



Farm News - November

When it comes to family planning, no farm animal does it better than the buffalo. Beef cows and pigs can give birth any time of year but the bison consistently reserve the month of August for breeding and May for birthing. It makes sense. May is when the new grass starts growing so the mothers get prime nutrition and the calves have excellent summer pasture to supplement their mother's milk.

Family planning was not in the mind of one buffalo cow who got a little too close to the bull last winter. The result of her encounter appeared this fall when her calf was born. Although the mother and calf are doing well, all the bison in the herd have been affected by the new addition. Normally the herd is pretty quiet at this time of year and it's easy to walk up close to them. Sometimes I'll be cutting twines on one side of the bale and they'll be munching on the other side.

The new mother is very protective of her calf so as I get close, she runs away taking her calf with her. The other bison see this and as they do by instinct, "follow the leader". She sees the herd behind and just keeps going. After awhile they come to a stop and must think, "what am I doing way out here when all the food is back there?" They slowly start wandering back and resume munching until the next event spooks the new mother. "Oh, not again!"

Boreal owl comes by to visit. This cute little owl stands only 10 inches tall and likes to hang out in our "feed shed". Fortunately for him/her, the feed shed also happens to be a spot where the mice also would like to take up residence.

Moving the cows is usually an easy process but if they get spooked, anything can happen. This was the case when I was in town and my good help saw an opportunity to move the herd across the road. Everything was going well until the last four animals (calves) made the unwise decision to travel down the road rather than across it. Two miles later the chase ended up back in the field they started from. Both calves and *WOOFFers had quite an adventure that day.

One thing that's been on the list for years is to "bring in the kitchen knives for sharpening". It's nice when you have friends in the meat cutting business because no one can sharpen a knife better than a good butcher. Within the first few days of getting our razor sharp knives back we had a new item on the list - bandages.