

## June 18th, 2013 - Beginning of Summer

For the middle of June, we have had a heck of a lot of rain. The last time we remember this much rain this far into the summer months was 2009. Not that we are complaining.



The pavilion looks great and is very functional. We processed our first batch of broilers in it during our May processing, and just did our second batch of Cornish hens for the restaurants last week. June 30th and July 1st will be the next broiler processing date. The building is plumbed with well water and propane, and also is wired with lights bright enough to work at night. It really is quite a sight. The only hiccup in construction was when Paul slipped putting on the last piece of metal roofing and fell 17 feet to the ground. The X-rays didn't show any breaks, but recovery has been slow and 4 weeks later he is just beginning to hobble.

Fortunately Dan McGrath, Lauren's cousin, arrived a week after Paul's injury and has been a huge help in facilitating all of the physical load of farm work. He is learning the ropes of Rainbow Farm's operations and should be an experienced hand by the time his work is done here at the end of July.



We are over 2000 square bales into the hay season and have had good luck getting it all in before the rain. This has been challenging because as was mentioned before, this Summer has been very wet. We

still have 17 acres left to cut for 1st cutting - last year we had all of our first cut completed before June. On the upside, if the rain continues, we should have plenty of grass for a nice second cut. We would be remiss to talk about hay without mentioning our fantastic friends who have assisted us in getting it all put up. Without them we'd be up the creek without a paddle.



The high tunnel cherry

tomatoes are just starting to ripen and we should have them to sell at the market starting this weekend. This is 3 weeks later than last year, but the cool spring was responsible for that. We are also really happy with the slicer tomatoes in the tunnel, which are loaded with nice sized and good looking fruit. The cucumbers are lagging behind, but they should catch up in a couple weeks. This past winter we loaded the tunnel with 3 tons of compost, which might explain why everything is looking so good.

The Spring goat kids are growing really nicely. We've been rotating them between field pasture and wooded pasture; this variety seems to be feeding both the protein need as well as the foraging need. Herding the goats between pastures has been interesting; the kids are not as agreeable to herding as the does, which makes for some creative herding techniques.



Our female dog Yeti had 11

puppies almost 4 weeks ago. There are 5 females and 6 males and they are all looking great. It is amazing how quickly they grow in both size and personality. We enjoy them while they are here because in 4 weeks they will be gone to their new homes. Their latest development is learning to eat semi-solid food, which as you can imagine is a big mess.

As you can tell, there is never a dull moment on the farm, quite a bit more than what is mentioned in this update. Hopefully your doing well and we hope to see you soon.

### **May 23rd, 2013 - Before Summer**



To say it has been a busy Spring would be an understatement. The cool temperatures of April followed by the warm and wet of May have sent things growing like crazy.

We have spent much of the past two months constructing a pavilion building. The intention for this building was primarily for a chicken processing facility, but we designed it to be substantially larger to accommodate storage as well as a carport when not in use for processing. We had hoped to have it done in time for our first processing; we came close, with only the metal roof left to complete following our processing dates. The building is complete with substantial lighting for after hours projects, enough outlets to run all of our processing equipment, and a propane feed directly from our U-Save tank for scalding fuel. Our structure is a big step up from our pop up tent and we think you'll enjoy it on your next visit to Rainbow Farm.



Our first batch of broilers was processed on May 19th and 20th and went very smoothly. We averaged over 30/chickens per hour when we were processing, which

we were very happy with. We did suffer more losses due to heart attacks with this batch of broilers than we normally do, but we have not put our finger on the reason for that yet. Needless to say we'll make the proper changes to correct this as soon as we can. We delivered 100 Cornish hens to The Livery in Lewisburg. Our next scheduled batch of 100 has been interrupted due to a dog incident, so our next delivery of hens will be in 4 weeks.



Our greens were a little late in coming, but are finally producing good results. The cooler temperatures with ample moisture have kept the lettuces tender; there is no sign of bolting. We had a stellar harvest of radishes last week which we will not be able to mimic until the fall; I hope you all got them while they lasted because they were a real treat.

The high tunnel tomatoes are growing at a mad pace. We have to sucker and clip the tomatoes twice a week to keep up with their growth. Last year we had cherry tomatoes the last week of May; this year they will not be that early. Our guess is that everything is about 3 weeks later. Still not too bad to have fresh tomatoes in mid-June. Our cucumbers are ready for transplant into the tunnel, though we'll probably wait for this last cold night or two to pass before we put them out.

Now that our first processing is complete and our building is nearly watertight, hay



is just around the corner. The next dry stretch of days will be devoted to bailing our fields; they'll be followed shortly by our leased fields. June will be a busy month and we expect that we'll have close to 3,000 square bales put up by the time our first cuttings are done.

