



Farm News - August

Haying season is over and considering the drought, yields were low but the quality high. What's a typical haying day like? The best time to rake hay is early in the morning when the dew is still on. The hay rake fluffs up the hay swaths which helps drying and brings two swaths together, cutting baling time in half. 5:00 AM is a good time to head out to the field. Perched on the seat of our 45 year old tractor is a great way to watch the sun rise. By 9 AM the hay is starting to dry and further raking would break off the fine leaves and flowers which are so valuable for their protein content. After the morning chores of feeding the chickens, pigs and turkeys it's time to start cutting more hay. This year I did something I've dreamed of for the past 30 years. I bought a brand new hay cutter (mower/conditioner). I couldn't resist the financing and the thought of a reliable machine with no breakdowns was too appealing. Unfortunately, "reliable" was not to be the case. There must have been a staff party the night before my NH499 was built. I had all kinds of mechanical issues. The folks at New Holland after hearing of my troubles brought me out a replacement machine which finished all my cutting trouble free and then they decided to give me a brand new one for next year. Honourable! Afternoons and evenings were spent baling. The big, round bales we wrapped were full of perfect hay, no rain (mixed blessing) and I know the bison, cattle and pigs will eat well this winter.

What a great month it's been for help on the farm: Daniel, a writer, traveller and customer from the Farmer's Market who wanted to see where his food came from. Sophie & Julia, on their one month agricultural internship along with Sebastian the WWOofer, all from Germany, stayed for August. Maxime, is an agricultural student from an organic dairy farm in France. He was a great help with all the haying. His brother even showed up for a few days. Then there was Thomas Kamiya, the Japanese mechanic who traveled across B.C., Yukon and Alberta, volunteering on organic farms to fix equipment.

As I write, a loon just passed overhead!

First summer holiday in 30 years! Leaving the farm during summer is almost impossible when you raise animals. For that reason my kids have never had a summer holiday with their parents. But awhile ago I promised them that when they graduated I would take them fishing to the coast. Well this spring my daughter graduated from high school and my son from university with a degree in environmental engineering. Thanks to the good help we had on the farm, the three of us were able to take off fishing to Kitimat and the Queen Charlotte Islands. A successful trip it was. We returned with two large coolers of halibut and salmon and lots of great photos and memories.

9th annual Ranch BBQ held this month. The annual event started out as a rodeo in 1919. When we moved to the farm in 1980 we carried on the tradition (minus the rodeo). *Jerry*