

Akyla Farms Newsletter 2017

The theme seems to be “If it's not one thing it's 5 others,” hence part of the reason why the newsletter is so late. The big story is that we have acquired 3 Great Pyrenees Livestock Guardian Dogs. We were only supposed to get one but with 2 different transports that fell apart and us wanting to do what is right we have a brother and 2 sisters. One of the many other 'things' is we are working on rehoming the brother and a sister.



As time marches on we are looking forward to the warmer days of spring and summer, especially after the snowy winter we have had. It is very rare for us to be feeding hay to the goat herd in December but with snow on the ground their food was covered and they were munching away on the hay we provided them. They are now on daily moves with a small amount of hay to help their systems with the high water content grasses of the spring. Kidding will start later this month.

One of the 'things' that has been on our shoulders for the last few years finally left when the LaConner property sold and we are now searching for acreage closer to the leased land in Birdsvie, which is about 20 minutes upriver from where we are currently at. Also for the first time in years we managed to take a real vacation. We spent a week seeing the sights in Eastern Oregon. The biggest factor in us being able to take a vacation is finding someone to take care of the animals while we are away. We found a wonderful person who loves her animals as much as we love ours and it worked out so well that we even managed a 3 day vacation in January where we wandered Port Townsend and visited Fort Flagler State Park.

Our artistic side is starting to come out more as we continue to spin, weave and start fine woodworking. Carol has discovered a way of making continuous weave spiral scarves from a 4-inch pin loom and Kevin is outfitting the shop with woodworking tools. At this time Kevin has done some small wood projects as he refines his skills.



We are taking this year to scale back a bit on meat chicken production as there was a glut in the market last year as we do still have a very large chest freezer full of birds to sell. So we will only be doing 2 batches. The first batch will be a half batch as we need to have the chicks ordered before we start getting pre-orders in. The second batch, depending on how pre-orders go may be a full or a half batch. With doing the smaller batches will not be bringing in the mobile unit so all birds will need to be picked up from the farm on the day of processing. Many of you prefer the better packaging from the mobile unit for better freezer storage so we will be upgrading our packaging to the shrink bags. With not having the Mobile Unit out for processing all of the birds will be the same price at \$6/lb.

Once again Akyla's Browsers had a good year eating vegetation in Skagit, Whatcom, Snohomish and Island Counties. They went to 10 different locations for 58 days of browsing. A couple of them were



repeat projects for maintenance work which are great and a couple of others look like they may be multi year projects due to size and the landowners just love having the herd to watch.

The cows sealed their fate last year when they went AWOL into the woods, not once but twice! So if you are interested in some beef from an older animal with more flavor get your pre-order in. The butcher will be scheduled as soon as the 2

cows are spoken for and even though we have plenty of chicken and pork for us our beef supply is low. Our plan is to use what we get for these cows to purchase some younger cows of the Red Poll breed. The Red Poll is very similar to the Galloway (current breed) in that they are the small to medium sized frame which do best on pasture and provide plenty of milk for their calves.

Lovitt Restaurant
 1114 Harris Avenue, Bellingham, WA

We were recently contacted by a restaurant that has relocated from Eastern WA to Bellingham. They are a true farm to table place to eat as they are sourcing all of the products locally and the menu will be changing weekly based on what the local farmers have available. They are even making their ketchup from scratch!

We are happy to say that they love our chicken and we hope that you will love what they do with our chicken so check them out.

Don't know when we will be there but it will happen shortly I am sure as I really want to taste our chickens after being cooked by a chef!

The layers that were purchased last year are now happily providing over a dozen eggs per day. Let us know if you would like to stop by for some of their delicious eggs. We are also planning on adding 10-15 more layer chicks this spring so when the current ones slow down this coming winter eggs will still be available.

Not getting this out sooner does limit your time to get your pre-orders in for fall pork. Get your pre-orders in for pork sooner rather than later as we will only be raising what we have pre-orders for again this year.

Even though the theme says '5 others' it is actually a lot more than that but that is life on a small farm and we looking forward to this years production season, watching the goat kids being born and seeing you when chickens are picked up or when I bring out the goats to eat your unwanted blackberry vines and other woody vegetation.

Thank You for supporting our local small farm,
 Carol and Kevin Osterman
 Akyla Farms

