

## AUGUST NEWSLETTER

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### Oh ducks! ...

Last month it was 3 little pigs, this month its 3 little ducks (or maybe just a few more!1)

We now have a lovely flock of ducks – great time wasters, they are in the pen on our track and it’s just impossible to walk past without stopping to smile at their little bobbing heads. Mainly white with their lovely little faces I can just picture them on the pond with a garden gnome & fishing rod (I keep asking Ernie to dress up but its a big no!– apparently walking around the shows dressed as a chicken was more than enough to ask from a 13 year old!)



Call ducks make lovely pets, they are full of character and quickly become part of the family, they can be kept in small flocks (if mixing, then it is best to have at least 2 girls to one boy) but you can keep a group of just girls (the noisy ones!) or a group of boys (much quieter). The proper term for a flock of ducks is a ‘paddling’ – can’t imagine why! One of our ducks has gone to live with a rabbit – we wasn’t quite sure if this would work but they are now inseparable – just picking the rabbit up sends the duck into panic – quacking and pacing until his girlfriend is returned, and the rabbit is pulling out its fur to make a nest, lets see what happens - could make our fortune here!!)

Call Ducks need just a small pen and paddling pool – something easy to wash out and refill. A floor of woodchip works well to prevent a muddy patch and they need a fox proof house at ground level, although they prefer to sleep on their pond if their pen is completely fox proof.

The pigs are growing well and eating well! They now know that the sight of us generally means food and start squealling as soon as they see us, so we are now at the stage where we creep past their pen or duck under the hedge if we want to keep the peace – once the pigs start squealing the geese soon shout back, often setting off the cockerels and peacocks – nice quiet country life!



We had fair weather for the Smallholders show, a bit of rain on the Sunday, but lovely sunshine on Saturday. The showground seemed quieter than usual but Jason’s Poultry talk was popular on both days with standing room only at the entrance to the tent.

# Our local weather forecast



Despite the poor weather in the latter half of July, including the recent downpour there is still a lack of water everywhere. Gardens are looking a bit parched and lawns are not in good shape without copious watering. Forecasting has been tricky as the unsettled patterns means the forecasts were changing hourly.

Still, fingers crossed, there are signs of better times ahead - although not for lawns - as there are signs that a hot spell might be on the way. Certainly over the first week of August there'll be some nice weather with sunshine and light winds starting the month.

August can be changeable but it is looking good, so keep watering the animals and make sure the chickens have plenty of water. Bees are still active and frantically stocking up for the winter, especially

as the number of flowers will reduce gradually towards the end of the month.

For us here in Frickley Hollow our chickens have had an eventful time, firstly a cock pheasant has decided he wants to be a chicken and has taken up residence with the hens (we don't have a cockerel). He even roosts in the hen house with them and is with them all the time.

Unfortunately a particularly persistent Fox has been visiting. On four occasions I've had to chase him/her off as he was looking for a light chicken salad. On one occasion he even had one poor hen in his jaws before he spotted me - she survived. OK

I've had to keep them locked in their pen which we hate to do as we like to see them free ranging.

Time to get a LLama I think!

Tim

## Special Offers, New Products and Services



### Diatom offer continues

Our diatom offer continues this month - use as a dry powder in the house or in a dust bath for general fleas and mites and use as a water spray around the inside of the house for red mite.

**Just £7.95 for a 2kg tub!**



### Call ducks for sale

White, Chocolate and Black & White ducks available

Ducks can be purchased through our website for collection from the farm, or by simply calling into the shop

**£30.00 each, reserve with a £5.00 deposit**



### Add an extra drinker

During the summer it's even more important to make sure your hens have constant access to fresh drinking water during the day. Floor standing drinkers can easily become blocked with flooring mainly caused through the chickens scratching so we advise hanging all drinkers (or raising up on concrete blocks or similar).

To help to give extra water in the summer months we have a special offer on our **3Ltr** drinker: **normal price £5.00 reduced to £3.50 for August only**



### Cedar Beehives

Our range of cedar beehive parts are now back in stock, both National and WBC. Available self assembly or assembled, (please order assembled parts in advance), along with a selection of frames, foundation, clothing and equipment

*With best wishes from all at Mantel Farm*

**[www.mantelfarm.co.uk](http://www.mantelfarm.co.uk)**