



The F.A.R.M. Institute

Volume 1, Issue 1

Winter 2004

Barnyard Tails



We hope you enjoy the very first issue of Barnyard Tails. The works of our students and staff will share the community of farming with our friends and supporters. Future issues will introduce you to our staff and programs. Let us know what you think at cow-girls@farminstitute.org

Winter on the Farm By Robyn Hosey

At Herring Creek Farm the winds have been blowing mighty strong this winter and many times snow has blanketed our fields, but the warmth in our barns is unfathomable. It has been a complete pleasure cozing up with our animals in their new winter homes. Though I am sure they would be happier out on green pasture, we have been given the delightful gift of truly acquainting ourselves with them. We never knew how much “Walter,” our Churro ram, missed his mamma “Betsy,” till we brought her in. Now they meet

every morning at the fence dividing their outdoor paddocks and rub noses. We have also enjoyed watching “Henry,” our Tunis ram, run around outside on sunny days clicking his hooves together. His spunk has awarded him the nickname “Hoppin’ Henry.” “Itsy and Mitsy,” our Icelandic ewes, like licking molasses right out of our hands and also enjoy nibbling on our coat zippers, shoelaces, scarves and just about anything else they can find on us. Our littlest and shyest ewe, “One Horn,” who we suspected was so small due to her ten-



dency to take off running every time she saw us, is finally putting on some weight from our alfalfa hay, and now enjoys a little scratch under her neck every once in awhile. I can not explain the feeling you get when an animal who was once terrified of you begins to get comfortable and curious with you, sniffing your hands and rubbing up against your legs, its breathtaking.

(cont’d pg. 3)

Inside this issue:

Winter poems	2
F.I.T	2
Creative Animals	3
Winter on the Farm (cont’d)	3
Up-coming Events (cont’d)	4

The farm is the school.
Thomas Jefferson

Artwork Lily Bennett age 7

Up-coming Events

As the temperature starts to rise, we are all feeling very excited about the new activities to come. We hope to see some new faces, as well as some old in these coming programs:

February Vacation Days: Feb. 24—27, 9—12

Tuesday: “Coping with the Cold” (k-2)

Wednesday: “The Wonder of Worms” (grades 3-8)

Thursday: “Making Tracks” (k-2)

Friday: “A Way with Waste” (3-8)

(cont’s pg.4)



Two Winter Poems

Feeding the chickens

All the grain they need

Run the animals into the barn

More hay for the cows. It will be their meal

I see the chickens pecking on my shoes

New and fresh water for our thirsty friends

Sunshine brings warmth to the bitterly cold days

Thursday is our day to do the chores

I have so much fun at The FARM Institute

The truck brought 700 bales of hay

Unique farms are so good

Tons of hay made our day

Everyday should be a farm day

by Joe, Jim, Joey, Josh, Timmy, Harrison



Both poems were created by Ms. Lawton's class from the Edgartown School. This class spends two hours every Thursday with us all through the year.

I like to go to the farm on a winter day

On the farm I work all day

700 bales of hay will come today

Cows and sheep run to the hay

At 32 degrees the chicken comb will freeze

The chickens will peck until the grain is there

This is the end of our poem

Don't forget the chickens comb

NEW Farmers In Training (F.I.T.)

While the farm has touched many children on the island, there are about two dozen children who do anything to be on the farm. They have helped us prepare the animals for the agricultural fair, as well as shown them in the ring. The children also created a market garden display, without the hand of the gardener, and took home the blue ribbon in the commercial grower category. In the fall of 2002 we created a new program to cater to these youths who display an extraordinary desire to work on the farm.

Our Intensive Fridays, recently renamed Farmers in Training, allows these children to be on the farm every Friday after-

noon. They each have different interests, and so we are allowing them to pursue their individual goals on the farm.

The children are chosen by us to join the FIT program when we have seen that they understand the basic workings of the farm and are able to demonstrate that they understand all safety concerns on the farm. For this reason we can give them more responsibility of tasks to be done. Although the teachers are there, we often hang back and let the kids deal with any problems that may arise. We are trying to get them to the point that when they are old enough to work, they have a good work ethic.

