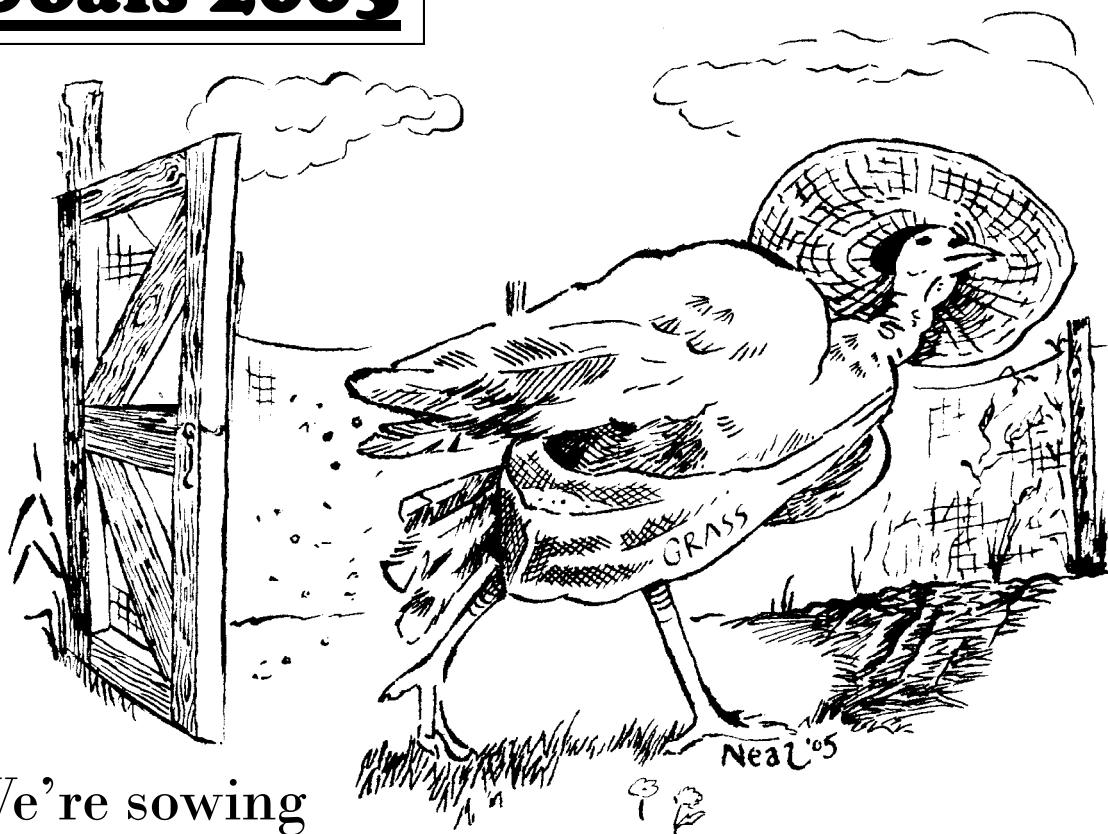


The Turkey Times

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Goals 2005



We're sowing the seeds for a return to profitability

If you looked only at our goals for last year, you might imagine that we had had a very good year. But if you read the winter issue of *The Turkey Times*, you know better.

Of our seven goals last year, we met five and partly met one. But for the fowl cholera that infected our flocks, 2004 might have been a great year.

Our first goal for 2004 was to reduce by 30 percent the number of wholesale accounts we serve. At the start of 2003, we were serving 21 wholesale accounts, almost all with year-round frozen items as well as fresh holiday Turkeys. By discontinuing service to eight accounts, we more than **MET THIS GOAL**. This reversed a policy of 18 years to accept all requests to establish

wholesale accounts.

Even though we discontinued eight accounts, our sales to stores and kitchens settled in at just above 95 percent of the business we had been doing with 21 wholesale accounts.

