

The Turkey Times

Volume XVII, Issue 3 ~ Spring 2007

Published by THE TURKEY FARM, New Sharon, Maine

Six steps toward making a good farm better

In business, it's get better or die.

So, each year, we draw up a set of goals to improve our operation — a picture, if you will, of what we want the farm to look like at the end of the year — and we look back a year later to see how we did.

You can read on Pages 2 and 3 about how we did on last year's set of seven ambitious goals.

For this year, our goals list is no less ambitious, and we are already working toward meeting our targets.

No. 1: Get back to our soil improvement project. As the season shapes up, we'll assess where we need to seed and where to yard Turkeys so they don't damage the emerging perennial grasses.

Farm manager Elaine Stevens has already begun liming the ranges, and as the recession of mud season con-

Goals 2007

tinues, we'll begin tilling and then planting timothy, blue grass and clover and, perhaps, other grasses to give our Turkeys a green carpet and to give our soil a root substructure that will hold soil and nutrients in place.

No. 2: Return to rotating our birds. We'll build a new yard of about a half-acre and divide two others into four yards of a half-acre each.

Then, we can move birds every couple of weeks to prevent overuse of yards and to permit the grasses to recover a bit during the season before the birds go back to each yard.

We were at capacity on ranges last year, and the heavy rain made it all but impossible to move birds about and give the ground a breather.

This year, we're cutting back to 3,000 birds and will spread them over more ground.

No. 3: Build at least two shelters, one on the new range and at least one on an older range, to protect our birds from the elements.

Comfort is an important part of animal welfare, and having a place to get away from rain and wind makes the birds more comfortable.

All but one of our present ranges have built or natural shelter.

No. 4: Install a water line to our brooder. We began this last year, as an added project, and almost made it but the ground froze a day or two before we got the line into the ground and connected.

No. 5: Maintain our flocks cholera- and erysipelas-free. This means vaccination and vigilance.

We vaccinate each bird twice for cholera and once for erysipelas and then a few weeks later with a booster.

We also go on a daily "walkabout," in which we check the birds in every yard for appearance, cleanliness and healthiness.

During the walkabout, we clean and sanitize the waterers and clean up spilled feed. We also check fences to make sure gaps aren't opening that would let in critters that might also carry disease.

No. 6: Further improve our Fryeburg Fair operation. We need to eliminate the lines at the drinks counter and to structure our setup to handle the busy times without stretching our crew too thin.

We need to decide whether to include drinks in the meal prices or to charge separately for them. This

(Continued on Page 2)



Goals 2006: Five of seven goals met — not too bad

As you probably read in the winter issue of The Turkey Times, 2006 was the best year ever for The Turkey Farm. So it shouldn't be a surprise that we also met or partly met all of our seven goals for the season.

Our new set of goals for 2007 is spelled out on Page 1. Let's look at our ambitious goals list for 2006.

Goal No. 1:

Keep our flocks free of cholera and erysipelas.

Throughout 2006, we found no sign of cholera or erysipelas in any bird.

For the second consecutive year, we used a vaccine made especially for us to combat fowl cholera type No. 9. This is the type that had been found in our birds.

We vaccinate all birds at 42 days of age for type No. 9 and for type Nos. 1, 3 and 4. A couple of weeks later, we administer a different vaccine for erysipelas.

Twenty-one days later, we give booster shots for each vaccine.

We have since 1995 gone through a similar routine for erysipelas, which is in our soil and can survive a Maine winter. We vaccinate at 8 weeks and boost at 13 weeks.

No sign of cholera or erysipelas, and we all (including the Turkeys) are breathing easier these days.

Goal No. 2:

Expand our Thanksgiving operation.

We expanded at Thanksgiving by 300 birds at the behest of several wholesale customers, who thought they hadn't yet neared their potential for Thanksgiving sales.

So, we slaughtered 1,900 birds at Thanksgiving, an increase of 400, and sold 1,684, an increase of more than 300.

To expand our cooling capacity, we bought a third refrigerator truck.

We got all the Thanksgiving birds out, but we were right on the edge of not meeting our own quality standards, so we have decided not to try more than 1,500 birds at Thanksgiving 2007.

The frenzy and the added cost (about \$2,000 to fix equipment breakdowns and to pay crew to move birds from one cold-storage spot to another when equipment broke down) may not have been worth the added sales.

