

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Spring News 2016 from Bone Dry

Happy Spring Everyone



I would like to dedicate this newsletter to Dali, the Llama. He died in May after a very short illness. He was with me for 15 years. He was about two years old when he came here to guard the sheep. At first he was terrified of the sheep, and it took him a whole year to warm up to them, but as the years went by he became one of them. He often was the first thing the lambs would see when they were born. He was present at every birth and after this many

years, he had seen every sheep in the flock being born. He was a very good guard lambs. In the early years he would do a drill just about every night. This consisted of him calling the sheep in his high shrill of a voice, and then rounding them up. He could get really pissed if one or two would not want to participate. But the sheep got used to this exercise and when Dale was concerned about anything, he only needed to call out and all the sheep would gather into a tight flock. He is already greatly missed.

Meat Sales: I have $\frac{1}{4}$ beef left, one and a half pigs and a bunch of lambs. Here is a link to the [brochure](#). To order, simply print and fill out the order form and send it back to me with the deposit. The beef cows will be slaughtered in mid-July, pigs in mid-August and the lambs in mid-October.

The weather report: What a spring this has been. This feels very much like last spring. Too much sun and heat. Grasses grew very fast and many farmers were haying in May. With no rain here at Bone Dry Ridge for two months the grasses have slowed down a lot. There still is plenty for the sheep and cows and soon they sheep will go down to the lowlands to irrigated pastures and the cows will be gone.

Cows: This is the last summer I will have my cows with me. 16 years it had been. I will still offer you beef options. But those animals will be raised on Keith's farm. He and I share the same philosophy in raising animals, give the animals whatever it is they need and you will end up with healthy happy animals. He is so much better set up for having cattle. He has been a dairy farmer his whole life. We do the Creamery together, he is reducing his dairy herd and crossbreeding some with beef cattle. He has a few



variations and I look forward to being able to offer them to you.

Sheep: What a lambing season I had. It started a month early and I had five sets of triplets and most of the others had two. I hardly ever have triplets and I don't really want triplets since the ewes only have two nipples and three lambs sharing the milk, makes each lamb generally smaller. But we shall see what happens. I contribute this unusual event to very good irrigated pastures last summer. The ewes were in unusually great condition = lot of back fat, when breeding season started and they got bred in their first cycle instead of their second, which is more the norm. Most of the lambs are rams, only a few ewe lambs. I don't have any explanation for that. Amongst all this wonderfulness there is



always some tragedy. One of the triplets died and one other lamb died when it was a week old from an unknown cause. This is the way farming goes. Some live and some do not. It is one of that hardest things to get used to in farming. Not being able to save them all. I have seen people give up because they could not take the emotional fluctuations during lambing season. One minute being happy seeing lambs being born and hopping around in a matter of hours and then being really sad when there are still births or a sick lamb that one is not being able to save. For me this was one of the attractions to farming. Emotionally on the edge during lambing season and giving it my best but also realizing I cannot save them all. This lambing season, I called the vet with a very difficult birth. I usually can handle this myself, but this time, I simply had to call in help. I was thinking we might have to do a cesarean but we were able to deliver both lambs live and well and their mom now considers me her new best friend. She used to be so skittish, but now we are on much better terms.



Pigs: The pigs I have this year are the most beautiful I have ever had. They are a cross between a Waddle and a Large Black. They are all ladies, some with a waddle and some without. They are being fed the organic grains, as always, and again this year they are getting 4 gallons of yogurt or milk for

breakfast. It is fun to bring out the bucket in the morning and see them eat $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon each in about two seconds. I'm going to keep them in and around the barn this summer. I'm wetting down the winter bedding from the sheep in the hope the pigs will do a better job of digging it up. Which in turn makes it easier for me to dig it out. During these warm days they like to dig into it to stay cool and I like that a lot.

The Creamery: The Creamery keeps doing well. We recently added Haggen's on Cooper Point in Olympia and many of the Whole Foods stores in the Seattle Area. We just started doing deliveries south to Vancouver. We are already in Chucks Produce on Mill Plain and will be at the other Chucks in two weeks. Keith and I have an intern named Aimee this year. She makes yogurt and helps out at the dairy and her partner, Brian is our delivery person.



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