

**New
Direction**

AUGUST 2009

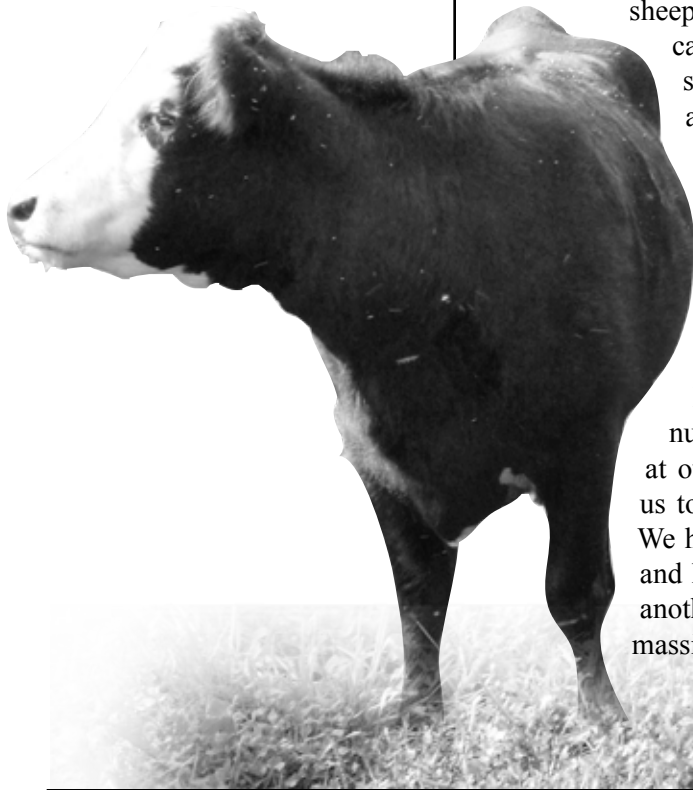
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Dear Friends,



