



## Farm News from October

It was the beginning of October; I was driving from Edmonton when close to home I noticed a skiff of snow on the highway. "It's a bit early" I thought. Concern grew and so did the amount of snow as I drove the last few miles.

6 inches of snow! "It'll melt". But it didn't. Since then we've had another 14+".

Aside from putting an end to my plans for fall field work it created another problem. Mud! Normally the ground would be freezing but not this year. Under that insulating wet snow is saturated earth and now axle sinking mud. Either we're spinning out on slippery snow or breaking through and making ruts in mud. Boot sucking mud!

We should have had all our bales hauled home by now but we can't get into the fields - mud! The new pastures we set up for the pigs have all been rooted up and have turned into - mud! Our once firm gravelled driveway - mud! Our vehicles, our boots, our porch, our gloves, our clothes - mud!

Forecast for the next 2 weeks? "Snow and temperatures around zero". This may be the first time I've wished for -30.

I spent a few weeks checking ads for milk cows. There were a lot of cows in a lot of different situations but finally we settled on one that sounded promising; a 2 year old Jersey cow complete with a little bull calf.

"3 gallons a day". Exposed to a Jersey bull in July she would also be calving again next April. The only problem was distance, an hour south of Prince George

BC which was another 1 hour

Desperate to not be buying industrial milk from the stores I hooked up the stock trailer and started the journey.

When I first met "Brittany" (not my choice of names), she was pretty skinny but her big brown eyes convinced me she wanted to be adopted into our family.

The "3 gallons a day" ended up being about a litre on the first milking. Disappointed? Yes, but over time with the addition of our best hay and treats of oats and flax she was up to a gallon a day. Enough for drinking but not enough to make butter and cheese.

As hard as we tried to rename her, nothing stuck. Her ear tag says "Brittany". Her bull calf's tag says "Brittany". Maybe that's the problem; she needs a new ear tag!?

Tim was a little shy on oxygen when he was born and ended up as a bottle fed calf. That was 2 years ago. Now he's a friendly big guy with short little legs. We were recording cattle ear tag numbers in the corral the other day and had a pen tied to the clip board. Most cows move away when you approach them. Not Tim, he moves in, "lovingly." Tim decided he needed that pen on the string and with 600 pounds of muscle behind his pair of cow lips, he was going to get it. This made the attempt of recording ear tag numbers very difficult. If I was a fiction writer, he would have taken that pen and wrote out a message. What would it say? Maybe I'll let Tim will write the next "Farm News".

Jerry