

Sept. 6 2012

Eastern Ontario Drought

After years of having greater than average rainfall, last year and this we have experienced a drought in this region. The stress on the fields and pastures is even worse this year because of a lack of snow over the previous winter. And the impact on Hawk Hill Farm has been huge.

1. While we got a decent first cut of hay, the hay stopped growing just after harvest and we have no second cut at all. We have put the lambs out on the front hay fields to allow them to harvest what hay is there.
2. Our pastures are not regrowing after the first pass of grazing. As a result we have had to supplement with hay as early as July. A bit of rain early in August has brought some pasture back but the sheep are going through it fast.
3. Leaf hoppers have invaded our hay fields and have killed off the alfalfa.
4. Because of poor pasture quality this year the growth rates of our lambs is way down. That means they will probably take another month or more to reach market weight.
5. We were not able to put our meat chickens on pasture as the pastures are burnt off. They have remained in the barn. While we probably would have had to feed as much grain (it is a misconception that chickens can get all their nutrition from pasture), it has cost us more than we had planned for bedding.
6. Feed prices have gone sky high and prices at the sale barn have gone down while farmers dump excess animals before winter.
7. My vegetable garden was pretty well a bust and what did survive was eaten by deer.

The only plus was my lawnmower has been out maybe 4 times this summer.

RAIN PLEASE and then tons of snow this winter.

TTFN,
Laurie