

This is the original diary kept by Greg Christiansen as sent to Farm and Ranch Living Magazine in 2009, pictures were added later. It was edited by Melissa Phaneuf, of Farm and Ranch, to fit the required space and was published in the April/May issue of 2010.

## Farm and Ranch Intro

Honestly, between you and me, Reality TV Shows are the most unrealistic thing on television.

There is one reality show I would like to see. I would call it, "Here's Some Dirt, Make It Work". In this show, the contestants would be given some land, a few hundred to a few thousand acres, depending upon the given rainfall and environment. He would then have to decide, based upon his own management skills, how to make a living on the property. Of course he would have to make payments on it, buy livestock, build facilities, buy equipment, plant a crop and harvest it. He would have to keep the equipment running, fix fence, know how to keep the livestock alive and productive, set the planter for proper seed placement, and the combine to efficiently harvest the crop, know how to control weeds and brush that invade the fields. They would be responsible to secure loans for purchasing inputs, making decisions on when to buy and when to sell in an economic environment that has been highly volatile, even before the media started using that word. You must keep up on technological advances in your business and educate yourself in all these areas, no employer to send you to a weeklong seminar in Florida.

While doing all that they must keep money available to pay the household bills, pay college tuition, keep gas in the car, take off early to go to children's sports events, be active in the community, and church, don't forget anniversaries, birthdays, and vacations. Oh, yea, almost forgot, keep the banker happy too. You must do this and keep your chin up while doing it.

And if you succeed? You win a chance to do it all again next year!

Yea, that's the reality for many of us in agriculture and who read and write in this magazine. We all get to catch a glimpse of your life, the "real" reality show.

My name is Greg Christiansen and I've been ask to let you in on my reality show this month by keeping a diary. My wife, Ann is a Pre-school handicapped

teacher, covering 3 counties. We have two daughters, Ashley 21, and Megan 20, and a son, Tanner. Megan and Tanner are twins.

Our place is in Eastern Kansas. We raise corn, milo, soybeans and wheat, and have a beef cow herd. A few years ago, after having our third drought in five years and nothing would grow but brush and weeds, we got into meat goats. Now, kidding out about 500 nannies every spring keeps me pretty busy for a few weeks, just before planting and spraying of our no-till crop field's gets into full swing.

Maybe you think, as I did, that goats are hardy and will eat anything, you're as wrong as I was. There are a million things that can kill a goat and every time I think I have found them all, I immediately come across another one. I have had them die by getting stuck in the fork of a tree, in a fence, stuck in the mud, and even get stuck in a crack in the ground and die in the hot sun. They must be protected from predators and even the neighbor's dogs. We have livestock guardian dogs that live and protect our goats that are on 6-7 different pastures within 20 miles of our house.



Kidding for

us normally starts the last week of March and goes through April. Our goats will have an average of 1.7 kids born for each doe. Kidding season is a mixed emotion. Some days having over 50 kids born is exciting, but it is also the highest death loss time for a goat. That can take a toll on any livestock producer, as many of you know. It's an emotional rollercoaster during kidding, calving, planting, growing or harvest season. The weather, disease, weed control, death and market volatility, makes it hard to keep your emotions level, and keep an attitude that others can live with, no matter what area of agriculture production you are in.

I've had over a 150 kids born in since the middle of March. The labor required during kidding season is directly correlated to the weather. Wet and cold kids usually end up being brought into the barn if they appear weak or a

storms coming. We had a freak blizzard last Saturday with rain before that so the pens in the barn are full and need cleaned out. We have rule #355 because number 355 kid didn't look quite right one night but thought I would check him the next day. He didn't make it through the night. After you do this a while you get to know the look that says, you better do something for me if you want me to be here tomorrow. But still, you can only do so much. Sometimes you get lax or just tired. It gets pretty fast and furious sometimes so you must discipline yourself to go at a pace you can sustain for a few weeks. If you don't, you'll make too many mistakes that will cost you more than a little rest would have.



Sun. March 1,

Black Momma had twins today. Only about 15 degrees outside, so had to dry and warm them up. Cold again tonight so brought them inside. She's the first goat we ever bought and only one side of her bag has milk but that has quite a bit. We bought her about 7 years ago and she was no spring chicken then. Most of her teeth are gone now but we try to put her with the group that is getting the best feed. Unfortunately that was the meat kids we were growing out this past fall, hence she got bred.

Mon. March 2, 2009 had a new calf this morning. 6 degrees in the night didn't seem to bother him any. I caught up a few more does that need to go to

the sale and will take them a few miles to a neighbor that works at the Yates Center, Ks. Sale, 75 miles away. They may have 1000 sheep and goats selling. It is only on the first Tues. of the month. Black mama's kids don't seem very lively. They were probably somewhat premature. I had to tube milk down their throat with a stomach tube. You have to be careful not to get the tube into their lungs and drown them. Something I seem to do once a year, just getting in a hurry and being careless. If they make a noise while the tube is in then you are in the esophagus that leads to the stomach. If no noise, then pull the tube out and start over. I buy the tubes from Premier One vet supply on the net.

Tues. March 3, 2009 today is cold and gray. Not as cold as yesterday but a depressing grey is on everything. Cattle, market, crops, economy, looks bad. Don't feel like doing anything. Loaded some junk from old iron pile. Dr.'d another calf in west pasture for pneumonia. Settled up with Tom for last year. Need to buy hay, pay feed bill, truck parts. Self employment is a mind game. You have to keep yourself up. Easy to get down and not feel like doing much. 90% of success is in your attitude, and it's hard to keep a good one this time of year when prices are low, everything is brown and monotone.

Wed. March 4, 2009 What a difference a day makes. 70 some degrees today and almost 80 tomorrow. Attitude is as good as the weather. Even the markets are up today. Worked Wollards goats and got bull from Meeks. Sean helped me today. He just lives a half mile away, and Jack will help tomorrow. He's semi retired and has a few goats. He is a lifesaver because he can usually help at any moment. I couldn't do it without them. And the livestock guardian dogs. Each pasture has 2-4 dogs in it. I don't like to put one dog out by themselves. They have more confidence with two together. We use Akbash, Anatolian Shepherd, Kommodor, and Great Pyrennes, and mixes of those from



our own breeding.

A Kommodor guardian, Bonnie.



Akbash/Anatolian shepherd pups with Mollie.

Thur. March 5, 2009 Not a good day, actually this is March 7 but didn't feel like writing on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Bought a bull yesterday, I paid too much for, but justified it in the added weight that he would put on my calves over 6-7 yrs of service. Brought him home and he hung himself in my corral and died. I would expect that from a goat but not usually cattle. So took me two days to get over it. Dealing with setbacks in this business is not my strong suit. Always thinking what I would've, could've, or should've done. Read March 6<sup>th</sup> to see what I did yesterday.

