



## The French Connection and News from Bone Dry Ridge Farm

**The Weather Report:** Since the PNW has had such a mild winter it is likely we will have a long drawn out and cold spring. There is an upside to a long cold and wet spring however. The sheep will not go out into the field until late which means most of the lambs are going to be born in the barn. Something that is much easier on me in case I need to help. I do like to think the sheep like it also since it is dry and protected in the barn.

**Beef:** We have one Wagyu beef left in the May harvest and 3 in the September harvest. Now is a good time to sign up for your beef share for this year.

[Wagyu beef order form:](#) Write in the "Notes" if you prefer beef in the May or the September Harvest.

I'm including order forms for lamb and summer pork. It is rather unorthodox of me to start taking order before the little things are born. But since this is a rather rare email this early in the spring, I feel I can risk it.

[Summer Pork Order Form:](#) Likely harvested in September.

[Icelandic Lamb Order Form:](#) Harvested in Mid-September.

**Personal:** I'm back home on my lovely little farm after spending 2.5 months in France on my sabbatical, back just in time for the action. Lambing season started this morning with twins. Mother and babies are doing well.



*The Basque country side*



*Old Stone buildings*

I did get to spend some time in the countryside of France. Not on a farm, but with an American woman who is a food tour guide in the Gers region. I helped her in the garden in exchange for room and board. It was sooo much fun. We worked hard and played hard. I even got to go to the community Valentine's lunch and to the local hardware store. What a treat. At the lunch there were lots of local farmers, as well as a group of Expats. I wondered why they were called Expats and not immigrants. I looked that up in the dictionary and found out that has mostly to do with skin color and economic status. I so wished my French was better, so I could have conversed with the local farmers, but my French is very limited and most of them do not speak English (and why should they). They are French, live in France and speak French. What was so interesting to me was how I identified with them. They were just like the farmers around here. My people. I'm seeing that we farmers are in fact a certain type of people, and that we are the same all over. At the Farmers Markets it was the same. My people were on the inside of the tables and I felt a bit like fish out of water being on the wrong side of the table.



*Cured ham at the store*

*At the wrong side of the table*

*Jenine's dog who was a delight*

**French Farmers.** These farmers are being faced with some of the same issues we are faced with in America. The endless obsession with cheap food: the idea that food should cost less. We seem to be fine with spending hundreds of Dollars or Euros on our cell phones or airfare to go to the other side of the world, but we complain about the price of food. The European farmers are being faced with the fact that the European Union has spent years on making a deal with South America to bring cheaper food to the continent. What an absurd action. To ship food from the other side of the world to a place that produces very good and plenty of food already. Why are we this stupid?



*Now that is what I call "bread"*



*Jenine in Bassoues*

**Jenine**, the woman I spend some time with in Bassoues, Gers region, has a Gastronomy Food Tour business. I hope in the next couple of years to be able to go back and take this 6-day tour with her. She takes people to local farmers, bakers, cheese makers and vineyards, as well as to farmers markets and local historical places, of which there are many. Castles, forts, ancient buildings and churches, dot this beautiful farm landscape of Gers, just east of Toulouse. If you are interested in such a thing, here is a link to her website: [Taste of Gascony](#). She also gives relocation retreats. All the little things one needs to know about moving to France.



*The Pau Castle*



*History everywhere*



*The lower level street in Pau*

**Nice to be home.** Although I had a wonderful and productive time in France, I am glad to be home on my little farm. If the path of my life would have been

different and I would have immigrated to France vs the USA, it is very likely I would have been doing the same in France as I'm doing here. Being a small farmer is who I am, not just what I do for a living. I feel so lucky to have been able to find that in my life. As I landed in Seattle and announcements were being broadcast over the airport, I understood every word. I did not have to put any effort into understanding what was being said. That made me feel like I belonged. Yes, I could move to France if I had to, but the Pacific Northwest is a very special place, and I belong here.

Take care. Your farmers and shepherdess Selma and Keith

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