Our female Great Pyrenees Yeti is poised to have puppies any minute now. This will be her second litter, and she certainly looks larger than her first litter (10 pups). We had no problem finding homes for the pups last year, and I would expect this litter will be no different.

Lauren's cousin Daniel will be coming to Rainbow Farm next week for two months this Summer. With an extra hand we should be able to get more accomplished. Keep checking back for updates at the Summer progresses; you can always visit our [facebook](#) page and "Like" us!

## April 28, 2013 - Spring Newsletter

It has been way too long since our last update. Here is a brief summary of what we have planned for this season.

### Pastured Poultry - Chicken



Pastured Poultry was again very successful for us in 2012. This year we are not planning on expanding our operation. If you want fresh chicken reserved, the sooner the better.

Our broilers are raised following the Polyface, Inc. approach to pastured poultry. The broilers are raised on pasture and receive a diet of mixed grains to supplement what they forage. They are hormone and antibiotic free. Most customers come to the farm to pickup their chickens fresh the day they are processed.

On the day of processing we will be selling the chickens fresh for \$3.00/lb. This is the preferred purchasing option. If we have any broilers available after processing day they will be sold frozen for \$3.50/lb. These prices are \$0.10/lb more expensive than our 2012 rate and will help us to cover some of the costs we incur. We accept cash, check, or credit cards.

Below are the processing dates for 2013. Let us know how many fresh chickens you would like to order on each date. Priority is given to early orders.

#### Processing Schedule for 2013:

- Processing #1: May 19th and 20th
- Processing #2: June 30 and July 1st
- Processing #3: August 11th and 12th

- Processing #4: September 22nd and 23rd
- Processing #5: November 3rd and 4th

We will continue to honor orders on good faith, without a deposit. If you order chickens fresh, please plan to be at the farm to pick them up.



## Eggs

Our eggs layers have been productive this spring and we have a glut of eggs this time of year. The layers are enjoying their chicken tractor, and to show their appreciation they've been fertilizing our fields for us.

We will continue to sell our eggs for \$3/doz on and off the farm. This being our hen's second laying cycle, we will be processing them in November and selling them as stewing hens. We will have roughly 100 available and the price will be \$2.50/lb. If you'd like to order them let us know and we'll contact you when their processing date nears.



### **Veggies**

Our high tunnel was educational last year and we've made some changes to fit both the space and the market. We'll be growing the same varieties of cherry tomatoes, but we're changing some of the slicer varieties to hopefully be more appropriate for tunnel growing. We're also cutting out the peppers and eggplant and replacing them with cucumbers, basil, and assorted greens.

As in years past, we'll continue to offer seasonal vegetables, mushrooms and we may soon be offering garlic for sale as our planting stock increases.

### **Chevon – Cabrito – Goat Meat**

In March we had over 30 goat kids born. They are energetic, healthy, and love to run around the barn and jump on their moms. Many have been spoken for as breeding stock for other goat operations, but there should still be plenty available for sale as chevon.

We will likely take several of our older animals to a WV inspected slaughter house this year to be made into goat sausage. Look for that to be available for sale mid year.

### **Hay**

We will continue production of square bales this year for sale. Custom haying is available upon request.

## Dogs



In August of last year our female Pyrenees Yeti had a litter of 9 puppies sired by our Pyrenees male Samson. Only one of the males from the litter stayed on the farm; the rest have found good homes.

We believe Yeti was bred again in March and we expect another litter of puppies in late May. We will likely sell the pups for \$200 after they've been weaned. If you're interested in a Great Pyrenees pup, let us know and we'll let you know when the pups arrive.

## Miscellaneous

We will continue to sell our products at the Lewisburg Farmers Market on Saturdays. The market season opens this Saturday, April 6th. Come out to support your local farmers! We are expecting some help to be staying with us for June and July. If you happen to see a new face on the farm or around the market, he's with us.



Next time you visit the farm, we hope to have completed our multi-purpose pavilion. It will be used for chicken processing, storage, and parking. Most of our time these days has been devoted to getting the structure under roof. As of today, we have about a quarter of the rafters up. If the weather holds out and Paul starts feeling better, we should have all the rafters up by the end of next week. Our goal is to have the metal roofing installed before our first chicken processing. Wish us luck!

Follow us online at [www.rainbowfarmwv.com](http://www.rainbowfarmwv.com) and “Like” us on Facebook. We try to update the website regularly, but have been remiss for months. As this season gets into full swing there will be more to add and it should be updated more regularly.

Please share this letter (and website) with anyone you think might be interested in local, sustainable, high quality food. Referrals are the greatest compliment we can receive. Thanks for your continued support.