Goal No. 3:

Streamline our Thanksgiving ordering system.

Marilyn Neal took over the ordering system and did a fine job of organizing it and of notifying continuing customers that it was time to order again.

We had no cases of customers coming to the farm for whom we didn't have a recorded order. A few people who

had ordered at the Crystal Spring Farmers Market were surprised that we didn't have their orders, but we had taken extra birds there knowing we had lost one day's orders in September.

And, most important, we are not aware of any Community Supported Agriculture sharers or long-time customers who didn't get an opportunity to place their orders before all the birds had been reserved., and that had been a major impetus to establishing this as a goal for the season.

Goal No. 4:

Build and improve fences and shelters on our ranges.

Elaine reset nearly 400 feet of fence, much of it heaved up by frost, around the pen nearest the road and reset another fence between two yards, about 240 feet long. This permitted us to expand range by a few hundred square feet and to clear some brush and let birds into an area they hadn't often used.

She also built a shelter in what we call the "middle pen," a yard that gets heavy use every year.

Goal No. 5:

Increase the number of CSA sharers to 67 and the number of shares to 83. This would be a total investment of about \$12,500.

We sold shares to 68 people for a total investment of \$12,750. But they

(Continued on Page 3)

TURKEY ENCHILADA LASAGNA

1 lb.	ground Turkey	10	corn tortillas (6-inch, cut in half)
2/3	onion, chopped	8 oz	cheddar cheese, shredded
2 cloves	garlic, chopped finely	1/2 Cup	enchilada sauce
	chopped scallions, optional		

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a skillet, cook Turkey, garlic and onion and sauté until the Turkey is browned. Add enchilada sauce to skillet. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Grease 9-inch baking dish and line half of the cut tortillas on the bottom. Top with half of the meat mixture, and sprinkle with half the cheese. Repeat with another layer and cover.

Bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake for 5 minutes more. Top with scallions and serve.

-from Zorba Paster *On Your Health*

Goals for 2007

(Continued from Page 1)

is important because making change takes as much time as dishing up a meal.

Rents are going up at Fryeburg this year, and the legislature is threatening to raise the meals tax by 43 percent, so we can't really work on this goal until we know how much more money the state is going to take out of your pocket every time you buy a meal.

If we can meet these goals, we will have an even better farm than we have now.

Community Supported Agriculture: Round II

The first burst of buying shares in Community Supported Agriculture is over, and we are getting ready for the second wave.

As of April 30, we had sold 24 shares, 20 of them renewals and four to new sharers.

They totaled \$3,900, which is within \$1,000 of paying for our refiguring of our yards this year (see the second goal for 2007).

We have sharers from Orono to Cape Elizabeth. More than a third are in the Brunswick area, where they can collect proceeds on their shares easily at the Farmers Market at Crystal Spring.

More than half are in Western Maine and come to our farm or order for delivery.

We hope at least to hold even with last year's level of 72 shares and total value of \$12,750.

We usually have a second wave of share buying just as the farmers' market opens at Crystal Spring in Brunswick.

A quick recap: Sharers buy in at \$100

or more and receive Turkey valued at the share price plus the interest we add to the share.

Shares rise in increments of \$50, and the interest rises in increments of 2 percentage points. A share of \$100 pays 6 percent (\$106), a share of \$150 pays 8 percent (162), and a share of \$200 pays 10 percent (\$220).

And so on.

Sharers may collect any part of their share at any time. Shares last for a year, but if a sharer uses up the share within the year, she may renew. The balance on any share that is renewed may be rolled over into the new share.

To enroll, just fill out the form below and mail or bring it to us with your check. You may start drawing on the share at once.

CSA Order Form 173

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:

(circle) \$100 \$150 \$200 \$250 \$300 \$350 \$400 \$450 \$500
 (I have enclosed a check for that amount)

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

e-mail _____ Telephone No. _____

Even the rain couldn't dampen our success at meeting goals

(Continued from Page 2)

bought 72 shares, so we didn't hit 83.

This translates to an average share value of \$177, an increase of about \$20 a share, which tells us that some sharers bought in at a higher level, which earns them a higher interest rate.

**PARTLY
MET**

That increase per share also explains how we met the goal on number of sharers and amount of investment but not number of shares.

