



## Farm News from May

Spring is supposed to be the rainy season, necessary for all plant life to start growing. In Goodfare, it hasn't happened. We had one good rain, around one inch. Other than that, just bits of damp weather. That's the bad news.

The good news is that spring is also birthing season for our beef and bison herds and there are lots of healthy babies running around. This year we tried to expand our cow herd with many first time heifers. Amazingly - no problems! 100% success! Healthy mothers with white striped calves (Belted Galloways).

Then there was a group of young bison originally destined for the Farmers Market but 9 of the heifers have now become new mothers with 9 new babies. The pasture with the older bison cows is also speckled with newborn bison calves, too many to count.

Back to the bad news, they have no grass to eat. I'm still feeding from my dwindling stock of precious hay bales.

No rain means no grass which means no grazing which also means no winter feed. Tough decisions ahead.

Around 24 years ago I decided to get into free range poultry and came up with a design for a movable poultry pen. Most portable poultry shelters are 12' x 12', around 144 square feet. Some are bigger, many are smaller. The ones we built on the farm were 4300 square feet. Back then we'd constructed 17 of them. They've worked great up until I was shut down by the Turkey Marketing Board (that's another story). But age has caught up with the shelters. Over the years I thought of improvements I could make and so this spring we've started 2 new shelters. With chickens in the brooder house and turkeys on the way the pressure to

complete the project is on. Lots of shop time in the next couple of weeks.

As I was doing the chicken chores this morning I couldn't help but wonder how many other chickens in the world were listening to Brahms and Mozart? Last night it was James Brown and Bob Dylan. Our chickens listen to CKUA radio. It helps to enhance their appreciation of the diversity in music. It also helps to keep them calm when noises such as voices, tractors, etc would otherwise frighten them.

The pigs are in the process of moving. Every spring they go from their wintering grounds to fresh new spring pastures. The houses move, the fences move, the feeders move, the water systems move and finally the pigs move. It's lots of work but the job is very rewarding. Happy pigs! They love it!

Ever have a crappy day? There's a few things to watch when milking a cow and one of those things is the tail. One WWOOFer was showing his new milking skills to another and was demonstrating from behind the cow. He missed seeing the tail rise. The next instant he was totally covered." It was really warm!"

Back in January I had a chance to travel in Uganda and ended up working on some garden projects at a school for orphans and "vulnerable" kids. A friend of mine took some footage and has since edited it down to a great little YouTube video. If all goes well I'd like to return next winter and would share any donations. Unlike other projects this one has zero administration costs. \$250 US was enough to build a classroom allowing a group of 11 year olds to return to school for another year. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6X7ZDljik4> Jerry

# Farm News from May

