



Farm News from September

Most people who raise bison would cringe at the thought of leaving a gate open. I had no choice.

The summer pasture was finished and the fall pasture was lush but that meant getting the bison to go diagonally across the public road through the intersection to a whole new section of land.

Normally I would set up panels to direct the bison but last month I was short on help and there wouldn't be enough time to set up panels and take them down if a vehicle came. Instead I just opened the gate and waited, hoping for the best.

That didn't happen. Instead, they went running down the middle of the road until they were out of sight. Years ago I lost them when a tree fell on the fence. They were gone for 11 weeks. I thought of that as the last ones disappeared down the road. Fortunately their taste of freedom was short lived and they returned back, found the gate I had left open for them and ran into the new pasture. Phew!

You have to be quick! Our laying hens enjoy the sight of the compost bucket. It contains all sorts of treats they love and some that the chickens don't like too. Leftover pasta, rice, apple cores, meat



trimmings are all tasty treats. Tea bags, onion skins, orange or lemon peels, not so much. With 45 hens we have to throw the compost to spread it so all the chickens

have an equal chance. That's when they have to be quick. In order to get the best goodies, they have to assess what's being offered (in mid air), where it's going to land and how to be there when it hits the ground. It's a game of luck and skill.

What makes holes in the turkey netting, 7 feet off the ground? Big bird maybe? What also leaves turkey feathers?

Carnivorous big bird perhaps? And leaves massive poops filled with oats and



wheat? Omnivorous big bird? My first thought was a bear but how would the bear get back through the hole 7 feet in the air?" A bear always exits in a different spot

than it enters" I was told. Sure enough, with a walk around the 300 foot perimeter of the pen I found where the bear had exited, also a dead turkey and a paw print as proof. I knew why the bear had left the uneaten turkey. I had an electric fence around the perimeter. Too bad for the turkey and a good lesson for the bear. He hasn't returned. Thanks given.



Some guys have problems with things caught in their beards but so do bison. This one had issues with snowballs.

Jerry

First Nature Farms is a family farm in the Peace Country. Once a month, First Nature Farms owner Jerry Kitt writes about his experiences on the farm.

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