



# Down on the farm

Maple K Farms LLC

Colfax, Washington

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 1

2020

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.

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## Smores Anyone?



In May, with enough material on hand, I built yet another cross fence at the Meyers Place to enhance the pasture management plan. I believe this will be the last cross fence, but I have said that before. Upon completion, I was at the Rock Pit paddock looking with a scrutinizing eye to see what it looked like from the Public's point-of-view, as this piece has cows in it for about 5 month of the year and I want to sustain a good positive public image of our operation. I realized that there were quite a few dead branches laying around as well as a dead tree, so I went about collecting and piling all the dead matter so I could burn it and clean everything up. The pile grew to a size of some con-

ty, here came the cattle back. I was very confident that they would get close enough to see it was fire and lose interest. Wanting to be contrary as usual, they had to walk up, noses around the flames and determine where the best place was to enjoy the fire. I was concerned that hair would be singed, noses burnt and this would be



sequence. The cattle in the pasture came to inspect, rub and attempt to redistribute the branches. I dissuaded this behavior and tried to get them to lose interest and go back to grazing. Interest was lost and off they went, interested in other things for the time being. Being relatively early in the afternoon, I decided to light the pile and be done with it. I did, but not ignoring the new activi-

hard to explain to a vet. So, the cattle and I monitored the flames until they were low enough that I could go home. Next morning, I came back to check and found two cows laying in the remnants and ash enjoying a warm cozy bed, with black noses from sniffing about. Never under-estimate the inquisitiveness and intelligence of these beasts.



## New Cattle Additions



In March we had the opportunity to add some additional cattle to our herd. A rather disjointed cattle sale had resulted in 3 animals that were not purchased, so we were called and asked if we were interested. As unregistered animals we knew that we were not interested in them as breeding stock but we could always add them to our beef herd.

After a rather harrowing job of

picking them up, we brought them home and looked them over carefully. The oldest was too old for beef but would make a good burger animal. The others were age appropriate for beef animals. They were then separated and placed in the appropriate herds and life went on.

In late March we had the opportunity to have the vet out to Bangs vaccinate which is a vaccination to prevent the spread of brucellosis. We had not preg-checked the bred cows yet and for some reason Cheryl asked the vet if the oldest animal was bred would the Bangs vaccine cause her to abort. His answer was yes, so we decided to wait. Needless to say, when we preg-checked the next week, she "Belle" turned up pregnant. Having no idea who the father was, we realized that no matter what breed the calf might be, it would still make good beef.

Our momma cows were due to start calving in April. Of

course, the first cow to calve was our new purchase. A nice healthy bull calf, dun in color. The problem was that because of his color, when he curled up, we couldn't find him because he blended in with the landscape, thus earning his name "Rock".

The more we worked with Belle, the more realized that even though she had been a "range" animal, she was very calm, easy to move around, and not aggressive. Abbie and Chuck had expressed an interest in starting a small herd to raise for beef eventually. We thought that Belle and her calf might make a good start for this herd because being unregistered everything she had would be beef and her attitude made her easy to work with. After keeping her with the breeding herd for the summer and preg-checking her in the fall, she and Rock moved to their new home. They have settled in nicely and the Demeerleer family has started on a new adventure with a wonderful breed.



2020 was a very very different year for us. The most beef interest calls every. And the most interest in live animals (heifers) also.



## Where Did All the Heifers Go??

The year started out in January with the sale of four heifers to a farm just getting started in Elko, Nevada, followed by sales in Spokane, Pasco, Yelm, and Albion/Pullman.

All in all 8 heifers will be going into production as seedstock purchased from Maple K. Some of the purchasers had found us on the web, others by word of mouth. It is satisfying to know that we have done something right after almost



25 years in the Highland cattle business. Our focus on quality animals has been seen by others as well. Thanks for the business Back 40 Farms, Heritage Flats Homestead, Squires Farm, MLHAcreZ, and Red Hawk Ranch.