Fri. March 6, 2009 I looked through the Exchanger and found couple bulls about 30 mi. away. Same breed, and bought two for the price of the one that died. They're maybe not as good, but probably adequate for my operation. I turned them straight out with the cows. It was warmer today and 70 degrees felt pretty good. But I am also having some pneumonia in my calves due to the warm up after being so cold. I worked on putting electric fence around a 160 acre pasture that I will put goats in with someone else's cattle to control the weeds and brush.

Sat. March 7, 2009 I fed everybody today and helped Tom work on an auger that goes on the back of the truck to fill the planter with bean seed.

Sun. March 8, 2009 I fed and checked the heavy cows and goats out front then a guy came by to get a couple roping goats that he uses for practice for his granddaughter. The time changed last night and now it stays light till almost 8:00. I see that as the end of winter and am happy and sad to see it go. It is also the end of coming in the house at 5-6 p.m. You can work yourself to death when it stays light long into the evening. Something tells you, you can't go in the house

until it's dark. Just a mind game I guess but that seems to be the way it is every year.

Mon. March 9, 2009 I had a couple calves born to tag this morning. Fed everybody and moved some rock that a friend brought in. Seems like you can never have enough rock in the drive and lots. Always wondered why the rock in the road goes down and you have to keep adding more, but the rock in the fields comes up and you need to continually pick it up? Been working on fencing another pasture that we will put goats on this spring. The current renter wants to stop mowing the pasture and let the goats eat the weeds and brush. The trick is the stocking rate to control the weeds but not consume the grass his cows are eating. Try to keep everyone happy, land owner, tenant, cows, goats and me. And I'm often told, "it must be nice to be your own boss."



Goats cleaning a pasture.

Tues. March 10, 2009 Raining still this morning, off and on. Worked in the barn making pens, and feeders for goats that need to be brought in during kidding. The only goats that come in are problems. I make small pens about 5x5 to keep them close to their babies. This works good for making adoptions. That seems to just be part of the business. They are easier to adopt on than cattle. Mainly because you can hold them still. I made a portable, wooden station that will hold a doe while a kid nurses, it's real handy when you don't feel like manhandling them.

Wed. March 11, 2009 after feeding I moved some more rock for the drive way and the corral. I then took everything out of the shop and swept the “rock floor” and put another layer of fresh screenings on it. Some of the other rock was a little large for the drive but for the price I paid, guess we can just drive slow. Black mommas kids are doing well and were running around like bandits when I let them out of a smaller pen into the larger one.

Thurs. March 12, 2009 After feeding the south goats at “Claytons and Isbells” pastures while the ground was frozen I found a calf that had tumbled down the bank of a creek here at home and was wet and cold. The cow probably pushed him down it trying to lick him off. I put him in the cab of the pickup (mobile calf hot box) and ran the heater on him while I thawed colostrum. Took him back and the mom was glad to see him and he looked fine when I checked him this evening.



Goats at Clayton's pasture.

Kind of a weird day, gray, and about 30 degrees, but bone chilling cold. Seems like I fought the urge to go inside and just fall asleep all day telling myself I would quit early and go inside. After getting some goats up that I will vaccinate tomorrow and checking the cows and new calves again, I looked at my watch and it's 6:30 p.m. I'm not liking daylight savings time. There's no excuse to go to the house when it's still light out. I know it's a mind game. But if you're like me, and I'm pretty average, you don't answer the phone if your inside during the day and it rings, don't want anyone to know you were inside at that time of day, right? Not that anyone would think anything but you. Right now I look outside and the sun just came out for the first time today. I get the feeling I should be out there doing something.

I think that is why it is so hard to do planning and preparation work in the office. Keep thinking I will do it on a rainy day or at night. But then I don't because I just don't feel like it then. I believe most of the monetary profit in ag

businesses comes from time spent ,keeping and going over livestock records, searching out the best hybrid to plant, looking at weed control programs that worked or didn't work last year, making a budget and keeping track of expenses, and all the other stuff that we put off because we got to get outside where the work is. Secretly, I think most of us don't think very highly of people with office jobs so it is hard for us to do that part of the job. Maybe I should hire a farm manager, he could write me a pay check every two weeks. But then I guess I would have to ask him for time off when I wanted it. But who ever wants time off anyway? Or I guess I could hire someone to do the outside work and I could do office work. No, don't like that idea either.

I just checked the markets. Corn up 20 cents and beans up 24 cents. I feel better now. Our attitudes are so finicky, it almost makes me sick.

March 13, 2009 Vaccinated and wormed goats from Leota's. Got guttering put on the barn and the house.

March 18, 2009 Took Tanner to look at Tx. Job and he will move there next week. It is a really good job for him and he should do well. The owner seems like a good person to work for. Had several kids born at Isbells and all doing well. Seems like the does have been really good mothers over there so far this year. Some years they don't want to watch over their kids very well and leave them to go and eat when I show up but seems like these half kiko's aren't doing that so maybe they really are exceptionally good mothers.

Sprayed some wheat today after getting the sprayer ready yesterday. Started working on an oil leak this evening and will check it out in the morning. It has been really warm, in the 70's so cattle aren't eating as much hay and feed. Grass is starting to grow and things are really greening up. Be mowing the yard soon.

March 19, 2009 Tagged some more kids at Isbells pasture today. They're all doing well, over 35 hd. So far. Had to work on the sprayer today and fix oil leaks around the wheel hubs. Hate working on oily, dirty machinery. Sprayed out a load on 75



acres of wheat and got about 100 acres left to go.



Goats on "Isbells" pasture.

March 24, 2009 Moving Tanner to Texas. Planned on leaving at 6 a.m. but didn't get out until after 7. The wind was the worst I had ever seen. We got there after 9 hrs of driving. Moved stuff in the house and went to the grocery store to get him some supplies.

March 25, 2009 Got Tanners internet set up and he went on to work with Jim, (the father). I later hooked up with them and went with Jim as he checked irrigation motors and showed me around. The country there and the way they farm is so different. Sometimes I think I would like it and other times I don't think so. I think Tanner will like it okay, at least for a while, just because it is so new and different. It is good for him to work for someone else. He was still working at 8:30 but said that he didn't have to start until about 8:30 in the morning.

We got home about midnight but I plan on starting before 8:30.

March 26, 2009 Got out early to see who kidded since I was gone. 5 does kidded out front, didn't find the kids to one doe. I could tell she had given birth but no kids were in the pasture without mothers. I hate that because you don't know what happened, were they born dead? The guard dogs will eat a dead kid but I have never seen them kill and eat a live one. I have actually bated them with a kid that was so weak that I knew it wouldn't survive and it was still there later that day. I have seen them eating dead ones before and so just have to trust them. Some say that they eat them so they won't attract predators, I just think they are hungry. Of course they eat the afterbirth too. I have seen them take it away from a doe that is eating it after giving birth.

