



Down on the Farm

Maple K Farms

Colfax, Washington

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 1

2012

**Special points
of interest:**

**Come visit
us on the
farm!**

**Please call be-
fore you visit to
make sure we
are here to
show you
around.**

509-397-4589

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Forever Fencing

This spring saw a new fence go in at the “Meyers Place” and another pasture come into use. With retirement from one job Tom has some extra time to do what has not been done for lack of time in the past. This

ture into 3 sections. This gives us better management of the grasses. Instead of



spring some fence was built new and other portions brought up to snuff and our South Pasture went into production with 5 cows, 2 calves and a bull. It gave us a great deal of breathing room during our spring rotation of cows with calves and cows about to calve.

After the south pasture was on board, we purchased some portable fencing and subdivided the North pas-

having the cattle roam wherever they want and eating only the most desirable grasses, we now move them from paddock to paddock (5 in all) . This requires them to eat a little of everything.

Just like children, they want to eat just the dessert, but this makes them eat a little of everything on their plate.

Cross-fencing allows each area a rest and regrowth time of about 5 weeks before the cattle are rotated back to that section. This is good for the grass, good for the cows, and good for us, because they gain weight better and we will have a shorter feeding period during the winter because there will be more forage for a longer period of time.



Bull Sale

We are very happy to report that one of our bulls has a new home north of Spokane. He has joined a herd populated by some cows purchased from us a few years ago. We know Findley will serve them in good stead and wish him well in his new home.



Findley of Maple K



“Portly” News

Retirement – What retirement? I knew I would be busy with the Port duties and have found that I was correct. So far it has been taking 8 – 10 days per month with lots to learn. Many different bureaucracies, government agencies, etc. to understand. Just trying to learn which road to take and where the pot holes are. If the first six months are any indication, this position and I are a good fit. It thought I knew a large number of people with the farm, conservation district, etc., but the number has doubled overnight.

Water Trough Disaster



Around the end of February, the spring water that feeds the main watering trough for the winter pasture slowed down and slowed down, and finally stopped. Always with a back-up plan, we created a water gap (a small area where the cattle can get a drink from the creek but go no further) and waited until spring to find the cause for the failure.

In May, that time came. The spring was still producing an abundant supply of water, but it was not reaching the trough. How could this happen with a newly laid line just a few years old?

Well, it seems that an overzealous gopher found the only weakness in the line.

A 5 inch piece of rubber pipe joined the 200 feet of steel pipe in the top section with the 150 feet of plastic pipe

in the second section.

At this junction, I guess he wanted to show me who really controls the water by chewing the joint completely in two. I felt a little like the movie “Caddy Shack”.

Upon repair with a new joint covered in aluminum sheeting, the water flowed again.





Our newest grandchild arrived in May. She is Maisy He Xiqi Kammerzell. She was born to Sam and Peach on May 3, 2012. She is

Newest Grandchild

growing quickly and is quite the charmer.

She and her parents moved to Lebanon, OR in July in order for Sam to start medical school at Western Oregon.



We have a barn cat that has been with us for many years. Each year she presents us with a litter of kittens and then proceeds to teach them to hunt the mice and voles in our pasture. Last year, we think due to her age, she was not successful in raising the litter to adulthood so this year we thought we would give her a hand. As soon as she presented the kittens

My Friend Kitty

to us mobile and with their eyes open, we took to feeding them in a secluded spot where they could eat without the assistance of mother or the other cats. In doing so they became quite tame and of course had to have names. We now have four kittens entertaining us with their antics; Socks, Boots, My Friend Kitty II, and Budda. The last name was given because of his habit of filling his stomach to such an extent that all he could do was lie back with his stomach sticking out in front of him.

They are now beginning to learn to hunt and will hopefully join our army of mouse catchers to keep the

critters out of my flowers and lawn.



Spring Rain, Summer Rain, Forever Raining!!!



This year precipitation has been much on our mind and very much a topic of discussion. Spring seemed forever in coming with the average temperature in April still in the 50s but what was amazing was the rain. For an area of the country known for "dry-land" agriculture, we had over 5 inches of rain in March and nearly 4 inches in April. What was really unusual was that the rain continued through May, June, and July. The farmers in the area had difficulty planting spring crops and began to be concerned about harvest. There have been years where the Fourth of July

sees the beginning of harvest. Not this year, everything was lush and green.

But then somebody turned off the spigot. We had no measurable rainfall in August, September, or the first half of October. Harvest came quickly but because the

rain shut off so abruptly, some crops were affected.

The rain has now returned but with temperatures still in the high sixties, things are green again. Nothing like fresh lettuce and Easter lilies in November.



Trip to the Fair

Our annual trek to the Spokane Interstate Fair happened in early September. We took 10 animals this year and enjoyed relatively

moderate weather. Our cow/calf entry took Grand Champion and our bull received Reserve Grand Champion. We were visited by the grandkids who

petted the cows or assisted with feeding.



Ducks

The saga of the Maple K ducks continues. Having ducks on the farm has never really been something we especially chose to accomplish. In the beginning we received several excess ducks from a friend of Cheryl's looking to decrease her flock. They were brought home and introduced to the pond where they swam and settled. Eventually they decided to visit the barnyard and would walk from the pond to the barnyard (about ¼ of a mile) everyday to graze and visit, returning to the pond at night. This went quite well for several years but eventually due to age and predation, the flock was reduced from four to one.

He spent one winter quite happy because he was joined by a flock of wild ducks. He couldn't fly out with them each day but each evening they would return and he was lord of his domain. However, with the coming of spring, his pondmates left and he was alone. Tom was sympathetic to his plight and began perusing "Craigslist" for any free ducks needing a home. He found a lady with three Peking ducks that she could no longer keep and needed a good home for them.

They arrived at the farm in the late afternoon and were introduced to the pond.

Unlike their predecessors, they chose to immediately leave and head out across the

pasture. Concerned about their possible loss to predators with evening coming on, we rounded them up and housed them in the chicken pen overnight. The next morning they were reintroduced to the pond, this time with more success. This arrangement lasted for about a month until one day we noticed our leading man, bringing his new ladies (we had discovered the new additions were all female) to the barnyard to visit. Once again we had ducks waddling up the road in the morning and back to the pond in the evening. This lasted for about 3 weeks until we noticed they didn't seem to be making their daily trek and we only had two ducks, the drake and one of his ladies. We became concerned that something had eaten the other two until one day while weeding the garden, Cheryl was surprised by a very angry hissing duck.

She had built quite a nest under one of the pine trees in the rose garden and settled in to hatch some eggs. Peking ducks are not supposed to be enthusiastic nesters but this one put that idea to shame.

The other duck was also nesting but not with the same level of enthusiasm. She would lay her daily egg, hang



around for 30 minutes or so, and then wander off to find the others. The end result was two nests but no ducklings. At this same time the ducks had discovered the chicken feed. We tried to keep them out of the chicken house to no avail.

Finally we realized that the ducks might as well earn their keep. If they were going to eat the chicken feed, we might as well collect the eggs. So, we built a house and pen for them where they now spend the evenings safe from predators and where we can collect our two to three duck eggs each morning.

An equitable arrangement.





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