



## Farm News - May

When the phone call came, "are you interested in an old tom turkey" I said "yes and no.....I'll think on it". "Yes" because I like wild turkeys but "no" because an old turkey would just be a pet, I don't need another pet and I don't have time to build a turkey house. So I called back to say "no". She said, "if you don't want it we're just going to kill it". "Where did you get it from?" I asked. "From a neighbour who bought the chick from you!" At least 10 years ago I used to hatch and sell wild turkeys. Now I felt distant pangs of responsibility. One week later, "Norbert" has moved back to his place of birth, living in his new turkey house.

Although we specialize in grass fed beef and bison, I've started giving oats to my calves. Not for nutrition, but for training purposes. Grass fed animals have no reason to associate with humans so any contact becomes stressful. I prefer to have them "friendly" so I can walk amongst them. So now in the mornings I call out to the beef calves "Come Boss!" and spread a pail of oats in the trough. For the bison calves I call "Moostoos, Tatonka, Astum!" (buffalo, buffalo, come here!) The beef calves were the quickest to catch on. A couple of weeks later I woke to find they had escaped because the fence was down. "This will be their first test" I thought. So I went with my pail of oats and started calling them. Within 5 minutes they were all back, happily munching their oats.

The new boar I got last month is doing great. I was finally able to release him in with the sows and "Brutus", the dominant male. I anticipated a fight but they decided to accept each other without a battle. The new boar "Carl" was a freaked out, paranoid pig when I bought him. Now he comes to the fence looking for treats when I walk by.

High speed internet arrives at the farm! It took a 67' tower to reach the signal. The previous "dial up" system was so slow that I would click "Get Mail" before I went to bed and in the morning I would either be able to check my emails or view a message that said "connection interrupted".

Chicken chicks arrive. The 1100 peeping, bundles of fluff may be cute but they sure are a lot of work. They've added an extra couple of hours to my day. The chicks will spend around 3-4 weeks in their brooder barn before I turn them out to pasture to "free range" in their huge mobile shelters.

I was finally able to collect last year's barley crop. When I seeded the barley in spring '09 I had hoped for grain in the bin come fall so I wouldn't have to purchase it to feed my pigs. That didn't happen. This spring I had to bale it up. But like most farmers, we live in "next year country". This spring I went out and seeded another 50 acres, oats this time. I borrowed the seed drill from my organic neighbour down the road. The seed drill was so old that the chart that details the various settings for different crops (oats, wheat, corn etc.) also included a setting for hemp. Jerry