Suppose to have rain and then 4-7 inches of snow from now thru Saturday. Cold rain and 35-45 degrees is the worst thing for newborn goats. They don't have much body mass so they chill so quickly. I have some sheds and brush for protection which helps but they don't always go to those areas. Two years ago

we had 6 inches of wet snow after 5 inches of rain in the heart of my kidding season. I went out at night and tried to gather up kids to put in the barns. A lot of the does went in but left their kids in the rain. Some made it, but many didn't.

March 28, 2009 Rain starting about 9 a. m. I took the 4-wheeler to check goats kidding at Wollards pasture about 6 mi. away. The rain caused them to go to the barn and there were 4 new kids in the barn but I couldn't tag them because I wasn't sure who their mother was. I like to tag them with their mother's number then if I have a problem with one I can take the nanny home with the kid. I can also keep track of how well that nanny does as far as raising her kids, weaning weight and profitability.



A newborn with it's mother.

The rain soon turned to a blizzard like snow storm. I was glad I had closed the gate on the does here at home so they couldn't leave the loafing shed area. You would think they would go in there to have their kids but not always. After checking on them and not finding any new kids, I went to the house. Maybe watching a little March Madness will take my mind off of the ugly weather during this critical time. Not a whole lot you can do. Can't put everyone in the barn, I guess I should just expect weather like this when I start into kidding season. Freak late March or early April snow storms seem to be the norm the last couple years. Kind of like the 3 different hundred year floods we had in the last few years.

March 29, 2009 Got out and fed hay before church because the ground was frozen and 2 inches of rain then 4 inches of wet snow will make it too sloppy to feed easily, later. The sun came out this afternoon and warmed to 50 degrees, so the snow went pretty fast, but now all the creeks and rivers are out of their banks. Checked the pasture again after church and as far as I can tell I only lost one kid during the storm. He was in a barn with several others and their mothers, looks like he might have gotten suffocated. Most the time you never really know for

sure. But that's not bad only losing one for having cold rain and snow. Luckily not many nannies kidded during that time and if they did the rain had drove them into a barn or shelter where they made out better. Had 2 cows have calves which were doing fine. Don't worry about them nearly as much as goats for survivability.

Ann got back from Megan's sorority mother/daughter activities this evening.

March 30, 2009 Had a few new kids in the shed area at home and 8 others born during the day. Went to Wollards pasture and had 16 to tag but not sure on the mothers of some so I'll wait until I can figure it out later. One set of triplets on a very wild doe. I may try to make an adoption onto one of the does that lost her kids. I don't have real good luck with triplets and I've got an adoption candidate that really wants a baby. Had to strap one doe to the 4-wheeler and take her home, as her teats were too large for the kids so I milked them down. Put them in a pen by themselves but had to milk her again by evening. Hope they get to sucking both of them. If they don't one will likely go bad and the kids will be stunted. I marked her to be shipped out after she weans her kids. I have enough problems without keeping some around for next year.

I brought another kid home who wasn't doing well. Don't know who his mom is either but she's not doing a very good job. Tubed colostrum down him and gave him electrolytes. But he still isn't able to stand up. I will give them 50 cc lactating ringers and 10 cc dextrose under the skin to help get them up and going. Sometimes it works, sometimes not. Seems like you need to do something but you can almost tell when one isn't going to make it. The more goats you have the more that die, it's a given. I still don't like it and wonder what else you can do.

It's 10:30 and I can hear the thunder.



He's doing better.

I'm glad I brought in the newborn kids in the front pasture so I don't have to go out and gather them up now and put them in the barn or wish I would have when I go out in the morning. Nothing is more of a killer on baby goats than a cold, pounding, wind blown, rain. After being in the 60's today it is suppose to be high in the 40's and very windy tomorrow.

March 31, 2009 Took 6 does back to pasture and cleaned out the 5 pens in the barn but had them all full again by this evening. This rule number 355 will wear you out if you let it. I usually get a little more slack later in the kidding season and when the weather is warmer. Suppose to get down to 30 degrees again tonight so with the wet ground I will usually bring in anyone I have a question about until I run out of time or energy and then quit frankly they are on their own. You can only do so much.

Had to run to Garnett about 20 miles to pick up three cows and calves that a guy bought for me. I can't stand sitting at sales and buying my own livestock so I don't do that very often. He doesn't charge what it would I have to be paid to sit still for that long.

Hope to take most of the does and kids back to their respective pastures today, although it is suppose to rain again tonight.

When I bring them home or take them back, I usually just put some feed down out in the pasture and sneak up behind them grabbing a back leg then tie them three legged like a calf and throw them in the back of the pickup. I have a small Nissan pickup that I use for everything except hauling hay and pulling my trailer. After picking up 5 or 6 nannies you are glad that it is low to the ground. I put the kids in the front floor board with the one of three boarder collies I take with me. I back into the barn at home and milk some colostrums out for the kid, tubing it down them. Then I trim her feet. This is usually the only time I trim hooves, unless they are limping badly, as I already have them caught. Raising goats is surprisingly very physical as you can manhandle them. So you often do. You can't do that with cattle so you don't even try. I always carry 4 or 5 tie ropes in the pickup for problem goats I need to bring home anytime throughout the year.



April 1, 2009 Today I checked all the goat pastures and didn't have to bring anyone in. The weather was warmer, not the cold wind of yesterday. Newborn kids lose body heat very fast if they don't get up and nursing soon after birth. Anyone that is slightly stressed and stays on the cold ground too long after birth may not get up. I have to take them and warm them in the pickup, while I take them back to the barn and milk the mother, tubing the warm colostrum down them. I took some from the barn back to their homes but some others I kept as it is suppose to rain again tonight or tomorrow.

Since there weren't any major problems to take care of I got some help and put the duals on the tractor. Then we hooked on to the new planter that was delivered last week. As with any new piece of equipment it is a love hate relationship until you get to know it.

Went to a meeting put on by the ethanol plant we sell grain to, in Garnett this evening then checked the front pasture again and found two kids without a mother. They had been dried off and wandering around so I warmed some frozen colostrum and tubed them, then took them back to the loafing shed as there was a nanny that was balling for them. The front pasture has about 100 does that will kid and about 80 of them are first time kidders so I don't give them the benefit of



Kodiak and Gracie, Akbash guardians

the doubt very often. When I go out at night the guard dogs aren't really sure about me. Don't think a stranger would be too welcome after dark, but I talked to them and they settle down. I had to put a doe in a head catch I made that holds her while I milk her or a kid nurses. It's portable so I can move it from pen to pen. I am working on an adoption from a doe that had triplets, to one that lost her kids in the cold rain last Friday. She hasn't quite accepted her new baby yet but sometimes it takes a few days.

April 2, 2009 I went out before the rain started this morning. One of the two kids I gave colostrums to last night and left in the loafing shed was about dead and I couldn't find the other one. Apparently the mother didn't claim them as I thought she would. Rule number 355 violated and paid for. I put the one in the pickup to warm him and gave electrolytes and dextrose, then headed over to Wollard's pasture with the 4-wheeler before it rains.

