

TWO TRACKS ACRES NEWSLETTER

August 2014



HARVESTING WHEAT

The wheat was ready to harvest – the heads were bent over dripping with seeds, and if we left them any longer they would drop and we would lose the crop. Harvest time was now or never, so we asked our friend Ben to bring his combine over. It worked like a dream – for about five minutes. The machine cut the stalks and shook the seeds to separate them in the hopper. It spit the spent shafts out the side. It was wonderful, and then the belt broke.



Without a machine to harvest the wheat, I decided to use a scythe. This was slow work and knocked all the wheat seed to the ground where it got lost in the dirt. Finally I started pulling the stalks up by hand and laying them in piles. It was a hot, humid day and the work was exhausting. I experimented with banging the shafts onto a wooden pallet with a tarp underneath to catch the seeds, but it still felt like I was losing a lot of food. I have used this method to harvest rice while in Thailand and thought it would work similarly, but rice separates from the stalk much more easily than wheat.

With farming, as with many things in life, I've found that there is a point when it's smart to call it quits; when the effort put in outweighs the benefits received. I've always been one to press this barrier and keep at a task longer than is practical. Taik took one look at me banging the stalks of wheat against the pallet and told me to call him when I was ready to load it into the barn. He, at least, has a better sense of what's practical. I just couldn't stand to watch the food go to waste, even though it would be pretty cheap to buy a similar amount at the grain mill. Sometimes it just feels right to do the impractical.



CALLY'S WEDDING

My sister got married last weekend and we did a "farm to table" dinner for the reception. Two Tracks, Tandre, and Capella Farm provided all of the vegetables for the occasion. Of course we had to plan an in-season menu, so we featured dill potatoes and roasted carrots along with steak or salmon. For a vegetarian option we made fresh sweet corn fritters with arugula

and tomato salsa on top. Taik volunteered to cook and a bunch of friends pitched in and helped make it happen. I was stressed the whole time because there were 150 guests but Taik managed to pull it off, somehow. The dinner was delicious and the farm fresh ingredients took it over the top.

SILLY TURKEYS

You may have heard that turkeys can drown when it rains because they look up and forget to close their mouths. Well, the rumors are true. No turkeys drowned per se, but one turkey at Capella Farm (where I work) did get water in its lungs after a thunderstorm because it forgot to close its beak. We asked for suggestions online for a cure and brought it inside the house to warm up. After rubbing Vicks on its nose and raw garlic on its feet (don't ask, I think garlic is a cure-all) it seemed to perk up. Now I make sure our Two Tracks turkeys are in their pen when I know a storm is coming.



Thanks and Be Well!