



## Farm News - November

Not too often do I get a chance to leave the farm. Holidays are something other people take. But my kids were taking them and I had a chance to go along with them. So the goal to "travel with my family" became my drive and for two weeks before the departure date I put in double shifts. Getting food prepared for the pigs, extra hay to the bison and cows, sorting, fencing, dealing with mechanical issues, preparing for pig birthing, organizing grain deliveries, paperwork... on and on. I had already paid for the trip so not being able to go would have been a real bummer.

Two days before departure I realized I was not going to make my deadline and I had to either cancel or postpone the flight. For an extra \$250 I was able to delay departure by one day. It seemed weird, having to pay to stay at home and work but it was worth it.

The next day I was in Turin, Italy at a gathering of thousands of food producers from around the world. The SLOW FOOD movement believes that food should be fairly produced, should be nourishing, tasty, and produced in a way which sustains the soil, the farmer, the traditions and the community. The idea is nothing new but the eroding of our right to produce food is very recent. The domination of food production by a handful of power hungry corporations is moving in to capitalize on our need to eat. Even the right to save our own seeds is becoming illegal.

That's why I support SLOW FOOD, the change we need to become. Sorry, that was the start of a rant. Italy. The few days I spent at Terra Madre reminded me of how delicious good food can be. The next five days were in Iceland for the Airwaves music festival. The recommended delicacies of Iceland (split sheep's head, sheep testicles and fermented shark meat) were left for those with a braver palate.

When the time came to find a new truck (under \$400) I went to my local towing service. The truck didn't have to be anything special, it's only purpose was to haul a water tank to the pigs. The new/old Dodge ran well and along with the truck came the contents of the cab: beer cans, a sleeping bag, a very fancy glass bong and a package of bacon. The truck had been sitting all summer in the heat with the windows closed. I could not imagine what condition the bacon must be in but I saw that some mice had chewed a hole in the plastic but had not touched the contents. Dare I have a sniff to see what the ancient bacon had become? I did and to my surprise, it smelled like bacon.

Driving home the other night I saw the one thing I did not want to see. Covering the snowy road were tracks, bison tracks.

Last year I had some yearlings escape. It took eleven weeks before they were all home. The thought of another 'bison adventure' was not what I needed at this time. There was nothing I could do in the dark so at first light I was out there. Tracks everywhere! I checked my herd of yearlings, the ones that escaped last year. All there, good! That left the herd of 40 cows plus calves. To my surprise, they were all inside where they were supposed to be. (???)

I found the answer. At one low spot along the fence where the grass grew tall, the weight of the snow on the grass pushed the wire down. As the amount of snow increased, the wire was pushed lower and lower. Apparently the bison had noticed this before I had but to my good fortune, not only did they go out through the hole but they came back in. I like to think that in the mind of my bison they think, "there's no place like home".

Jerry