



Down on the farm

Maple K Farms

Colfax, Washington

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2017

**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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Sometimes You Can Believe What You See on the Internet



In January while scrolling through Facebook I spotted an advertisement for “The Safety Calf Catcher”. It showed a device that could be attached to an ATV or UTV to safely (for both you and the calf) catch a newborn calf.

After watching the video several times and reading all the testimonials, Cheryl and I decided to take the (not so inexpensive) plunge. It was ordered, delivered and put together. As simple as that statement is, with some of the worst directions ever, not a

simple task. There were either too many of some parts, other parts changed but not listed in the instructions, or no instructions at all. Finally assembled, we waited for the arrival of the first calf. The test came when the calf arrived in the most remote area of the pasture and needed to be moved the ½ mile up the county road to the home corrals. The calf was caught, put in the transport section and moved (with Mom following

close behind) to the destination. There was NO stress for me, the calf, or mom.

Turns out this is one of the best investments we have made in our cattle career. During the entire year, catching and working the newborn calves (with their very protective mothers expressing their disdain for my very existence) has always been one of the most stressful times of the year. This is now part of history. Thank you to the designers of this tool.



Out with the Old—In with the New

Actually, this took place in reverse. As we started cutting slightly back on the number of cattle we raise and the fact that we don’t show anymore, it became apparent that our 24’ gooseneck stock trailer was a little overkill for us. Since our other trailers were well beyond their useful lives, we decided to upgrade our 16’ trailer with another 16’, but in aluminum instead of steel. After shopping the entire northwest (WA,

OR, ID & MT) we only found two that met our needs. We purchased the new trailer, sold 2 old steel trailers and finally sold the 24’ trailer. In short, we went from 3 trailers to one. Life is simpler with fewer brakes, tires, and lights to maintain.



Cattle Sales



Once again this year we have been successful in selling several animals as livestock. In May, we had a call from a rancher in Montana looking to buy steers ready for harvest. Normally we don't sell steers, but he was willing to pay the full price (saving us processing fees) so 2 steers were picked up and sent to Montana. In August, we received an inquiry from a local (Garfield) family interested in purchasing a heifer. After visiting and looking at the available stock, they chose a weanling heifer to take home. We appreciate these purchases and enjoy seeing our stock spread throughout the Northwest.



Got That "Coveyed"



Seems like such a small thing (pun intended) to have some quail around, but it is a big deal for me! For some reason I have always liked the officious nature of these small birds and wanted some running around the home place. For years we have tried to create habitat for them and watched and waited. We saw them on neighboring properties but none here. This last spring, I was driving down the road and couldn't believe what I was seeing. Here in the middle of the road (always) stood Mr. Quail. I was pleased but hopeful that there was a Mrs. Quail (or two) somewhere nearby. About one month later I found the answer to that question. As

I was getting the fire-truck ready to move out, clean up and fill, I moved a piece of cardboard that was leaning against the tires. I was met by the flush of Mrs. Quail, who had decided to make her nest in the

shed under the cardboard. Scared the X%?@ out of me! So, the firetruck sat until Mrs. Q. was done setting. She was successful in hatching them out, so to date we have about a dozen quail busy on the grounds of the home place.

Note to Self: Look carefully when lifting boxes under trucks!!!

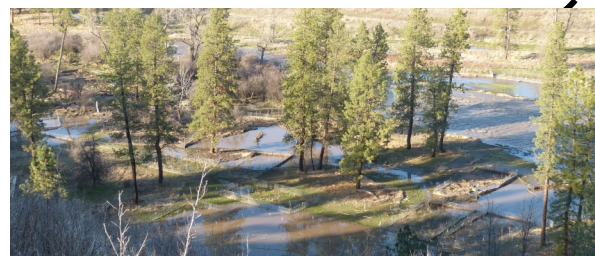


A Successful Plan



After a spectacularly snowy winter the other shoe fell with extremely high runoffs this spring. The wetland mitigation project on the Meyers Place along the South Fork of the Palouse River performed as designed. The river breached the lowered river banks and filled the holding ponds

which were created to help reduce the energy of the high flowing water. The river went from about 30 yards wide to over 300 yards wide. Part of the idea of the project was to take some of the energy out of the high flowing river to help diminish negative effects downstream. At the highest flow day, the water covered the area from the toe of the hill to the railroad



bank. Quite spectacular. As a side note the two companion projects, east and west of the mitigation zone, have now been planted and an additional 3-5 thousand plants are now in the ground. This brings the total plants to around 29,000. We are excited to watch this all start growing and taking shape.



So Much Snow!

This last winter we had an event that was a first. As I drive the roads along our pastures my instinct is to continually check fences. We have had many automobile accidents where they go through the fence but fail to notify us.

