



Farm News from November

December has arrived and Santa (me) has built a new giant sled to bring gifts. Not for children but for pigs. If one was to ask a pig what they wanted for Christmas I'm pretty sure the answer would be "food!". They have an incredible ability to over eat.

The problem has been getting the food out to the pigs since the ground has not totally frozen. The high spots finally are frozen but the low spots still have running water. That's where we get stuck. The



problem was mostly solved by building a giant flat bottomed sled which slides over the ice and does not sink in the mud, capable of carrying

2500 kg. Sleigh rides anyone?

Aside from the Berkshire pigs we normally sell, we also raise a rare heritage breed, the Red Wattle and another breed listed as "critically rare", the Mulefoot. The

Mulefoot has a hoof like a horse instead of the normal split or cloven hoof of cows, sheep, goats and most pigs. This ancient breed is valued for its production of fat. Unfortunately, we had to butcher one of our Mulefoots. Too bad for the pig but great for us because we used the fat to make lard. A simple process, just put the fat in a slow cooker, set it on "low" and a couple hours later ladled the liquid fat into jars. This picture shows the finished



product from just one third of the fat. The great thing about lard is that it stores well at room temperature.

We keep a jar next to the stove and use it for most of our frying needs.



Another

thing is that lard is pure and unlike commercial cooking oils, is not genetically modified. So easy to make so what could be better? It's local, organic and great for the keto diet if you want to lose weight. Praise the lard!

After all the warm weather, we finally got a bit of a cold snap (-20). That's when a group of pregnant sows decided to farrow (give birth). It seems like colder weather helps to kick in the maternal instincts of the sows. Losses are less and the babies seem to thrive. It takes about a week before they start to

venture outside the cozy houses to follow their moms to the feed



trough. A couple weeks after that and they're just like kids, wanting to go outside to play with their friends. "Don't forget to put a jacket on!" "Huh?"

Jerry