



Farm News from February

A long time ago I had great plans to be a turkey farmer. My free range birds would have the largest mobile shelters that anyone had ever designed - 4300 square feet each. I had an idea how I would build them out of salmon net, high tensile wire and one inch square steel tubing. Each pen would need 36 pieces of one inch square tubing, 24 feet in length.

The pens worked great and I built seventeen of them to shelter my 1400 wild turkeys. One thing I didn't expect was the Turkey Marketing Board to shut me down but they did. Disillusioned, I watched as my investment slowly collapsed to the ground. All that square tubing amounted to a lot of bent steel (17 pens x 36 pieces x 24 feet) and the plan was to build something with them some day. That was 20 years ago. Some projects take a long time to start. Finally this month we started straightening the twisted metal and with the aid of a welder, now have some new swinging gates.

I always say "expected the unexpected". While working on replacing the water pump on my faithful John Deere tractor (unexpected), we happened to glance out the shop door in time to see a herd of seven Icelandic horses running by. I corralled them and called the owner who said he was too busy at work to get

them. Now I'm boarding horses (unexpected).

My son and I were driving back from Edmonton talking about all kinds of things when the subject of "wild turkeys" again came up. "Y'know, I wouldn't mind getting some more and try hatching eggs again". Within a minute he and his phone found an ad about some wild turkeys for sale close to where we live.

A few days later I brought home seven mature turkeys and once again after many years, it looks like I'm a wild turkey farmer. Hopefully they'll hatch some chicks this spring.

All kinds of visitors like to drop by but we've had one that has spent the past month hanging around the compost pile. At first, he/she would fly off when I approached but we're buds and the juvenile Bald Eagle tolerates me get pretty close.

It's starting to look like this is the month for new species on the farm. I've raised all kinds of critters but now I placed a \$200 deposit on 3 pounds of insects due to arrive in April. Buying insects by the pound does sound a little weird but as I've recently learned, that's how honey bees arrive. Three pounds of bees plus one queen. One thing I've already learned is that I have a lot more learning to do and a month to do it in. Jerry