

Deck Family Farm Newsletter

June 2010

Spring Part II

The Cherries are beginning to darken and the tiny apples and pears have begun to swell. A few days ago I was working on the farm and had just helped Ella with the piglets. We kept picking them up and putting them into their farrowing hut so that they would be a little safer (they were just a day old), and they kept trying to crawl back out. We finally succeeded in getting them all in and then their mama joined them, which sealed the deal. Next we headed up to the barn to start feeding the laying hens. As we walked through the barn, I noticed a white hen sitting on what looked like a nest in the middle of the barn floor. I was rather surprised until I got close enough for her to jump up and six tiny chicks to spill out from under her wings. We both laughed and Ella said, "Spring Part II".

EWS All School Outing

We recently hosted the Eugene Waldorf School for their All School Outing at the farm. They came out to farm in the morning, students, teachers, and parents, armed with hoes, clippers, pruners, and gloves. Some walked, some rode in the truck, but the whole school got back to our back hillside where the main herd of our Galloway Beef have been grazing lately. They spent the morning cutting down Scotch Broom and then hiked/walked/rode back to the main barn for a picnic lunch, barn dance, and then rousing game of capture the flag in one of our soggy pastures. It was a great day with a lot of children working hard and playing hard.

Second litter of Red Wattle Piglets

We are happy to announce that the second of our four Red Wattle Sows has had a litter of piglets. Ten of the piglets in this litter have survived and are doing well. They are a range of color between dark red, brown and slate gray. The piglets are so fun to watch rooting around, piling on top of each other for a nap, and squealing when their mother comes into their "house" to lie down in her nest.

Coming Soon, Honey

We are working closely with the beekeeper who has kept bees on our property for the past several years and now plan to have the honey from our farm available to sell at the markets and on the farm sometime towards the end of summer.

Specials

Try our new small packages of thin sliced, all beef Salami and Pepperoni and they are Nitrite Free! Great for a picnic or a pizza. Our sales this month include Goat Summer Sausages and All Beef Nitrite Free Hotdogs.

Chickens are Finally Ready!

Our first batch of Heritage, No Soy! Roasters will be ready this weekend. We are now officially completely No Soy! We have found a variety of heritage birds that have a bigger breast than the breed we raised last year so for those of you who were a little concerned about the smaller breasted birds, we will have bigger meatier ones available this year. The taste, as always is outstanding since they have spent their lives grazing and scratching in the real earth. The decision to stop raising fast growing, super birds is another step in our commitment to sustainability. There are many aspects to consider when trying to be sustainable, and an important part is the future of our food system. Raising chickens that are capable of reproducing is an important step in that process.

Turkeys growing well

Our turkeys are growing well and continue to look as though we will indeed have a wide range of sizes available once they fully mature in several months. It is never too early to place your order for a holiday turkey!

First Galloway Beef

Our first heritage breed Galloway Beef is about show up in our coolers at the markets. Once a cow has been bred to the Galloway Bull it takes about 10 months before the calf is born. It is then another two years before that calf has reached maturity and is ready to be processed. We have been working on turning our entire beef herd into half Galloway and now we are heading towards $\frac{3}{4}$ Galloway. However, it has been a slow process and we are just now beginning to be able to share that with our farm supporters.

Organic Certification

As many of you know we have long been farming with “Organic Practices” but had not pursued official Organic Certification. We have now gone through the enormous process of becoming Oregon Tilth Certified and several of our products will soon be stamped with the coveted (Organic) stamp. For our beef this will not change anything. We have been totally organic as far as our beef herd is concerned for years. Our chickens are now being raised on entirely organic grains and our pastures are now certified. It will take a little longer to certify all of our animals (for example the pigs are fed raw milk from our farm and considering so many of the laws regarding the production and sale of raw milk are so restrictive and confusing it may take a while before the pigs are actually certified). The rules and regulations for organic certification in some cases just mean good farming practices, and in other cases are quite complicated and will take some more planning on our part to conform to. We will continue to let you know as more of our products are certified.



The Laying Hen Hotel on its way out to pasture June 2010

Eggs, Eggs, Eggs

Our laying hens are doing well and we have plenty of our signature “rainbow eggs” with their deep orange yolks and their fantastic flavor you only get from pasture raised hens.

Support Local Food

There are more and more local based food businesses that connect the Farmers with the Consumers in innovative new ways. Check out foodhub.com, eugenelocalfoods.org, corvallislocalfoods.org, meetthyfood.org and see what is out there.

Meet Cassandra

We are trying to keep the office staffed regularly now Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 1:00. You might notice that Cassandra often answers the phone or responds to emails these days. She has been working at the farm for several weeks now and we already can't imagine not having her around. She has been working hard to help us build our restaurant and small grocery accounts. Cassandra impressed me when she decided that she needed to find out what she really thought of 100% Grassfed and Finished Beef. She hosted a party with some of her friends and used one of our Tri-tip roasts and one she bought from a national chain grocery store. The chef was the only one who knew which roast was which and everyone at the party, including Cassandra, were astonished at the obvious difference. She said, “the one from the store tasted like charcoal and seasoning and the one from the farm tasted like meat!”

Calling all Farm Interns

Sometimes we have so many farm interns we aren't sure what to do with them and then other times we wonder where they all disappeared to. Whether you are 19 or 39, love to farm or have never set foot on a farm, if you are considering spending a week or two working hard on a farm, getting to know what it is like to get up and milk the cows in the morning, move the cattle before lunch, help bale the hay for next winter, and camp on a beautiful piece of property at the same time, consider contacting us. We are currently looking for farm interns for help throughout the summer. We offer great camping, communal meals, place to shower, pool to cool off in, and good conversation and for those who enjoy a good jam session, we are always looking for some musicians. What we expect in return is a hard day of work, clean language, regular showers, no smoking of any kind on the property, pitching in on meal prep and cleanup and a good attitude about life. Let us know if you are interested!

Earthsong Waldorf Farm School

If you have been to the farm lately you may have noticed the beautiful new wood carved sign for the farm school made by a friend of the farm (<http://www.etsy.com/shop/mysticorb>). We have had a small farm school and preschool here at the farm this past year and hope to add more children in the coming year. If you are interested let us know and we will fill you in on the details.