



## Farm News from January

It was 10 PM and while walking back from the shop I was greeted by some very unexpected visitors. Quacking from the darkness in front of the house were four ducks. "What's going on?" I asked. Unable to understand their reply I went to the chicken coup where they should



have been sleeping. Everything seemed normal. Their other buddy duck was in there snoozing but I noticed that 3 chickens were missing. No signs of struggle or lost feathers. Predator? I had a better search outside with my flashlight and bedded down

in the snow were the 3 missing chickens. They seemed perfectly fine, no missing feathers, just hunkered down, asleep in the snow. "What's going on?" No reply. I picked up the sleeping chickens and returned them to the chicken coup.

The next morning I was very anxious to figure out what had happened. Unfortunately I didn't figure it out. Everything was back to normal. Mystery.

The minus 40 streak of weather we had for a week was a bit brutal, especially for the WWOOFers from Europe. When in the fall the temperatures used to be plus 5 and they would complain about the cold I would say "the time will



come when it is minus 20 and you'll comment how warm it is." I'm sure they never believed me. That's the nice thing about minus 40. When the cold snap broke and temperatures rose to minus 20 they said "It's so warm!"

The pigs stayed warm with their nice canarygrass bales of straw fluffed up inside their houses. Other straw like oat, wheat, barley straw works well for bedding but I always feel like I'm stealing from the soil when I buy straw. Reed canarygrass is a perennial which comes up year after year and produces so much organic matter that I don't think the soil would miss it too much. Fluffy and organic, the pigs love it.

"Change is always a good thing" and with the addition of the next two generations on the farm there has been no shortage of changes. There has been one change that I've wished for even before those generations got started. I've always wanted to go solar. All the electricity we have used in the past has been generated by the burning of coal. This is about to change thanks to some 15 year financing at 4.5% interest. I've decided that now is the time. Construction of our solar farm will begin with 60 x 395 watt panels this spring!



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Jerry