

Bone Dry Ridge

A little bit of everything farm



Winter 2011 news from Bone Dry Ridge

Hello all and Happy Winter

Sometimes I think of February as the beginning of Spring. There have been years I have put the sheep out to pasture in mid-February. There have also been years I have had to bring them back into the barn and keep them there until mid-April. But for the most part they go out in early March. The way I plan it is to have them shorn in early March and let them graze the field near the barn for at least two weeks, so they can use the barn as shelter while their wool is coming back. But as all pregnant women know, at the end of term you are very hot, and you prefer not have too much cover. The same goes for the sheep. The weather has to be pretty cold for them not to want to be outside. But they do prefer to spend the night in shelter, especially if it is raining or sleeting.



An unfortunate event happened this winter. One of my sheep, Heba, broke her leg. Evergreen students had come out to ultrasound my sheep, really just for my interest and their practice, but as I was catching Heba, she jumped forward and fell and I fell on top of her. We all heard the snap. It was just awful. The vet came over and we found the break right at her knee. Since she is one of my favorite sheep, I wanted to do everything I could to make her better. The break was in a spot that did not allow us to put a splint on, so I decided to simply give her a separate stall = a place where no one could push her around and make her step into the leg. She did not use the leg at all for about two weeks, but then things changed dramatically. She is now completely using it, still limping, but using the leg almost like normal. What a relief!

I do hope the weather starts warming up soon. I need to have the barn ready for the pigs, who are scheduled to arrive in early April. The laying hen chicks will be here in early March and the meat bird chicks in April. I am gearing up for another busy summer.

A neighbor is helping me build a new improved mobile chicken coop. This one is going to be pulled by the tractor. The one I have been using for years was pulled by Selma and friends, and to move that thing in these hills is just a killer. I'm done with that. I'm not getting any younger or stronger.

Janise from JA Felt bought some wool from me this winter. She is an amazing felt artist, known throughout the world for her work with felt, reviving this ancient technique of fabric making and bringing new techniques to the surface. She is working on a large furniture felting project and wanted to use some local wool. When I say "large" I mean large. Her felting panels start at 15" thick by 10' wide by 30' long. This then gets felted down to an indestructible fabric of about 2.5 " thick. If you are not familiar with her work, go to her website at jafelt.com. She has done installations for the Smithsonian Design Museum and Cirque du Soleil and others. She is bringing a photographer here to the farm to document the entire process from sheering the sheep to the finished felted product. Photos of my sheep are going to be on display. Very exciting for me and my sheep.



I hope the cows are bred. Pretty Boy Floyd sure was here long enough, but the day after he left, Skye came into heat again. I'm not sure if this was a false heat, and she just missed Floyd, but I am now on the lookout to see if she will have another one. If she did not get bred it is not something terrible. I will simply borrow Floyd again, and she will go back to having calves in the spring, which I prefer anyway.

Take care and I will be in contact again in the spring/early summer

Your farmer and shepherdess *Selma*