

## Farm News from August



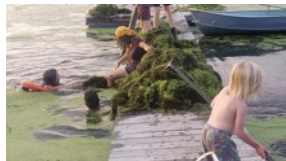
The battle of the thistle continues but the plant is clearly winning. Hundreds of hours have gone into the fight to control Canada Thistle: shovels, weed trimmers, mulchers, Bobcat mounted brush cutters and flame throwing torches. The thistle seems to thrive on it all.



Canada thistle is actually not Canadian at all but a native of the Mediterranean region. It can reduce crop yields by 80% with roots that can spread out 15 feet in a season and seeds that are viable for 21 years. I walked by a church lawn in Beaverlodge - thistle. It was nicely mowed but no one would dare walk on it barefoot.

What's good about the plant? It's high in protein but so are a lot of friendlier plants like alfalfa. Goats like it but goats could be a whole new problem. We've tried to teach our cows to eat them and they will but it's the last thing they would touch in a pasture. Live with it? Spray the farm with chemicals? Not an option. Canada Thistle may be here to stay.

This plant on the other hand has all kinds of benefits. Duckweed grows in still water and is often seen floating in small ponds. The Duckweed family has the distinction of having the world's smallest flowers. August is the month that it likes to spread across the surface of our fish pond which for our animals is a good thing. It's high in protein (up to 40%) and a good source of minerals and amino acids. Healthy pigs! Healthy chickens! Fun to collect too!



Those pig wallows are getting deeper as the hot weather continues. This one is around three feet deep. Nice for the pigs but once they move onto new pastures those holes won't be nice for tractors or quads.



Name the boar! This new guy just arrived but we're stumped for the name. The problem is all of our boars have been named after slangs for penises. Willy, Johnson, Mr. 'Schlong, Dick, Peter, Peter the Great, Peeno, .... Next?



There was a time years ago when we did a bunch of math and determined that our farm produced an average of 2000 servings of meat per week: chicken, turkey, beef, bison and pork. Now with the addition of eggs and vegetables



some new math is due. These crates of squash are just a small sampling. The garlic and onions in this photo go way beyond what I ever imagined would be possible to produce on our farm. If you look closely at the picture that's me standing in the middle. Those boards at the top are spaced two feet apart and there's still another ten feet of garlic behind me! I claim no credit for all these veggies. It's all the effort of my daughter-in-law Lisa, husband Donovan and their super human crew. What's even cooler? Their postings to Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thehomestead2015>

