



## Farm News - September

First Nature Farms, certified organic since 1990 just had their 20<sup>th</sup> organic inspection. Usually the inspectors change every year or two and each one has a different spin on the inspection process. Our first inspector spend his time walking around the fields, checking the soil and plant health. Our latest inspector spent her time going over our paperwork, checking out the "audit trail". She picked at random one animal we had which happened to be a pig processed on June 27<sup>th</sup>. We were able to follow that pig all the way from the store in Vancouver where it was sold, to the truck that transported it, the plant that processed it, the day it arrived, the source (our farm), all the food the pig ate, the feed recipes, which farm the feed grains came from and the organization which certified their farm as organic!

Added to our organic inspection was our SPCA inspection, our 4<sup>th</sup> one.

Weaning time is never a pleasant process but there comes a time in the life of a pig when they are old enough to leave their mothers and start a new life of their own. The trouble is, they don't really want to go. They just keep nursing and their mothers get run down. Once the young pigs can't get enough milk they often move onto other sows, robbing other piglets of their nourishment. Our pigs are weaned around 5-8 weeks. It's quite a job to catch all those weaners and move them into their new home. The process took me weeks before everyone was caught. Imagine my disappointment (and their mothers too) to find out that during the night the fence had opened up and all the pigs had escaped back to their old homes. Suddenly plans for the day had changed but by nightfall most of the pigs were back with their fellow weaners. It took 2 weeks to catch the last one.

Free range chickens? Our flock of egg layers roam free around the farm under the watchful eye of Walter Pyrenees and Rosy the Irish Wolfhound. Although the chickens love it and their eggs are delicious, the birds also enjoy the deck of our house. They're nice to see out the window but it's their "calling cards" that leave a mess.

Haying finally finished. Forecasting the weather and predicting the next equipment breakdown is essential for quality hay. Although yields were down, the quality was high. If you happen to be a bison, cow or pig living on our farm, you can look forward to a season of fine dining. Organic of course! Jerry