

APRIL 13 - 14, 2022

# BAYFIELD FOODS CSA

Community Supported Agriculture



## Early Spring & the Gifts it Brings

**FRED & KELLY FAYE - HAPPY HOLLOW CREAMERY**

Hello from Happy Hollow Creamery,

It's lambing time here on the farm! Our first lambs for the season arrived back on March 10th. Since then, just over 100 lambs have been born. We are still waiting on the last few ewes to give birth. Some of the oldest lambs have grown from 8 to 10 lbs. at birth to more than 30 lbs. today. They are eating grain and hay in addition to mother's milk. Every year we let the ewes nurse their lambs until they are more than a month old, or around 40 lbs. At this time they can be weaned entirely onto grain and hay and we can begin milking the ewes twice a day and making our cheese. Another yearly ritual is having the sheep shorn. Right now the ewes have a very thick coat of wool about 4 inches long. It's such an effective layer of insulation that snow does not melt on their backs! Sheep are often shorn before lambing for several reasons, but this spring has been cold! I decided to wait to have them shorn until this Wednesday, the 13th. I'm sure glad I did, as there were some windy days in the single digits, even below zero in March. As the weather warms up however, the sheep will be much more comfortable with a haircut.

Lambing time is normally a lot of work for the shepherd of even a small flock of 60 ewes like ours. The ewes have their lambs inside our old dairy barn. The barn is always open to an outside yard where they go to a heated waterer and eat round bales. I usually check for ewes in labor every few hours around the clock. When the ewe goes into labor, she looks for a quiet corner of the barn away from the other sheep. She becomes restless, gets up and down and digs a nest in the straw before laying down and pushing her lambs out. After the lambs are born she fusses over them, licking them clean and making a constant soft cooing noise. After a few minutes the lamb begins to talk back to the mother. During this time, the ewe and lamb bond to each other by smell and by the sound of the other's voice. It's very important for the mother and lamb to stay close together during this period, so we often put them in a small pen together for a day or two. Within a half hour of birth, most lambs are able to walk and suckle the ewe on their own. The lamb must get the ewe's first milk or colostrum within the first few hours of life. Colostrum contains antibodies that function as the lambs immune system for the first few weeks. Also the lambs need the milk to keep their body temperature up. Sheep instinctively do a good job of birthing their lambs without help most of the time. The shepherd's job is to make sure it all goes well. Sometimes the lambs enter the birth canal in the wrong position and it's necessary to reach in and line the lamb up correctly. When it's very cold out, the lambs can become hypothermic very quickly after birth, even inside the barn on the straw. They can be born as small as 6 lbs. and they come out soaking wet with almost no wool. On very cold days I use a feeding tube with small lambs at birth to get the colostrum directly into their stomach. One good feeding guarantees that they have a dose of mother's antibodies and gives



**The two youngest of the Faye crew are great lambing assistants.**



**A brand new healthy lamb - born this season.**



**Lambing season inside Happy Hollow's old dairy barn.**

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them enough fuel to burn the moisture off of their skin. Another thing to watch for is a lamb that gets separated from the ewe. If a newborn gets confused and wanders away from the mother before they bond she may reject the lamb when it's brought back. Sheep often have two or three lambs and the ewe can only stay near one of them. Needless to say, it is very satisfying to have a barn full of healthy lambs racing each other back and forth and jumping up and down like popcorn. It's also nice to be able to sleep through the night again when it's over.

This morning is Friday, April 8th. I went out to do chores with a foot of new snow on the ground since it started the night before last. Mud is the farmer's nemesis and I've been griping constantly about the mess this snow is going to leave us with for weeks to come. I dislike this season intensely except on rare dry days. This morning our friend Matt came to feed the sheep and do the barn chores. I took a fence reel and some posts and walked up the pasture to make a new paddock to feed the cows in. While I slogged around the pasture fixing fence I was struck by how beautiful it all was. The hills and valley as far as I could see were covered in a thick blanket of snow. Tree branches were plastered with snow. Flurries came down silently in a light breeze. I want nothing more than the snow to disappear and the mud to dry up. Yet I couldn't help appreciating the rare beauty of a day like today--having a crisp white snow day in April.

Thank you all again for buying the fruits (meats, vegetables, breads and cheeses) of our labor. Knowing you are enjoying our farm products makes it all worthwhile. Enjoy the snow while it lasts!

## Cheese, Pear & Walnut on Sourdough

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 small pears
- 1 T olive oil
- 2 T Heritage Acres honey
- 4 slices Starlit Kitchen sourdough, sliced
- 8 oz. Ewe Rascal Ewe sheep milk cheese
- Small handful of chives, chopped
- 2 oz. walnuts, roughly chopped
- 2 T good-quality balsamic vinegar
- Mixed salad greens, for serving

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Heat a griddle pan. Cut the pears into quarters or eighths, brush with the oil. Cook for a few mins until charred on all sides, then drizzle with the honey.
- Meanwhile, toast the bread.
- Spread toast with the cheese and top with sticky pears, chives and walnuts. Drizzle over the balsamic vinegar and serve with some dressed salad greens.

