

TWO TRACKS ACRES NEWSLETTER

September 2015



We have turkeys! These bronze breasted birds are escape artists and have thwarted every attempt we've made to keep them in their enclosure. They have a large fenced in area but are convinced the grass is greener on the other side, so they escape just about every day. By now Taik has put up fencing two layers tall, adding a new layer after they scaled the old one, but we have yet to find a way to contain them. I know when they've gotten out because I can hear their gobbling all around the field, even though I cannot see them in the tall grass.



So, we are taking orders for Thanksgiving Turkeys! They are \$4.50/lb. We estimate they will be between 17 to 25 pounds this year. Let us know if you want to pre order your turkey. Pickup will be a few days before Thanksgiving.

The cow has settled into his home. We've given him access to both the barn and field, but he prefers to stay inside away from flies during the heat of the day and come out in the mornings and at night. He expects treats now when we go to the pen, and will run to us when he hears us coming. I've been bringing him the fallen apples from our one apple tree, which he loves.

We've been able to hay the fields twice this season. It was difficult to get a tractor in this spring because it was so wet. You want a few clear days when haying because it needs to be dry when you bale it. Our neighbor Ben loaned us his tractor (we



still don't have one of our own – it's on our wish list) and we cut about four acres worth of hay. Then we raked it into long piles, or furrows, and flipped it after the sun had dried the first layer. Only after it had completely dried could we come through with the baler (also borrowed from Ben). My whole family came over to help load the bales onto the truck and into the barn. We'll use it this winter for bedding and feed for the cow.



This year was an experiment to see how much hay we can get off of our land, and if it's enough to support the cow through the winter. How much we use this winter will determine how many cows we'll be able to have in the future. Being able to produce all of the food the cow needs right here on our own land is a big step toward being sustainable. For our other animals we've had to supplement food by buying some from the nearby mill. We are also thinking of planting pasture more suited to grazing so that the animals can get as many nutrients as possible from the space that we have. What we have now is great, but I would like more diversity in the plants which would be healthier for both the land and the animals.



Thanks and Be Well!