



Farm News from June

"Careful what you wish for!" That was my response to my daughter when she suggested "we should get a goat". I knew her birthday was around the corner and now I knew what she was getting.

When the day came we went off to Trickle Creek Farm, home of the late Weibo Ludwig. I knew they had a herd of milking goats and recently offered to trade a "kid" for a young boar. They had several goats, all around a month old and in a short time, one ended in the arms of my daughter. That was when we met "Edith".

First thing I learned about Edith is that she cannot drink milk replacer meant for cows, it had to be special for goats. Off to town again in search of "goat milk replacer". When we got the bottle mixed and presented Edith with for sure was the perfect drink for baby goats, she won't touch it. Edith liked to be held and we soon discovered that she would only drink milk if she was held which became a two person job (three times a day). Another thing about Edith's milk drinking, she was incredibly slow. She would ferociously suck away but hardly drink anything. Set her down on the ground and she would quit. Try to leave and she would make her goat bleating cries "Baaaaa! (Don't leave me, I'm just a baby, hold me! You should feel guilty!)" She was very good at that.

A couple of weeks have passed and Edith has settled right in. She's drinking well and is everyone's friend. Edith is no longer allowed in the house however since she was caught grazing on the kitchen table.

Fox News? No foxes since last month. The yard chickens that I was so worried about are all still there and the thousand plus broilers I started from day old chicks have grown up free from predation.

It's taken approximately 622 buckets of grain (18,660 pounds) and 51,000 square feet of pasture to grow the 1037 chickens that have now moved to an elevated state of consciousness. Hope they had a good life. They were "surplus" chickens who lives would have ended at day one had someone not taken them.

I was around 800 km away from the farm when I got the call from home. "There's a small cow that looks like she's trying to have a calf, there's feet sticking out".

In the spring time our cattle herd is divided into two groups: the cows and heifers who are pregnant and those that are not. The vet helps us make that decision by "preg testing" in the fall. The pregnant ones get moved close to the house where we can check them regularly and the rest go out to pasture. The small cow trying to have the baby was with the group which was not pregnant, a now obvious mistake.

"Get her in the corral! Call the vet!" was my long distance advice. The result of the doctor's handy work was a C section and "Tiny Tim" was born alive but stunted. The mother had no milk or interest in her new baby so Tim was moved to the house. It was touch and go for the first couple of weeks but now Tim has the distinction of being of being our new yard pet and also the buddy of Edith the goat.