I found a dead kid there in the barn. I'm sure it's not good for them to be in the dirt and dried manure of the barn but I don't know if it's worse than being out in the cold rain. I suspect they are susceptible to respiratory infection in there. Normally any dead kids are found in the barn but don't know if that is the cause or just where they go when they're sick. Not much alternative as that is where



they want to go when it rains.



Tagged a couple newborn kids in there and saw some kids laying in the brush with their mothers close by as I drove back there. Now's not the time to tag those newborns, if they look good and mothered up then why upset things by tagging them now, with cold rain beginning to fall? It does make my record keeping inaccurate but I would rather have live goats come sale day than good records. On my way out I spotted a newborn that was by itself about a half mile away from the other goats in the barn. I wasn't sure if it's mom was coming back for it or just went to get herself out of the rain. Rule #355 said to pick it up and take it to the rest of them. When I did, it's mom came running up, and he went to sucking. He'd have probably been history out where he was after a few hours of this weather. On the way back to the pickup there was a nanny trying to get her kids to join her under a cedar tree out of the rain. The two kids didn't want to cross the small stream to get over to their mom, so I picked them up and took them across to the balling mother. She didn't even act grateful. Back at home I found the mother of the orphaned kid from this morning and put them in a pen together. She doesn't want him very badly but that will change.

I came inside and ate a couple hamburgers my wife picked up on her way home, knowing I would go back out and check before dark. I then got a call that I had goats out at Claytons pasture so left to put those in. It's the only pasture that we don't use electric fence. It has 7 wires barb wire and it isn't as effective. There was a new kid there even though they aren't due to start until next week. Isbells pasture is on the way home so went by. One new kid there was doing well but had to bring home a set of twins just born, that looked chilled. Checked the front pasture at home and had two sets of twins just born on the cold wet ground and predicting 32 degrees or below tonight. So they came in too. I milk the nannies and tube feed colostrums down the kids as long as I have them contained.

I checked the back loafing shed where the front nannies bed down and there was two new sets of twins doing okay so I went ahead and tagged them so I could

check them tomorrow. Found a couple newborns that looked abandoned and one was still alive so took him into the house and guess he'll spend the night with us so I can feed him a few times. Don't know anyone who has livestock who hasn't had kids, calves, lambs or piglets in the house at some time or another.

I ate some cream of wheat with ice cream on it before I tubed our house Guest again and went to bed.



He's doing fine.

April 3, 2009 I caught a buck for a friend who wants to use him to breed some does. Goats normally breed when the days start getting shorter. Occasionally you can get some to breed out of season. I've tried it with little success, but Jack wants to give it a try.

The temperatures being up in the 60's today made it a better day to have goats born. I don't think I brought home anybody as it will stay in the 40's tonight. Had 10 born out front and a few in the other pastures but everyone looked fine. The warmer, drier day sure makes my job easier. I caught a goat that had lost her kids a few days ago to be an adopted mom to the one from the porch, I couldn't spot anybody who had just kidded that might be his real mother.

I sold a load of beans today and forward contracted some grain sorghum. It's amazing how finicky our attitudes are. When you sell at a good price you feel good, but if they go higher later, it aggravates me, if they go lower, then I should have sold more, my attitude can't win in this game. Being successful in the business of agriculture revolves around being able to keep a good attitude during the ups and down, even when you don't know for sure if it is an "up" or a "down". I'm not very good at it.

April 4, 2009 Another warm day. Didn't have to bring anyone into the nursery so cleaned the pens. Tagged 10 at "Wollards", 6 out front and 3 at "claytons". Some others born but I didn't see their mother with them.



We sell our kid crop once a year. The prices are usually better in Oct. thru Easter. This year we sold in Jan. Kid goats 60-75 lbs. bring about \$1.00- \$1.25 / lb. All of ours go to slaughter in Pennsylvania, through a buyer that picks them up here. With goats, the price is good enough but you only get paid for those that get on the truck. And as with a lot of things, stuff happens. Like today, had a dead kid for no apparent reason. The worst thing is it was one of my favorites, front half black, and back half white. Why is it that it is always your favorite animal that dies? That's one of the questions I have for God when we meet. Also, God, why does the rock in my driveway go down and the rock in my fields comes up? Why do I feel my cell phone ring when I'm not even wearing it? Why does time move so fast when you work for yourself and so slow when you work for someone else? Why am I the tireddest right before I have to get out of bed in the morning? Everyday that I grease a piece of equipment, what happened to the grease I put in yesterday? I am quite sure that when we do finally meet, I won't be asking any questions.

April 5, 2009 Our church had their first Sunday worship service in a new building that was just completed, this morning. I'm not sure how I think about churches and big, fancy buildings but I might as well enjoy it.

Had to put the long underwear back on today as the temperature has dropped and a stiff north wind is blowing over 30 mph. Suppose to have snow flurries. Checking the pastures, rule #355 was on alert and enforced as I brought 4 does home with new born kids that were still wet. Others were born but their moms had them dried off and tucked away out of the wind. I'll have to get out early tomorrow and check as it is suppose to get down to 25 degrees and windy all night and 22 degrees tomorrow night.

I was missing one of my livestock guardian dogs, Job, from Leota's pasture. He's always with the goats but not in the pasture today. There are two other dogs there so they aren't without protection from predators but worried about Jobs absence. I ask a couple neighbors and drove around but no clues. We have 18 dogs that stay in the pastures with the goats. At least 2 and up to 4 in each pasture, live with the goats protecting them from coyotes, stray dogs, even hawks, eagles or buzzards can't land in the pastures with the dogs there. When you go check a pasture and don't see one of the dogs, you go looking for it as they will usually be with a new mother, or goat stuck in the fence or some goat that is in trouble or by itself. They are actually pretty amazing. They live and stay in the pastures with the goats, ours are usually friendly enough to handle but they are

not pets. We use breeds of, Anatolian Shepherd, Kommodor, Akbash and one Great Pyrenes who is black. We also cross those breeds, raising our own pups.

April 6, 2009 Today is the birthday of our first born, Ashley. It wasn't this cold in Colorado, 22 years ago, where she was born in a 6 bed hospital in Kremmling. The wind blew brutally today, I had to spend the evening bringing in 4 goat families that were born out front this afternoon. The other pastures were ok, and have more wind breaks and cover for the new borns. I took my horse to the vet, he has something wrong with him that I can't really talk about in a family magazine. I also had a bull semen checked and took him and another one to another pasture. I like to have my bulls back in before the neighbor turns his out. That means that I have some January calves born but that doesn't work out too bad usually, and I don't have to fix fence the bulls tore up between them.

I had a call on the machine when I got home that I had a guard dog out at a neighbor's house. It wasn't Job, he's still missing, but it was Flo, our black Great Pyrenes dog. Sometimes my dogs can cause me more grief than my other livestock. I wish I had a good trick to keep them in. They aren't out often, but I don't like them to be a bother to my neighbors, and they need to be with the goats. Some people use lamas or donkeys to guard goats from predators, but from research we did before we got into the goat business, the dogs are the most reliable. Nothing is fool proof and there are problems in any business. That's what you get paid for, working out the problems. Anyone can raise goats, cattle, or crops until there is a problem, then it's your ability to persevere that makes you a success or failure.

