



## Farm News from May

Birthdays. So many have gone by that I'm starting to loose track of the numbers. Just as well. I now realize there comes a time when you don't like to announce your age because it's starting to sound old.

I was sound asleep when I heard my son say "You awake? Happy Birthday!" Then there was an animal plopped down on me. "I don't like the cat on me when I'm sleeping" and I when I went to brush the cat off I realized it wasn't a cat. Now I was awake.

A few days back I recall my daughter asking what I wanted to eat for my birthday (which has nothing to do with the previous paragraph). "Macaroni and Cheese!", a long time favorite. That question was forgotten.

As the date drew nearer and as the "big clean up" started happening I was starting to suspect a few neighbours might be showing up when. Was I wrong. The first guest was a total surprise. I was told "Be at the airport at this time". I had no idea who was arriving until I recognized Roger the WWOOFer, all the way from Switzerland. Back on the farm then other guests started to arrive. A good buddy from Vancouver Island, another lifelong friend from Edmonton. And vehicles kept arriving. Soon, gathered in my yard were some of the most amazing people I had met in my lifetime. I was humbled. And to eat - macaroni! Every variation imaginable. One neighbour even grew the wheat which they ground into flour to make the pasta. Desserts included "Macaroonis" and "Macaroni and Cheesecake".

And that animal? When my son turned on the light he said "Read the name tag". Staring me in the face was a black and white puppy. The tag said "Hello. My name is Sixty."

It was great news to find out that Buttercup was pregnant. A milk cow becomes a very close part of your family. Every day she's there with her quiet little moos, waiting for that outstretched arm that will pet her or scratch her head, the perfect cow that anyone can milk. She'll stand so patiently while the first time milkers learn the art. As a bonus to her great personality she presently shares around six liters of milk per day.

Several months ago when the vet checked her he announced "she's open". Devastating news. A milk cow that is not pregnant is a milk cow that stops giving milk. Each morning the amount would drop a little until eventually there would be nothing. Only giving birth, "to freshen", will cause the milk to start flowing again. After the vet gave us the bad news I put Oreo the bull (black, white and black) back in with her but never noticed the two "really wanting each other".

Every time I milked her I thought about Buttercup's future. On a farm an open cow is a cow that doesn't stay around for long. Those cows get renamed: Hamburger. A sad thought to be thinking as your pail fills with some of the best organic, grass fed Jersey milk one could ever find.

After a few months of exposure to Oreo I was sharing my sad story with neighbour visiting for morning coffee who had some vet skills. He said "let's check her again". I remember the moment, with his outstretched arm, this time in the opposite end from her head, he said "she's pregnant!"

I don't know why it was but that day and for the next few days after, Buttercup gave us an extra liter of milk.

Jerry