

Farm News - September

Change in email address. I used to be jkitt@telusplanet.net but after my neighbours and I experienced weeks of hassles, I've dropped them. My new address: jerrykitt@gmail.com I answer all questions!

As nice as "free range" can be for poultry, it does come at a price. I was enjoying my half dozen pet turkeys as they explored the farm, all the time wandering closer to the 300 turkeys that were way out in the field contemplating thoughts such as the meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas. It takes a lot of energy for a turkey tom to keep having to prove himself to his peers by fluffing up and strutting, constantly trying to make himself as big and important looking as possible (like many teenage guys). My two turkey toms were at it constantly but when they finally wandered out and reached the turkeys in the field, there were almost 100 toms and 200 hens to impress! The turkey hens would follow and wait while their guys did their thing. Maybe it was after an important day of acting big that their senses were not as tuned as they should have been. When I walked down the driveway all I could see of my pet turkeys were their feathers. The coyotes had come. I now have one pet turkey left, a tom.

I like the way the Berkshire sows decide that if there are going to have babies, they should all do it at the same time. The pigs get so massively pregnant (most of them anyhow) and then all of a sudden: pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop! When check them out in the morning, there are 6 or 8 or 10 plus piglets all nursing away on their mothers. Then I check the neighbouring huts and sure enough, within a day or two they are all nursing mothers. It takes 4 days or so before the new babies venture outside (temperature related). Soon they have discovered each other and became a black & white pack of dozens of ten inch long piglets, tearing around, freaking their mothers, just waiting to get into trouble.

Careful what you wish for! I was thinking to myself how much I enjoy my lifestyle as an organic farmer, feeding between 2-3000 weekly with the best meat I could imagine eating. But when you get too used to a good thing it gets easy to loose that sense of appreciation. That all changed when I went to visit my doctor. He said "mitral valve repair" which just over the past few days has landed me in the hospital for open heart surgery. Now that can change the way a farm operates! How fortunate I was that my son was able to take his holidays at the same time I would be gone and 4 people from across Europe wanted to show up to experience organic farming. I've had a good chance to do a lot of thinking and I'm really looking forward to being back on the farm.