



Down on the farm

Maple K Farms

Colfax, Washington

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2 & 3

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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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NWHCA Spring Meeting

On May 22, Maple K Farms hosted the regional meeting of the Northwest Highland Cattle Association. It is a one day event that includes food, fellowship, workshops, and a general membership meeting. The day began with coffee, juice, and pastry to get everyone in the mood for an active day. The workshops began with the folks from Run-a-Muk

ble Events was served, followed by the annual membership meeting.

In order

for the participants to see more cattle, Tom lead a caravan of cars to view cattle at several other pasture locations. Upon their return, a barbeque served by Porky's Pit Barbeque was enjoyed by all. Throughout the day, a silent auction and picture contest were held to

raise money to support the association.

Despite the downturn in the weather toward the end of the day, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

We would like to thank the crew

from Run-a-Muk for their help with set up the day before, family for their help during the day, and our intern Duncan MacDonald for his able assistance. Without this help, the day would not have been so enjoyable for the 60+ people attending.



Ranches conducting hands-on demonstration on halter training calves and proper show ring etiquette. This was followed by Tom giving a tour and explanation of the different types of corral systems we have and how they can be used to suit the needs of breeders with various sized operations and pocketbooks. After the workshops, a box lunch catered by Memora-



All Juiced Up



Ready for Wind

Maple K Farms as become a little less reliant on the electricity grid and a little more eco-friendly. As of the end of September we are now producing some of our own electricity with a wind turbine. A year ago we started the process of finding funding sources to reduce the

cost of installing a wind turbine and thus reduce the average 15 year payback period.

Sources were secured and the payback period was reduced to 5.6 years making the project economically viable so installation was completed. The paperwork was monumental

but with Cheryl's background with grants and her patience with working through governmental systems (not mine –we would have been sunk), all got completed and we have the system up and running. It will be a pilot project for state USDA grant programs and the local conservation district.

"Do you plan to use any of the sustainable practices you experienced in Washington state?"

100% Yes



Extension Agent Tour

On April 26th, Maple K Farms hosted the NACA/SARE Fellows program. The Fellows program focuses on sustainability throughout the U.S. The seven extension educators visited a wide variety of eastern Washington farms and ranches. The tours highlighted some of the inherent challenges and the new opportunities of farming in the Pacific NW. The following results from a survey conducted rate the tours and impressions of the farms and ranches visited.

c. windshield note-taking (dry-erase) [a trick they got from Tom].

2. Based on your impressions of the tours, rank the farms in order of overall sustainability from 1 – 10 with 10 being the highest.

Aeschliman Farm:(direct seed wheat, corn & legumes)
7.86

Maple K Farms: (Highland cattle, range chickens eggs direct marketing)
7.14

Tonnemaker Farm: (organic produce direct marketing)
6.86

Orondo Cider Works: (orchard/store)
6.29

Williamson Farms: (beef, vegetables and custom farming)
6.29

Sunshine Farms: (vineyard, vegetables & store)
5.71

Bates Farm: (Icelandic sheep & range chicken eggs direct marketing)
5.29

1. Did you bring back any ideas that you plan to incorporate into your Extension program:

- Put chickens anywhere and everywhere;
- small management practices to help run an operation more effectively;

Attending members – Steve Van Vleet – WSU Extension – Host; Stephen Komar – Brzozowski – University of Maine Cooperative Extension; Joran Viers, New Mexico State University Extension; Mark Kopecky and Vance Haugen – University of Wisconsin Extension; Mike Gastier – Ohio State University Extension; Al Kirki – SARE PDP Coordinator for Western Region.



After thirteen years of weighing, analyzing, choosing genetics, and working to improve our herd – the perfect storm struck. At the Spokane Interstate Fair Highland Show, with 22 animals

Spokane Interstate Fair

entered, Maple K Farms won Grand Champion Cow/Calf, Grand Champion Female, Grand Champion Bull, Get of Sire, Produce of Dam, and Best Six head. This amounts to a sweep of the major awards.

It was a truly proud and special moment for us. We want to thank all of you that throughout the years

have either purchased animals or beef from us.

Without your help and support the cattle would not have remained a viable business and none of this would have been possible. So thank you to all of you.



Our New Showman!

After practicing in the spring, Grace arrived at the fair ready to take her place as our newest showman in the ring. She was showing our Junior Heifer Calf – Princess Fiona (Grace's name for her). She and grandpa practiced in the ring the day before the show, including the reminder that when you are in the ring you always keep your eye on the judge and smile when he looks your way.

On Monday, Grace arrived properly attired and ready to go. She, Fiona, and grandpa entered the ring and completed the approved circuit – never taking her eyes off the judge. When the judging was complete, the judge commented on the correctness of the calf and the obvious skill of the new showman including “never taking her eyes off the judge”.

The winner of a blue ribbon, Grace was very pleased with her performance and ready to tackle next year's show string.



**“Never take
your eyes off
the judge”**

The Precious Commodity

Even though we had an above normal wet spring – with the seemingly everlasting rains and cooler than normal temperatures through June, two of the creeks that our cattle depend on for water dried up by the end of July. The sight of a dried creek bed would normally be

absolutely devastating, but the locations where this occurred are places we have in years past developed springs. What a relief to have a back-up and stable system. Thank goodness we took the time when we did to get the springs on line – not when we needed them. In the end,

the cattle may need to walk a little further, but they have a steady supply of cool, clean water to drink.



