



Farm News - December

Christmas on the farm was a special day, not only for our friends and family but also for the three WWOOFers who were able to share it with us.

The two from Germany and one from France had a chance to see what a real "white Christmas" is like. With a meter of snow which had fallen since the start of winter, there was no shortage of whiteness.

Waking up on Christmas morning (-27 C) did not mean the start of a holiday, not when there are hundreds of animals waiting to be cared for. But because it is Christmas we like to do something special for them too.

What to give a chicken? Our thirteen young hens and one rooster received new shavings for their floor which left their coop with the scent of pine. Joe the donkey and his two lady friends, Julia and Jessica had always been jealous of Buttercup the milk cow, who gets a bowl full of oats every morning. The donkeys are getting a little plump from the good hay they've been eating but on Christmas morning, they were treated to oats. Buttercup and her 9 month old Jersey calf "Daisy" usually get separated at night so we can milk her in the morning. Their treat was to spend the night together so the calf had an extra gallon of milk to drink Christmas morning.

Passing by the hay bales on the way to the pigs there were signs that the moose had been enjoying the bright green alfalfa hay. They had left little presents all along the trail. With pigs being pigs, it was easy to know what they would like, more food! They enjoyed Christmas with extra full bellies, snuggled in their shelters with their buddies.

The turkeys? It was a relief to no longer have to carry all those pails. For once in their life they were on the "giving" end rather than the receiving end. I figured that there would be over a thousand people who would enjoy Christmas dinner thanks to their "trip to town".

The cows and the bison? They already had everything they needed so we just wished them "season's greetings" and headed back to the house. The aroma of bacon frying, the heat from the wood fire, the smiles of friends and family, the waiting Christmas tree, now it was our turn.

With a new year arriving it is time once again to reflect on the past to see if I have become any wiser. "No and yes" are the answers. "No" because the days are still overflowing with things that need doing, the never ending list, the ever more difficult job of balancing income and expenses. Then there's my old pickup with over 800,000 km, the aging machinery and the aging body.

"Yes" because I've come to realize that changes are in store. I have been gifted to lead the life I've been given. A wonderful family, a great neighbourhood, hundreds of people from around the world who have shared their lives and laughter and thousands of people I have nourished. In the bigger picture, it's been so rewarding that I've decided I should share it. I have this fantasy that there is someone or some young family with new energy, ideas, enthusiasm and purpose who sees the great opportunity of merging into First Nature Farms. Who? When? What? No idea but when I do find out, you'll read it in the "Farm News". Jerry