

March Newsletter 2023
Gus's Farm
Mason, NH
gusfarmnh@gmail.com

Burns Buildings and Babies

I am happy to say we finally got around to burning some brush on the farm. We had some big nasty piles drying and patiently waiting for two or more years that are finally no longer. It was a great way to spend the past couple snow days. Snow covered ground and low winds made for little worry. The tractor forks and well positioned leaf blower kept the fire fed with both fuel and oxygen all day. I was lucky enough to have help each day with the burn. This included others dragging brush, cutting more trees, and just hanging out. The cows seemed as excited as me, they laid down on the ground where we burned the following days absorbing the dissipating heat (it was a big fire) and licking the charcoal. The plan is to feed round bales over where we burned or had piles of brush stacked to get grass seeds and fertilizer (manure) properly placed. The york rake on the back of the tractor will make quick work of spreading

around the wood ashes, manure, and hay come spring. I'm confident we will see the most drastic improvement in grass growth in 2023 to date.



We finally made progress on a farm specific building. Currently, we have just the farm store, and a few portable animal huts. Depending on what projects or grain stockpile our garage holds, my beloved tractor ends up outside more than any self respecting farmer would care to admit. We framed out a simple but sturdy lean-to off the back of our garage with the sole purpose of parking the John Deere. I'm sure it will quickly become home to many other "necessary" items but our tractor will be the priority and I am very excited about both extending the life of the machine, and the motivation of myself on days I would otherwise have to chip away the ice from my seat and throttle. There is still more to do on it but that's why they are called buildings not built!

Babies. Lots of babies. We have had a healthy growing bull calf since October. We just had a beautiful hereford heifer calf

born in the snow (of course) the day we shipped our other (unrelated) hereford cow. As they say, out with the old in with the new. It made getting rid of the cow I'm closest with much more tolerable. We had a small litter of pigs get even smaller the week of extreme cold.



Week old calf walking around a pile of wood ash.

The shelter was minimal, weather extreme, and being a mother new, so we will give her a second chance at breeding this summer, the remaining three out of five are looking wonderful. Our best sow blessed us with her fourth litter and 8/10 are running around past the point I'd expect any more losses. This is pretty good for a low input farrowing system on pasture. Snowy pasture at that! Two more sows and another cow are due within the month.

Last but not least, Josephine Claire Franchi was born that same weekend of extreme cold on February 2nd. Both mom and baby did and are continuing to do great and it didn't take but a moment to feel like she has always been with us. Although she wasn't born with one, she is at risk of developing a cow lick from all her sibling's sloppy kisses. They are simply smitten with her, as are we. The little sweet pea is snoozing on my lap as I type and I can't help but feel like the luckiest guy there is. (George and I are officially outnumbered).



Looking ahead, we have pigs growing steadily headed to the butcher in April, a few are unspoken for so please reach out to reserve your half or whole. We expect to do at least 2 more cows this spring and another 4 in the fall so if you think you'd be interested in a quarter, half, or whole beef let us know as soon as possible. Additionally, we are signed up to be at the [Marlborough, MA farmers market](#) again this year with the intention of making it to every market every Saturday. Currently we have most pork cuts except ribs. Beef will be back in a few weeks. Our self-serve farm store is always open!



Sows enjoying their dinner in a winter wonderland.