



# DOWN ON THE FARM

Maple K Farms LLC

Colfax, Washington

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Special points of interest:

Come visit us on the farm!

Please call before you visit to make sure we are here to show you around.

509-397-4589

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## What Is the Latest Buzz



It all started from an unsolicited phone call. Brandon Hopkins, an apiary professor at WSU called one day and asked if we would ever consider having honeybees at the Meyers Place. He explained the research they were doing regarding colony collapse and said he had been driving by the Meyers Place at least once a day for years and had thought it would be the perfect place to place some bees. I explained that we had indeed had bees located there a few years

ago. The gentleman had brought one hive that had turned into 5 hives. My only concern was the cattle. I was worried that where they would be placed the cattle would knock them over rubbing on them. Brandon said he wasn't concerned. They had cattle

around other placements and had no problems or at least not more than once. Well was I surprised when I had been thinking there would be few hives and when I drove in to find 6 pallets of hives. I was not there when they delivered them, as that is done at night to keep the bees calm. Brandon was extremely happy to have the location so close to WSU, as he could have students doing some of the research and work at such a close location. The only downside for Brandon was having to produce a "daisy chain lock" presentation to teach the students how not to lock the owner out of the property, our only access. GO COUGS and here's to getting our Buzzzz on!



## Stop the Snow

Now the entire barn is accessible year-round.



The barn at the Meyers Place was built over 120 years ago with a critical design flaw (at least in my opinion). The main access door (which was originally not used in the winter, but only as an access to load hay in the summer) was under the pitch of the roof. This allowed snow to come off the roof and pile up against the door, thus rendering the door

useless during the snow months. The problem is, that this door is where the Honda Pioneer is stored which is used to check cows, work on fences, etc., all still necessary during the winter. When the snow would come off the roof it would pile up to 16" be compacted, making it nearly impossible to dig out and move. So this spring I purchased some tin roof "snow stop" and installed it above the door. This keeps the snow in place and lets it melt on the roof rather than sliding off. We had substantial snow in December and the snow stop worked wonderfully.



In April a University of Idaho rangeland management class came to the Meyers Place to learn how and why we manage our pastures the way we do. The class was both online and in-person which led to several members of the class traveling from as far as Arizona to participate in the tour. The students majors ranged from Natural resources, fish and game to rangeland management and animal and veterinarian sciences. The professor who set up the tour had been

on a tour of our place several years ago and wanted the students to learn about the challenges surrounding managing cattle with regard to the environment, government regulations and actually trying to be successful in

## Another Tour

business. The time shared was short, the information much appreciated and the questions many. After the tour was completed a review of the time spent was done. It was found they really enjoyed their time with us.





# Events Outside the Norm for Maple K

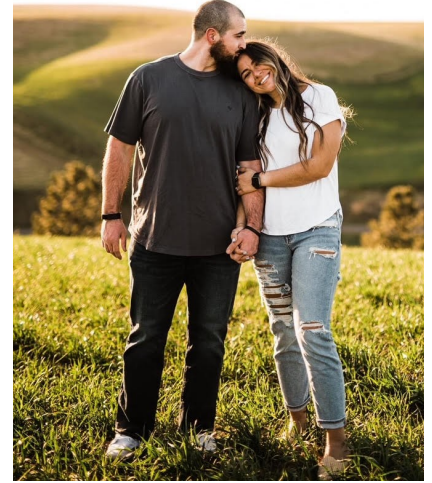


An email from a photographer friend with an interesting request led to a spring photo shoot. "I have a gal that would like her engagement photos taken on a farm. What do

you think?" This was a new one for us but given the professionalism of the photographer and the fact that she was a respected and dear friend, the answer was yes. So, a date was set and a photo shoot ensued. As always with Emily, the photos were amazing. To the point, I was not even sure they were all on our place. She has the ability to see angles, backgrounds and such that normal people miss.

