



## Farm News from September

For a long time Buttercup, our milk cow did not get pregnant. A milk cow that does not give birth is a milk cow that does not give milk. A milk cow that does not give milk becomes a beef cow. Still we kept the bull in with her, just hoping. When we found out that she did indeed "catch", we were elated.

The other day I was sharing a ride with a neighbour to the "Tequila Mockingbird" concert at the famous Demmitt Hall. Along the driveway we passed by the milk cow. "She sure looks ready to calve" I remarked. "The ideal calf?" "Ideally she would be a heifer calf, kind of reddish like her Jersey mother, with a white stripe around the middle." (Dad was a Belted Galloway).

My daughter was carpooling with another neighbour to the same concert. I had arrived early and expected to see her anytime but now she was late. After a long while she was really late. Relieved when she finally walked through the door, she walked up to me and announced "Buttercup had her calf! She's already standing!" What colour I asked. "Red with a white stripe!"

After the concert, around 2 AM I went stumbling through the tall grass hoping to catch site of the new addition. There they were, Buttercup with her calf, sharing motherly moos along with Uncle Timbit, last year's steer and Aunt Edith the goat. With the Milky Way glazing down on us, it became another one of those miracle moments on the farm.

It only took a couple of days for Timbit to become trouble again. Timbit is both a slow learner and a slow grower. We keep the stunted steer around because he is so friendly and approachable. Now Timbit has decided he needs to start nursing again. A 500 pound steer can drink a lot of milk. Unfortunately for him, his nursing days are over. There's a new nurser around. It's back to grass for Timbit.

When the email said "The Minister would like to visit your farm" I replied "I'm honoured but why us? We're just a humble little farm." The reply came, "because you're a humble little farm." There was a lot of tidying and cleaning involved but the day came. I kept checking for phone messages and emails thinking they would surely cancel. The scheduled time arrived and the pickup pulled up to the house. Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry for the Province of Alberta arrived with his assistant Keith Gardener. Boots and jeans, we wandered down the driveway to check out the bison, turkeys and pigs. Why? The new Minister wanted to get a picture of the diversity of agriculture in the province. Unfortunately as we wandered, their cell phones skipped to BC time (just 5 miles away and an hour earlier). When we got back to the house the phones went back to Alberta time and suddenly our time was finished, unlike the bison tenderloin on the BBQ. They had a flight to catch. Great visit with great people. I felt lucky and I couldn't help but think, Alberta's lucky too. We sent them off with some saskatoon cake and our good wishes.