

Farm News - August

Bison get lost - in the grass!

Almost 20 years ago I brought the first bison to the farm. Since then they have munched on every pasture we've had to offer, several times. This year they experienced the tallest pastures they have ever seen. Along with that came the feeling of not knowing where their friends were because they could not see thru the thick, tall sweet clover and grass! I witnessed this after I opened the gate to the new pasture and was around 200 meters away when the herd decided to run thru the gate. That was the last they saw of each other. They literally disappeared into the pasture that was taller than they were. I could see were their heads bobbing up and down, scattered thru the pasture, going every direction. What a difference a foot of rain can make. Last year this time they couldn't see the grass because it wasn't growing.

An intense season of haying is drawing to a close, I hope. Because of all the rain, the start of the haying season was delayed by almost three weeks. I was really impatient waiting because I had a brand new haybine (cutter) which as yet had not cut one blade of grass. After years of old machines breaking down when I most needed them, I was ready for a problem free experience and fortunately, that's what I got.

I was very thankful for the help I received from Chad from Manitoba and Adam, my 12 year old neighbour (who wants to be a farmer). I calculated that we travelled 600 miles, driving around and around, cutting, raking and baling hay. The next big job will be collecting all those bales and hauling them into the yard.

I was ready to celebrate the end of the haying season last Sunday. I had a couple hours of baling left to do and I would be finally be done. The hay was dry, the weather was perfect and the forecast was sunny. The neighbours had invited me over for Sunday dinner so, with plans of finishing up the next day, I celebrated being almost done. Ever hear that saying "make hay while the sun shines"? Well that night it rained. Days later, I am still waiting for those swaths to dry.

Turkey season is approaching and the birds are busy gobbling up the feed. Every day now we carry 144 kilograms of wheat and peas to satisfy their ever increasing appetites. Just yesterday I moved their 4500 square foot pens on to fresh pasture and after shutting off the tractor, listened to what they had to say. Turkeys are very curious birds (dumb only to those who can't perceive intelligence). When they are moved they are very excited about the new pasture and the tasty treats it offers so they make a special sound. Kind of like a "clukkle". I've taped the sound and played it back to them. If the birds are quiet and hear the sound, they start to make a lot of noise. If the are noisy and they hear the sound, they all become quiet.

Help on the farm comes and goes. Last year at this time I was turning away 2 out of 3 people who wanted to come out to learn about organic farming. This month I have no one. Weird? I hope it's not a trend. Jerry