



Farm News from July

Tough year for haying, the rain is unrelenting. The growing season started out pretty dry. That told the plants "you'd better hurry up and go to seed while you have enough moisture". Once the plant goes to seed then the protein levels goes down. Then the rains came. The plants started growing again. More rain, more growth. Low protein but lots of volume. I was getting excited. The last few years I was really short on hay but this year it was starting to look like there could be extra. The problem is that after the hay is cut, it has to dry to 15% moisture in order to store without moulding. The cloudy skies and showers never let the swaths dry.



At this time of year I should be almost finished. Instead I've barely

even started. To date I've made 4 bales of mouldy feed. Lots of grass out there, too bad I can't get harvest any.

How serious of a problem is it? No hay means no winter feed. No winter feed means sell the animals (cows and bison). No beef or bison means no Farmers Market. No Farmers Market? No sense growing turkeys or chickens either.

The problem is not only mine but affects all the producers. Going to be a lot of disappointed cows this winter.

As a meat producer I am always interested in groups that promote animal rights and welfare. I'm actually a supporter of two groups, GAP (Global Animal Partnership) and SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). Our farm has been certified with both groups for years. But there is one animal issue that affects hundreds of millions no one ever talks about. That is the problem of horny chickens. All those hens, mostly caged, when they reach puberty, start to lay eggs. The one thing missing in their



lives is the rooster.

Do they miss the intimacy? I suspect so. Our hens have a rooster and our turkey hens have a tom. Barnyard sex is common occurrence (and not limited to closed chicken coop doors).

The result - contented chickens and fertile eggs. All the eggs from the stores are from "starved chickens".

At the Farmers Market I sold some eggs to a farm family and told them "put them in the fridge and you have eggs, put them under a hen or in an incubator then you have chicks". This one young guy tried it by sneaking one of our turkey eggs under a chicken. A month later he was really excited to share the news: "the chicken had hatched out a turkey!" Jerry