In 2004, our second goal was to reduce the number of farmers' market days by nearly half. We backed off from the farmers' mar-

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Sad but true; prices rise to meet rising costs

Everyone faces the pressure of rising costs, and for us it is triple pressure.

The cost of baby Turkeys rose 25 percent in 2004 because of new regulations by Homeland Security and the state agriculture department.

Diesel fuel rose more than \$1 a gallon in 18 months.

And, the weakening U.S. dollar raised feed prices because the dollar in Canada, where our feed is milled, is relatively stronger.

We have taken significant steps to reduce costs. We reduced our hours of hired labor last year by about 15 percent. The cut was too much, and this year we must restore some hours.

We plan to switch for some flocks to a strain of Turkey that we expect will use less feed, although it takes much longer to grow to maturity. We are gambling that the saving in feed cost will more than offset the higher risk of loss by predation and higher management cost.

We will maintain equipment but plan no capital purchases. We will switch to a less costly lender for spot feed purchases.

We could have cut costs by buying less expensive feed. Our feed costs about 13 more than conventional feed, which all of our competitors use.

But, we went to great lengths in 2001 to arrange for feed free of genetically engineered grain. Genetically clean grain is important to us and to many of our customers so we will stay with it. We have built our business on doing the right thing whenever possible, and genetically clean feed is the right thing.

Instead, we decided on a general price increase of about 5 percent, which took place on May 1. Our previous general price increase was in October 2003.

We are sorry to raise prices. We hope you can stand the increase and will keep your business with us.

Four new goals for 2005

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ket in Farmington, reducing our selling days to 10 from 34. We went to the Saturday market in Brunswick for 24 weeks, so we attended 34 market days in 2004. Count this, too, a **GOAL MET**.

This year, we are selling on Saturdays at Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick, but we are not selling in Farmington.

Our third goal was to develop a line of six smoked Turkey items. We can count this as the **GOAL PARTLY MET**.

We developed three smoked items, two planned and one not. Sliced smoked Turkey and whole Turkeys had been part of the plan. But we also found a new item by happenstance when we began making smoked Turkey salad. It came to outsell our regular Turkey salad.

Our fourth goal was to increase the retail proportion of our sales to 48 percent of the birds we sell at Thanksgiving. Count this a **GOAL MET**, although not in the way we would have liked. Since we had fewer birds available than usual (cholera, again), we held steady the number of retail birds while reducing the number available for wholesale.

Fifth, we wanted to strengthen our Fryeburg Fair operation by adding an oven exclusively for Turkey legs. Another **GOAL MET**. With the new oven, we never sent away customers who wanted Turkey legs.

Sixth, we wanted to build a shelter on our largest range. Not only did we **MISS** this goal entirely, we have scuttled it. That pen has been the site of the first outbreak of fowl cholera each of the past three seasons. Instead of building a shelter there, we'll abandon most of that yard.

Our final goal was to finish two of the partly met goals for 2003. One was a land-clearing project and the other was to upgrade electric fencing. **GOAL MET**. Farm manager Elaine Stevens brought in her skidder, and working over the summer cleared about three-quarters of an acre. With the land cleared, adding to the electric fencing was pretty easy. We sharply reduced predator losses.

GOALS FOR 2005

Our overriding goal this year is to whip the fowl cholera that has devastated our operation.

Arko Laboratories in Jewell, Iowa, has made a vaccine for us, using a culture from birds that died on our farm last year. To make that vaccine effective, our first two goals are:

One, develop a program of vaccination. We have received recommendations from Dr. Larry Koehn, a co-owner of Arko, and from Dr. Michael Opitz, avian pathologist (retired) at the University of Maine.

We need to design combinations of protection for the birds. Our options are killed vaccines (to protect against specific choleras), live vaccine (to protect against all nine cholera serotypes) and antibiotics.

We prefer vaccines to antibiotics, but both specialists have suggested very short-term antibiotic treatment to strengthen the birds as their systems adjust to the vaccines.

We will begin the season with vaccines only, but if any combination of killed or killed and live vaccines is failing, we can supplement it with antibiotics.

