



Farm News from November

She's called the "Secret Cat". No one knew we had this cat, including me. It was a few months back when I was given this middle-aged cat. Her owner had passed on. Arriving home, I let her out of the carrier and instantly she bolted to somewhere in the house. That was the last time we saw her. "Where's the new cat?" "I have no idea". The question remained and after several weeks we started to forget about her until someone discovered her hiding in a hole in some log work at the top of the stairs. It took the length of my arm to touch her and depending which way she was facing, a long arm could pull her out. We would pet and cuddle her but as soon as we set her down, she was gone. One time I had the bright idea to plug the hole. She disappeared for weeks after that. I unplugged the hole hoping she would come back.

Months have gone by and not once has she been seen roaming around the house. Her spot is the top of the stairs, back in her hole. To feed her we make a scratching noise at the entrance to the hole. She then comes out to eat. Often our other cat joins her. They get along fine.



We pick her up, hold her. She purrs. Put her down and she goes right back to her spot. She's a mystery, our Secret Cat.

Do pigs care what their food is served in? No, but I do. We've had a busy time in the workshop building new pig troughs, 16 feet long with dividers that reduce feeding competition. I like to say that pigs are really destructive and anything I build for them has to be strong. The more steel used to reinforce the wooden troughs, the better. Truth is the I'm the destructive one, me and the tractor. The 10 new troughs represent around 100 hours of work. Do the pigs appreciate all the work? Only if they contain food.

Our new cow, Brie is a rare breed Canadian milk cow. She's Canada's only breed of milk cow, originating from Quebec and selected by French monks in the 16th century. When she arrived she had no halter since she was restrained by a head gate for machine milking. We only milk by hand so a halter is important. Brie also had a full set of horns which made working with her a little more intimidating. Slowly, over weeks she got used to her halter, then being tied and eventually the goal was achieved. We could now lead her into the milking parlor, put a bucket under her and milk. Our neighbor has come by every Saturday for years to milk our cows and this time, delaying the chores I made sure I was

around to tell her about our success and detail the procedure. As we proudly described our baby steps to get Brie to the state she could be milked our neighbour listened patiently. Her response? "Oh, I've been milking her for the past 3 weeks!"^{Jerry}