April 7, 2009 I took two does and twins back to Isbells and had to pick two more up to bring home. It got down to 22 degrees last night and they must have been born in the early morning. After tubing them with their mother's colostrum they were fine. I tagged a few babies in the other pastures but everyone was ok.

Dodds pasture started to kid today. They are bred to Cisco, a myotonic buck. They are also called "fainting goats" but they really don't faint. The muscles in their legs stiffen up when they are startled and they will sometimes fall over. That flexing and relaxing of the muscles also makes them more muscular. The goats at Claytons pasture are also bred to a myotonic buck, "Huntley". I was driving through the gate one day to feed and I honked the horn to get the goats to back away so I could drive on in. As I pulled through, I felt the truck roll over something and I knew I had run over a goat. It was "Huntley" the myotonic buck.

He must have “stiffened” and maybe even fell over when I honked. He was expensive.



Kids from Huntley



April 8, 2009 I loaded out 2 loads of soybeans. I had to clean the bin out on the last load, a little more shoveling than I like, and then moved the augers over to the next bin to get a load in the morning. My Father in-law, Tom Masoner and I farm together. We spent some time today getting familiar with our new planter before the dealership comes out tomorrow and helps us get started with it planting corn. I ate lunch at their house, my mother in-law is a great cook and fixes a good noon meal.

I didn't get to check all the goats today. Some days maybe it's better not knowing if you have any problems because you don't have time to deal with them anyway. I could tell I had some new kids in the front pasture but it got dark before I could get out there and tag them.

I knew the weather would soon straighten out and we would be busy, planting, spraying, moving cattle to pasture and getting the goats taken care of.

April 9, 2009 I loaded out another load of soybeans and made it back home to meet the cattle buyer delivering 9 cows and calves. They are older cows but well worth the money. Young cows are costing twice what I paid. The planter technician met with Tom and I, to get us started on the new planter and monitor set up. It got colder during the day and wondered if we were crazy to be planting corn. The calendar says yes but the weather says no, so much for the weather straightening out, it's a cold 40 degrees with high winds and rain this evening.

I checked the goat pastures this afternoon and had some tagging to catch up on. I lost 3 babies from the front pasture in the loafing shed. I'm sure due to pneumonia. They are so small you rarely catch them sick before they die. Even if you do there isn't much you can do for them because it takes them down so quick

when they only weigh 5-6 lbs. I wanted to close the gate and keep them out of the shed, it's so dirty, but with the rain coming I think they're better off in out of the weather even risking the pathogens of the barn lot. I shut half of it off to the goats so I could let the new cows and calves in out of the rain.

Our oldest, Ashley, came home today from college at Baker University in Baldwin City, Kansas, only about an hour away.  
(sent 4/9/2009)

April 10, 2009 It rained again most of the night and still raining when I got up and 40 degrees with the north wind howling. Had two dead kids in the loafing shed area, the doe had them in a mud puddle under where the roof gutter drains. I brought in another one that was wet and cold and put him in the pickup as I drove around checking the other pastures. A couple inches of standing water on most of the pasture areas makes it pretty uncomfortable for goats. I had two dead at Isbells pasture also. Job, was back home at leot's pasture. Don't know where he was for 4 days, but glad he's back now.

I hate having animals die on me. I always think there was something else I could have or should have done, even though you do the best you can with the circumstances and resources you have. It's the same feeling you get when you sell grain too cheap or have a breakdown on a piece of equipment, or you watch a crop wither away in the heat of a summer drought or go under water in a flood. Maybe it's a pride thing because you think you should be able to figure out the problems and avoid them, but your not that smart, so it becomes an attack on how you imagine yourself to be. That's hard to take.

April 11, 2009 Today was sunny and warmer. Tanner came home for the Easter weekend from the 10,000 acre farm he works on in the Texas Panhandle. He just started there a couple weeks ago. He's helped me in the summers but we both thought it would be good for him to get some experience working for someone besides his Dad. When we went and looked at the job he asked my advice. I told him what I'd learned from interviewing and working several ranch jobs throughout the Midwest, "Don't work for anyone who has lights in his corral, or who has names for all his livestock, or who has more sows than cows."

He helped me work the cows and calves I bought, then we took them to pasture. Megan was home for the week end too, she is currently attending college at KSU but will transfer to Washburn in Topeka to enroll in the nursing school.

I fed extra hay today as it is suppose to rain again tomorrow and the pasture will get even muddier to feed hay in. I take my small Nissan pickup and feed dried distillers grain, when I don't need to feed hay. It's much easier to get around in the mud and more fuel efficient. When I need to take a goat home, I put feed down and catch her, then tie her 3 legged and put her in the back of the Nissan. I'll put her kids in the front. On really bad days I've had up to 5 does in the back, ten babies in the floor board with one or two border collies.

My horse has developed a severe case of diarrhea. I started him on antibiotics from the Vet. Sandy's 25 years old. I trained him as a 2 yr. old on a ranch in Texas, and took him with us to a ranch in Colorado, then Missouri, and a feed lot in Oklahoma. We've logged a lot of miles together and it actually chokes me up to think of losing him, although I know it is inevitable at some point in the future. We all want to put off pain as long as we can. There's really nothing wrong with that, but then when it comes it seems to catch us by surprise.

April 12, 2009 We all went to 9 a.m. Easter service at church and it was packed in the new building. I didn't go out to check any livestock before church and when we got back it had started raining. I went to a couple pastures and put out hay, moving some of the newborns into a barn. My mom, my wife's mother and father, brother and sister, and all our kids were at our house to eat a big Easter dinner with ham, barbecued brisket, cheesy potatoes, vegetables and all kind of deserts.

I went out to check the front pasture after lunch. It was still raining and about 40 degrees, one of those slow soaking rains you can be out in and not think your getting that wet until your soaked to the bone in 15 minutes. There was a doe trying to get her babies out of the rain by keeping them under her belly, and behind a tree. It wasn't working out so well for her as they looked like drowned rats, shivering underneath her. I caught the family and took them to the barn. I wondered if she appreciated what I had done for her. I know she didn't appreciate being tied and put on the 4-wheeler. I think Sandy acted a little better today.

April 13, 2009 It rained all night and there's a heavy mist this morning, not suppose to get over 40 degrees. I had a dead cow in a pasture that I just moved some cows to. Dang, didn't see that comin', I don't know, but I'm guessing pneumonia. By the time I got to Isbells pasture, I found a set of triplets that were dead, then twins and a single that had died. They were all born in the cold rain

and never got up. There were some other new borns that were in the barn, doing okay, and another new family under some trees. If I would have been there I would have brought them in and warmed up the kids, but then again, I have to have does that take care of themselves and their babies because you are never there at just the right time. I checked them late yesterday so they were the last ones to get checked today. It is one method of culling the poor mothers, but it's an expensive way. I'll go through the does this summer when we're worming and send to town anyone who doesn't have a kid nursing them. By the way, when you go to sale barns and buy does, these are the kind you get, bad mothers people like me are getting rid of. We've bought a lot of them over the years and finally weeding most of them out. We would have been much better off buying breeding stock off a farm and paying 3 times what we did at a sale barn.

