

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Spring 2011 news from Bone Dry Ridge

Hello all and Happy Spring/early Summer

It is finally Spring. I thought Winter was never going to end. It is hard to believe July is just around the corner since Spring just got here. This cold Spring made life hectic for us here on the farm. The grazing schedule was out of whack, and the heating lamps on the chickens and pigs stayed on much later than normal. But what to do but adapt...



I let the sheep out to the fields two weeks later than normal, thinking the weather must be about to warm up, but of course it did not. The cold weather prevented the grass from growing, so I had to graze the sheep in the field in which the cows usually start their spring grazing. That delayed the cows a month-and-a-half, and even though they did not complain, and just ate their hay quietly until mid-May, I felt they looked over at the sheep eating their green grass with a little dismay. They are all out on green pastures now, and the grass is growing like crazy. It is amazing what just a few degrees does for grass.

Lambing was great. No birthing problems at all this year. One ewe, Aska, did have a sore udder and would not let her lambs suckle on one side for the first two days after they were born. I got her into the barn, milked that side of the udder to relieve the pressure, and oh how nice she felt. She fought me in the beginning, but as the pressure in her udder subsided, she relaxed and all was well. I think everything went so well this year because I was totally prepared for dealing with problems, like never before. This should be a lesson to me. Be prepared and nothing will go wrong.

Most every ewe had twins. We have 23 little lambs running around. The ram I used is moorit (brown) in color, so many of the lambs are also moorit and many are black and spotted, and only three are totally white. I think this is the darkest flock of lambs I have ever had.

The piglets arrived Easter Sunday. And like always it was like getting puppies; all trouble and so much fun. They have been helping me dig out the barn and that job is just about finished. My husband and I are building their summer housing on the edge of the woods. It is coming along, although I of course wish it was ready for the pigs to move into now. Like any project, it tends to take longer than expected, but



the pigs' summer house is going to be deluxe. I think they will be happy to be there and to spend the summer in the woods. This year I have Karl and Karlotta. Victor and Vivienne and Jean and Jeanine (French pronunciation). Jean is a squealer. Karlotta is a darling, and Jeanine is in charge. Such characters, every one of them.

The cows are so happy to be in the field. They were totally transformed by going out on



green grass. Not that they were trouble before, but now they seem so docile and content. It appears either one or both of our cows did not get bred by Floyd last fall, so we are planning another visit soon. At first I thought this was disastrous, but it was in fact an opportunity for change. It is funny how one can just use the mind and go from panic to calm in a matter of minutes. The opportunity was to change the cycle the cows were on. They have been having their calves in the fall and now we can change that to spring.

It would be a much better situation.

A red-tailed-hawk has been causing me grief lately. He is trying to get my chickens. This morning I found him feasting on one of my birds. He must have killed it just as I was getting out of bed. This is really bad, since now he thinks he can get away with it and will be coming back. As I write this, I'm sitting in the barn with my laptop, surrounded by pigs and chickens. I figured I might as well let him know that I am nearby, so he will be discouraged. I had this problem once before and I had to be on guard for a few days before the hawk finally gave up. I should get a baby monitor, so I can be aware of what is going on in the barn. All animals have an alarm call, and if this fellow comes around again in the early morning hours, I can be forewarned and can rush out there in my nightgown. That should scare the bugger. Don't you think?

Take care everyone and I hope to hear from you or see you this summer.

Your farmer and shepherdess *Selma*