



Farm News - October

The job of haying is not complete until the bales are moved from the field into the hay yard. This involves driving the truck and trailer out to the field where the bales and tractor are waiting. I park the truck, hop on the tractor and start loading the bales onto the trailer, 12 per load. In years where I left the job too long, stray cattle, deer, elk or moose would start munching on the bales. I don't mind feeding wildlife but when the bales start to fall apart, it leaves a mess in the field which has to be cleaned up.

And so many mice this year! Squish them or leave them? While I'm busy trying to get the hay in, the mice who live in the field have found the best home they could imagine. 1250 pounds of nice, dry hay to protect them from the elements. They have everything they need: food, insulation and a secure spot where the predators can't find them. They must not have a care in the world until suddenly a distant engine interrupts their silence. The next thing they know sunlight is pouring in as the security of their home is lifted high above their heads and then gone with the tractor.

Most of the bales had 6-10 of the fat, grey rodents. Staring at them from the tractor seat I have a choice, drive forward and run over them or stop and reverse the tractor. Knowing that the hawks, owls, weasels, etc. will dine well thru the winter I back away (most of the time) leaving the mice to reconsider a new home.

The last time I left the farm to go to the Farmers Market I also left a number of Berkshire sows that were close to farrowing (having babies). Each sow had their own little shelter, filled with straw with a carpet over the door to keep them cozy. Since the majority of our farm income comes from raising pigs, I was leaving a lot of responsibility up to those sows. Three days later I returned to find each shelter filled with the overly cute, panda patterned piglets. Nice job moms!

Last month I was an empty nester. How things have changed! With Chad and Collin (Manitoba), Nadav and Daniel (Israel), Antoine (France) and Darius (Germany) here to share the farm, the dinner table is again full. Most of the guys are here thru the WWOOF program (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). We have a lot of fun together (and good food) and the animals appreciate the extra attention too.

It was 23 years ago we built our log house and 23 years ago since we paid any attention to the outside logs. Unfinished projects tend to go unfinished for a long time around here (just this spring I finally tiled the kitchen floor). Thanks to the great help and inspiration from the WWOOFers (and my daughter) we are finally tackling those unfinished logs. If you added up all the logs in our 26x36' house, it would amount to almost a half a mile of log which has to be sanded, stained and chinked. A third of the way thru the project, what's done is looking great! Thanks guys!