

## September 5th, 2011 - Farm Update

As I write this, the rain is falling outside. Really. I do not think it has rained here since the last time I wrote about rain a month and a half ago. We need this moisture badly, so as far as we are concerned, let it rain.

There are now 2 water troughs in the goat pastures, as well as two freeze proof hydrants for irrigation and utility use. Digging the trenches for the water line proved to be as challenging as we thought. We broke 2 excavators in the process and unearthed tens of thousands of pounds of boulders. The Webbers were a big help in getting this project complete - a track steer and dozer blade proved to be the correct tools for back filling the trenches.



Our August batch of broilers went well. The only hang up is a pesky raccoon that killed 4 of our chickens prior to processing. The signs of the raccoon are obvious - missing wings or legs.

The vermin is still at large, though we are currently engaged in a cat and mouse game. We have yet to trap it, but it is only a matter of time. Until then, we've taken the extra precaution of surrounding the pens with electric netting, which has proved to be successful in keeping the young chicks safe. We hope to catch the coon soon though, because moving the netting is time consuming.

As expected, second cutting of hay was laughably light. The plus side was that it was very quick to cut, dry, and put up.

The goats are separated out for breeding with our two bucks; the bucks are going crazy with lust. They are crusted with urine and stinking up the place, which means that most of our does should be covered. Expect goat kids in late January and early February.

We've ordered our high tunnel, and we expect delivery in 2 weeks. We'll construct the structure in October and with any luck have it ready for spring growing.

Does anyone want to farm sit for 10 days at the end of September? We have a wedding to attend October 1st, and would like to make a mini vacation out of it. However, the broilers do need to be moved. Any takers?

## July 20th, 2011 - Farm Update

Aside from the 2 inches of rain that fell in an hour yesterday, Rainbow Farm has become rather desert like.

The past two months have been in stark contrast to the wet weather that was so characteristic before June. Our once lush gardens and truck patches are withering, with the exception of the tomatoes which seem to be soaking up the rays. The far field, where we range our pastured poultry, is not getting enough moisture to regrow after the chickens scratch at it. Most of the creeks in this area are bone dry.



That's not to say we are discouraged by this; we just roll with the weather. The broilers have been selling well - our July batch was a bit smaller than the ones in June, which seems to be just fine with our customers. We've started getting lots of calls about hay as well, likely because folks are noticing that hay could be sparse this winter without a second cutting and with pastures drying up.

We've sold a few goats off the farm during the past couple weeks - we prefer to sell them on the hoof, so this has worked out well for us. We think word is spreading, and it would not be surprising to receive many more requests for live goats over the next few weeks.

Soon we are going to start digging our trench and laying water line to freeze proof troughs in 2 of our pastures. This will provide a reliable source of water and will free us from shuttling water to the pasture via gallon jugs and backpacks. We're thinking that we'll rent an excavator for the job - go big or go home.

Our friends Ben and [Pete](#) from CT visited for the week after the 4th of July. During their visit we are able to take several days "off" to climb and recreate - a mini vacation. Click on [Pete's](#) name to visit his site and read about their visit. He also posts lots of pictures - take a look at them. We've swiped this image from it.

## June 3rd, 2011 - Farm Update

The beginning of June finds us busier than ever trying to keep up with the list of farm chores and demands.



Last week we put away our first cutting of hay. The total bale count was just short of 1800 squares, and the hay storage building is bulging at the seams. After some initial equipment issues (mower breaking down) and some surprise allergic reactions, things went fairly smooth. The MF 124 baled well and only missed when passing two knots while changing twine balls. We had great friends help us with this, and we appreciate everyone who chipped in. We owe you all big time.

The broilers are almost ready for butchering; we have three processing dates set for this Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. A small batch of 10 was processed yesterday to work out any kinks and all went well. The plucker works great and it is now hard to imagine how we spent all of the time in the past plucking by hand.

The next batch of broilers is in the brooder now (300 more) and should be ready to put out on pasture next weekend. Hopefully the word will spread about our chicken's quality and we will have more customers.

The farmers market has been going strong; we've had lots of greens to bring, especially lettuce, swiss chard, and kale. We hope to have pieced goat and whole broilers at the market soon to round out our offerings.

We had a small group of girl scouts visit on May 25th - we really do enjoy the opportunity to share with younger kids the virtues to growing food locally and responsibly. It seemed like they left with a better appreciation of the farm to food concept.

## April 26th, 2011 - Chicks Out on Pasture

The warmer weather we have been having recently combined with the chicks growth rate and feather development allowed us to move the ~280 chicks from the brooder to pasture yesterday. The chicks were gathered in groups of 70 and placed in wooden crates we made for hauling chick/chickens to and from the pasture. Since we only have two crates, it took us two trips to get all the two week old chicks into their pens. Shocked initially at their first experience with greenery, the chicks stood still for a few



moments until they got comfortable with their surroundings; then the scratching and "hunting" began. According to Joel Salatin, the chickens are expected to get approximately 30% of their diet from forage; we will let you know what we experience.

The pens are set up with two, 36" feed troughs per pen placed under the covered door to keep the food out of the weather, and one Plasson waterer suspended inside the cage. A five gallon bucket of water sits on top of the pen and supplies the Plasson waterer.

### **April 12th, 2011 - Chicks Thriving**

Yesterday 300 Cornish X chicks arrived at Rainbow Farm for their brief but enjoyable stay.

They'll be staying for 8 weeks during which they'll be living it up. For now they are enjoying warm temps and lots of food and water indoors. We'll be gradually acclimating them to cooler temperatures, and by week 3 of their stay they should be outdoors full time enjoying green pastures.



For everyone that has preordered your broilers, thank you. For anyone that has not but wants to, we would appreciate you putting in your order as soon as possible. The last day to preorder for on farm pick up at \$2.50/lb will be **May 15, 2011**. After this we can not assure you that we will have broilers unless you would like to order from either of our next two batches in July and/or September.