

March 31st, 2011 - Farm Happenings

February and March were exciting months here on the farm. The big news (as you can tell from the pictures) were all of the goat births. As of today we have 25 baby goats running around - we only have two mothers left to kid so we are nearly done for the season. We have been fortunate that the weather has been cooperative and has not been a hurdle in kidding. We slaughtered two goats on the farm at the end of February and the meat has been a nice addition to our meals.

We've been working in the gardens as best we can given the constant moisture. Our covered hoops contain a good amount of germinating greens, and we've sowed some of the heartier seeds in the open. There are also cabbage transplants in the ground, as well as more which are being prepped for an April transplanting. Of course our germinating room is also very green.



To open some more ground for planting we plowed about a quarter acre of new earth. We amended that and existing plots with organic fertilizer (rock phosphate and sulfur of potash) we purchased at [Countryside Organics](#) in Virginia.

Another exciting note - we've signed a contract for a high tunnel with NRCS - USDA. This will allow for some cost sharing on what we project to be a 26'x56' greenhouse like structure that will allow us to extend our seasons both earlier and later. We are planning to locate the structure in the far field (furthest to the west).

In early March we reseeded several of our pastures and pasture located on Lick Creek Road using a rental from the Southern Conservation District. This "No-Till Drill" allowed us to put seed into an existing sod without having to plow, till, disc, or otherwise disturb the soil. This is a win because we don't run the risk of soil runoff. On our farm it is clear that the clover is already showing itself, and we expect that the grasses will not be too far behind. We've been tuning up all of our haying equipment in anticipation of this new forage.

March 31st, 2011 - Lewisburg Market

The Lewisburg Farmers Market is set to open on April 16th, 2011, which for those following Lewisburg events is the week AFTER the Chocolate Festival. Hopefully you all will be feeling guilty from all the chocolate and will come to buy our greens and eggs, but not too guilty to pass up our gluten free baked goods. If the weather conditions continue to hold we should have arugula, a selection of leaf lettuces, and radishes. A couple weeks later the kale, spinach, swiss chard, and spring onions should be ready, and peas will follow shortly after that. It's that time of year!

February 18th, 2011

This week was filled with kids, kids, kids, and more kids. So far we have had four sets of triplets and one set of twins. The kids are spunky, healthy, and very happy. It was a great week weather wise with highs in the 60's during the day and lows in high 30's at night; perfect conditions for welcoming kids into the world. Check out the [kids](#) page for photos of the cute kids!



February 10th, 2011

Our preparations for pasture poultry are well underway. We have built 4 pens according to the Salatin method which seem to be sturdy yet light.



We've been working through the designs making a Whizbang plucker (google that) - we are almost there. Our design has a slight modification on the belt tensioning, which will take place with the motor mount rather than an idler pulley. It won't be pretty but it'll pluck a chicken just fine.

Today we cut the top off a scrap electric hot water heater with the intention of using that as our scalding. Initial tests look promising though we aren't sure if one of the heating elements is functioning. In 20 minutes it was able to raise 45 gallons of water to 85 degrees (from 55).

January 31st, 2011

After much deliberation, consultation, expectation, frustration, inebriation, and procrastination we finally put in our well pump and pipe in our front yard! That may sound like an easy job, but let us be the first to tell you that it isn't. The well pipe is threaded 20' foot sections of schedule 80 PVC - 500 feet of it. That equals a lot of weight in addition to logistics. Normally someone doing this would have a pump installer with a special rig do the work, but due to extenuating circumstances this was not possible for us. Responding to this, we devised a structure with sufficient height and integrity to do the job. Thanks to the Boumans and Webbers for their help. The pictures show what we did. It worked, so if you need help doing something like this let us know.



Overview of the project - note the gigantic tripod with pulley mounted on top, and the Isuzu being used as a counterweight. Yes the tripod has guy wires.



Step One - using a custom made plug with an eye bolt, we raise the stick of pipe above the casing of the well. Be careful not to bang the sticks around.



Step 2 - Pipe is vertical and requires slap guard. After the slap guard is on and wire in place, coat threads with sealant.



Step 2/3 - This is a nice view of the mechanism we used to clamp the pipe already in the well to the top of the casing so that we could thread the pieces together.



Step 4 - The grunts lowering the threaded section into the well. They were able to use woman power to lower (and raise) for the entire project.