The BYG (Beltie Youth Group) that the children partici-

pate in offers each child an opportunity to help care for one particular cow or calf and come to know it very well. They learn what its nutritional needs are as well as how to groom the animal and eventually take it to the fair to show. They keep a weekly journal in which they keep track of the progress the child-cow team has made, and any health concerns that may arise.

These are the people who we call first to help us on the weekend or any day when we need to do something that requires a good knowledge of the animals. They are our number one volunteers.

Go Team!



This cow is the product of one of our favorite activities on the farm. Everyone comes up with their own breed of animal and how its uniqueness can help out the farm. This activity was developed by our friends at the New England Heritage Breeds Conservancy. You can visit them at the Hancock Shaker village or www.nehbc.org

Winter on the Farm (cont'd)

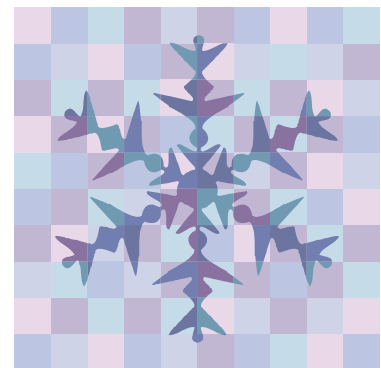
Our laying hens began to lose their feathers and their egg production slowed miserably several weeks ago. We were quite worried and even thought the end was near, until we read about molting. Molting is part of an older chicken's yearly cycle where just this happens. We are pleased to say that on Sunday our hens laid 35 eggs and they all have a glorious new coat of feathers that would even make a peacock jealous.

This past Thursday after feeding our Murray Grey cows, our only cows without names, a volunteer proudly exited the barn and whispered to me, "Just so you know their names are "Vera,"

"Sophie" and "Pearl," they told me they don't appreciate being the only ones called by numbers." I was astounded and the next day all of the staff was happy to oblige.

Our Belties are as beautiful and happy as ever, they seem to like the fact that we bring their food right to them. Perhaps this is because most of our herd is bred, carrying little ones inside, and they need to save as much energy as possible. Just after feeding last Friday morning it began to snow quite hard. I was amazed to see one of our Beltie moms, "Mullein," and her daughter, "Nathara" leave the cow barn and their leafy hay, to stand outside in the snow. I wondered what ex-

actly it was they were doing. When it hit me, I smiled, chuckled and thought to myself, "but of course." The pair stood catching the snow on their tongues flake by flake for at least fifteen minutes, I had no choice but to join them.



The F.A.R.M. Institute

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Mission:

The mission of The F.A.R.M. Institute is to educate children in sustainable agriculture.

The FARM Institute is a result of an amazing partnership of friends, families, staff and board sharing a remarkable belief: that just about everything you need to learn – the three “R’s”, values, commitment to community, caring for the land – can be experienced on the farm.

Perhaps you are touched by a special memory of a farm, or, you truly share the dreams of our mission and our kids. If so, please show your support with a contribution to The FARM Institute. By helping to provide lessons to be learned, the planting of gardens, and the grazing of our rare breeds of livestock, your gift will grow fertile minds and rich traditions.



Up-Coming Events (cont'd)

After School Program - begins on March 3 and run every Wednesday for seven weeks. We are unable to provide transportation during this time, because all schools are invited on the same day. We are happy to help you car pool if necessary. The space is limited because we are down to three teachers (Jess is studying organic agriculture in Maui!!!).

Volunteer Opportunities -We need help doing chores on the weekends. If you are interested in helping out (with your child), please call us and come to our volunteer training day on Saturday March 6, 10am—12pm.

Spring Vacation Days— This program will run from 9 am—12 noon during the week of April 19—23. Call us in March for more details.

Summer Camp— We will be announcing all details about summer camp in late March.

Mailing List— If you would like to be on our mailing list, give us a call. You can be added to our email list for more frequent updates.



SEA SMOKE
SMOOTH ICE
GREEN HAY
AND SMILES
DELIGHTED MOOS
STEAMY NOSTRILS
BEAUTIFUL BAAS
AND LOTS OF GIGGLES
BLOWING SNOW
WINDY DAYS
ICY BREATH
AND FRIENDS THAT STAY

THESE ARE THE THINGS
WE SEE EVERY DAY
SO COME ON DOWN
AND SEE THE SHEEP PLAY