of having received just a drop over four inches of rain since last October, there is good news: the sun is shining, the soil is thawing and moist, and the grass is reaching toward the sun. It is beautiful weather--if a

bit worrisome. Why worry, though, when planning is so much more fun—and helpful! Some sage advice I received the other day is: “When times are tough, do less with less.” To me this means focus, focus, focus on

what is within one’s “circle of influence.” At T.O. Cattle Company that means:

We need to manage the cattle to ensure that the soil is 100% covered, 100% of the time. Why?

“Less with Less” cont’d from pg. 1

If we think of the soil as the skin of the earth and that it is similar to our own skin, we can imagine that soil covered by plants—last year’s or those growing now—is more comfortable soil. It doesn’t get as cold, nor does it get as hot. It doesn’t dry out as quickly, and it is well prepared to catch every raindrop or sprinkle that it is blessed with. This is good

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news for those critters that make the soil their home and do so much work that enhances our lives. There is at least as much life beneath the surface of the soil as there is above it. And that means that “soil ain’t just dirt!”

Culinary Cows

Many times customers ask us where they can get Morris Grassfed Beef during the rest of the year, if they haven’t purchased a split half, or if they just need some more. We now have a couple of options.

At this point we have begun to harvest our “culinary” cows. As the name says, they are cows rather than the younger animals we sell as split-halves, but they are no less delicious and healthful. The ground beef and many of the cuts are indistinguishable from the meat from the younger animals. The cuts that might not be as tender, we have cut into roasts or stew, and we sell them at a bit lower price. It under-scores the idea that everything has its proper place, and it is up to us to find that place. The flavors of the beef are amazing, and it is a more fitting way to go for our “culinary” cows that have served us and the land so

well. It also allows us to have beef in the freezer to sell for a longer period during the year. If you time your order right, we can put the beef on our truck in time for our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) delivery days.

The first option for other than “split half” Morris Grassfed Beef is through the efforts of our friends and fellow farmers, **Jim and Rebecca of TLC Ranch**. They sell pasture-raised pigs, laying hens, and, occasionally, lamb. They sell their delicious foods, and ours, in farmer’s markets in Mountain View on Sunday and in Santa Cruz on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Their farm is outside of Watsonville and they are great collaborators of ours, and their pork and eggs are wonderful (haven’t had their lamb yet) www.tasteslikechickenranch.com.



*Morris cattle grazing on the Kelly Thompson Ranch in Watsonville—
Photo by Tamia Marg*

Another option, as many of you already know, is to use the services of Lucas Moen of West Coast Distribution. Lucas comes by the ranch every Monday and can pick up and deliver our beef to places around the Bay Area. Lucas has a small distribution company that seeks to connect those who are looking for high quality, locally produced foods with the farmers and ranchers who produce them. He may be contacted for more information at 415-686-8684 or <http://www.freshorganicgourmet.com/>.

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Beef Carbonnade

By Farrell May Podgorsek

Modified from a Cooks Illustrated recipe

This is a wonderful stew, very hearty and warming. It is perfect on a cold, winter night. The best beer I have found to use is Trader Joe's Vintage Ale. Chimay Ale is also very good. Do not make it with a lighter beer. You need that full, rich, sweet flavor that a good dark Belgium style beer has. Cook it low and slow. Grassfed beef adds a wonderful richness and flavor boost to the stew. I like it best over wide egg noodles. My husband prefers mashed potatoes. I also like to boil some thickly sliced carrots in salted water and serve them with the stew. I feel the carrots retain more character when cooked separately and served in the bowl with the stew. Beverage of choice would be the same beer that was used in the stew.

2 1/2 pounds Morris Grassfed Beef - chuck roast or any other stew meat, cut 3/4 inch thick, trimmed of gristle and fat and cut into 3/4-inch cubes
salt and ground black pepper
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 1/2 pounds yellow onions (about 2 medium), halved and sliced about 1/4 inch thick
1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
3/4 cup low-sodium beef broth
1 1/2 cups beer (12-ounce bottle or can) Trader Joes Vintage Ale is preferred
1 tsp thyme
2 bay leaves
2 tsp cider vinegar

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Dry beef thoroughly with paper towels, then season generously with salt and pepper. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in large heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium-high heat until beginning to smoke; add about one-third of beef to pot. Cook without moving pieces until well browned, 2 to 3 minutes; using tongs, turn each piece and continue cooking until second side is well browned, about 5 minutes longer. Transfer browned beef to medium bowl. Repeat with additional 2 teaspoons oil and half of remaining beef. (If drippings in bottom of pot are very dark, add about 1/2 cup of above-listed chicken or beef broth and scrape pan bottom with wooden spoon to loosen browned bits; pour liquid into bowl with browned beef, then proceed.) Repeat once more with 2 teaspoons oil and remaining beef.

Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to now-empty Dutch oven; reduce heat to medium-low. Add onions, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and tomato paste; cook, scraping bottom of pot with wooden spoon to loosen browned bits, until onions have released some moisture, about 5 minutes. Increase heat to medium and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are lightly browned, 12 to 14 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add flour and stir until onions are evenly coated and flour is lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Stir in broths, scraping pan bottom to loosen browned bits; stir in beer, thyme, bay, vinegar, browned beef with any accumulated juices, and salt and pepper to taste. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to full simmer, stirring occasionally; cover partially, then place pot in oven. Cook until fork inserted into beef meets little resistance, about 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

Discard bay. Adjust seasonings with salt and pepper to taste and serve.