

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. So I wanted to make this episode a little bit different than usual. Instead of walking you through a new topic or teaching you something new, I thought it would be fun to pull back the curtain just a little bit on what is happening around our homestead right now, spring of 2020. So if you've been curious about what we're growing or what we're waiting on or what we're going to be producing this year, well here you go. I'm your host Jill Winger. And this is the podcast for the trailblazers, the Mavericks, the makers, the homesteaders, the modern pioneers, and the backyard farmers. If you've ever found yourself disenchanted with conformity, we just kinda like to swim upstream while the rest of the society rides the river of least resistance. Well, you found your tribe. So I'd actually planned on this sort of state of the homestead episode before the whole Corona virus world shutting down thing happens.

Speaker 1 ([01:01](#)):

But you know, here we are, we're actually a little bit more homestead centric than even normal, which we're usually pretty homestead centric. So that saying a lot. So I think it's even more timely and hopefully this episode will be a welcome distraction from all of the stuff that is happening in the world right now. Not to mention, inspire you as you dream and plan out your own homestead efforts during this time. So I'm calling it spring 2020 this period of time. But uh, so spring in Wyoming is a very loose term right now as I record this, it's blizzarding outside, which is very normal and will probably be happening several more times before we finally green up and move on with our life. So spring in Wyoming involves all the normal activities you'd have, you know, getting chicks, starting seeds, but then a lot of shoveling snow as well.

Speaker 1 ([02:01](#)):

So just so you know, I want you to have the right mental image as we go through this audio tour. I'm also kind of losing my voice, so I'm going to be a little raspy. I don't have coronavirus just a head cold, so bear with me if I sound a little bit froggier than normal. So here, here's what we have poppin right now. And thankfully with every not, I don't think thankfully the right word, uh, maybe I'll use a different word with the whole world being a little bit quieter than normal. It's giving us even more time to kind of focus on our homesteading efforts. And honestly, it's made me a lot more thankful even more so than I have been in the past for our homestead efforts and the animals we have and the things we have in place. So, I've just had a lot of time of reflection and gratitude over the last few days.

Speaker 1 ([02:54](#)):

But that being said, here's what's happening. So first off, we've had a couple of episodes this, but there are seeds in my basement, which is such a good feeling. Like, I don't know, walking down there, I open up the storage room and it's warm and the lights are on, you can smell the soil and it just, I don't know, it just like fills me with excitement because I know spring is close even if it's snowing outside. So we'll done a couple of little videos and things. If you follow me on social media, probably tired of seeing my seed set up, but I've got the cabbage and the tomatoes and the peppers and some flowers and herbs down there and those will stay in the basement until probably Memorial day weekend. So I don't plant it until end of may, early June because there's way too much frost risk before that.

Speaker 1 ([03:48](#)):

I can potentially start some seeds outside, like maybe the lettuce and the greens and some of those cold weather seeds. Maybe put those in mid may. But if I go much earlier than that, the ground is too cold

and they don't germinate anyway. So I really don't start digging deep into the garden until about after mother's day generally. So in the chicken coop, we just did a big gut out of the chicken coop, which was super gross. And I posted a video on YouTube if you want to watch how that went down. Um, anyway, um, lost my train of thought. Oh, meat birds. We got meat bird chicks, which I was, it was just like divine intervention. I was cleaning the chicken coop that day thinking we're going to have to get some meat chicks. And lo and behold, Christian went to the feed store and they had meat chicks on sale for a dollar each.

Speaker 1 ([04:44](#)):

Like I couldn't believe it cause normally they're, I don't know, two or three bucks a pop and obviously chicks on sale like who can say no to that. So he brought home 30 and stuck them in the brooder and they're doing really, really well. They are Cornish cross, which are the faster growing bird. And I know there's controversy on that. I'd done podcast episodes on it. We like those because they're just more efficient on feed, but that's what they are. They're growing well. We had the heat lamp on them and I'm really excited to have more chicken for the freezer because we kind of ran out last year. We didn't do meat birds and I've really missed it. It's been stressing me out. So those are coming along. We'll butcher those probably, uh, end of April, early may. And what else? So in the kitchen I have my sourdough starter.

Speaker 1 ([05:37](#)):

I have my continuous brew kombucha. We also started sprouting some seeds, which I haven't done in a while and now sprouting, I should, I should clarify, it's a little different than starting seeds in soil. So I have my seeds in the basement in soil that'll turn into my vegetable plants, but sprouts are like the sprouts you get at the grocery store. You'd put them on your bagel sandwiches with cream cheese or your salads or your wraps. And they're packed full of nutrition, just crazy amounts of nutrition and you can grow them at your house, which is a really good thing because when you buy them at the store, they're expensive and they go bad really quickly. So I had some sprouting seeds that had tucked, been tucked away in the basement and thanks to the grocery stores being rather empty, I felt inspired to pull them out.

