

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Spring News 2017 from Bone Dry Ridge

Happy Spring

The weather report: What a Spring. It finally feels like spring. All the fields have been very soggy. The sheep are light enough so that they do not do a lot of field damage, but down at Keith's dairy, the cows have done substantial damage to the grazing fields. Some fields will have to be redone this year or next. One of a farmer's dilemma in this kind of a wet weather is: do I send my animals out on pasture where the grass is growing like crazy even though I know they will damage the fields, or do I keep them in the barn and feed them hay while all this very good spring grass is going to waste. Cows are big and heavy and can do a lot of damage. But out on pasture is where they do best, and one often just has to accept that there always is some damage to fields... Just part of being a farmer. Our neighbors the vegetable farmers had a much bigger dilemma than we did. Not being able to go out into their fields to till the soil and plant has caused them a lot of anxiety and stress. When the hot weather hit, they were all working around the clock to plow, till, transplant and into their fields.

Meat Sales: We are going to be offering Lamb, Pork and perhaps Beef this year. I say perhaps beef, because we only have one steer to offer you this year. But he will likely not be ready until winter. I will offer him to you at a later date. I do not have the brochures ready. I'll send another email in the near future with links to this year's brochures.

Pigs: We went to the same farm in Oregon as last spring to get our summer piglets. It is such a pleasure to go to this farm. Everything is well kept and clean, the animals are well cared for, happy and out on pasture. They raise a variety of animals and their whole operation is very impressive. We know what it takes to keep everything in good order like this. I'm hoping we can continue to go there for our piglets. Yes, it is a two-hour drive one way, but we think it is worth it. These people raise two cross-breeds of pigs. The Red Waddle/Large Black cross and the Red Waddle/Gloucestershire Old Spot, or GOS. These breeds are all listed on The Livestock Conservancy list. Last year we had the Red Waddle/Large Back cross and this year we have the Red Waddle/ Gloucestershire Old Spot. The piglets are of course totally adorable. They are light red in color with black spots. Some have the waddle and some do not. Every morning they get a treat of milk soaked grain. They are totally loving that. They are being fed the organic grain of course from In-Season's Farm. This grain comes from Canada and now there is a trade war going on at the border. It takes In-Season's farm 3 weeks to get a certificate to cross the border into the USA with grain, whereas last year it was only a 2-day process. This has caused us a lot of headache, but we are coping.

Sheep: Do you remember how unusual lambing season was last year? I had five sets of triplets. Well, this year was the opposite. Many ewes that normally have two lambs and sometimes three, only had one. Two miscarried and two ewes were barren. Also, another

unusual thing, the two first-time moms, both had twins. The norm is for them to have only one the first time. As a result, I have many fewer lambs than normal and I will likely have a huge variation in sizes. Moms that can feed up to three just fine but are only feeding one will have huge lambs, but I'm expecting the lambs from the first-timers, to be a bit on the smaller side. They have a lot of grass to eat. Since I do not have cows here on my farm anymore there is more pasture for the sheep, more than they can handle, but it certainly is better to have too much than too little. I'm not complaining. One ewe had triplets and after two days did not want to let one of them suckle so, I took him on and am feeding him with a bottle. He is doing well and is just as big as his brother. Most of my lambs, by the way, are rams. I only have four girls. What is up with that?

Cows: Four Wagyu calves have been born this spring. They are all so similar it is hard to tell them apart. Starting a beef herd takes time, a minimum 2 to 3 years. The calves that were born this spring will be ready to slaughter in about 1.5 to 2 years. Their moms are all either Holstein/Angus cross or Holstein/Wagyu/Wagyu cross. All the calves are from a Wagyu bull. Our beef offerings are rather slim this year. We have only one steer. He is a Holstein/Herford cross. We are not sure when he is going to be ready for slaughter. We'll keep you informed about that. Likely not until late fall or winter.

The Creamery: Things are good at the Creamery, expanding little by little. We are in more Whole Foods stores and some new smaller stores. We are also in two hospitals now. The Mason General in Shelton and Jefferson County Hospital in Port Townsend. I hired a wonderful helper for this summer. He is my driver and yogurt maker. He moved here from LA and now lives just down the road. I had hired him over the phone, so I did not know what he looked like. But after I met him, I told Keith: I think we just hired John Lennon. So of course, the name stuck and now we call him Lennon.

Personal note: Two days after lambing season I got what I thought was a stomach flue. Three days later I figured, this was not the flu. Keith took me to the Centralia hospital emergency room and I was on the operating table within the hour. Burst appendix. What an ordeal. I was in the hospital for 6 days. I'm thankful to have fantastic hospital facilities just down the road. Wonderful staff great facilities but the food was inedible. I was of course on liquid diet and what they had to offer was either overly sweet or just about inedible. After I came back home the hospital sent me a survey. I gave them great marks for everything but the food. Wrote them an essay on the subject and gave them my phone number in case they wanted more info. But so far, they have not contacted me. Ohh well.

Take care. Your farmer and shepherdess **Selma**