

## Package Contents:

- 2 frozen pizza dough balls
- 4 oz fresh mozzarella cheese
- 1 lb assorted ground sausages
- 1 bag mixed organic greens
- 4 oz hot and sweet chevre
- 1 bag corn chips
- 1 lb tub salsa
- 1 organic bibb lettuce
- Country Ribs



## Pizza Preparation Notes

### Thawing the pizza dough ball

Sit the frozen ball on a cookie sheet or plate and let the dough thaw slowly. It will begin to rise. If your house is cold (sub 70), you may want to sit the tray on top of the stove while the oven preheats. You want the pizza dough to grow.

### Prepare your toppings

Always prepare your toppings in advance. There is nothing worse than trying to cut onions while your pizza quickly goes from almost done to burnt in the oven!

### Preheat your oven...HOT

Most commercial pizza ovens are about 600 degrees. Your home oven likely won't get that hot, or do so without significant hot spots. Preheat your oven to 450 or 475 degrees. If you have a pizza stone, place that in the oven while it is preheating. The pizza stone will help create a crispy crust with not burn spots.

### Stretch your pizza dough.

Spread some cornmeal on the counter and dust the outside of the pizza dough. Work the pizza dough with your hands and let gravity pull it towards the countertop as you rotate your dough. If you struggle this way...just roll it with a rolling pin!

If you have a pizza peel, dust it first and then place the crust on it. Slide the crust into the oven. If

you don't, simply place your crust on the hot pizza stone or cookie sheet in the oven. I usually add some sauce at this time...then add the toppings as the pizza is partially cooked.

You may want to consider adding your cheese at the end, even after you remove it from the oven. If you add it too soon, the cheese may burn. I think the fresh cheese, minimally cooked, tastes so much better than baked on.

Also, try precooking your sausage some before adding it to the pizza. This will ensure that it cooks thoroughly before the crust is done.

## Dedication

In general, most of my Amish producers are very motivated, resourceful, and entrepreneurial individuals. In fact, I recently read a statistic about Amish-ran businesses. The article stated that while only 80% of non-Amish businesses survive past five years, over 96% of Amish businesses survive that same time frame.

I thought about it briefly and was able to name to think of reasons. One possible reason is their community structure. Amish communities are very tight-knit and need to be to survive. Without adequate transportation, they must do business close to home and therefore with their neighbors. In a growing community (each family averages 9 children and less than 3% of the children leave the Amish faith), there is growing demand.

Second, their lifestyles permit lower operating costs and income expectations. Finally, and most importantly, they are dedicated individuals.

I started writing this section after visiting one of my Amish producers, David Yoder, this last week. While most Amish are quite dedicated workers, this fellow is exceptional.

I stop at David's house almost bi-weekly and get the latest news. In December, he was taking a public bus to Cleveland. David is of a very old order Amish, and he cannot use motorized transportation unless it is on a set route, such as public transportation. Some how he found a series of bus routes (without the internet or phone) that run from south-western Medina county to Tower City, where he was going to take a bus to East 40<sup>th</sup> and Woodland and visit the produce terminal.

I've road a bus before and I'm not sure I would have been able to figure that one out without modern resources.

Then, in January I arrived in a foot of snow and spun my way down his driveway to encounter about 30 whole trees (logging timber) laying where I would usually turn around. As I walk around the timber I notice a 30' long contraption that kind of looks like a conveyor belt on a sturdy I-beam frame with a rail system overhead and a movable platform that rode along the overhead rails. Upon closer inspection, it was a gasoline motor powered ban-saw that one pushed from one side of the platform to the other.

I asked David what he was doing. He replied that he was making tomato stakes. I couldn't stop there. "From whole trees?" "Yes," he replied, "we'll cut the trees into slats and then cut them again into long stakes."

"Ok, but I'm imagining that you can make a lot of stakes from this pile of lumber." David sighs, "Yes, but this is the first of six loads. We are making 75,000 tomato stakes."

In short, David and his brother-in-law spent all of January, February, and March outside making tomato stakes for a commercial tomato grower in Michigan. The stakes get shipped off this week.

Then about a month ago (last time I saw him prior to this week), I was visiting David and he was going to the produce growers' sale in Mt Hope. The sale was a supplies sale where growers could exchange hardware, buy supplies, etc.

"We'll leave at 12 for the sale." "Ok, so it starts later in the day?" I ask. "No, we'll leave at 12 AM. The sale starts at 7 AM."

I stopped and thought. Mt. Hope isn't close but it isn't far from David's house – under 40 miles. I just assumed he'd hire a driver and go down there. "We are going by buggy," stated David.

At this point all I could say was "Good luck to your horse." David told me the trip would take them about 6 hours (in February at night in an open air buggy lit by candlelight). They would stay all day and the horse would rest during the day. They would leave again in the afternoon and get home around 10 PM the following day.

David's trip was successful. He was able to sell the stakes he took and buy some tools he needed. Amongst all of this, David has started his field vegetables in the greenhouse, collected and boiled off 5,000 gallons of maple sap, and erected a cold frame (unheated greenhouse). This is why Amish businesses are successful.