

The Turkey Times

Volume XVI, Issue 3 ~ Spring 2006

Published by THE TURKEY FARM, New Sharon, Maine

Vaccination program was just the shot in the arm, er, wing that we needed

The Turkey Farm, like many other businesses, sets goals each year for improvement. Last year, we set four, and fully met three of them.

Our overriding goal was to whip the cholera that had plagued our farm.

Arko Laboratories in Jewell, Iowa, made a vaccine for us using a culture from birds that

had died on our farm in 2004.

We used this vaccine to stop type 9 cholera, and it worked, so we **MET** our first goal for the season. That was to **develop a program of vaccination** against type 9 cholera plus three other types of cholera (3, 4 and 3-cross-4) and against erysipelas, a disease that has been in our soil since 1995. Off-the-shelf vaccines are available for all but the type 9.

We developed the program in consul-



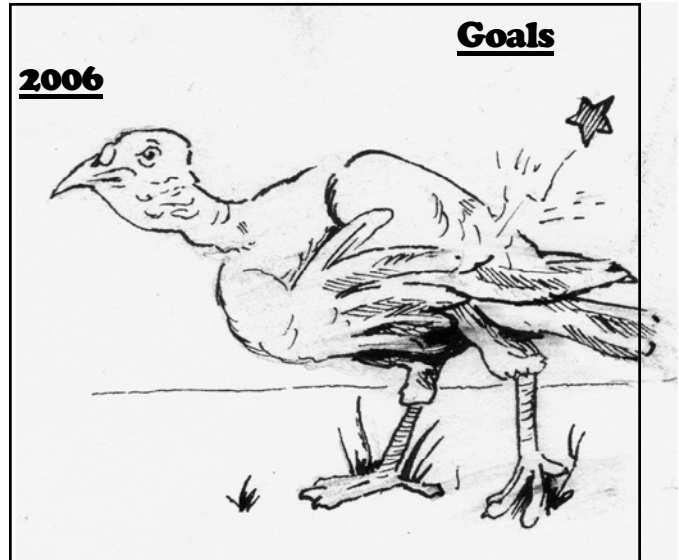
tation with Dr. Larry Koehn, a co-owner of Arko, Dr. Michael Opitz, avian pathologist (retired) at the University of Maine; and Dr. Scott Haskell, veterinarian at the University of Maine.

The second part of freeing our farm of cholera was to get rid of our small army of barn cats, which could carry the cholera organism in their mouths and spread it about the farm. With the help of Wayne Atwood, animal control officer, we trapped the cats and sent them to the Franklin County Animal Shelter. Homes were found for some of them, the shelter director told us.

The second goal, which we also **MET**, was to **follow rigidly a schedule of vaccinations** for each flock.

Vaccination schedules are tricky because each vaccine has a withdrawal period to permit the vaccine to flush from the birds' systems, so we can't slaughter birds during the withdrawal period.

Although there is no enforcement of the withdrawal dates, we adhere to them



We also **MET** the third goal, which was to **increase sales by 9.5 percent** at the Crystal Spring Farmers Market in Brunswick.

In 2005, sales at the Saturday market rose by 2.8 percent. Sales of shares in Community Supported Agriculture at Brunswick rose by 37.7 percent.

Our Thanksgiving and Christmas sales rose nicely, Thanksgiving by 11 percent and Christmas by 69 percent.

Overall, sales rose almost 10 percent.

For our fourth goal, we wanted to **complete a soil improvement project** that is largely the idea of farm manager Elaine Stevens, who has done almost all the heavy lifting on it.

But for the 38 inches of rain between Labor Day and Christmas, this would have been a met goal. As it is, we can count it **PARTLY MET**, because we won't know for a while how much seed and nascent root structure was washed away by the rain.

(Continued on Page 2)

New season, new goals

(Continued from Page 1)

The project consisted of cleaning, tilling and seeding about half our ranges.

