



# Down on the Farm

Maple K Farms

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Colfax, Washington

JULY 31, 2011

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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## Rain, Rain... Come Again Another Day!

This spring has been our greatest challenge since we started in 1997. With all the rain, feeding has turned into – “watch the weather and feed in between storms”. The new system of feeding almost exclusively with tractors has proven to be a good choice. We can now put more hay in the feeders and have less of a negative impact on the soil (mud) because we do not have to drive in and out as often.

This year has also turned out to be the latest on record (for us) that we have ever had to feed. Usually by early March the grass has started growing enough to move the animals to summer pasture. This year, we did not start moving cows

to spring pastures until the end of April, first of May.

The grass was turning green, but with the cold temperatures, not much was growing.

Another challenge due to all the rain has been keeping our creek crossing fences in place. Due to the high water levels in the creeks all of the cross fences that Chuck, Dustin, and Tom put in were removed by Mother Nature in no uncertain terms.



I guess she was just trying to get the word to us that it's not yet time to have cattle turned out to pasture. The next time we put the fences back we'll see if she will allow us to proceed with her approval!

## The Roost

Egg production and customer demand have both

increased in the past few months. With word-of-



mouth and taste-of-product, we need to do very little advertising to sell eggs. Yeah!

As for the chickens, Cheryl purchased 16 additional pullet chicks to add to the flock. Because we are always trying new things, we picked Aracunas, White Lace Wine-dotes, Barred Rocks and Rhode Island Reds. If nothing else, we have a diverse flock for color.

# Waste Not

The gutter system that was installed on the chicken residence has been working exceptionally well. It is working so well that we decided to utilize the water running off the roof. Tom designed the downspout systems to fill the water troughs in the adjacent cattle pens. With

all the rain it has been working amazingly well.

You don't realize how much water actually comes off a roof until you start collecting it. Plus we don't have to use electricity to pump the water into the troughs. Every little bit helps.



## “Follow-up”

### Just a note to follow-up

An update on the wind generator. It has been performing almost exactly as expected and maybe a little beyond expectations. While the average performance has been as predicted – what we did not expect was to be able to actually completely cover our usage and put energy back into the grid. This has happened several times since installation. It is also interesting how quickly you get used to the sound of the blades turning and how you can determine how much wind is blowing just by the sound.



# Old Concepts Recycled

A group from the University of Idaho has



secured a grant to investigate the challenges and needs of meat producers in our area. This is a \$400,000 grant that will be worked on over two years. Specifically the grant will be investigating the need and feasibility of building and running a

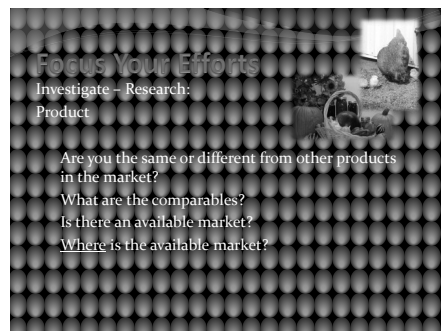
USDA inspected meat processing plant in the area.

With the knowledge that Maple K had been working on this six to seven years ago, we were asked to be an active participant in working with the grant staff. As the outcome is solidified, we may ask you as consumers to also give input. Look for more information in the future.

On another level of local interest, we have been a part of a new group in the Spokane area that is trying to bring together local producers of food and local consumers. Local being within a 175 mile radius of Spokane. The group's name is SNAPIN – Support Network for Agricultural

Producers of the Northwest. The website is [www.snapin-network.org](http://www.snapin-network.org) for more information.

We were also asked to be presenters at the “Small Farms Conference” held at SCC in Spokane. The conference was sponsored by the Spokane Conservation District, WSU Extension, and RMA on April 15 and 16. We were asked to present on business and marketing plans for the small producer.



# More Showmen



Our daughter Liz and husband Dustin will be having a baby girl in late August, early September. In addition, Sam and

his new wife Peach have returned from China. They arrived in the U. S. on June 30 and are settling in. Peach is getting a crash course on farm living. We haven't had her breaking calves to lead quite yet, but I'm sure she will take it in stride. If the trend continues, in a few years, we can just line up the show animals and actually watch our cattle

being judged. A view from outside the ring is one we are not accustomed to.



## Busy Guy

It is said, "If you want the job done – ask a busy guy to do it and it will get done." Well..... As if he didn't have enough to do, Tom has thrown his hat in the ring as a candidate for Port Commissioner of Whitman County. Most people's first question is "What does the Port do?" Short version..... Port Commissioners oversee the water

access facilities along the Snake River ( 4 of them); the railroad lines (1); the industrial parks (2 in Pullman); the airport facilities (outside Colfax); fiber optic main lines; and help with economic development for the benefit of all citizens within Whitman County. He has been out on the campaign trail and will know if

the fruits of his labor are successful on August 17. There are four candidates currently running for the office so the primary in August will narrow the number to the top two which will move to the general election in November. It has been a busy campaign so far.





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**We are on the web  
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If you are not interested in receiving this newsletter, please let us know. Thank you.



Y.O.U. is the acronym for Youth Outdoors Unlimited. It is a group from Moses Lake, WA that we have been working with for the last nine months. They work to create outdoor hunting experiences for youth who have been diagnosed with a life threatening illness and/or physical disability. We have been working with them to develop our Meyers property as a hunting site for one of their young men for this fall. This

has entailed locating a spot for and installing a blind for a young man with only one arm.



He has completed his hunter safety course and is quite the marksman but has not had the opportunity to actually hunt because of his limitations. The blind and the availability of deer will allow him the opportunity to actually participate in a sport that his family has enjoyed. Youth Outdoors Unlimited is currently only located in Washington but they look to grow to other parts

of the country through local chapters. For more information you can visit their website  
[www.youthoutdoorsu.org](http://www.youthoutdoorsu.org).

# Y. O. U.