Then, the second week of April, I got an email from someone claiming they worked for NBC news wanting to see if I would do a news story regarding the Snake River Dams. I was sure it was a scammer. After getting a follow-up phone call I

found out they were serious. The next two days were a whirlwind of confirming locations, times, and getting a reporter, videographer, sound person, drone pilot, and news director all to our house at the same time. Turns out none of these people travel together, so six vehicles show up and the chaos rolls. The biggest problem of the day was with the sound crew. They had great difficulty with their equipment due to the fact that our place was so quiet they had to recalibrate all their equipment because there was no background noise to filter out. (Not a bad problem from my point of view.) They were also mystified by the ability to walk down the road without fear of getting run over ( 1 car going by in 2 hours). The news crew had come from Los Angeles, the other crews from the Seattle area. Two hours of walking, talking and filming was reduced to 24 seconds in the



final broadcast on the David Muir



news report for Earth Day. I will have to say I was a little nervous with what they would make me look like on the national news but it turned out OK. At least another view was heard regarding the removal of the Snake River Dams. I was the only view in favor of keeping the dams. The other four interviewees were pro-removal. I can now say that my national television days are well behind me. Yea!



# No Deer—They are GONE!!!



In 2007, we purchased the Meyers Place and inherited the prolific deer herd that inhabited the property.

There were as

many as 123 counted. This was the reason we partnered with Youth Outdoors Unlimited, giving differently abled and terminally ill youth the opportunity to hunt. The numbers were so good that the youth had a high degree of success.

This year, the extremely dry summer conditions were optimal for the spread of disease throughout the deer herd. Starting the end of July, we started observing dead deer everywhere. By the time the first frost occurred, which ends the disease cycle, 98 – 99% of the deer had succumbed. As of December, a total of 5 deer (3 fawns, 1 doe and 1 buck) were all that had survived. As a result of this pandemic occurrence the annual Youth Outdoors hunt had to be cancelled. When, and I say

when, the population recovers to huntable levels, the youth will be back. For now, we have a new normal with no



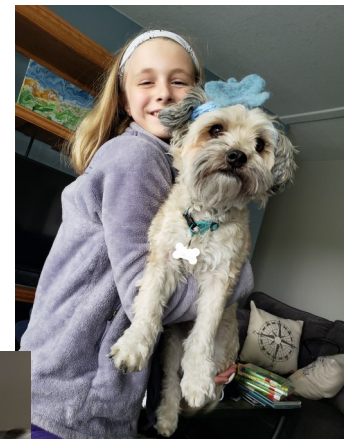
hunting for anyone.

## Milo Has Cuteness Competition



Mr. Milo has traveled less this year (haven't we all) but he has still had some adventures. He did get some competition in the cuteness department but he is

handling it well as the "Old Man" of the trio.



These are cousins. They don't live here with Mr. Milo. Whew!!





## Highlands—Never Boring



The winters get long and boring from time to time. In February, as I was doing my daily check of the beasts, Travis met me to show his latest endeavor. He had decided to broaden his experiences and/or take the opportunity to

try a little farming. His horns (personal tillage devices) were covered in moist soil and an area of pasture had been tilled, ostensibly for farm production.

After having a discussion with him about his latest foray, I believe he decided that farming was not what he thought it would be and decided to move off to other endeavors.

Also, in May, we purchased a new bull Jeremiah to be a potential replacement for Travis. Over the past 25 years of Highland production, we have used many bulls and they have come in many colors, but until now we have never had a black one. Color has absolutely no bearing on the worth of the animal but it does add a little



visual appeal. So we say to Jeremiah, you have a lot to live up to in what your predecessors have brought in value to the Maple K Highlands line.



## Spring Calving—Roll of the Dice



Every spring calving is always an exciting and stressful time. It is exciting to see the new calves, what color they are, how many heifers and bulls, etc. It is also stressful because you hope all the cows deliver easily and all the calves are strong and healthy. This last spring, we had an interesting turn of events. We only had 3 calves. In 2019 we had had a severe outbreak of pink eye. This led to less than ideal interest in breeding which meant that when the cattle were checked for pregnancy in July, only 3 cows were pregnant. Rather than have the calving season the next spring go on until August, we split the herd and removed all of the cows not already pregnant from the breeding herd for one year.

