

Community News
March 2017

In the last few months you have heard about the acreage and its uses on the farm and the cow herd. I've heard some clucking going on around the chicken coop that the hens want equal time and space in Community News. In an effort to be fair and equitable (and to keep the hens happy and laying eggs!), this month is an update on our chicken flock.

The farm purchased a new flock of Golden Comet chickens in September of 2016. The flock needs to be replaced approximately every 18 months because egg laying will slow and eventually stop around that period of time. Our hens lay a brown egg about every 26 hours. When they arrive at the farm they are about 16 weeks old. Most of the time, they will start laying about a week from the time of arrival. The first eggs are usually small but within the first few weeks, they will start to lay larger and larger eggs. Now they are laying mostly medium, large and extra-large eggs with a few jumbo eggs on occasion. Their feed is carefully monitored in order to get the size egg wanted. Their shell strength is also carefully monitored and minerals are added to the feed to get a strong shell. S. Marie monitors both the egg size and shell strength as she feeds and waters the chickens every morning and evening. Their feed is non-GMO and they are free range chickens. During the colder months, the chickens stay in and around the chicken house. During the warmer months, they will follow the herd as the cows move through some of the pastures. Mobile chicken huts are moved through the pastures so that the chickens are inside the huts at night and outdoors during the day. The purpose of having the chickens follow the cows is to allow the chickens to move around more, to help scratch the manure into the soil and to help hold down the bug population in the pastures. The bugs are food for the chickens and pests for the cows. A win-win situation! And no they don't lay their eggs in the pasture, there are nesting boxes in the huts.

The chickens lay about 15 to 17 dozen eggs per day and we sell an average of 12 to 14 dozen a day through the farm store. The rest are sold to a local restaurant that will take as many as we can offer. The eggs sold through the store and to the restaurant help us greatly over the colder months when we have no produce to offer. The eggs also bring people to the farm weekly to get their eggs. Often they purchase other products...beef, herbs and vegetables (in season).

Two of the many blessings that the farm has right now are S. Rachel and S. Evelyn Lindenmaier. Rachel and Evelyn come Monday through Friday to wash, weigh and put the eggs in cartons. They spend several hours doing this all important job for us which saves us valuable time that can go to other farm chores. Thank you S. Rachel and S. Evelyn for your service to the farm and to the Community.

Another blessing the farm has is Dawn Merkel (Chris' wife). Dawn comes every Tuesday to prepare the egg cartons for the week and help with any other chores that might be needed. Thank you Dawn for your service to the farm and to the Community.

Hopefully the clucking will subside in the coop with this story and the hens can get on with laying their eggs. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we move into another year of production.