

## Farm News from December

Yes Jerry, there is a Santa Claus, or miracles, or incredible good luck.

Christmas on the farm means turkey season and 95 turkeys had been getting ready for the event. Part of our Goodfare tradition is the Christmas turkey catch, this year with eighteen neighbours ranging in age from two years to me participating. A half hour after we started the turkeys were ready for their trip. We headed to the house to warm by the wood stove, a large wok full of red pork curry to greet us along with the tasty treats the neighbours had brought. The evening was just getting going when we had to excuse ourselves and start the night time drive to the processing facility (600+ km).

It was 4:30 AM, and -23 C when we arrived. Sleep was instant. At 5 AM I heard a truck sound, ding, ding, ding. I tried to ignore it but since I've been driving the same 99 Dodge for 850,000 plus kilometres I knew something was wrong. The dash light said "check gauges". Voltage - good. Fuel - good. Temperature - good. Oil pressure - zero. (!!!)

Instantly awake I grabbed a flashlight, went out to check the engine and noticed a big puddle of oil under the motor. No oil on the dipstick. I shut the engine off and pondered options while the inside temperature dropped. I was glad we had made it to our destination but that was only the first part of our turkey adventure. I still had to deliver the birds to waiting customers in Edmonton, Grande Prairie and my neighbours at home. At 8 AM I started phoning. No rental trucks available. No mechanics who had time to check out my truck. No one to deliver the birds for me. All I could do was figure out where the leak was coming from.

In a warm carwash bay I cleaned my under my motor trying to find the leak. It took every yoga position I could contort myself into to reach all the potential spots and wipe them down trying to figure out where was the leak. No drips.

Stumped, I decided that if I drove the truck for a few miles it would surely start leaking again. Not a drop. Desperate, I found a mechanic who would look at it. He couldn't find a leak either. He said it looked like "the problem healed itself". "It must be a miracle".

Not believing in mechanical miracles I called my mechanic at home who said the "crankcase ventilation tube had probably frozen creating high pressure causing the oil to leak from a rubber gasket which resealed itself once the frozen blockage thawed in the car wash". He was right. I continued with my turkey deliveries without further incident and made it all the way back home with a very clean engine.

New Turkey record: 40.3 pounds

Earlier this month I took advantage of the confident farm help offered by my kids and WWOOFers and took off for nine days with friends in Mexico. I had travelled there in 1976 and spent six weeks living in a hammock in a little Mayan fishing village called "Playa del Carmen". Now returning 37 years later I saw the changes that had taken place. What was once a jungle with a pristine coastline was now a city full of shops, hotels, condos and now Walmart.

What would be a holiday to most travellers was a working holiday for me. I had been hoping for years to upgrade our farm website but never found the break from the farm to do so. Finally this was to be my chance. Not only did I have the break, I also had along my friend who designed the previous website. The time passed quickly as did the G&T's but I am happy with the results, the new, online version of:

[firstnaturefarms.ab.ca](http://firstnaturefarms.ab.ca)

Any constructive criticism would be appreciated. Jerry