



Farm News from April

I've always been amazed by the sales of organic pigs. We've often had less pigs than we needed to sell but never more. We are the only farm I know of that has pigs birthing throughout the year - outside. That's no problem in the warm months but the minus 30's of winter can prove challenging. How do we do it? We don't; the sow does it all. What we do is select pigs for their maternal instincts: the ability to nest and care for their newborns. These skills are no longer needed for conventional production since farrowing crates and controlled environments make maternal instincts unnecessary. Artificial insemination has replaced the need for boars. Not on our farm however. When it comes to breeding, we leave it all up to the boars.

The sales of our pigs are pretty constant throughout the year. Pork has no season when it comes to supper. But the breeding of the sows can be unpredictable, kind of a "hit and miss" thing. Other factors like temperature: too hot or too cold, relationship issues, competition between males or moods (headaches?) all determine when 115 days later, a litter of pigs will be born. As a result, our pig numbers can really fluctuate.

This is the part that amazes me. For all the years we've been doing this and all the times we've reached a peak when we have too many finished pigs, something happens. Someone will call looking for pigs. We have always sold pigs to someone who wanted organic pigs and have never had to unload them in a conventional market.

This time may be different however. With the termination of our relationship with Whole Foods we now have around 50 pigs that are getting really close to being finished and to date the phone hasn't rang. Should I be worried?



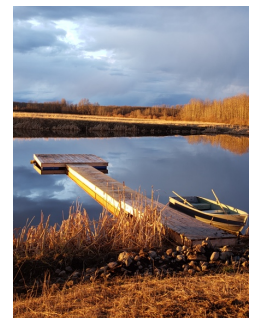
Remember the news last month arriving on April 1st? Everyone thought the cards were scented somehow, not so. Only one person (and one pig) knew the trick. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDmLw7c3uI>

Middle of May is when calving season is supposed to start but every year we seem to get surprised. Our cattle are not confined to corrals and rotate through pastures throughout the year so checking them requires a fair bit of strolling. There have been times in the past when a preemie was discovered. These premature calves often require a lot of medical attention and sometimes they don't make it.

This year it happened again, two weeks before calving season was supposed to begin. But this time we were pleasantly surprised: twins! Mother and babies are doing well.



Life on the pond has been has seen a lot of building activity this spring. Last year it was the windmill. This year is the construction of a new dock. Now rather than standing on shore you can walk out 56 feet onto the water. Maybe I'll put a



couple of lounging chairs at the end. Maybe even a diving board. Some people however just couldn't wait.

Jerry