



Farm News - March

When the times comes to give birth, we offer the best we can for our sows. Private accommodation, an 8x8 foot insulated shelter filled with straw. No farrowing crates, steel bars or confinement on this farm. So when our brown polka dotted sow decided not to use her private shelter and to have her babies where the big boars lived, I was very concerned. She had eleven babies including the little runt who could fit into the palm of your hand. I tried moving her to join other nursing sows in the maternity area but she would not leave. Those big boars weigh over 500 pounds and the brutes have zero nurturing skills. They could easily crush the little babies with their feet or lay on top of them. "What to do?" I stressed. The sow however, had her own solution to the problem. She just kicked the boars out and took over their house. Five days later, the boars were still having to sleep outside.

Of the 2 weeks I spent in with my daughter in Cuba, only 10 minutes were on the beach. The rest of the time was touring around the organic farms, research facilities and urban "organiponicos". Their government is trying to encourage food security and self reliance. This was very evident in the many places we visited. One I especially liked was the garden center. Here at home there would be all kinds of pesticide and fertilizers. There they sold only natural soil amendments produced by farmers. Natural compost, worm castings, pest-treatments from plant extracts. All the seeds, treatments, tools and gardening supplies were subsidized by the government. They even had a complimentary grinder service. If you brought corn, grains or beans they would grind it into flour. Free consultations too, the organic horticulture staff even made house calls. We have a lot to learn.

The Nature Conservancy (our next door neighbours) say "yes" to mile long pipeline. Conoco Phillips say they need the pipeline to "relieve the pressure". Slowing the rate of flow would also relieve the pressure.

Little overnight skiffs of snow make tracking really easy. On a morning walk down the driveway I saw the tracks of squirrels, rabbits, grouse, mule deer, coyotes, moose, dogs, cats, my daughter and a school bus.

Helpless on the farm. That's what the next month looks like. Normally I have one or two people working along with me, there to learn about organic farming. Now there seems to be a break in the scheduling until May which means I have the whole farm to myself. Hard work but good work and lots of it. Although organic farming may not be all that profitable, the real value comes from knowing that I'm producing the most nutritional, cleanest, healthiest meats possible. Growing healthy families is my reward.

Jerry