Two, follow rigidly a schedule of vaccinations. We'll write up a schedule as each of our five hatches arrives and give its fulfillment our first priority.

Third, we want to increase sales by 9.5 percent at the Crystal Spring Farmers Market in Brunswick. Sales last year rose by 17.6 percent for year-round items and by 28 percent at the holidays, an overall increase of 22.7 percent.

We may need to add a second person to handle the business since we are near capacity for a one-person operation.

Fourth, we want to complete a soil improvement project that has been largely the idea of farm manager Stevens. She has done almost all of the work on it.

The project consists of cleaning, tilling and seeding about half our ranges plus the land cleared last year. Then, we'll leave that land fallow long enough for the perennial grasses to root and provide subsoil structure to distribute nutrients and prevent erosion as Turkeys beat down the grass and rain beats down the range.

This is a shorter goals list than usual, but as we focus on defeating the fowl cholera, it may be wise to shorten this list and work more intensively at the goals on it.

CSA subscriptions for the season: 33 down, 27 to go

The response to our offering of shares in Community Supported Agriculture for this season has been gratifying.

So far, 33 sharers have signed up, almost all of them renewals. Some signed on for a greater amount, and, with the farm in a down period we deeply appreciate — and need — that extra working capital.

We want to sell 60 shares this year. If the 24 sharers for 2004 from whom we have not heard were to renew, we'd

If you've got the time, we've got the work

If you've ever wanted to try farm life without committing to it, you might try a CSA work share.

Several families have earned their year's Turkey that way for years.

Work sharers work two days for the farm in exchange for a \$150 share. With the 8 percent interest, that share is worth \$162 in Turkey.

The work share consists of two 8-hour days. The usual shift is 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with an hour off for lunch. We can be flexible for anyone driving a long distance.

Fourteen people have signed on this year, and five have completed their workdays and have drawn some proceeds of their shares.

Five others worked a day last year and have a day left to complete their shares.

On April 22 and 23, we held workdays for sharers. While the turnout was low, the days were successful.

Among other things, we rebuilt a third of our feedboxes, we prepared our litter piles so people can get fertilizer for their gardens, we got our secondary brooder ready for the first flock of the year and we got equipment cleaned.

We have four more workdays set for sharers before Thanksgiving and five planned during the Thanksgiving rush.

On Sept. 26 and 27 work sharers will help prepare and load equipment for the Fryeburg Fair, which we will take to the fairgrounds on Sept. 28 and 29.

On Oct. 10 and 11, we will reverse

need three new sharers to sign on. Sixty shares would be one short of our record for a season.

In you're unfamiliar with CSA, here's how it works: Sharers pay for the year's harvest before it comes in. Then they draw against their investment until it is used up. The share lasts for a year, although many sharers use up the share and renew within the year.

Sharers get the best Turkey they can buy. They also get the satisfaction of

that process, and sharers will help by unloading and preparing equipment for winter storage.

Thanksgiving processing will begin on Wednesday, Nov. 16, and will run at least through Sunday, Nov. 20.

If you have signed up or want to sign up for work shares, let us know which of these dates you want to work. We have four spots available for the September and October workdays and six available for each workday during Thanksgiving. Slots fill on a basis of first come, first serve.

In addition, it may be possible to set individual work days — Monday through Thursday — for work sharers.

If you'd like more information e-mail us at turkeyfarm@gwi.net or call Bob at 778-2889.

knowing they support and participate in a Maine farm. Sharers even have a voice in directing the farm. For example, the late Dr. Roger Perry helped us understand the science behind genetic engineering and thus helped us convert to feed that is genetically clean.

Of course, there are huge benefits in CSA for the farm, as well. CSA guarantees us a market, and it spreads the market through the year. By using the CSA investments, we don't have to dip so early into our line of credit at the bank. (When it is maxed out, the line costs about \$150 a month.)

And, it's mighty nice to know that people support us strongly enough to put their purchase money up front.