Of the 68 who signed on, 13 were new sharers and five were sharers who had returned after not having renewed for a year or more. Six people who used up their shares did not renew in 2006, which is two more than dropped out in 2005.

(We had calculated incorrectly for the winter issue of The Turkey Times that we had fallen short on this goal, but that was because we counted only total shares and not sharers or investment.)

Goal No. 6:

Increase sales at Crystal Spring Farmers Market by 6 percent.

We could never have prepared ourselves for what happened at market. Instead of struggling to reach a 6 percent increase — we had barely made our goal of **MET!** growing sales by 9.5 percent in 2005 — we grew cash sales by 41 percent at the Saturday market!

And this was despite a terrible start to the season with rainy weather and a horrible final day — the final day is, often as not, our biggest day of the season — of cold wind and hard rain.

But through the rain of May and June, we were consistently even with our sales for the previous year, and when the clouds did break, sales shot up and never came down. On July 1, we set a record for sales in one market, then on Aug. 12, Aug. 26, Oct. 14 and Oct. 21 we set records again.

At Thanksgiving, we sold 14 more birds than in 2005, and at Christmas, we sold five more.

A banner year at market.

Goal No. 7:

Finish our soil improvement project.

After tilling and liming the soil last year, Elaine planted blue grass and timothy on half our ranges.

We put extra pressure on our ranges because we had 400 more birds than we had planned for, and the excessive rain of 2006

**PARTLY
MET**

added to the pressure, so we expect that as spring unfolds we'll find that not much root structure survived the Turkeys and the rain.

We have reestablished this goal for 2007 (See Page 1) because we are determined to leave the ground better than we found it.

The market is coming, the market is coming . . .

One seasonal change we look forward to eagerly every year is the change to farmers-market season, which begins on May 5.

In keeping with the renewal of the spring season, we are upgrading our operation, too, at the Crystal Spring Farmers Market in Brunswick.

We have bought a new canopy, 20 feet by 10, which gives us better cover from rain and sun. Look for the white cover.

And, the new tent has sides and back to protect our customers, our products and equipment and ourselves from slashing rain and wind.

We'll have a new menu board nearer the

counter, which we hope will make it easier for customers to select what they need.

This year, as every year, we'll introduce some new Turkey items. First up for 2007 will be a sandwich-sized sausage with native Maine cranberries and with roasted chestnuts.

The cranberry sausage will replace the smoked Turkey salad with grapes and walnuts that we sold last year.

We are also working on recipes for Italian sausage and for Polish sausage.

Some things won't change at market, though. Chief among those is that Hannah Sprague, a sophomore at Brunswick High

School, will be working with us again. Hannah joined us on Sept. 9 and is a valuable member of our crew.

Another is that we will bring our 34 regular items to market every week. As always, customers may order ahead if they wish or may just show up at market and select from the items that we take every week to Crystal Spring.

More farmers than ever have signed up to sell at Crystal Spring, so join us there. We'll sell at Crystal Spring every Saturday through Oct. 27, with the exception of Sept 29 and Oct. 6, when we'll be at the Fryeburg Fair.

. . . and there are other ways to get our Turkey, too

In addition to the market at Crystal Spring Farm (see above), you can get our fine products from Orono to Kennebunk and everywhere between.

We sell at our farm, we deliver to home and workplace, and we wholesale to the stores listed at the right.

Our farmstore on Route 27 in New Sharon is open 2 to 6 p.m. Wednesday and Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. It is also open by chance, and one or another of us is almost always there.

We'll deliver any order of \$50 or more to home or workplace. We deliver east of the Kennebec River on the second Thursday of the month and west of the Kennebec on the third Thursday. To place an order, just phone us at 778-2889 or e-mail us at turkeyfarm@gwi.net, and we'll take it from there.

BANGOR

Natural Living Center
209 Longview Drive

BAR HARBOR

Town Hill Market
Route 102

BELFAST

Belfast Co-op Store
123 High St.

BIDDEFORD

New Morning Natural Foods
230 Main St.

BLUE HILL

Blue Hill Food Co-op
Route 172

BRIDGTON

Morning Dew Natural Foods
17 Sandy Creek Road
(Route 117)

DAMARISCOTTA

Rising Tide Food Co-op
Coastal Marketplace
Business Route 1

ELLSWORTH

John Edward's 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.

RAYMOND

Good Life Market
Roosevelt Trail at Route 85

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