# The Big Move and Excitement!

Twice a year, spring and fall, we move the cattle from winter pasture to where they will graze on the lush grass until fall and then back a gain for wintering grounds until spring. The big move this fall meant getting all the cows and calves in, separating the calves to be weaned and moving them all home. At the same time our bull Travis and his 3 steer companions would be caught, moved to the home corrals and then wait their turn to be loaded in the trailer and transported to town for winter feeding. All in all 27 head had to move back and forth in one day. Everyone came into the proper facilities as planned and the transfer started. Travis and the boys had to wait in the corrals at home while the cows and calves at the Meyers Place moved to the 17 acres at home. We went to town unloaded and



came home and unloaded several of the cows and calves into the pasture across from the house – all was going good. Then we drove into the barnyard only to be met by Travis enjoying a walk-about around the barnyard. Nothing gets your juices going like a 2000 Lb. bull doing as he pleases. All access gates were closes so at least he was confined to the barnyard. Then all the gates to the corral area were opened and the fun began. Travis, it seemed, was enjoying his freedom greatly by toying with me by walking toward the corral and then bolting to the side, bucking and kicking like a 6 month old calf. After about 15 minutes of this fun (his not mine) Cheryl told him to go int the corral and he begrudgingly complied. (We figure since Doris Swalander, the people we purchased him from, had worked with him as a calf, he still sometimes responded to a female voice better.)

After his walk-about came to an end, we tried to figure out – how does a beast of his size simply get out of a newly rebuilt and repainted corral? The answer was simple – he did not want to be in so he took his escape master key (his horns) and opened the gate behind the chicken house as the lock

on the lever would not engage. He then worked his way between the chicken house and the corral fence about 5 feet wide and was chewing on the nice

green grass in the barnyard. He must have thought “If they really wanted me to stay in they would have locked it wouldn’t they?” Thank goodness he is not wild or aggressive, but enjoys a scratch and a comb. So, end of story, all the gate latches have been checked and reworked if necessary. The ones that are questionable have chains and snaps. Thank goodness, they don’t have thumbs because they can’t work a snap with a horn.





## Deer: A Blessing and a Curse



We knew there were many deer on the Meyer's Place when we purchased it. It has been good for our hunting ventures and for the disabled youth and veterans that we have hosted over the years.

However, the deer interactions with automobiles on SR 195 (our westerly property border) has not been positive. Early on I went to the local Department of Transportation Office and inquired about having a "Caution Deer Crossing" sign placed along the highway to warn motorists. Nothing doing, no way, we can't do that was the answer. Not being on to take "no" for an answer, Cheryl found a comparable sign which stated,

"Suicidal Deer Crossing". We put it up on one of our conspicuous pine trees about 10 feet up the tree. It took a step ladder and some stretching to get it up that high. All was good. Drivers chuckled but began to watch for deer. A driver's education teacher stopped to take a picture and incorporated our sign in his class. Many people enjoyed it.

In May, I was coming back to town and noticed the sign gone. I stopped to see if somehow it had been dislodged – but how? I had used metal screws to secure it to a backer plate. No, someone had gone to the trouble of bringing a ladder (or a tall friend to stand on) and stolen the sign. Unfortunately, we have not been able to locate a replacement. I guess all good things must come to an end. Hope they tore their pants climbing through the barbed wire fence. I guess drivers are on their own to watch for deer.

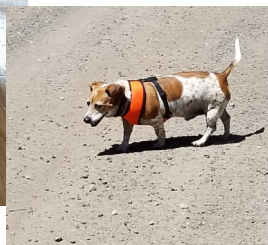


## Mr. Milo!



Mr. Milo was up to his usual antics this year. Getting to go on all the trips and keeping us well protected from

intruders like pinecones and dust bunnies!





## She Sheds



For Mother's day, I took Cheryl to Spokane to purchase the first "She Shed". I lovingly told her she could pick out any color she wanted. When I post-

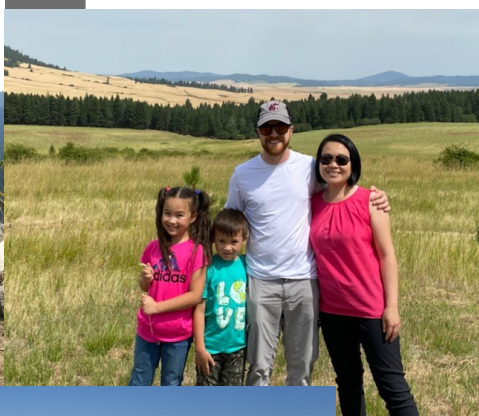
ed a picture of her next to her chosen out-house, I was bombarded with comments of my questionable choice of gifts. All in fun of course.