The shares begin at \$100 and rise in increments of \$50. As an incentive, we offer interest on our shares and the percentage of interest rises with each increment. We pay 6 percent on a \$100 share, so the sharer draws \$106 in Turkey. A \$150 share pays 8 percent (\$162), a \$200 share pays 10 percent (\$220) and a \$250 share pays 12 percent (\$280).

For more information, e-mail us at turkeyfarm@gwi.net or phone Bob at 778-2889. If you want to sign up, fill out the form on this page and send it along with your check. You may start to draw on your share as soon as we receive your check.

CSA Order Form

Fill out and send to The Turkey Farm, 209 Mile Hill Road, New Sharon, Maine 04955:

Please sign me up for the following share in Community Supported Agriculture:

[] Paid (circle) \$100 \$150 \$200 \$250 \$300 \$350 \$400 \$450
(I have enclosed a check for that amount)

[] Work Share, and I want to work at the farm _____ or at the Fryeburg Fair _____.

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

e-mail _____ Telephone No. _____

Give a gift, beat the tax guys

If you own or manage a business, you know the importance of your employees to your success. And you may want to do a little extra for them.

Thanks to an interpretation by the IRS, you can do that without anyone having to pay taxes.

Enter The Turkey Farm.

Every year, companies buy Turkeys from us for Christmas or Thanksgiving gifts to their employees as a way of saying Thank You for your work.

If the employers gave money bonuses, they would have to deduct income tax — the amount of the gift could push the employee into a higher tax bracket — and the employees and employers would each have to pay Social Security and Medicare taxes (7.65 percent each) on the gift.

Not so, though, if you give them Turkeys. And, if you buy 25 or more Turkeys for one holiday, you'll receive our wholesale price, which can save a couple of bucks on each Turkey.

Among the companies that give our Turkeys to employees are a motel in Franklin County, a seed company in Kennebec County and a logging company in Somerset County.

The seed company has been giving our Turkeys to its employees for more than 10 years, the logging company for five or more. From time to time, we run into people who work for one of these companies, and they never fail to tell us how much they like receiving our Turkeys every year.

For more information about gift Turkeys, e-mail us at turkeyfarm@gwi.net or call Bob at 778-2889.

Oh, yes. We give our employees Turkeys, too, for Thanksgiving.

Four ways to get our Turkey

We want to get our Turkey items to you as conveniently as possible.

Our farmstore on Route 27 in New Sharon is open Wednesday and Friday from 2 to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is also open by chance, and one or more of us is always likely to be at the farmstore. Or, call 778-2889 to see if we can meet you when you come by.

We also sell at the Crystal Spring Farmers' Market on the Pleasant Hill Road in Brunswick. It is open, rain or clouds, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. every Saturday through October.

If you don't live near enough to get to the farm of the market, we deliver. On the second Thursday of the month, we deliver east of the Kennebec River. On the third Thursday, we deliver west of the Kennebec. We need an order of at least \$50 for delivery.

If none of the above works for you, try one of these fine stores.

BANGOR

Natural Living Center
209 Longview Drive

BAR HARBOR

Town Hill Market
Route 102, Town Hill

BIDDEFORD

New Morning Natural Foods
230 Main St.

BLUE HILL

Blue Hill Food Co-op
Green's Hill Place, Route 172

BRIDGTON

Morning Dew Natural Foods
Route 117, South

DAMARISCOTTA

Rising Tide Food Co-op
Coastal Marketplace
Business Route 1

ELLSWORTH

John Edwards Market
158 Main St.

KENNEBUNK

New Morning Natural Foods
3 York St.

NEW SHARON

Whitewater Farm
Route 2 at the bridge

PORTLAND

Food Works
47 India St.

ROCKLAND

Good Tern Food Co-op
750 Main St.

SCARBOROUGH

Lois' Natural Foods
152 U.S. Route 1

The Turkey Farm
209 Mile Hill Road
New Sharon, Maine 04955
turkeyfarm@gwi.net
778-2889

Please forward