

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Fall News 2012 from Bone Dry Ridge

Hello All and Happy Fall

The weather report: The dry summer never wanted to end. I know many people were happy to have this long dry, warm fall with no rain until the middle of October. But we were not. The fields went dormant. I had to start feeding the cows hay in September and never stopped. We, of course, hope for a nice early spring, but there have been years when we have been hit from both sides. Dry summer/fall and then a cool spring. We are as prepared as can be. I always get more hay than I think I'm going to use, just in case.



Pigs: The pigs came out very nicely this year. Each one was over 200 lbs hanging weight (the weight of the carcass) at slaughter time, which means each one of them was over 400 lbs live. They loved their Taj Maswine, especially after it started raining. I brought them a bunch of hay so they could make a nice soft bed for themselves.

PeeWee, was the runt piglet this spring. I fed him rice and bananas many times a day for the first two weeks to help him with his diarrhea, just like for human babies. I feel it was time well spent, because he became the biggest pig I have ever had, 265 lbs hanging. He was always the lowest in the hierarchy, but he obviously got plenty to eat.

It is a lot of fun to have pigs, but it is also very nice when they are gone. Towards the end they each go through 25 to 35 lbs of grain per day. I get the feed in 50 lb bags and I pretty much continuously fill their feeders. A palette with fifty 50 lb bags gets eaten very quickly.

Cows: Pretty Boy Floyd is still here. We tried to send him home some time ago, but he refused to leave. No way were we going to get this enormous creature into a trailer if he did not want to. We were also in a bit of a rush and I'm sure all the cows could feel this stress energy, and that made them nervous. So we simply gave up and let him stay longer. I have not had the time yet to arrange for him to leave, but hopefully soon. I don't really like feeding him. He eats a lot. Next year we will only have one calf to slaughter, since we gave one cow a



one year break from calf rearing. So I'm considering purchasing one or two Highland yearlings to offer to you next year. I have to figure out, however, if it is better to purchase a couple of calves and feed them hay this winter, or if I should purchase more piglets next spring. I can't do both. At some point soon I'm going to have to make that decision.

Sheep: The sheep came home early this year. They had eaten everything in the lowlands by late October. I was actually happy that there was enough for them to eat until then. So many fields went dormant this fall. I have one field at Helsing Junction Farm that I can irrigate and that makes all the difference. My good old ram is limping these days. This is breeding season and I have the feeling he might have exerted himself too much. If he is not better in a day or two I will have to catch him and have a look.

I lost one of my top ewes just a few days ago. She came down with some mysterious ailment. It was like she had had a stroke. The vet came and we tried everything he could think of, but to no avail. On day three she could not stand, so it was time to get the 22. It is not hard for me to do the deed, the hard part is to come to the decision that I have done everything I could. It was difficult to figure out how the ewe could have gone from being just fine one day, and the next day not eating, hanging her head, being unsteady on her legs and drooling. I certainly mourn her loss. Her name was Ásta, named after one of my childhood friends.

Other: The Creamery business is coming along. Of course everything moves much more slowly than one would like. It turned out that the wonderful jar I had selected was made in China. In my excitement of having finally found the jar that I really wanted, I forgot to ask where it was made. It is three times less expensive than an American-made jar of the same size. But I am committed to use "made in America" glass containers, so I'm not going for the cheap jar. Since the jar is returnable for a deposit, I'm hoping my customers will be OK with a steep deposit, because they will in fact only pay that once. Each time after that they only pay for the contents.

I'm going to have to get a loan to purchase these jars and I'm in the process of filling out paper work. There is a lot of paperwork and I feel I am about to drown in it. I have my Dairy Processors License, my Dairy Technician License, the Business License, bank account, etc, etc. My logo is made. My friend who is an artist designed it for me. I'm working with Jami at the Sherwood Press in Olympia on the labels. It is all coming together, but of course I would like to be making yogurt already. I know I'm repeating myself from the last newsletter, but I really really hope to be in production by the time I write the next newsletter.



Take care, Your farmer and shepherdess

Selma