On the plus side of the ledger, I had a set of triplets at Dodds pasture, along with other kids born there yesterday and doing well. They are bred to a black and white Myotonic buck. Some look like dalmation dogs. Also, had another calf born and my horse is eating better. Guess if you can keep more pluses than minuses in your ledger, you should be thankful. But the minuses stay on your mind longer.



A "plus" for the day.



A guard dog's not far off.

April 14, 2009 This morning started out around 32 degrees, so after yesterday's lesson, I went to Isbells pasture first. There were two sets of new

twins just born, but doing fine. Looking through the barn, there must be at least 20 kids running around with no tags in their ears. I have no way of knowing who their mother is until they get paired up sometime. It makes accurate record keeping almost impossible.

It warmed up this afternoon and if you listened closely you could hear the grass grow. Was nice to take my coat off and I don't worry about newborns hitting the ground when it's 60 degrees. Sean, a neighbor in high school that helps me sometimes, and I, worked on an electric fence around a 160 acre pasture that I will take some goats to when they are done kidding.

The day went well until this evening when I was feeding some hay and got two pickups stuck in the mud and had to go get a tractor.

April 15, 2009 I tried to catch up on paying some bills and paper work this morning. Computers were suppose to save us on paper work, but mine manufactures paper. I have spread sheets that I enter all the feed that each pasture receives so I can keep track of the expenses attributed to every herd.

Ann had preschool screenings in Parker, just down the road 3 miles. She teaches pre-school handi-capped children. She helps some with the goats, mostly just warming up a cold kid in the kitchen sink, or bottle feeding until I find and adoptive mother. One of the things that I appreciate most is that she does all the records that we take to get our taxes done. It can get pretty complicated with the cattle, goats and farming enterprises.

I tagged some newborn kids at Dodds, and Isbells pasture and needed to put out dog food. We have self feeders for the dogs with a cage built around them. There is a hole in the cage that the dog learns to jump into to eat. As long as the goats don't know there's dog food in there they don't go in. But occasionally somebody gets smart. We feed about 25 bags of dog food a month. The guardian dogs more than pay their way in preventing death loss from coyotes. I also have 3 Border Collies that I use to move the goats into the corrals or other pastures. They are something to watch them work. I trained my own but they mostly do it by instinct. They naturally want to circle the livestock and



bring them to where ever you are standing.



A couple guard dogs, "Jenny and Buck, eating out of the dog food feeder. "Rocket" moving some goats through the gate.

April 16, 2009 Today I won. There seems to be a list of what we should accomplish in a day. Some may write it down, others just feel it. If you get it done, you're a winner, if you don't you feel like a loser. Like you weren't good enough that day. Today I won!

This morning I picked up a kid about a week old that was dead. I had doctored his mother for parasites and pneumonia yesterday, but apparently she hadn't been letting him nurse. Then I noticed he made a little sound and then started convulsing his head towards his back. That's a sign that they haven't gotten enough to eat for a few days, and usually the last sign of life they give. I gave him lactating ringers and dextrose and put him on the floor board with the heater on. In 15 minutes he was a new kid, sitting up and trying to stand! I let him suck a bottle and brought his mom and brother into a pen and he nursed her. He was actually snatch away from deaths door. I'm sure if I found him 15 minutes later and he wouldn't have made it. Sometimes the ball bounces your way. It doesn't always work, but it's miraculous when it does.

I then got some cattle up. I sorted some cows and calves to take to another pasture and some larger calves that I kept through the winter that I will take to the sale in Paola tomorrow. I didn't get all the pastures checked but the weather



was nice and a goat should be able to have a baby and take care under these conditions.

April 17, 2009 I took two loads yearlings and 3 old cows to the sale this morning, then loaded my horse for an appointment with the vet. The prognosis wasn't good. Doc, could feel a growth inside that shouldn't be there. Sandy feels better now, and wants to be out of his pen, so I turned him back out in the front pasture. Somehow, it doesn't hurt as bad when he looks better and is eating well, but I don't want to talk about it anymore.

The kid that I rescued yesterday still isn't doing very well and I knew I wouldn't be able to give her the attention she needs to survive, so I gave her to Jack, a friend of mine who has a few goats and is semi-retired. He will treat her like she is his first born child. He is a lifesaver cause he can usually help at any moment. I couldn't do it without him. And the livestock guardian dogs. Each pasture has 2-4 dogs in it. I don't like to put one dog out by themselves. They have more confidence with two together. We use Akbash, Anatolian Shepherd, Kommodor, and Great Pyrennes, and mixes of those from our own breeding.

I sprayed a burn down and pre-emergent herbicide on about 100 acres this afternoon, but it was really too wet and I left some ruts in the wet spots. Most times you just don't have ideal conditions. Manufacturers say you shouldn't spray if it is below 50 degrees at night or above 100 during the day, or wind over 15 mph or under 5mph, or going to rain within a couple hours, or not going to rain for a few days, or when the dew is on, or humidity is below 30% or above 80%. It's done and that's 100 acres less to do later.

Megan came home unexpectantly from Manhattan, really a nice surprise. I rarely eat breakfast and forgot to eat lunch so we all went to Paola and ate a steak, and got my cattle check. Some sold better than expected, others less, but still more than they would have brought last fall during the economic collapse, but I had to feed them all winter too.

April 18, 2009 It was raining again this morning. Really was kind of nice. I pretended I was a regular person and went back to sleep for a little while. Then I drank some coffee and if I took the newspaper, I would have gone out and picked it up and leisurely read it. Instead I read a couple chapters of Blue Like Jazz by Don Miller and then a copy of Farm and Ranch Magazine. I'm feeling lazy, I have a lot to do but don't feel like doing it.

Soon the rain quit and I felt too guilty to stay inside so I fed the goats and cattle their ration of Dried Distillers Grain, tagging a few kids that were born yesterday. I doctored another calf for pneumonia, then I called Jack to check on the kid I gave him. It had not eaten it's last feeding and the one before that. He gave her some antibiotic, but I wasn't too hopeful.

This evening I ran on our treadmill, as working in agriculture these days doesn't really give you much cardio vascular exercise. I hate to run, so I know it must be good for me. Megan and Ann went to Kansas City this afternoon and got home in time to go see the high school kids walk in at the Prom.

