

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Spring News 2015 from Bone Dry Ridge

Happy spring everyone

The weather report: Dry dry dry. How else can one describe the weather we have had. It is so dry, the condition of my fields, and the old well that waters the animals, are like what they are in mid-July. I have started tapping into my stored water. I don't generally tap into that until mid-July. The grasses have slowed down so much that I don't have enough for the regular rotational grazing. I'm predicting my fields will go dormant in mid-July. Unheard of around here.

Personal note: Many of you know that my husband battled with cancer for the last two years. His battle with it ended on March the 7th of this year. He passed away peacefully in his sleep. I'm sure many of you have gone through what we went through and know just what a roller coaster journey it is. I will be eternally grateful for the fact that in this state we have "Death with Dignity" laws, and the wonderful organization "Compassion and Choice of Washington" that helped us navigate the process. He was able to depart this world when he and I were ready. He came and visited me in a dream three weeks after he died. This helped me tremendously in the healing process. I woke up that morning with a smile on my face that pretty much has stayed there since. It is spring time, the time life begins again. Lots of little babies on the farm and hope is in the air.



Cows: No calves were born this year. I did not have the cows bred last year, because I am not able to separate the heifers from the bull when he comes for a visit. This has been something I have had trouble with the entire time I have been raising cows. It is easy of course when one has bull calves. For the last few years however, I have had one bull calf and one heifer every year. And because of not really being able to separate the heifers from the visiting bull, I have often thought about not raising cow at all. But so far they are still here.



Because of the drought, I will be bringing the cows to a pasture down in the lowlands, closer to the river, where water is plentiful. The cows have never had to enter a trailer, so this will be interesting. I'm planning to park the trailer in their field and have them get used to having it around. Then coax them in and out of it with some grain. Make it not a scary thing. In the next newsletter I'll tell you how it went.

Sheep: Lots of little lambs running around. I have about 30 lambs this year. The flock is a little bigger than it was last year. I was hoping for a perfect lambing season, but that did not happen. When is farming perfect? It was an unreasonable wish and I knew it. I had two ewes give birth to stillborn lambs. I got scared that something was going on in my flock, and that I was going to get many more of those, but at least that did not happen. I did breathe life into one lamb that was born with the bag over its head and suffocating. Usually the bag breaks as they are born. I came just in time. I saw this little thing kicking and trying to breathe. By the time I got to it, it had stopped, but I was able to breathe into it and all is well. The mom had gotten distracted by another lamb that was born at the same time, so she was attending someone else's lamb, not realizing hers needed assistance. I had to corral her for two days so she would accept the one I had saved for her. She did have a second lamb also, so now she is taking care of her two and not paying any attention to the one she was licking in the beginning. The maternal bond really takes place in the first 24 hours. If it does not happen then, there is no hope the ewe will let the lamb suckle. All is well that ends well.



Pigs: The pigs are arriving late this year. They will be here in early June. James, the farmer I get piglets from, was having problems with fertility this year and simply did not have enough that were available in April. So I'm anticipating their arrival soon. This will be a good experiment. Will it be better for me to have the pigs arrive in June or in April? One positive side of June arrival is that I will be able to feed them apples in the fall. Something they really love to eat. I'm planning on feeding them cultured milk again this summer. I will get raw milk from Keith, the dairy man, culture it with yogurt, mix grain into it and have it soak over night. They certainly have loved that in the past.

The Creamery: I'm so lucky to have great people working for me at the Creamery. During my husband's illness, I was not able to do much but take care of him. But the wonderful people who work for me did everything and kept it going just fine without me. We recently got into Whole Foods. We are selling at their store in Tacoma. Hopefully in the near future we will also be at the two Haggen's stores in Olympia.

Take care. Your farmer and shepherdess *Selma*