The out-house was bound for our Skyline property along with the bigger "She Shed", a 9'6" X 40' shipping container. There is some stuff you just do not want to pack

back and forth when staying for a period of time and this was an economical and secure way to solve the problem. The outhouse will go without explanation or details.



## Skyline and Beyond



And as for spending time at Skyline, we got to stay about 15 days enjoying time in the spring, summer and fall. The time was enjoyed with family, in-laws and friends from Alabama who are now going to be neighbors just

ty. Time was also spent this year exploring the back roads of Idaho with our dear friends and in-laws Mark & Carol Demeerleer (wow, the places we have seen together!)



over the hill. Welcome Bobbie & Steve Kynaston to North Idaho and Benewah Coun-







When I first explored the Meyers Place after purchase, I

discovered in several fence corners long unused and forgotten pieces of farm machinery. It had been abandoned since horses were the mode of power. Then I got to thinking (sometimes a bad idea) about the history of farming on the property and all the changes that have taken place in agriculture up to the modern day. This lead

me to retrieving the horse drawn and early day implements and displaying them

along the highway for all to see. I began to think about how much history has been lost in the last 100 years and determined that I was going to do my part to keep some of it. Sooo, I started collecting horse drawn and early day farm implements to show

that farming was not as easy or comfortable as it is presently.

This has lead to about 40+ pieces that show the different tools used and just how much man and

## History on Display



horse power it took to sow and reap a harvest.

Some have heard about what I was doing and have been on the lookout for additional pieces that might be added.

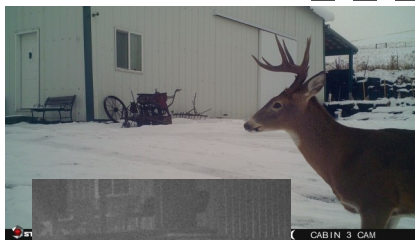
So on your weekend drives, watch for old machinery that I might add.

\*My wife might edit out the last sentence. Just saying!!



## Wildlife in our Life

I've included a few shots of the wildlife we get to see at different places in our life. It is always fun to see the variety of species taking advantage of our natural corridors.





## Nothing is Simple

After several years, the corrals (forest green in color) were starting to look a little



thought I would just mark the ones that needed replacing with an "X", then count how many needed replacing. The final count was 50 2X6X16 boards and 4 RR ties for posts! This was turning into a much bigger job! Kellan came over and we spent 2 days removing, replacing, digging, and packing the ties and boards. In Kellan's words, "That was a lot of work and I do not want to replace any-more of the railroad ties!"

bedraggled. Nothing a good coat of paint could not fix, so the grandkids (Kellan & Grace) were going to have some summer work, re. painting. But, as I did not want to put fresh paint on questionable corral boards I

So, then I got the paint, 5 gallons should do it said I. 20+ gallons later every board in 3 separate corrals has been inspected or replaced and had a fresh coat of paint. Good thing we have 3 sets of grand kids because I'm not



sure I can get them to "learn to paint" twice!! Several months later, Kellan was out at the farm, looked at the corral and stated, "Boy, that sure is a good-looking corral." Always take pride in a job well done. Thanks for the help you two.



The population of deer has continued to be good and good populations tend to lead to good harvests. This year was no exception.

Again we hosted "Youth Outdoors", the group that provides hunting opportunities for disabled and terminally ill children who would like to hunt. Isaiah came from Yakima to hunt. He was excited and very ready to harvest his first ever



## Deer Hunt 2020

deer. After his entourage got the blind set up and the sun came up, he only had to wait about one hour until success was his. As good as any seasoned hunter, one shot was perfectly placed and the deer was his. He could not wait to tell his grandpa of his hunt.

I spent all morning in support mode for the other hunters we had on the Meyers Place. In the afternoon as I returned to get started with the evening hunt, the largest buck I had ever seen on the

property showed himself. With a deep breath and an accurately placed shot, he was mine. I can say that even after all these years of hunting, one still has to suppress the emotions when opportunity arrives. Only after retrieving the beast did I realize how truly magnificent he was—6X7, 232 lbs. As I have been told by many since, that this is a buck of a lifetime. I have to agree, I was fortunate to be in the right place and the right time.





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### **Family in 2020**