**Spring fed water system at
Meyers Farm.**

Meyers Corrals



The corrals, alleyways, and chute at the Meyers property are complete and functional. They have already proven useful when we had a cow with cheat grass in her eye and we didn't need to bring her all the way home to remove

it. The availability of another working facility has simplified working with animals and given us another place to sort and load cattle that are usually pastured further from home.



Calves



The "cute" factor reigns in the spring with 13 new babies. We had the usual variety of colors from black to white with lots of red for good measure. As we head into fall, we will be weaning the spring group with the ac-

companying bawling and complaining but it is time for them to be on their own so moms can build up their reserves for next spring.

In the mean time we are waiting for our fall calves to be born. Always fun to

look forward to and a little less stress because they are all experienced mothers and only six of them.



Conservation Tour



The Washington State Conservation Commission held one of its state meetings in Pullman, WA in May. As part of the meeting the commission tours projects in

the immediate area. Maple K Farms—"Meyers Place" was one of the stops on the tour. Approximately 30 participants saw the efforts that we were making regarding water quality. They saw

the cross fencing, managed grazing, riparian planting, waste management berms, spring development, and test areas.

Mary Jane's Video Stars

In June of this year, we had an opportunity to have a professional videographer make a video about Maple K Farms and our Grassfed beef. It all came about because Mary Jane Butters of Moscow, ID was adding to her online video collection for her "Farm Girls" Sisterhood. She wanted to add a video on local grassfed beef.

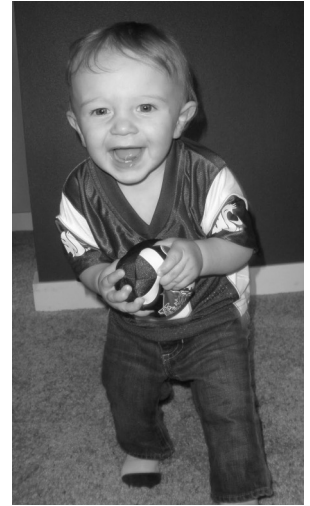
Her videographer Kevin found our info. on the web and suggested us for the video. Mary Jane liked the idea because we had worked with her before at one of her "Farm Festivals". Soo.... In June Kevin & his onscreen reporter Hallie came to the farm and recorded about an hour of video to be made into two shorts for use on Mary

Jane's website. The video about Maple K Farms is available to the public at www.maryjanesfarm.tv/FarmRomance.asp. Scroll down to see our video. The other video about Grassfed beef is only available to members of the "Farm Girl" Sisterhood at www.maryjanesfarm.tv under the Farm Girl Sisterhood tab.

Kellan—1 Year

Time has flown by and the new baby is a year old. Kellan is walking (actually running) and becoming quite the playmate for his sister. He enjoys his cars and building blocks and will eat whatever is put in front of him. He is growing so quickly that occasionally Grace feels the need to state that she is the “Big

Sister”. It is fun to watch him explore his environment. He greatly enjoyed the fair and enjoyed pointing at the cows and imitating their mooing. We look forward to adding another showman in a few years.



Hay

Our annual gathering of the hay was somewhat eventful this year. We were offered an additional hay field to harvest that allowed us to make enough hay to fully serve one of our winter pastures. However, nothing seems to happen without some off-set. The

additional strain on our old tractor proved too much for her and she managed to lose the clutch right in the middle of baling. This precipitated the search for a replacement tractor.

After presenting the required horsepower, equipment requirements, etc. to various dealers in the area, we were able to procure a Case/IH that more than fit the bill. We were also able to repair the old girl for a back-up and loading tractor at the Meyers



place.

With the addition of several loads of hay from a farm in our area, we are now set for what is predicted to be another long, cold, snowy winter.



Fall Harvest Time

Fall has arrived with its usual round of chores and preparation for winter. However it is also a great time of year to reflect on the peace and beauty of living so

close to nature. As we put up fruits and vegetables, move cattle to winter pastures, complete our fall harvest and prepare things for winter cold and snow,

we also enjoy the cool crisp days, the changing to fall colors, and slowing down as days get shorter. We hope you all enjoy this season.



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Naturally Grown, Naturally Good!

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In March we got the fire truck out, loaded with water, and prepped so it was ready to go for what we always hope never happens – fire. But as summer rolled



along we realized that the big red truck might have another use – Parade Vehicle.

So.... for the Fourth of July we decked it out with flags and bunting and headed for the Johnson Parade. Johnson is a small town of about 150 residents that most of year enjoys the quiet anonymity of a small rural town, but on the Fourth of July, it hosts one of the largest, rowdiest parades in the area. The parade make-up and organization is everyone is welcome and you line-up first come, first served. We loaded up the family, including Cheryl's mom, Wein and headed for Johnson. Wein

Summer Events

and Grace shared “Queen of the Parade” honors and enjoyed throwing candy to the many children, large and small, that lined the parade route.

The truck has now returned to its shed. Luckily we never needed it for its original purpose, but it can rest and dream about its moment as the star of the parade

