

Annie's on maternity leave...

December 03, is a special date for me for a couple of reasons. The first, you can probably understand why, is that I was due with our firstborn on that date almost 18 years ago. Liam surprised us a few days early, but the date still stands out in my mind, with fondness, especially this year.

Here we are, 18 years later and guess who gave us a fun reminder? One of our Jerseys who provide you with delicious, nutrient rich milk has been resting for a month now in preparation for delivering her next calf. Annie's due -YOU GUESSED IT! December 03, 2018!

While we wait for Annie to rest up, we definitely miss her production. You may have noticed that some dairy products aren't available right now, or that we've had to adjust the quantities on your order based on availability.

Well, this is the perfect opportunity to explain how this all works, so that you know what to expect with your dairy orders and can be as excited as we are for Annie's due date!

So, here's a few definitions for you...

1. What we mean when we say that **"we're drying the cow up"**: This just means that she needs a rest or break and it's time to let her milk supply end before her next calf.
2. **"The cow has freshened"**: when we say this, we're talking about how she has had her baby and has a good milk supply again. (after she is finished producing colostrum for her calf, the first week or so)
3. **"OAD Milking"**: Once a day milking ~ We milk once per day and the calf gets the rest until it is weaned.

How the process works:

After a cow is bred, she is pregnant for about 9 months. So, in a perfect world (*I know, it's never perfect, but just let me imagine, hee, hee!*) We know when she is bred, and make notes of that date.

If we didn't see it, then we have to rely on a pregnancy check by the vet. She can give us an estimated date. This helps us plan the dates for drying her up. She needs 2 months to rest and not be milked before she calves.

If she doesn't get that rest, it will be too hard on her system, she won't keep her healthy weight, her calf could be harmed and she won't be able to provide the healthiest colostrum for her calf's immune system development. It's all soooo important!

After Annie calves

Just like us, Cows don't always calve on their due date. And while we know when Annie was bred, she still may be a few days early, or a few late.

But, once she does, we will be doing some extra things to help her get her energy back. Some of those things will be:

- Making sure that she has access to her kelp and Redmond's sea salt mineral
- Mixing a little Organic Molasses and Raw, Apple Cider Vinegar in her water. This will help her with digestion, immune support, energy and recovery. All these things are necessary for a healthy cow, healthy calf, healthy milk and yes healthy **YOU! ~It's definitely all connected.**
- For the next few days, we'll watch mom and baby and milk out a little colostrum, by hand twice-a-day and gradually increasing the amount, to help relieve her swelling. This will make her much more comfortable and will help prevent infection in the udder.
- After a week to a week and a half, we'll start to see the bright orange color of her colostrum disappear and change to milk. When this happens, we can begin to sell her extra milk.

Here are some answers to production and other questions, we've received...

1. **Do you have less milk available in the winter months?** - Yes. Pastures go dormant and while we supplement with fresh barley grasses grown in our fodder room, the cows do not have the production that is available when they are on growing pastures with mild weather. *---This is why it is so important to let us know if you are needing something on a regular basis (every order). Then we can plan and do our best to provide as much as possible. If you can't get an order in while production is low, please let us know and we'll add you to our waiting list and let you know as soon as we have more available.*
2. **After Annie calves, will you have more milk available?** -Yes! Some products will however, be on hold until spring. This is usually butter, but we will let you know if there are times that we have it during winter. (butter takes a LOT of cream, so this is why it is the first item to be put on hold)

3. **Are there other times of year this will happen with your other Jersey cows?**
-Yes. We try to stagger breeding so that the period that they are dry, doesn't overlap, however sometimes it just doesn't work as planned, ;)
4. **How many cows can you sell milk from with your permit?** - By Idaho law, we can sell milk from a maximum of 3 cows.
5. **Do pasture-fed cows produce as much milk as grain-fed cows?** -No. They actually produce quite a bit less, especially in winter. The amounts change throughout the period after calving (as with all cows). They will reach a peak in production a few months after calving, then slowly decrease milk supply as time goes on.