



Farm News from November

Back in calving season of spring 2014 there seemed to be a lot more heifer calves born than bull calves. We don't keep a large herd, around 24 cows, just enough to supply the Farmers' Market and a few requests for sides.

That was then and last week our local vet made her yearly visit to "preg test" our cows and see who was bred and who was not. I was a little concerned this time since in the spring we got a new bull and although he was "mature" I never did actually see him breed any cows. That could be disastrous for a beef producer. One year we had a bull who preferred rubbing against trees instead of cows. (That's what it takes to go from breeder to burger)

In preparation of the vet visit we rounded up all the cows along with all the young heifers, a total of 40 animals.

The vet did her thing with her ultrasonic probe and the results - 39/40 were bred, a remarkable achievement for one bull in a short amount of time! Suddenly I had a whole new respect for the new bull.

It may seem that we are back into the beef business but there are some new problems. Next year the amount of organic hay land we can cut has been reduced by 60%. That means a 60% reduction in our beef herd of 24. 10 cows? And our bison cows, from 35 to 15. A 60% reduction in income? We're going to have to come up with some new creative solutions if we want to keep doing what we've been doing.

The grizzly bear that haunted the neighbourhood has avoided the trap set out by Fish & Wildlife. Aside from the large helping of pork he took from our neighbour, the 25 year old male caused no further problems.

Sixty the dog is barking with a little higher voice these days. The vet said he was a "licker" and insisted he wear a plastic cone around his head. "Keep him inside for a couple of days" What a hassle that was! The cone was almost as big as the dog and he kept bumping into everything in the house. Most notable were our shins. Then when we let him outside, the cone shattered in the cold and we had to duct tape it together, a blue duct tape with pink pigs on it.

After 5 days that was enough.

Buttercup the milk cow is having a relationship, the first in a long time. When we moved the bull in with her it was love at first sight. The two would share seductive moos and lick each other's necks. Clara the calf was starting to play second fiddle to this new guy in the corral. Step-dad?.

Poor Buttercup. I don't think she knows she is number 40 in the bull's list of flings. She's the only cow left. The bull is still unnamed. Ideas? Jerry