



Farm Connection
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SUFFICIENT WINTER FEED AT STRATFORD ECOLOGICAL CENTER

Thanks to the unseasonably warm, dry weather during the last few months all the harvesting and fall planting has been completed at Stratford Ecological Center on Liberty Road. The corn harvest was the earliest on record. The livestock were moved into field #6 to clean up. They were so efficient I could not find even one corn kernel to share with the visiting school children!

The cows evidently did not find enough to eat when they were returned to pasture. They walked back to the barn and Farmer Jeff found them bawling, a sure sign they are hungry.

He brought in a couple of the few remaining large bales of haylage put up in 2014. The first was rotted and moldy but they still tore into it. The second bale was good. The cows simply pushed their noses through the unappetizing outer layer to get to the good stuff.

Once we are through the haylage, we will feed the big round hay bales that were used to create the caterpillar for kids to play on at the Harvest Fair. It should last three to four weeks. Then we will turn to the nutritious rectangular bales stored in the loft. The timing should work out well, especially for those animals expecting offspring in late winter who need all the nutrients they can ingest.

In early October the Tunis ram could wait no longer to mate with the ewes. After breaking **through a wire fence, he lived up to his name by literally "ramming" the latch on a gate** until it broke and he had access to their field. Gunther the buck only gained access to our nine nanny goats last weekend. Eighteen month old Starving Marvin and Bo Bo, his **brother, plus two of this year's spring bucks also joined the does.**

We want to ensure we have more success with breeding than was evident this past spring.

Our Jersey cow Sassy's two year old steer has reached a thousand pounds and is scheduled to go to the processors the week of Thanksgiving. I for one will be thankful to purchase Stratford meat from an animal that I know was well taken care of and grass fed.

The nine hens in the orchard are still laying, but the demand for their golden yolks is great, and their average total of seven eggs a day does not meet it! Fortunately, the spring chicks **are about ready to produce, and the hens will join them in the Children's Garden.**

The three young hogs have adjusted to their new lower protein diet which includes some corn, as well as spelt and soybeans. To sweeten the mix Farmer Jeff added molasses and beet pulp and this seems to be the secret to ensuring they eat well and grow.

Dan Hoover, a volunteer on the Tuesday farm crew, has spearheaded the enclosing of the area above the education storage room and the walk-in coolers in the big machine shed. The project is almost complete and will be coon and mice proof. It is a welcome addition, as demand for storage in our education building is ongoing. I encourage you to peep into the shed as the extensive work is a piece of art. Thank you to Dan and his assistants for a job so very well done.

Stratford will be closed over the Thanksgiving weekend and re-open on Monday, November 30. We welcome visitors year round, and hope you will not let the approaching colder temperatures prevent you coming out to see us. We wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

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