



## Farm News - January

2010 - the International Year of Biodiversity. 2010 is also the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our farm goal - "to protect and enhance our natural biodiversity".

The strangest deer tracks I've ever seen. They are in totally straight lines in the 2 foot deep snow, a quarter mile long, exactly 18 feet apart, 50 acres in total = all perfectly parallel to each other! The reason? Last year's barley crop. It was cut but never dried enough to be harvested and is still lying there under the snow. Now that the deer have found the grain, I hope they will leave some for a spring harvest. The grain, if harvested is worth around 10 thousand dollars.

People have all kinds of strange pets. I have a turtle and a garter snake along with 3 cats and 2 dogs. This winter my workshop is now home to - a chicken. In the fall the brown hen wandered there from the chicken coop, a distance of 200 meters (a lot for a chicken). She left all her fellow hens behind to take up the new residence in the workshop. After a couple days we carried her back to rejoin her buds. Next day she returned. When I'm in the shop laying under some vehicle or fixing the tractor, there she is, clucking away! Unlike other pets, the shop chicken pays for her accommodation, every couple days I'm rewarded with an egg.

New WWOOFer from France arrives. WWOOF stands for "World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms" and is a volunteer program for people wanting to experience life on an organic farm. Alex is a carpenter, a very valuable skill to have on this operation. One time we were lucky enough to have a John Deere mechanic from England spent a few weeks.

Excitement away from home. A friend who raises buffalo needed to ear tag his animals. This is a legal requirement made by the federal government. All buffalo and cattle must wear special radio frequency ear tags for identification. The bison were herded into corrals which grew smaller as the animals moved along. Finally they entered a chute and then a "squeeze" which confined the animal making it possible for me to attach the ear tag. Next month I will have to tag my own bison. More excitement to follow!

One of our friends said she had rave reviews about the special cookies she made. Her secret ingredient? Rather than using butter in her recipe she substituted with lard which she rendered herself from First Nature Farms organic pork fat. She's not the only one. We worked with a commercial baker who rendered our organic pork fat to create "the ultimate" pie crusts and pastries. Rendering is a simple process involving heating the fat to slowly melt out the oils. Lot of online info. Good luck! Jerry