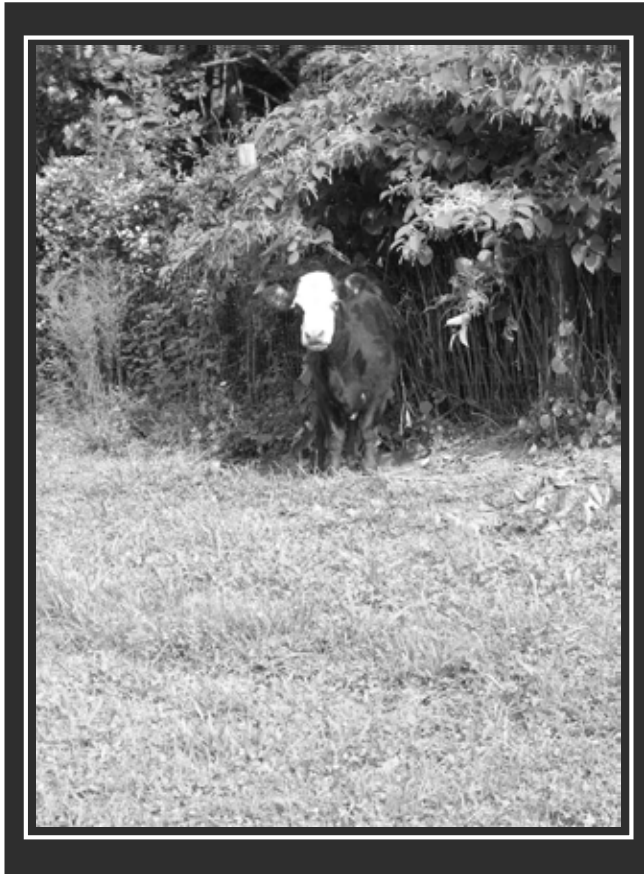
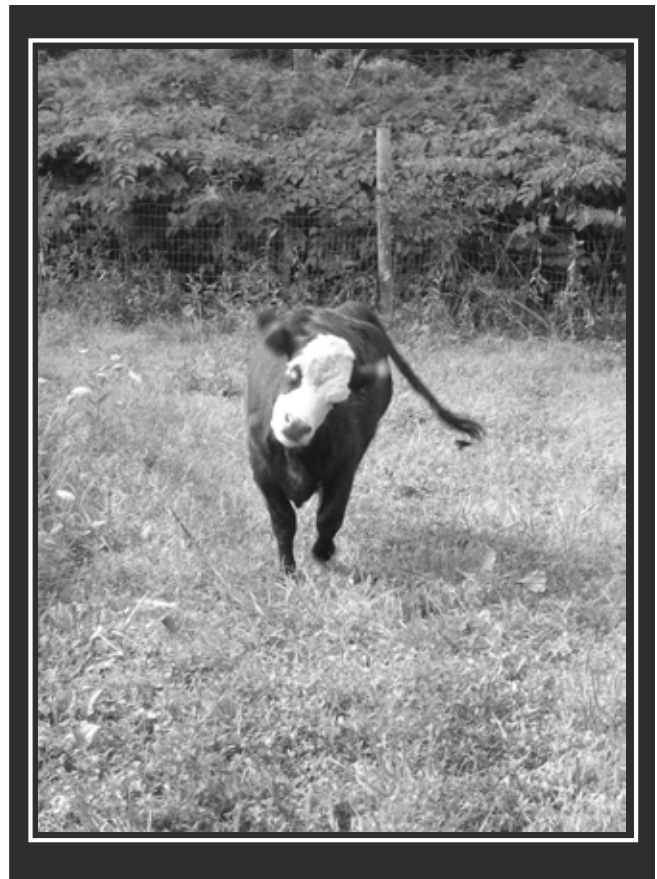
You never know what might be going on when you are not at home. Several weeks ago while we were at our Sunday service there was a lot of excitement going on back at the farm. When we turned on our cell phone we found there were four calls all from the same person over the period of time we were in church. It was our neighbor, Chad, leaving one call after another regarding one of our cows who was giving birth to a calf and in deep distress. The cow was near a fence line that was across the street from these folks. Katy was a nurse (of people) and was able to discern something was terribly wrong. Being where we were and unable to return immediately we told them to contact some other neighbors who raise sheep and see if they could help. Sure enough Dawn and Steve came to the scene and helped to deliver the calf (which was still born); which required tying a rope to the calf and using a farm vehicle to pull.

The mother was not doing well after the birth. She remained down (physically and emotionally) for days. If you have ever been around cows when they lose a calf in birth, or one of their little ones squeezes through a fence and crosses into another area, or when calves are separated from their mothers once weaned.....you know the woeful, mournful sound the mothers make. A number of years ago a friend volunteered to spend the night at our home with the houseful of girls who were living with us to give Dave and me a needed break away from the farm. We had a cattle round-up that day, with the teens riding horses and helping to move a group of the calves down the road into another pasture. It was the first time we had done such a massive maneuver.



Little did we realize that throughout the night the mothers would be calling to their calves and vice-versa; each pasture on either side of the girls' home; surround-sound mooing from dusk to dawn. Needless to say our friend and the girls were not happy campers when we arrived back on property the next afternoon. Animals grieve the loss of their little ones and we weren't sure how much of the recent traumatic, physical circumstances of the birth were responsible for our cow's staying down or how much of it may have been despair. You will be delighted to read "the rest of the story.

Katy and Chad and their family, many times a day, crossed the creek to check on "Bessie". Their young son named her in those early days of infirmity. She had to be fed by hand and given drink by a cup. Never did a cow exist that received such healthy and royal treatment. Concoctions of olive oil, green tea, vitamin C were given to her. Bug spray was regularly applied to keep the flies down. Hay and specially picked grasses were hand fed. Chips of mineral blocks placed near her lips. (or do cows have lips?) Many times a day Dave would go over and come back discouraged and concerned. A couple of veterinarians were called; one



of whom recommended putting her down. We began giving her antibiotic shots to fight any infection. One man at a nearby feed store talked about his cow that stayed down for months and then got up one day when a dog came in the pasture and barked at her. Another farmer said "*once down a cow will never get up*".

