

# Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



## Winter News 2014 from Bone Dry Ridge

I hope you all have had a good winter

I'm trying out this Mail Chimp service. It makes it simpler for me to send out the newsletters, but I cannot add attachments, so I don't know yet how to send you the brochures in the spring. But I will figure out something.

**The weather report:** This very dry winter has me worried. Often when we have a nice winter like this we have a terrible spring, but it sure has been nice to have this dry weather. Spring is just around the corner. My animals are looking over the fence at the green grass that has started growing.

**Cows:** This past fall and winter have been very eventful concerning our cows. Raggi got injured and had to be put down and Gracie broke her leg. It was a very sad day here at Bone Dry Ridge when Raggi died. She had been with us for 13 years, had given us many calves and was just a delight in every way. I had noticed her go downhill this summer, starting to look like an old cow. When the bull was here and breeding with her, he injured her hip, so that she could hardly walk. It was a sad day, and the only thing to do was to get the gun and put her out of her misery. To our dismay, when the shot was heard, all the other cows came running. They knew something terrible had happened. It was very interesting to be among the animals when one of them died. They all stood, looked at her, sniffed at her, and then just kind of hung around having a "good bye" ceremony, me crying, and the cows, saying their good byes to our very good, old cow Raggi. After an hour or so the ceremony was over. The cows went back up the hill to their hay, and I dried my eyes and went to get the tractor to bring the carcass up the hill for the butcher to take to the butcher shop. We can learn so much from the animals, and I think dealing with death is one of them. Skye is now the leader of this little herd of cows. She is much more bossy than Raggi ever was.



You may remember Abigail's calf Gracie, who had a hard beginning this summer when we had to keep her alive until her mom would let her suckle. The poor thing managed somehow to get her hind leg caught in the hay feeder, and broke it, right between her hoof and knee. I got the vet and together we managed to set the break and put a splint on the leg, using PVC pipe and a lot of duct tape. We are still not sure if this is going to work 100%, but we are crossing our fingers. Gracie and her mom are now inside the corral where I bring them hay and water twice a day. She is doing as well as can be expected and we hope this will heal. She is still young so the chances are pretty good.

**Sheep:** The sheep are doing very well. This fall I tried for the first time to use a breeding harness on my ram. This is a harness with a large crayon in front that marks the

ewes when he breeds with them. This way I can keep track of who is bred and when. It worked so well that I'm sold on this very simple breeding recorder. One thing that I need to keep up on is to change out the color in case the ram breeds with the same ewe more than once, i.e. use a blue crayon the first month and then change over to red. The ram did not mind at all having this on. I love it.



The Farmers in Independence Valley are starting a new but informal alliance. We want to be known as the Independence Valley Farmers. We think this will help us advertise ourselves as a group rather than just as individual farmers. We are in the process of setting up a website where people go to and then link to our respective farms' websites.

We are a very diverse group: vegetable farmers, meat farmers, a dairy farmer and a Creamery, as well as a plant nursery, just to name a few. Because we are forming this new alliance, I have decided to expand my little flock of sheep, so I will no longer have the need to purchase additional lambs from Tanglewood farm. I kept eight ewe lambs from this past fall that I will breed in the Fall.

**Chickens:** I'm not going to raise a lot of meat chickens this year. They do not spend a long time here on the farm, but when they are here they take a lot of my time. Since the Creamery has become very busy, I figure it is best to just keep the meat bird flock small.

**Pigs:** The pigs will be arriving in early April. I always look forward to that. Again, I'm getting the pigs from my friend and neighbor, James, who lives in the valley just South of us.

**The Creamery:** Flying Cow Creamery is hopping. Sales are going well. We are in many



stores now. To find out where to buy our yogurt, go to our website [flyingcowcreamery.com](http://flyingcowcreamery.com). I also have a FaceBook page. If you would like to Like it, that would be great. It has been very nice to be able to start this business in a leased facility at Black Sheep Creamery, but the time has come to have our own. Keith and his brothers are working on our own creamery building across the road from the dairy. We hope to have it up and running this Spring. Having our own facility will give us some room to grow and make yogurt when we need to, and not have to fit into the very busy schedule of

Black Sheep. If you are not familiar with their cheese, you should definitely try some of their many, many different cheeses. The link is [Blacksheepcreamery](http://Blacksheepcreamery).

This summer I will be offering Flying Cow Yogurt through the Independence Valley CSA farms. They are: Helsing Junction Farm, Rising River Farm and Wobbly Cart. We are still figuring out some of the logistics, but the yogurt will come in a thermal tote with an icepack to keep it cold and clean.

Take care. Your farmer and shepherdess

*Selma*