We were able to leave each range fallow long enough for the grasses to root and provide sub-soil structure before we turned Turkeys onto it.

The continued support of our customers, based in their belief that we can grow and prepare for them the finest Turkey meat, makes it possible for us to meet our goals. Without our customers, the farm has no reason to continue.

NEW GOALS

We have seven goals for this year.

The first is to **maintain our flocks cholera and erysipelas free**.

The off-the-shelf vaccines are already in our refrigerator. The autogenous vaccine will be shipped in early May.

We will again adhere to a tight vaccination schedule that puts vaccination first in our priority of chores.

The second goal is to **expand our Thanksgiving operation** by 300 birds.

The dust hadn't even settled from Thanksgiving 2005 when we started hearing from stores that wanted more birds for Thanksgiving and Christmas 2006.

One store wanted to jump from 100 to 200 birds, another from 110 to 200, a third from 25 to 50. And so on.

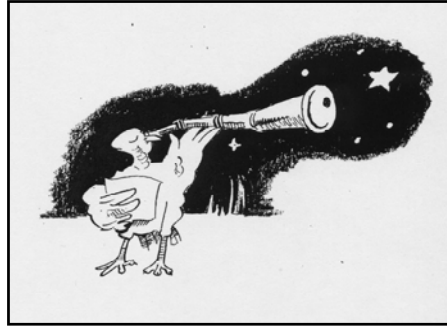
As Lyndon Johnson said, "You dance with the one who brung you," and the ones who "brung" us are the year-round customers, wholesale and retail.

The "Gang of Three" — Marilyn Neal, Bob Neal and farm manager Stevens — sat down in December to work out a way to accommodate these requests from those who "brung" us.

By reallocating birds a bit and by adding a day to our Thanksgiving slaughter, we believe we can offer about 1,700 birds at Thanksgiving (up 300) and about 375 at Christmas (up 75).

Beyond those numbers, we fear we'd risk lowering the quality of our birds as our orientation shifted to production.

To accommodate this expansion, we will change some Thanksgiving policies. We will have to discontinue offering birds at



wholesale to accounts that buy only at Thanksgiving.

We will also have to redesign our wholesale delivery schedules and we will likely have to discontinue retail pickups in Waterville and Augusta.

The third goal is to **streamline our Thanksgiving ordering system**.

We have been concerned for several years that some faithful customers don't order holiday birds in time and wind up getting shut out after supporting our farm all year, while others get a holiday bird but buy nothing else from us.

Last year, for the first time, even some CSA sharers didn't get their orders in soon enough and had to settle for Turkeys from somewhere else.

Marilyn is going to redesign our ordering system to give CSA sharers and year-round customers first crack at holiday birds. She may set up an early-order period during which sharers and year-round customers can order before we begin taking orders from the once-a-year customers both new and continuing.

She has decided to discontinue the automatic reordering system because most of the people who don't show up for reserved Turkeys are the automatic renewals.

So, whatever system Marilyn comes up with, starting this year everyone will have to order her own Turkey again.

The fourth goal is to **rebuild and improve fences and shelters on our ranges**.

Winter frost heaves some fence posts every mud season. When several posts on the a line heave, we reset the entire line, and so it is this year as we reset posts and rewire parts of three of our seven ranges.

We're also completing built shelters on two ranges, bringing to four the number of ranges with built shelters. We have natural shelter on two other ranges. Time and finances permitting, we'll build a shelter on the seventh range.

Goals 2006

Our fifth goal is to **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

Last year, 62 sharers bought 74 shares, a total investment of \$11,850. Twelve were bought by sharers who had used up their share within the year but wanted more.

In 2005, 47 sharers renewed from 2004 and 15 new sharers joined them. Only four sharers from 2004 dropped out.

If all current sharers renew, which we know is highly unlikely, we would need five new sharers. If another four drop out, we would need nine new sharers.

(See story and order form on Page 3.)

