

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm

Scottish Highland Cattle
Icelandic Sheep
Chickens
Bees
Pigs



Spring 2009 news from Bone Dry Ridge

Happy spring to you all. It was another cold spring here in the Northwest. I was very happy to have bought more hay last summer than I hoped to use since I did go through all of it this spring. These last two springs have really taught me the lesson in being prepared for the worst. Always have more hay on hand than you think you will use. The warmth finally did come and the grass started growing again and all is well. All the animals are out on pasture and we are all happy.

Lambing season went well. Most of the lambs were born in the first week of April. Often it drags out for the entire month but not this time. That was very nice for me since one week of sleepless nights is much better than one month of sleepless nights. We have lots of little lambs running around the fields these days. Many spotted this time and only three black once. This is one of the fun things about lambing season; you have no idea what color they will be until they pop out. My oldest ewe, Lára is now ten years old. This is considered very old for an ewe. Eight is considered old. She is now giving only one lamb each spring and for the last two they have been females. Over the years I have kept all of her female lambs to expand the flock and I'm so happy she gave another one this spring. She is down to one tooth but since the grass is tall and they have an abundance of hay in winter her body condition is excellent. She is awesome.



I'm raising pigs again this year. In hind sight I should have gotten more than two piglets this year since so many of you have been inquiring about pork. I purchased these piglets from my friend Molly just like last year. I really like the way she raises her pigs. The mama pig, Hattie lives in hog heaven. Large pasture with lots of places to dig and root around. They arrived in late March and since it was so cold I placed a heat lamp in the barn for them. They loved that. Pigs just love to be warm and have a full belly. They have access to the pasture around the barn and again I am surprised at how much grass and clover they eat. They spend a considerable amount of time grazing.

No calves this spring. It took me much longer to find a bull to come visit my cows than I had expected which in turn moved the calving season to the fall. Pretty Boy Floyd came and turned out to be the mellowest bull I have ever been around.

He is half Brahman and half Angus. I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of calves come out. I think the Highland characteristics will likely be dominant but perhaps the calves will be black. I tried to find a Highland bull but it turned out to be so complicated and I realized I just needed to be practical in this matter and a neighbors bull could do the job just fine.

Some of you have expressed an interest in online news of the farm. I'm therefore going to setup a news link on my new website where you will be able to read what is going on at the farm. I'm hoping to have that up and running by mid June.

A few years ago I met a couple from Yelm who were setting up their farm and raising Icelandic sheep. Since then we have been playing with the idea of forming an Icelandic sheep Coop. This is the first year they have lambs for sale and depending on your response their lambs will be for sale through me as well. I have had this idea of a sheep Coop for some time now since I soon will reach the carrying capacity of my land. In addition the demand for locally raised meat is so great I could not possibly fulfill it. This Coop is based only on Icelandic sheep but could in the future expand to other animals. These guys in Yelm raise their animals the way I believe they should be raised so I feel good about being in cooperation with them.

Another cooperative movement is happening. I have been asked to join three other local sheep farmers in a local fiber collective. We call ourselves the Woolly Gals. We all raise different breeds of sheep. We are going to be selling our locally produced yarn and wool garments at local farmer's markets. We will be at the Tumwater farmers market for the three Wednesdays starting on May the 27th from 11 am to 2 pm. Then we will return again in the fall on Wednesdays in September through October. We will also be at the Chehalis farmers market every Tuesday in September and October from 12 to 5 pm. We figured no one is in the mood to knit wool in summer. Spring and Fall are going to be our best bet. I have numerous fleeces for sale on my website and as I get yarn back from the fiber mills (I'm testing out a few) it will also be available on the website.

This is all for now. Check on the website for more news starting in mid June

Your farmer,

Selma

