



## Farm News - February

Buttercup the milk cow has had a tough month. Last month Joe the donkey had to be banished to another field for chasing her. Now Joe's girl friends are taking up where Joe left off. Julia and Jessica have decided that they have issues being in the same pasture as Buttercup and started chasing her around. Buttercup is the most gentle milk cow ever and being bullied by two donkeys certainly stresses her out. This is easily measured by the amount of milk she gives each morning. So the female donkeys (Jennys) were removed to another area but that was not the end of the milk cow's problems. One day Buttercup discovered the chicken food, about 500 kg. of it. Having a taste for wheat, oats, peas, flax and all kinds of other goodies, she started eating, and eating, and eating to the point that her giant belly could not handle all the rich food and she started to bloat. Bloat is a serious condition for cows. The inability to release gasses causes the stomach to keep enlarging until pressure stops organ function. Not a pleasant way to go. Fortunately we have a neighbour, Frieja who along with some other neighbours, arrived in time to save her life. Thanks! Buttercup is back to health now and gives us a gallon of milk each morning.

Blooming Aloe vera? It is supposed to be a rare event but my Aloe vera plant is now sporting a 3 foot stem with pinkish yellow flowers at the top.

When we had our blasts of freezing cold earlier this winter I kept saying, "gotta fix the insulation in the chicken coup". Well it happened. (Of course the weather warmed up after that). The coup is now super insulated and our thirteen hens are now laying around eight eggs a day.

"Jack" the Irish Wolfhound is a great companion, but that's about it. I like the quiet gentleness of the breed but I was hoping the giant dog would take over some of the security operations on the farm. Not so. Everyone is Jack's buddy. I've watched the coyotes wander along the creek just fifty meters from the house. Jack (if he awakes) would lift his head, maybe open an eye or two, then drop back down, enough excursion. The two year old dog is so tall now that if I stand next to him, I cannot reach over him and grab the dog dish. He's a good listener though. I can set some meat in front of his nose and tell him to "stay". Five minutes later the treat is still untouched.

One of my highlights of living on the farm is sharing it with all of the "WWOOFers" (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) who come by to share their time. I'll miss them all as for the next couple months I'll be the only one here. Lucky.

Jerry