April 19, 2009 After Church this morning I checked and fed the goat herds and cattle. I found a set of twins that were born in a couple inches of water due to the 1.5 inches of rain last night. Fourty five degree water lowers their body temperature quickly so I put them on the floor board of the pickup with the heater on and caught their mother, tied her and put her in the bed of the Nissan. I tubed colostrum in them after milking her and put them in a nursery pen with their mom. They were doing fine by this afternoon.



Basking in the rare sunlight.

This evening we had some other couples over for our home group at our house where we discuss more indepth about the Sunday sermon, "Husbands Love Your Wives, Wives Respect Your Husbands". That was interesting!

April 20, 2009 I checked with Jack this morning and the doeling was doing better and eating well. He had put some baking soda in her milk as she was grinding her teeth, a sign that they have a stomach ache.

The sun came out and days like this, you're glad to be outside. After I tagged some newborns in the front pasture I noticed a few does with diarrhea. That makes me suspicious of parasites so I caught a few and checked under their eyelids for signs of anemia. They were pale so I spot wormed them with an injection. By far the biggest killer of goats in this climate is parasites. They live in

the stomach and suck the goats blood. The victim will simply die of anemia. Whenever it's starts to warm up and we have some rain, they become a problem. Especially in this front pasture where I have 125 hd on 25 acres so I can check on them easier during kidding. I will need to get the whole herd wormed and moved to the pasture that I am fencing, it's not had goats on it before.

As I was driving down the road in front of our house I looked up to see Job in the road in front of me, he is a half mile from home. I opened the door and loaded him in the cab, then took him back. I don't know what is going on with him.

April 21, 2009 I sorted some more cattle to take out to pasture about 10 miles from here. There are a few calves I weaned and left them in the corral. We'll get to hear them all night. I sold another load of soybeans yesterday and the market was down sharply today. Makes you feel pretty smart, at least until tomorrow. I still got a few loads left though.

While around the shop I heard a kid goat balling in distress. You sort of get to know the cry, just like your own kids. I've had neighbors hear it from half mile away and go looking to find a goat stuck in the fence. I went out to the loafing shed and a tiny red kid was definitely starving and needing it's mom. There was no one but me, paying attention to it, so I implemented rule #355 and gave it some milk in a bottle, leaving it out there for it's mother to find.

One thing about goats is that people like them and my neighbors look out for them and let me know about any problems.

I talked to Tanner in Texas this evening about 10 p.m. He had just gotten in from work. I had to laugh, I beat him home. Between Ann and I, we usually talk or text message our kids almost every day, it's a great way to keep being a part of their lives when they're gone.

Ann's been looking on line to get Megan the summer classes she needs through some Community Colleges closer to home as she has a job lifeguarding at the YMCA this summer and will live here with us, then go to nursing school this next fall at Washburn, in Topeka, Kansas.

April 22, 2009 The ground is drying incredible fast with higher temperatures and wind. The race is on. It's suppose to be dry now for a few days and there is so much to do, fencing, moving cattle, worming and moving goats, spraying and planting 1500 acres, along with any unexpected problems. From here on out, everything feels like a timed event. In my mind anyway. It is like a chess game

against time. Which move is most important? What do I do first? One thing about being busy is that it makes you feel important. We all want to feel important and each person is the busiest person they know. What does that say about ourselves?

Just remembered, I have a "father, daughter day" with Ashley and her sorority on Saturday, just in the thick of things.

I checked the loafing shed and saw a small red rag doll looking thing and thought the little kid didn't make it. But he was still alive and I gave him the lactating ringers and dextrose and he was soon up and wanting to nurse so I gave him a bottle again. Later I gave him another round as I would be gone spraying and loading out soybeans until late evening. If I only had someone to adopt him to. When I came up the drive I could see Bonnie, Tex and one of our brown guardian dogs without a name, each laying close to a different doe who had recently kidded. One had triplets, one had twins and one had a single. I caught the one with the single and rubbed the afterbirth all over "Little Red", then put them in a small pen together along with her own kid who was black. I left the barn and did a few things. Before going to the house I checked on them. "Little Red" was nursing away. Was she going to take him? Or did she just not realize it wasn't her black kid, because it was dark? We'll know by tomorrow.

April 23 Little Red didn't make it. That's what I get for naming him. I turned the goats at Isbells into the second pasture. It helps with parasite control when you can rotate pastures. The goats really like being let into a new area.

It was one of those days when I really don't know what I got done. Nothing marked off the list. I feel pretty worthless. It rained overnight so couldn't plant. Everyone is several weeks behind on corn planting but may get started again tomorrow.

Megan text me today to check on Marty, her "house bunny" that is staying with us. He is a Lions Head rabbit. His small cage and fenced "yard" gives him about 4x6 area to roam in our front room. He's quite a character, sometimes laying around lazily and other times hopping and buzzing around his pen. He's

even potty trained, at least for the most part. Ann and I have grown ridiculously



fond of him.

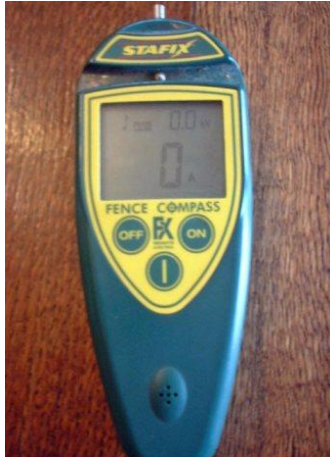
I was just calling it a night when a neighbor came up and said someone hit a cow and thought it was mine. Went and put the cow in my pasture, probably mine, too dark to tell, although with the electric fence in front of the barbed wire fence I've never had anything out here. The driver was ok, the cow was cut badly in her flank, but the car lost the battle.

Perfect to top off this day.

April 24, 2009 Went and checked first thing this morning and that was not my cow that got hit. There were 8 other cows out across the road. I don't wish bad luck on anyone but it's a nice feeling when the bad luck belongs to someone besides me. I notified the owner and we got a couple in, but didn't find all of the cows. I think I would rather help someone else get their cows in than have someone help me get mine in. I don't have much trouble because of the electric fence for the goats. The cows don't go near it. Over ten miles of electric wire on this place and it all comes from a charger in my shop. I have a remote control on the fault finder that lets me shut it off by touching the tool anywhere along the fence line and hitting the off button. Then you can work on it without getting shocked, which is nice. Not too much maintenance on electric fence, if it is put in



right. We've learned a lot by mile 10.



Our fence charger and remote control.

Tom started planting corn again today and I was able to spray about 80 acres that wasn't too wet, but had to go around the mud holes. It's suppose to rain again tomorrow night and more this next week and I could probably finish our corn planting, but it is Ashley's sorority's Father, Daughter day, and I really want to go. We all are constantly having to make choices about how we spend our time. It's free but non-refundable.

April 25,2009 I fed and checked for newborns early this morning and then headed to Baker University in Baldwin City, for the father, daughter day. This is Ashley's senior year and my last year to go. There were about 15 other dad's and we ate together and went bowling with our daughters. It was fun because none of us were very good. I hadn't bowled in probably 30 years. I didn't do bad, about 130'ish. I didn't remember bowling as being so physical when I was younger. I think the balls are heavier now. Would I be considered a wimp if I had to see the Chiropractor after bowling 2 games. I think so. Surely nothing that Ibuprofen won't fix.