One day the first week of February, I looked up the hill at the fence and saw something odd. I got the Honda Pioneer and drove to the top of the hill to investigate the odd-looking occurrence to find something I had



never seen before...60 yards of the fence totally gone. DUE TO AVALANCHE! As I was looking in amazement, I looked down and realized I was standing on a fracture/fault in the remaining 10-12' of deep snow drift. It didn't take me long to get the heck off my observation point.

The insurance agent assured me, I was not covered for avalanche damage so rebuilding waited until spring.

Don't Fence Me In—Wait! Yes, Do.

Fencing is a perennial job. This spring I took on the task of breaking our south pasture at the Meyers place (45 acres) into five paddocks.

In planning, I used Google maps and planned the fences, gates and water access. All went well until I staked things out to find fence posts, basalt rock and plans don't always align. The rock won and new plans were made or adjusted to fit the terrain and rock.

Three sets of stakes later the final layout was complete. After 2801' of fencing, 30 railroad tie posts, and 7 gates, the paddocks are complete. The new layout will allow year-round grazing on 3 of the paddocks and managed riparian grazing on the other 2. This will be better for managing the cattle, the pastures and the



ground for the quality of the water passing through our property. Recent testing has been showing that the water leaving our property is actually cleaner than when it entered. When we purchased the property there were basically 2 pastures, now there are 15 paddocks with an end goal of 19. A little more cross fencing to go. Please call and set up a time to come help fence if you are so inclined!! Spots are filling up

MOOMMM!- OH Wait, I have my own feed!



Because we have cut back on cattle numbers, our goal is to have the proper numbers to run on our own property and a couple leased pastures. With this being said, the need to change the corral system at the Meyers Place became apparent. Having cattle there longer, sorting and weaning became a necessity, so the system needed to be added to and modified.

As much as I did not want to take on yet another project this year, it was mandatory. A design was sketched out and then staked out and ulti-

mately built. This allowed an additional alleyway and now three enclosed pens for sorting. The test was this fall when we brought in all the cattle, separated the calves, turned everyone out but them. I was able to do this all by myself in about 20 minutes with no stress to the cows, calves or myself.

This was great. My backup (Cheryl & Mr. Milo) were in the pickup providing moral support or napping (That was Mr. Milo).

We then fence line wean the calves which means calves are inside the pen and cows(mom) are on the outside.

They have nose-to-nose contact but no access. The calves are provided with their own feed and after about 24 hours moms get more interested in grazing. There is little to no stress for calves or

mothers and no noise for us as we are 10 miles away. Sleeping at night is much quieter.



Last year we decided it was time to purchase a new bull. We had maintained the same blood lines through three generations and decided it was time to introduce some new genetics into our breeding. As we were beginning to bring some of the previous bloodline heifers into the breeding cattle, we knew we needed something that was unrelated to our various bloodlines. We wanted to look in the Northwest both to reduce the travel to checkout a possible herd bull, and, hopefully, if we could find one in Washington keep the



paperwork to a minimum. We have respected the breeding of the Swalanders of Elma, WA for some time so asked if they had any prospective herd bulls. They responded with pictures and pedigree of Travis (named after their son). After reviewing his pedigree and analyzing the pictures, we drove to Elma to take a look at him for both confirmation and attitude. Attitude can be very important when moving a one ton animal around. Watching him interact with Bob and Doris and his willingness to let us approach and give him a good scratch

Travis the Bull

convinced us to purchase and bring him home.

The reason for waiting until now to include him in our information is because, though he passed all the breeding soundness exams, calves on the ground are the only sure indication of success. We bred him to three cows and he was successful in fathering three calves. Interestingly, because of his genetic background, we are adding some color back in the herd. With one calf being white, one red, and one dun (grey), we are well on our way to having the multi-colored herds of the past.

Busier and Busier

Another year of fairs, fun, and growing up. Again, Grace and Kellan showed boar goats at the Palouse Empire Fair. They worked hard and it paid off. Grace once again won 4H Reserve Grand Champion (I think she thinks this is a given). Kellan did well though he is not of age to sell his goat during the

Zakiah is in first grade and making terrific progress in reading and problem solving. She is quite the creative writer, making her own books with illustrations and well-developed stories. Kamden is studying the solar system and was pleased to receive a telescope for Christmas. The big news at their house is the new puppy. Java is quite the personality and is learning manners very quickly.

The Sam Kammerzell family has moved to Oklahoma where Sam is completing his medical residency. He graduated from medical school at Western in June and immediately headed to Oklahoma. He has long

livestock auction (next year). They also both competed in the home arts section. Grace made a party dress and Kellan made a pair of pajamas (his first project). They are both proud of their efforts and their ribbons.

hours and long days, but the family is weathering this time with a focus on the goal at the end. Maisy started Kindergarten this year and is thoroughly enjoying herself. Otis was upset for sometime because he didn't understand why, even though he was dressed and ready with backpack to go, he couldn't get on the bus with Maisy for school. We are hoping to visit in the spring.





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Milo's Big Adventures

Some pictures of Milo and his adventures this year.