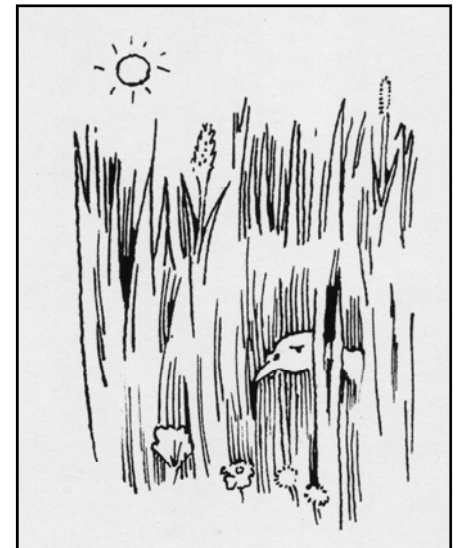
The sixth goal is to **increase sales at Crystal Spring by 6 percent** with an emphasis on Saturday sales at market (see article on Page 3).

The seventh goal is to **finish our soil improvement project**. After tilling and liming the soil last year, Elaine planted blue grass and timothy on half our ranges.

As the frost leaves the ground this year, we'll relime and reseed and then move on to the ranges we didn't seed last year.

With any kind of break from the weather, our ranges by season's end could be well on their way to healthier growth and root structures.

The goals list is ambitious, but we have a good start on it already and expect we can keep it under control. With the continued support of our sharers and other customers, this may be the season in which we finally meet all of our goals.



Spring means Crystal Spring (market, that is)

On May 6, we'll begin our sixth season at the Crystal Spring Farmers Market. It will be our eighth season in Brunswick.

We'll be at Crystal Spring, on the Pleasant Hill Road at Woodside Road, every Saturday through Oct. 28, except Sept. 30 and Oct. 7, when we'll be at the Fryeburg Fair.

The Crystal Spring market opens at 8:30 each Saturday morning and runs until 12:30 p.m. The market is busiest between 9:30 and 11:30, so customers who come outside those hours may find the shopping more leisurely.

We'll also deliver ordered Turkeys to Crystal Spring at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Our goals for 2006 (See Page 1) include increasing sales at Crystal Spring, with an emphasis on the Saturday markets.

Each month, we'll introduce a new item, beginning in May with smoked Turkey breast cured in maple syrup.

Curing produces a moister and longer-lasting smoked Turkey. In addition to maple syrup, we use sea salt and lemon juice, and we keep the salt to a minimum.

In June, we expect to introduce cooked smoked Kielbasa, which we have been developing on and off since last summer.

Other new items likely to come along this year include cranberry smoked sausage and perhaps a garlic and cheese sausage.

Again this year, Hannah Weddle will work with us at market, until she heads off to film school in September at New York University.

We're looking for another record in Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture seems again to be in the ascendancy, both across the state and at our farm.

In 1990, The Turkey Farm became the second Maine farm to start a CSA program — the first was Willow Pond Farm in Sabattus — and in 2005 we set a record for number of shares and sharers. We take the increase in the number of sharers as validation of our approach to farming, and we consider that CSA sharers are participating actively in our farm.

CSA lets people who eat food pay for that food ahead of time with money or work and receive in value more than they paid.

In addition to getting greater value of farm produce than the share price, sharers get the opportunity to influence farm decisions, get the best farm produce as quickly after harvest as possible and get the satisfaction of boosting Maine's fragile farm infrastructure.

The farm gains, too, from CSA support. We get the comfort of knowing people support what we're doing, we get access to some market that we might not otherwise have had, we get the benefit of people's perspectives on what we're doing, and we get a nice chunk of our year's income up front.

PAID SHARES

Shares at The Turkey Farm begin at \$100 and rise in \$50 increments. With each in-

crement, the interest rate rises 2 percentage points.

Shares run for a year, but sharers who use up their shares can buy another share any time and begin drawing on it. Last year, we set a record for number of sharers (62), number of

shares (74) and money invested (\$11,850) in CSA.