When I got back, Tom had finished another small field for me, so I moved to another one and started planting, finishing it, I was able to move just at dark to

the last field. I came in and looked at the radar and rain was definitely coming so I put more seed in and planted late into the night to finish. I was apprehensive, corn seed cost \$200/bag and I didn't want to have to do it over, but it seemed like the thing to do. It was really wet soil conditions and I didn't like planting like that but wanted to be done and now it would be over a week, maybe two, before we would get back in the field after several days of rain in the forecast.

Sometimes I get wore out just making decisions that have to be made at a moments notice, that can affect thousands of dollars in the future and you don't really have a clue what to do. I think that takes more of a toll on farmers and ranchers than the everyday work.

When I got in I text Tanner and told him I was done with corn planting, at least for the first time. He had just got in too, but they had a 4000 acres to plant yet.

April 26, 2009 It rained during the night as predicted. I got up lazily and went to church. After checking and tagging several new kids after lunch I went turkey hunting with some friends from Meade, Kansas that were staying with us. They hadn't seen many turkey's and apparently some disease has killed many off in the area.

The pace has slowed once again due to the weather. It's very frustrating with so much staring us in the face and not able to do what needs done. Helpless, worthless feeling like your being lazy and should be doing something. I remember times of being done planting all our crops by Mothers day, but with more rain predicted tonight we won't even be started again by then.

The kids have been coming more slowly than in years past. I am not quite half done kidding with just over 200 does having kids so far. To be honest it is making me a little nervous. I don't know why the others haven't given birth yet. I can tell many are pregnant but I hope I don't have several does that are open.



April 27, 2009 It rained another 3 inches during the night and drizzled and rained lightly all day. Ann fixed my favorite, French toast for breakfast as the hunters were leaving. I'm not here much in the morning, and Ann's leaving for work, she

never knows when I'll be home in the evening so I don't expect her to figure out my schedule and prepare meals just for me. But it's really great when it works out. I tagged a few kids, then went to Mound City to pay tags and taxes on our vehicles.

I stopped to visit a friend that raises goats. We talk periodically to learn what each other is doing that might work well on our own operations. I got some feeding information as I am trying to implement a different system for feeding my meat kids about 60 days before I sell them in the winter.

I spent the rest of the evening preparing cash flow statements for my landlords for the crops that I will plant on their property this year. I like them to know what expenses to expect and when, also, the income that I plan to generate for them, from their investment.

Ann has made a photo album for Ashley as she is a Senior this year and even though she won't graduate until after next fall semester, her sorority is honoring all seniors next week. I wish you could see the photo book. It's really special, Ann's so good at that kind of thing. I wrote a poem to include in it.

#### Ashley's Song

God bent down and kissed the stars,  
Then blew love into his hands.  
The day He left you here on loan  
Showering love on Greg and Ann.

With bonnets and boots and little red slippers  
And parachutes and hats and dolls.  
Your scruffy ole bear to cling to  
Your friends from the Wizard of Oz.

You grew up too fast, I tell myself,  
You grew up before we were ready.  
There's no way we'd ever hold you back  
The hands of time move steady.

Now your stepping through another door  
The theater of great unknown.  
No need to be apprehensive now,



Just look at from where you've flown.

You've left a most amazing trail  
Like a jet that soars above  
You've lived a life of your own dreams  
The life of your great loves.

There may be strong winds a blowing  
Just take off on them and ride.  
You know we're pulling for ya girl,  
You know we're on your side.

Don't quit livin' over the rainbow  
Where the skies are blue,  
And the dreams you dare to dream  
Really do come true.

April 28, 2009 I finally surrendered to my rubber boots today. I hate wearing them. They don't look very western and they pull my socks down. Just seems a man should have leather on his feet. But my feet kept getting wet and I had to watch where I walked with my other boots.

A doe in the front pasture had given birth during the night and the kid was dead when I found it, so I caught her and gave her to Jack to adopt the kid that he was bottle feeding. It is so wet in the pastures I took the 4-wheeler to check the goats this morning then worked on fence and checking two other pastures on my way home.

There were newborn kids everywhere at Claytons. I didn't get to check them since Friday. I could only pair up and catch 12 of them. They are out of a Spanish buck I got from of Tx. and pretty lively after just a couple days old.

Ann went to Topeka and met Megan there to enroll her at Washburn College for the fall semester nursing school. She then stopped at Baldwin City and dropped the photo book off for Ashley, (although she doesn't get to see it yet) and visited before heading back home.

April 29, 2009 Jack called and said the adoption took already and the same kid I pulled back from deaths door on the 16<sup>th</sup>, now is doing well and has a new mom.

It started raining again at noon. I fed some hay before the rain and almost got stuck twice. It's ridiculously muddy now and the road to La Cygne will probably be closed with water over it tomorrow. Oh well, I don't go to town much.

As I was writing this it was raining hard, I suddenly remembered a doe this morning, in the front pasture that looked like she was going to kid soon. I looked out the window and could see a goat standing in the pouring rain that looked like her. I went out in the rain, and she had her back legs spread like an umbrella and had pushed the newborns under her, but they were standing in about 3 inches of water. Had to give her an "A" for effort, I've had some new mothers freak out in a rain storm and run for the shed and leave their babies in the downpour. I caught them and placed them in a barn stall.

I cleaned out my pickups. A friend came by and we talked about all we're not getting done. Days like this make me really tired. I ate some cream of wheat with ice cream on it then went to bed.

April 30, 2009 This month I tagged 308 kids out of 204 does. Then there are all the kids I haven't gotten tagged. Probably over a hundred. We should have had over 400 kids born this month out of almost 300 does. There are still a couple hundred of does to kid. With the weather getting better and being behind farming I would guess there would be a lot more no tagged kids come weaning time.



As I tagged newborns and worked on preparing the "160" for goats, I felt a little melancholy. I've been dreading this, the last day of the diary. Like saying goodbye to a friend that you know you'll probably never see again. Even though you both kid yourself and say, you'll visit each other, you know the busyness of everyday life ends up filling your plate.

I'm not sure that I wrote it for you but maybe for my children. Maybe they will gain some insight about their father and a side of him they didn't know before. There will be so much that can't fit in the magazine. The word count says 13,145 right now, so that would take up the whole magazine.

If anyone is thinking of getting into the goat business or wants to talk goats my website has my contact information at [www.grandviewlivestock.com](http://www.grandviewlivestock.com) And if you're ever in eastern Kansas and see a bunch of goats alongside the road I



hope you pull up the drive and say hi.

For other Farm and Ranch diaries and information on the bi-monthly magazine, and other "web extra's, go to [www.farmandranchliving.com](http://www.farmandranchliving.com)

