

## Spring Newsletter 2023

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George and I pushed off the last hay bale to the cows to entice them into the combination of gates and panels held together by Romex wire and baling twine. This homemade corral helped me load them on the trailer with relative ease. It took 3 trips to move 13 cows but as they learn on the other side of the trailer is fresh pasture, they'll get easier to load throughout the season. To be clear, all animals can fit on the trailer. It's just that, well, they don't all want to at the same time so it's easier to "hold what ya got" and make another trip.

The cattle are grazing down our main lease on Ashburnham Rd in New Ipswich and are heavily supplemented with round bales of haylage (hay baled wet in white plastic to provide more nutrition). Providing this in addition to the forage available allows more time in the area. More time=more urine+hoof traffic+more manure+more eating of grass+more seed dispersion from the hay=more grass growth down the road. The cattle are already done with the hay and moving just about once a day to new grass. Leaving their mowed (eaten) pasture to recover and ultimately grow more and more grass and build more and more soil. As I have mentioned before, moving cows is an absolute blast. They are eager for tastier and more plentiful forage in their next paddock (built with portable electric fence) and kick and run with excitement on their way into it. I enjoy watching them in their natural behavior, mobbed up, the tearing sound they make as their tongue latches on a clump of forage and rips, and the beauty in controlling such a mass of animal with a simple polywire (string). A mowing maestro one could say.



At the home farm we were able to make some progress removing and piling brush for next winter's burns and opening paddocks to this summer's sunlight. From the pigs' deep bedding and a couple years of cleaning out livestock trailers we had a decent manure pile to spread on the recently cleared areas. Topped off with some broadcast seeding on a walk with our dog and now we just wait for growth and pray for rain. By mid-summer I expect some lush grass where there was dense brush.

Additionally, we were able to transplant some blueberry bushes from my parent's property where I grew up. The plan is to go back and get more this fall and get a few more. It's the coolest thing to take Eleanor and George out for a walk to water blueberries on their own farm that I grew up playing under at their grandmother's house. George enjoyed the transplanting process because he got to use his shovel. Ellie's just excited for blueberries and started rattling off how excited she was and how many things she likes that has blueberries.



Along the rest of the rock walls, we intend to really promote the raspberries that overwhelmed us last year. The farm's part time employee and my nephew Justin has been tasked with clipping any of the other saplings sprouting out and so far, has done well. There is an incredible number of raspberries, blackberries, and even some wild blueberry bushes growing wild and I'm hoping our pruning of the less desirables will pay off. Last year we picked buckets worth.

We intend on making most, if not all, of Lost Shoe's Farmer's Market in Marlborough, MA Saturdays from 9am to 1pm from June 17th to October 7th this year. So, we hope to see you there. We hope you all find your chaotic rhythm of the spring and summer season. There's always too many events, projects, vacations, and tasks to do. Accept it. Try to prioritize. But, stop and smell the tulips because after all, winter is coming.

