

We had a good summer in Sherburne County. Less rain than a normal year, although I'm not sure there is such a thing as a normal year in Minnesota. In any case the rain was a lot better than 2006 or 2007. The real beauty of this summer's rain was that we seemed to get just enough whenever we really needed it. I imagine you can all recall times during a dry spell when you saw a small rain cloud appear on the horizon and then watched while it slipped by with only a drop or two. This year, every time a little storm appeared it seemed to head right for our farm and then squeeze out all it possibly could. Maybe it was just our turn.

In August I completed fence building on our farm. Nearly ten miles of fence that has kept me busy for years. Over the past decade we've converted all our cropland to pasture and prairie. About half our land is oak savanna or wet meadow and we are now able to graze that also. A big help in dry summers. As those of you who rotate pastures know, it is a major milestone to train the herds to move easily from pasture to pasture. I think we have accomplished that. The last hurdle was getting the bison herd across the township road, something we will need to do twice each season. We routinely move the beef herd over with just a couple strands of white electrical fence forming an alley. Maybe I lacked courage on this topic but for the bison herd of 40 head I opted to build a solid fence right across the road. My good neighbors helped me to close it off early on a Sunday morning and we got them over. It wasn't totally uneventful, (Gail W. has photos) but we got them over without serious mishap. I think it will be a piece of cake from now on.

Gail W. and I had a great time at the Minnesota State Fair. We served two shifts at our association's booth. If you don't do a shift you are missing out. It is a good chance to connect to our customer base and to spend some quality time with fellow members. This year we got to hang out (my grandkids taught me that expression, "hang out") with Steve Fruechte for one shift, Dale and Beth Rengstorf for the other. Each year it is a challenge lining enough folks up to cover all the booth shifts. It shouldn't be that hard. If you haven't been helping out with booth duty you should work it into your schedule for next year. It is one of those experiences in life that is educational, rewarding and enjoyable. I'm sure you will hear more from your Board on this topic in coming months.

See you at the Auction. Tom Barthel