



Hello Friends!

We're optimistically calling this the "Late Winter" issue, as we're hoping that you've had a chance to dig out from the recent blizzards, and that spring won't be too far away!

The first sign of spring we've seen is the increase in eggs from our hens. Daylight affects the egg laying process, and while you can trick them somewhat with artificial light, there's no substitute for the real thing. The hens are upping production, so we'll be placing some eggs in the incubator soon for live chicks. Check out the article on page 2 for more about our birds.

The next sign of spring is that lambing season has begun. We raise Dorset & Dorset-cross sheep here at the farm. Lambs are born every spring. Some are kept as part of our breeding flock, the rest are nominated for what I call the "Lamb Chop Committee." These lambs will grow all summer as free range pasture animals, along with the permanent flock. In the fall months we offer grass fed lamb for purchase, priced by the pound. We offer the following cuts: ground lamb, stew/kabob meat, leg of lamb, shoulder steaks and lamb chops. As of this writing, we've had two healthy sets of twins born. We expect our other ewes to give birth a bit later on in the coming months as well.

Another sign of spring is that our seed orders for the year have begun to arrive in the mail. We spend many long, cold winter nights looking through the seed catalogs of nearly a dozen companies. We mainly select varieties of vegetables which have done well for us in the past, but each year we try a few new ones as well. We try to include as many heirloom varieties as possible, so you can expect old-time, fresh from the garden taste when you purchase vegetables from us. We spend a lot of time choosing the vegetables we raise, so don't hesitate to ask about the varieties of the veggies you see for sale at the stand!

Pleasant Valley Farm Online

Emily has been working hard over the past year to get information about the farm available to all our customers with the click of a mouse. We hope many of you have visited the [Pleasant Valley website](#). You'll find lots of good stuff there, including a listing of products for sale, pictures and descriptions of the birds and animals, recipes featured at the stand and more. We try to update it weekly so that the

products listed for sale are correct for those who like to preorder before driving out to the stand. **We are happy to take preorders for Saturday sales**, but please remember that you need to let us know before 5:00 pm the night before. Getting the stand ready is a big job and we simply can't guarantee we'll check our email after that time. We're usually not near the phone Saturdays either, so please plan ahead.

Another thing keeping Emily busy is our Local Harvest blog. We know lots of folks read it, because it's frequently listed as one of the top-10 most read. If you haven't, check it out at: www.localharvest.org/blog/27987

Our latest project is a Facebook page, so if you're a member, search out Pleasant Valley Farm and become a fan!

LATE WINTER HAPPENINGS:

- ◆ Look for us at the Farm to Table Expo March 26-27
- ◆ Eggs still for sale
- ◆ Lambs being born
- ◆ Preparing for piglets
- ◆ The incubator is filling with eggs, the hatching pen with chicks. Contact us about live chick purchases.
- ◆ Dreaming of Spring!!



PLEASANT VALLEY FARM

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Backyard Poultry

I've seen several web articles noting a new trend; people who don't live on farms are beginning to keep chickens in their backyard. For some, these birds are like pets who provide food in the form of eggs. Laws vary from place to place, so if you live in a town or city, you may want to double-check the rules before bringing a box of chicks home.

Pleasant Valley Farm is a chick hatchery too! We hatch chicks weekly throughout the spring. This year, we will have Buff Orpington, Barred Rock, Delaware, Blue Cochin and Golden Phoenix chicks. We sell



these breeds as day-old chicks so you can have the experience of raising birds from hatchlings. While you can mail-order chicks, there are some good reasons to get them from a farm like ours. Being mailed in an unheated box without food or water is hard on baby chicks, and not all of them may survive the journey. To make sure there are enough chicks to huddle together and stay warm, these hatcheries have minimum orders. Many families

don't want to start off with 30 chickens! Since you pick chicks up right from the farm, you can get the number you need. We also plan to have goslings for sale again this year.

Please remember that it takes about 6 months before your chicks start laying eggs. Also, we sell straight run chicks, which means we don't sex them...you will be getting a mix of roosters and hens. For descriptions and photos of the different types of chickens, as well as tips on caring for chicks, please visit the [Pleasant Valley Farm website](#) and look under "Meet the Birds" or "Chicks for Sale."

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 ORPINGTON,
 BARRED ROCK,
 DELAWARE, BLUE
 COCHIN AND
 GOLDEN PHOENIX
 CHICKS

Farm to Table Expo

Local food fans may have heard about the upcoming Farm to Table Expo being held March 26 & 27 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh. The aims of this conference are to connect people with sources of local food. Farms and other food producers have the chance to set up a table,

offer products for sale, and give out samples and other goodies.

While Pleasant Valley Farm isn't going to have a table, we have teamed up with the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) to highlight some of our jams and mustards with free tastings. The schedule is still being finalized,

but our products will be featured for a portion of the day, most likely on Saturday. We'll post the schedule on our website when plans are finalized. You may even run into Emily and Dan if you attend!

Tickets and other information are available at www.farmtotablepa.com.

Freezer Pork

Our sows, Fern and Charlotte, will be having their next litter of piglets very soon. While we are excited about that, it also means it won't be long before it is time to process the pigs we overwintered from the last litter. If you ordered a whole or half hog from us, you will be getting a form regarding how your pig will be processed and packaged. Expect to see those orms in your mailbox in late April.

If you are curious about getting pork in quantity from us, now is the best time to contact us. Orders for whole and half hogs will be taken now through the end of May. Although we don't require a down payment, you must preorder your pork. Give us a call or drop us an email for more information.

If your freezer isn't big enough for half a hog, don't

worry, we will again have pork for sale by the pound at our stand. When we reopen Memorial Day Weekend 2010, you can look forward to chops, roasts, ribs, bacon, ham and ham hocks. Of course, we'll have our breakfast sausage sold in 2 lb packages, as well as a sage variety. We'll again be offering our newly-famous Italian sausage, in mild or hot varieties.