

Summer

The Summertime groove is quite the grind. Lot's of fun don't get me wrong, but it certainly makes for long days. Nephew and farmhand "little big" Justin has been a huge asset this year, taking the brunt of chores and routine fence moves head on. With 13 beef, 3 sheep, two groups of sows, some piglets, a couple barn kittens, 14 chickens (down from 30 due to predators), blueberry bushes, apple and peach trees make for a hefty daily to do list. It's a great relief to have him doing that while I work on a different project or drive to whatever parts store, butcher shop, or errand that arises. It's also invaluable to have a second set of hands to accomplish tasks like; "holding that board" or "opening that gate" to "catching that escapee ewe (female sheep) and laying her across the four wheeler to drive her back to the farm". Don't ever tell him this, but he's doing great.



The rotational grazing of cattle has been going well. The consistent rain may have ruined a cookout or two for you but for the clover and all the other grasses it has been wonderful! It's a lot easier having grazed each field a few times by now, and knowing how to load the animals, how much portable fence is needed where, and what's the weak point in the fence. The cattle enterprise made a big step this month with the purchase of our first Scottish Highland Heifer (female who hasn't given birth yet). It's been the goal for a while to work our way toward highlands for a number of reasons. First and foremost yes, they simply are cool looking. Long wavy hair, rugged horns, and defined features are just

fun to look at. More practically, is their resilience to the climate we experience here in New Hampshire. The cold wet falls and winters largely mimic those of the Scottish Highlands. The low input model we are trying to create here on the farm requires a breed like highlands that perform well without a barn. I have no desire to clean out barns by hand or machine and I don't think, if given the right nutrition and wind breaks, many animals desire to be in them very often either. Even if they desire it, is it really what's best for them? Consider humans and offices like the one I write this from. But I digress... (Author and Rancher Julius Ruechel boasts a large cow calf herd operation in central Canada where he feeds no hay and has no barns. And relies on forage management alone for his cattle to thrive). Highlands are also more apt to browse shrubs and trees like a goat or sheep than other cattle breeds. This is a major selling point for us who only graze recently neglected fields or brand new paddocks cut out of the woods. As you may

be able to imagine, the effort in loading and unloading animals and training them to electric and to follow me to new paddocks can be tiresome. Doable of course and by no means an obstacle to justify NOT rotationally grazing, however, if I begin breeding highlands and keeping the same cows (cattle that have given birth) for year after year, my herd will eventually be full of those that know the program as well as I do, can be summoned to the next paddock by a sound and enticed onto a trailer easily with their memory of move after move leading to fresh grass. For any young calves that haven't been with us long enough to understand the white poly wire, they will be so attached to their mothers and their milk, it won't matter.

Financially highlands are a bit of an upfront hurdle. More expensive and harder to find for sale yet they don't produce as large a yield as many other breeds since they are so much smaller. This cost will ultimately help me if I begin selling calves down the road. Additionally, research shows they can live much colder before feed costs increase (we buy all the hay we feed). They also have a much higher success rate with calving and weaning than any other breed. This of course is just the plan that inevitably will vary at least slightly. Perhaps a newsletter down the road will retract any convictions I have now. Perhaps not. Today, we are enjoying our new "Bonnie" (she is the only named animal on the farm) and hope to welcome at least a couple more to the herd before winter.



Turkey poults arrive the second week of July so that will add a whole new layer of vital chores. Turkeys are extremely vulnerable to death their first few weeks, after that they are usually bullet proof. Unfortunately, last year we learned what can cause that unusual late death and we are prepared to have a really good year with pasture raised turkeys. The druggable lean-to huts that have housed some pigs will be cleaned and refitted for an extremely warm, dry, and safe turkey brooder. The early days require heat lamps, constant feeding, and believe it or not close monitoring for frequent rescuing as they tend to get stuck in waterers or corners and suffocate themselves. The run-in shed the cows used in the winter will likely be the turkey's shelter this summer. Creating small, pizza pie shaped paddocks with the electric netting and moving them around the hut will do a few things for us. It will keep the chore load down, because we have easily accessible water, feed, tools, and power at the home farm. It will also help with predators since that paddock has a good electric perimeter fence and enclosing the shed with metal will be relatively easy. Turkey's also have a great ability to scratch and turn over ground with their dinosaur-like talons allowing them to hunt for bugs, seeds, and forage. This natural behavior combined with their ultra fertile manure will greatly improve the pasture. With some light seeding, and dare I say more rain, we hope to see lush grass in the turkey paddock slices for the cattle to enjoy when they come home mid November.



Summer happens fast. Go swimming, be barefoot, grill outside, take a vacation, see some friends, make some friends, be a friend. Take your kids and lift a rock to see what kind of bugs and worms you find. Go do a nature collection of acorns, rockskids and their damn

rocks...flowers, pine cones, sticks.... they just love sticks...leaves Any ways do what makes you and your family happy.

Happy Independence Day from the Franchi Family!

In the freezer available now:

- A Half Pig just back from the butcher and is ready for pickup today, total cost \$510 includes: 11 lbs of breakfast sausage, 2 packs of country style ribs, 10 pairs of pork chops, spare ribs, shoulder roast, pork butt, 10 lbs of bacon, and ham steaks.
- Lots of ground pork at \$7.00/lbs, breakfast sausage, sweet italian, and hot italian at \$9.00/lbs or \$8.00/lbs if you buy ten pounds or more. If you'd like to make an order of 50 lbs or more at an even better discount let me know asap, I have a retiring sow scheduled for the butcher soon.
- Pet treats. Dog bones \$1.00, raw and frozen. Assorted frozen organs, pork or lamb heart, liver, kidneys. \$2.00 each. Discounts on bulk buys.
- Bakers and cast iron users! Pork Leaf fat (for making lard) and Beef Suet (for making tallow) \$4.00/lbs. Pasture raised and grass fed means tons of carotene and vitamin D.

Coming soon and selling out quickly! Reserve Now:

- Pasture Raised Thanksgiving Turkey grown with local feed. \$50 deposit. \$6.50/lbs. 20lbs target weight. Ready for pickup weekend before Thanksgiving. Gobble Gobble.
- 100% Grass fed and pasture raised Quarter, Half, or Whole Beef! \$100 deposit per quarter. \$7.00/lbs hanging weight. Approximately \$1000 per quarter. Approximately 100 lbs cut, wrapped, and frozen beef in each quarter. **ONLY 5** beef available in November and **1** in January.
- Ground Sheep coming back at the end of July. \$10/lbs. *These sheep were purchased from a friend who is moving. They were fed grain by their previous owner but have been on grass and forage rotating pastures for two months since they have been with us.*

Please email any orders you'd like to place.



Just a cool frog I saw.