

Northern Path Family Farm

Fall 2014



Happy fall y'all! Greetings from the farm! I hope this newsletter finds you all in good spirits and taking in the resplendent fall colors that come with the changing of the seasons. Although it is still October we've already welcomed in the cooler temperatures with more than a handful of early morning frosts here on the farm. That's put a quick end to the tomato growing season, but on the other hand our cool season vegetables like Brussels sprouts, kale, Swiss chard, beets, rutabaga, radishes, etc. are just getting started and seem to improve in flavor after going through a few frosts! Hopefully the real cold stuff will hold off for at least a little while longer so that we can continue to pick those delicious salad greens from the garden.

September 25th marked our 1 year anniversary since establishing the farm. It seems to have gone by so unbelievably fast, but it's not surprising given all the activities we've undertaken to get up and running this past year that have kept us beyond busy. It was through the support of our family, friends, and loyal customers that helped to make our first year in business a resounding success! For us, the most gratifying part of this adventure has been the opportunity to share this experience with so many people who have come out to visit us on the farm. We've welcomed so many visitors this past year, including three international home-stay guests. Yoko Kato traveled all the way from Japan to stay on the farm with us for a week. We also hosted a week-long stay from David and Luka, two exchange students hailing from Freiburg Germany. Look to the last page of this newsletter for pictures highlighting some of the wonderful guests that have come out to the farm this year.

Our now 'world famous' pasture-raised chickens are done for the year and will be available again in June 2015. Our turkeys however are still out on pasture and growing bigger by the day. For those that have pre-ordered turkeys you will receive a separate email with further details on pick-up dates and times. In addition, we are excited to announce that WE NOW HAVE EGGS! I had predicted that our hens would begin laying their first eggs on or around October 17th, but they beat that date by almost 3 weeks with the first egg laid on September 27th! They gradually ramped up production from then where we're now getting about 5 dozen per week! Check out Aidan's Corner in the pages to follow for more details on our eggs!

Fall Turkeys

We received our batch of 19 broad-breasted bronze turkeys on July 10th as day-old chicks. Similar to the chickens we raise, the turkeys are housed in a heated brooder for the first few weeks of their lives which keeps them warm and cozy, but more importantly protects them from predators. After the brooder we then transfer the turkeys out on pasture so that they can get all the benefits from being outdoors.

It is interesting how different turkeys and chickens are from each other. One of the interesting characteristics of turkeys is that they are very efficient foragers, much more so than the chickens. Given the right pasture they can obtain up to 50% of their daily needs straight from the ground. During chores we'll often flip over a 5-gallon bucket and sit for a spell to carefully observe our livestock. We feel that it is important to actively observe the animals which allows us to sense if they're healthy, happy, getting what they need, or if something is not right. With the turkeys, it's entertaining to watch them walk through their paddock and nibble on the different grasses like brome, clover, vetch, and timothy that are available to them. In late summer the fields are abundant with grasshoppers, katydids, and crickets which are an extra special treat that they enjoy!

Our fall turkeys sold out very quickly for 2014. Due to the high demand we are already planning to increase our production for 2015. Thank you for your continued support!



Our Fall Turkeys are Sold Out for 2014!

Turkeys for those who have pre-ordered will be available for direct on-farm pick up on Sunday November 23rd from 11am-5pm!



It's Harvest Season!

The fall harvest season is upon us and here on the farm we've been busy gathering all of the delicious goodies that become available this time of year. We didn't plant as much as we had hoped in the beginning of the year simply due to the time constraints of getting our pastured poultry operation up and running. You can be sure however that in 2015 we will be spending more time in the garden and in developing our permaculture orchard and tree nursery. This year was not a good year for most of the fruit trees here on the farm. We believe the severe winter had an effect on the productivity of our peaches, plums, pears, and apples. In fact none of these varieties exhibited any flower blossoms in spring which gave us indication that we probably would see little to no fruit. Other species seemed to fare better however despite the brutal winter. Our sweet and choke cherries came out in full force giving us more than we could use. We took advantage of the abundant fruit drop by pulsing our chickens and turkeys under the canopies of these trees to take advantage of the additional forage, while at the same time the birds did their thing to further add fertility to the soil in these areas. We refer to this as 'shared function stacking', whereby different elements on the farm (i.e., chickens, fruit trees) share a complementary relationship with each other to provide mutually-beneficial functions (i.e., fertility, forage).

Other fruits that did exceptionally well this year were our elderberries and grapes. Elderberries are quickly becoming one of our favorite edibles here on the farm. A smaller pea-sized fruit with a very deep maroon



color, this fruit makes one of the best jellies that we've ever tried. We've also made a few batches of elderberry syrup that was just delectable on pancakes! The grape harvest was equally as bountiful and also yielded plenty of juice to make lots of grape jelly. There's really no comparison between the store-bought stuff and the flavor and texture you get with home-made preserves. The challenge now is going to be tempering our taste buds to make the jelly last us through the winter!



Elderberry, ground cherry, & grapes from the farm!

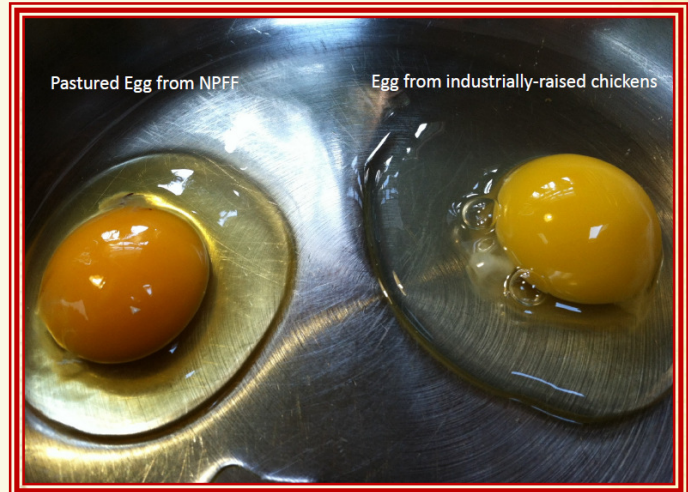


Aidan's Corner

Hi folks! It's me Aidan again. I want to tell you about my new business called Aidan's Eggs. I'm taking care of our layer chickens. I have to go out every day to collect the eggs. We are getting a lot now. Before we only got a couple every day but now we get a lot. Like maybe 10 or 12 a day. Now I'm going to be selling our eggs.

My dad and I did a test when we got the first eggs. We cracked them open and then compared it to a egg we bought from the store. The eggs are so different in the color. Our eggs have a dark orange color. This is because our chickens have a healthy diet and eat a lot of greens like grass, clover, and other plants. Another neat thing is that the egg shells are a lot harder than a store egg. That is because our chickens get a lot of minerals and it makes the shells stronger.

We have 5 different species of chickens and they each have different size eggs. Our Jersey-giants lays the biggest eggs. They are so big they don't fit in the egg carton. Check out the picture! Please let us know if you would like to purchase our eggs for \$5/dozen. Thank you!



Aidan's Eggs are now available for \$5/dozen. Please give us a call or stop by the farm to purchase!



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Thanks for visiting the farm!



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Be Sure To Visit Us At:
www.northernpathfamilyfarm.com

8775 Roberts Road
Gregory, MI 48137



Thank you for supporting your local farm!