As the goals article that begins on Page 1

states, we

hope to increase all three areas this year, to 67 sharers, 83 shares and \$12,500 invested.

The Payout		
Share	Interest	Proceeds
\$100	6 %	\$106
150	8 %	162
200	10 %	220
250	12 %	280
300	14 %	342
350	16 %	406
400	18 %	472

WORK SHARES

We'll again offer work shares through CSA. Work sharers invest in the farm with sweat rather than money.

A work share consists of two days of work for the farm and earns a \$150 share, which is worth \$162 in Turkey. Work sharers can draw on their share after one day of work, and the interest is added to the share after the second day.

This year, for the first time, we are scheduling work days ahead of time. They are: Sept. 25 and 26, to prepare for the Fryeburg Fair; Oct. 9 and 10, to put away after the fair; Nov. 14-21 to pack and ship Thanksgiving birds; Dec. 18-20 to pack and ship Christmas birds; and Dec. 28-30 to put the farm to bed for the winter.

If these dates won't work for you, we may be able to schedule different dates.

If you need to know more about Community Supported Agriculture before deciding whether to join, just Email us at turkeyfarm@gwi.net or call Bob at 778-2889.

If you're ready to renew or to sign on for the first time, just fill out the form at the left and add your check or work dates and send it in. As soon as we receive the check, you may start drawing on your share.

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
(I have enclosed a check for that amount)

[] Work Share, and I want to work these dates: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

e-mail _____ Telephone No. _____

Turkey for all seasons and almost anywhere

We make it as easy as we can for you to get our farm-raised Turkey items year round.

We keep regular store hours at the farm, we sell at the farmers market in Brunswick, we deliver to home and workplace and we wholesale to 13 stores.

At the farm, our hours are 2 to 6 p.m. Wednesday and Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

In addition, we are open by chance, which means we're open whenever we're here. And, it seems that at least one of us is on the farm almost all the time. We try to take off Sundays, but most other days don't be shy about stopping and shopping.

We also make appointments to meet customers at the farmstore. Reach us by phone at 778-2889 or by Email at turkeyfarm@gwi.net.

During our regular trips around the state, we deliver to home and workplace any order of \$50 or more. We deliver east of the Kennebec River on the second Thursday of the month and west of the Kennebec on the third Thursday of the month. We'll also deliver after market on Saturdays (May through October).

If none of these works for you, try any of the 13 stores listed below. Each carries at least three of our 35 Turkey items.

In Bangor, the Natural Living Center sells cutlets (BC), ground Turkey (GT), ground breast (GB), breast roast (BR), mild sausage (MS) and spicy sausage (SS) in solid pack and mild breakfast links (BL). It also sells our Turkey pies.

Other stores and what they sell:

Town Hill Market: BC, GT, GB, BR,

MS, SS, BL.

Belfast Co-op: BC, GT and pies.

New Morning in Biddeford: BC, GT, GB, BR and pies.

Blue Hill Co-op: BC, GT, GB, BR, MS, SS, BL.

Morning Dew in Bridgton: BC, GT, GB, BR, MS, SS, BL.

Rising Tide Co-op: BC, GT, GB, BR, MS, SS, BL.

John Edwards Market: BC, GT, GB, BR and pies.

New Morning in Kennebunk: BC, GT, GB, BR, MS, SS, BL and pies.

Whitewater Farm: BC, GT, BR, MS, SS, BL, spicy links and pies.

Food Works: GT, BR, MS, SS.

Good Tern Co-op: BC, GT, GB, BR, MS, SS, BL and pies.

And, Lois' Natural: BC, GT, GB, BR, MS, SS, BL and pies.

THE STORES

BANGOR

Natural Living Center
209 Longview Drive

BAR HARBOR

Town Hill Market
Route 102, Town Hill

BELFAST

Belfast Co-op Store
123 High Street

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
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