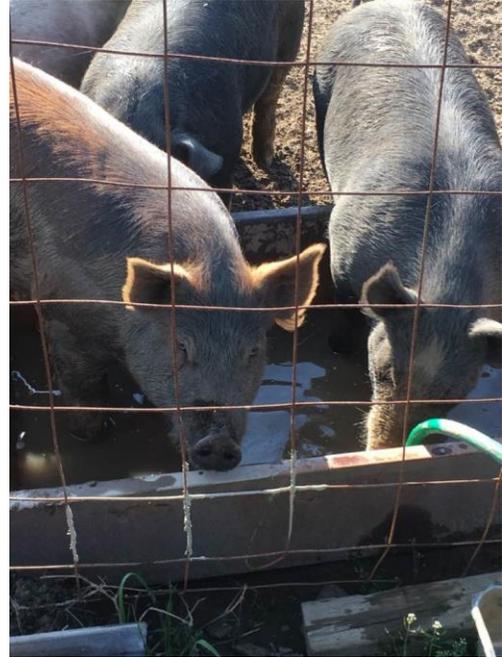


TWO TRACKS ACRES NEWSLETTER
May 2017

What's Happenin'?

It has been so long since our last newsletter that I don't know where to begin. We are ramping up for the 2017 season. Here are some highlights:

- (1) We got a mortgage! We had purchased our farm on a 5-year land contract, which meant that in October of this year if we hadn't paid for the property, or gotten a mortgage, we could have lost the farm. But we finally got a 30-year loan from the bank and are here to stay.
- (2) Taik has chosen to quit work and farm full time. This is a new development and we are waiting to see how it goes (knock on wood).
- (3) With the extra time to work on the farm, we are growing a few vegetables to bring to Chelsea Market, along with the meat.
- (4) This year we will have beef, chicken, pork and Thanksgiving turkeys for sale.



Establishing a Herd

The newest additions to Two Tracks Acres include a Red Devon bull calf and a Red Poll/Angus heifer. Red Devons are a heritage breed that do well on grass, have a thick hide that is resistant to parasites and extreme temperatures, and are docile, short and stocky. Red Polls are born naturally without horns and are good for both meat and dairy. They are known for easy calving and are a gentle, very old breed of cattle. It was for all of these reasons that we chose these two calves to start our herd. Once they are older we hope to use them for breeding instead of meat.



Rotational Grazing

Last season we practiced mob grazing, which is a fancy term for letting the cattle wander anywhere and everywhere on the farm. This year we will use rotational grazing, by sectioning off paddocks with electric wire, and moving the cattle every few days. This prevents them from overgrazing by giving the grass a chance to grow back. When allowed to mob graze, cattle only eat the choice plants and leave the weeds, so eventually you end up with pasture full of weeds. Rotation encourages them to eat more of what is available without being so picky.



Swarm Traps

Jacob from Hives on a Hill Apiary came out to Two Tracks to place swarm traps around our farm. Bees often swarm in the Spring, and a swarm trap is basically a readymade box that makes an appealing home for a new swarm. We hope that they move in to the trap, so that we can put them into a proper hive and have ourselves some honey.

A swarm occurs when a strong hive splits in two. A new queen hatches and exits the hive along with half of the workers, leaving the old queen and other workers behind. This creates room and keeps the space inside from getting too crowded.

CSA and Markets

Two Tracks will once again be at Chelsea Farmers Market on Saturday mornings, 8 am – 1 pm. Come visit us! www.chelseafarmersmkt.org

Our CSA begins in June and runs through November. We now have a beef option. We have decreased the share size to 4 lbs at each pickup, and the prices are lower to reflect this. Sign up on our website at www.twotracksacres.com.

Until next time, Be Well!