I know people often pray for their pets. We had never prayed for a cow before. There was something about Bessie's situation that moved the hearts of many people throughout our little community and beyond. Many were praying for her healing. Meanwhile, the men being practically minded, realized that if they didn't get her out of the place she was at she would soon drown and become so water logged she would never get up. Over the days she slid down the hill somewhat next to the creek. Also we were worried about a predator coming and taking advantage of her vulnerability. Having worked with Joel, a marine, over these past 11 years Dave and I have great confidence that most marines can figure things out about which regular folks, like us, haven't a clue. Well, Joel is not the only marine on staff. Erik is also a marine and when they put their heads together with Andy, a woodworker, a most amazing plan for transporting Bessie came about.

After much deliberation a skiff was built with the plan of pushing Bessie onto it, attaching the skiff to the tractor with chains, then pulling her down to an enclosed barnyard right across from our kitchen. Once they got her onto the board they strapped her on and began proceeding down the road. She passed by the pasture where all of her fellow cows were and seemed quite proud of her position, mooing to them as they in turn mooed back, following parallel with her along the fence line. My first impression was it looked like a sacred cow float. Bessie with her head upright and the men walking in step right behind gave the sense of someone of great prestige moving down our road. Once inside the barnyard she made an attempt to get up on all fours but quickly went down with a grimace, only to enter into several days of somewhat of a different type of painful suffering. Prayers for Bessie continued. Chad and Katy and their family regularly visited her in her new setting. Anytime she ate or drank pain would shoot through her body and she would look at us with those big helpless eyes. Evidently all of us were right where God would have us to be: that state of admitting we hadn't a clue what to do for her but He did and to please direct our steps.

Six days into Bessie's demise we were at a birthday party at Erik and Maryann's (houseparents for the boys' home right behind ours). Dave had been thinking that if Bessie could be moved into an upright sitting position it might help her. He engaged the help of several young men who were at the party. All of them heaved together and were able to upright Bessie which seemed to help her immensely. Then, someone came and gave her a special injection which seemed to give

her a second boost. Gradually, we began to see her come back to life. Two weeks later, she got up on all fours. Now, she is as good as new, ready to be put into a pasture.

What I love about the story of Bessie is how she became the common goodwill cause of a community. Years ago as God was leading us to Madison County to begin New Direction Farm, it was with great trepidation we came. Now we cannot imagine a more wonderful place to live. Not only because of the amazing peace and beauty but also because of the sense of community that weaves all of us together. We know that if ever we have a problem we have neighbors who will help do whatever they can. Hopefully our neighbors have the same sense about us, as well. This same belief has always been a large piece of the work that is done with the teens and their families. The Book of Galatians has the most wonderful piece about how God has called us to carry our own loads (backpacks) while helping one another carry the burdens (boulders); Jesus Christ being the Main burden Bearer.

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each should carry his own load.”
Galatians 6: 2-5



Just as our neighbors helped us to carry the burden of Bessie and helping her back to wholeness, so have you helped to carry the burden of the many families who have received help through New Direction Farm. For this we, and all who have been restored, thank you.....and Bessie thanks you, as well. For if it wasn't for New Direction Farm she never would have gotten to be the main attraction on a summer day, riding a float pulled by a tractor, down East Fork Road.

God Bless You

All of us at New Direction Farm



Fall Festival at New Direction Farm Saturday, October 10

Barbecue, hay rides, crafts for sale, silent auction, bluegrass music.....fun

See insert for more details.....you all come!!

EXCHANGED LIFE MINISTRIES
dba New Direction Ministries
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