In addition, Travis was now blind in one eye. Due to his age and these factors we went on the lookout to add a new bull to the breeding herd. We found Jeremiah in central Washington and though young, liked his lineage and looks. He was bred to one cow and a heifer this last summer and now we wait to see the outcome before moving Travis on.

There was one further tragedy facing the calves. We had two red calves and a white bull calf. Quite a good looking boy, but in late summer Tom was doing his regular head count and couldn't find him. He received a phone call

from one of the many people watching our cattle that one of the calves seemed to be down. He went and checked and for sure, the calf was dead. The only thing we can attribute his death to is the same viral infection that was so devastating to the deer population this summer and fall. So going forward we will have only two calves to harvest. The ups and downs of the cattle/beef business.





# Family & Change



The family is doing well. Busy as usual. Grace and Kellan showed goats at the Palouse Empire Fair again this year. Grace took Grand Champion Market Goat FFA and Kellan took Reserve Champion



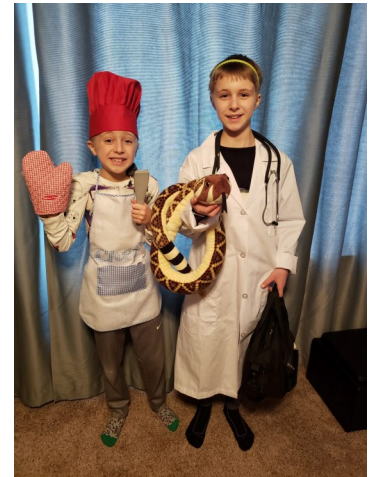
atop the hill which overlooks the farm and on south to the Blue Mountains south of Dayton, with his parents, brother, and cousin.

their health goals. Maisy and Otis are doing well in school. Both have been student of the month and are doing well academically.



Market Goat 4H. They were both active in sports at school.

We have been blessed to have the opportunity to live on the Kammerzell family farm which was established in 1936. In December, my Dad, Don Kammerzell, who was the second generation to live on the farm passed away. He had grown up and seen many changes in both the farm and farming. His last trip out to the farm in October, he was not able to get out of the car, but sat, looked around quite some time, contemplating and then stated, "This place is beautiful, isn't it!" He will rest



Zakiah and Kamden are enjoying their new school this year. Zakiah has added to her menagerie and both of them are doing well with





# Logging by Necessity



Having property occasionally leads to some interesting maintenance issues. This spring we had some

terrific wind storms as usual. When you have tall trees, one of them can come down. This particular tree came

down into the farm ground creating a hazard. Having the right equipment to deal with the mess made it short work for Tom to remove the tree from the farm ground and utilize some of it as future firewood.



## Other Stuff

Tom's term as Whitman County Port Commissioner was expiring so he decided to run for another six year term.

He ran in an uncontested race so as a result he will be a Port Commissioner for another six year term. Along with Whitman County Port duties, he was elected Vice President of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Assoc. and serves as the Chairman of the Inland Ports and Navigation Group.

This is the group which represents the interests of navigation in the ever-present litigation

relating to the Snake River dam breaching efforts.



Our annual 5 day back country trip with the side-by-sides had to be cancelled due to forest fires and closed National Forests. But, an elk hunting trip to Idaho did take place in October. A wee bit off the main road, seven miles into the back country to be exact. Due to the 50" requirement on many ATV trails a new "used" 50" side-by-side was pur-

chased, a Honda Pioneer 500. Besides being a vehicle well-suited to trail use it is proving to be very handy working with the cows at home.





## **MAPLE K FARMS LLC**

**1102 Kammerzell Rd.  
Colfax, WA 99111**

Phone: 509-397-4589

Email: [maplekfarms@gmail.com](mailto:maplekfarms@gmail.com)

**We are on the web  
[www.maplehighlands.com](http://www.maplehighlands.com)**

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## **On the Farm in 2021**