Speaker 1 ([06:30](#)):

And it's been really fun to have those going again. And I have a little video, on my Facebook page, I'll link it in the show notes that you can see how I do it. It's really simple, really affordable. And if you want to go to true leaf market, I'll leave a link to them in the show notes as well. They have all the sprouting stuff you could ever want. So really good resource. Okay. So, the soil now, once the snow goes away, which will hopefully, well I can't even predict when that'll happen. It could be well into May before we lose all of our snow. But once it goes away, I'll start to work out in the garden, getting my raised beds ready and what that will look like. Like right now they are completely dormant, I've just been maybe putting a little bit of chicken bedding that I had been pulling out of the chicken coop and sprinkling it around.

Speaker 1 ([07:19](#)):

But that is it. It, the ground was way too cold for me to go out there and try to do anything. But I will number one, test the soil and I have a blog post about that if you want to know how I did that for. It was really not expensive or complicated, but that just kinda gives me an idea of what nutrients I may be missing. So I'll test the soil, send that sample in and then maybe add a little bit more amendment in the form of um, some carbon matter, maybe some grass clippings, things like that. But I think we're

probably pretty good. Last year I added a little bit more soil into the beds because it started to compact, you know, it had them for three or four years. It just kind of happens and so we had to top them off.

Speaker 1 ([08:03](#)):

I'm hoping not to have to do that again because it's not my favorite job. That's the one downfall of our, you know, taller raised beds that you've probably seen pictures of online. It's kind of a bear to get in there and put more soil in any quantity in there. So kind of a pain in the butt. But that'll be something I'll, I like to go in there, the first part of May, if it's not covered in snow and just start working the soil, adding a few things, getting it ready, kind of picking up any junk, pulling out the dead plants, just tidying it up in preparation for planting later that month. Now, as far as the animals go. Man, I've never been more thankful to have milk coming where we don't have any animals we're milking at the moment and I have been really missing it.

Speaker 1 ([08:52](#)):

So if our calculations are correct, I think Mesa, my daughter, she had a little goat herd that she bought, last fall. Her Doe Poppy who's a Nigerian Dwarf should be having babies the first week of April. She looks pregnant. She was in with a buck. I think she's pregnant. We haven't had her ultrasounded, but that will be awesome. And then a few weeks later around the end of April, we should have two of our Brown Swiss cows that will be calving and it's, I think we, we kinda got off our schedule last year so I haven't been milking them for quite awhile and I'm super excited to have fresh milk available again and do all the cheese and the butter and all the things I took a little bit. I mean I kinda needed a break. I'll be honest, I needed a break from the milk cows cause I've had so many work projects the last couple of years.

Speaker 1 ([09:49](#)):

But I'm really ready to spend more time in the barn. We are working on revamping our milking set up, kind of have more of a dedicated milking area right now and should be a lot easier than before. So I'll definitely bring you along for the ride on that with video and, and stuff on Facebook and Instagram as we get back into the milking routine. And, also we have been calving our Herford cows and heifers, so herford are a beef breed. And as some of you know, we've been building up a herd of Herford. It's a little bit confusing, herd of Herford but um, for commercial purposes basically. So we decided, we honestly kind of came to this crossroads. We were like, do we invest, in real estate or do we invest in cattle? And we chose cattle potentially to have that, you know, give us a good return on investment, which is what we're hoping.

Speaker 1 ([10:48](#)):

And so our goal is to have a grass fed grass finished beef business and be able to sell the beef to the public both locally and to ship the beef out to some of you as well if you're in the market for grass finished beef. So we have our herd that we lease ground for and we are calving them as we speak. So with this big blizzard coming in today, that means a whole bunch of them will have babies. Christian has been staying down in our horse trailer. It has like a little living quarters camper section in it. Don't worry. He's not like sleeping in the back of the horse trailer on the rubber mats. It's, it's cushy. He's not, he's not suffering, don't worry. But he's down there sleeping in the horse trailer so he can check the heifers all night when pulling a few calves.

Speaker 1 ([11:36](#)):

So calving is kind of stressful, maybe stressful for him. It's just more chaotic because he's not home as much. He doesn't eat, eat meals with us as much cause he's out feeding and checking and moving calves. And especially during blizzards, like the one we're having right now. There's potential for the calves to struggle a little bit more, so we have to be really watchful. Sometimes I end up with babies in my mud room if they get chilled, so it can be a little bit adventurous. So I kind of don't know what to expect over the next few days. But hopefully we'll get through it without issue. We're also from our, I mentioned our grass fed beef plan. We processed our first set of beef a couple of months ago and we have beef that we're selling and it's been so fulfilling. You know, I've been the homesteader person for a long time, but I've never been the producer as far as like providing food for the public.

Speaker 1 ([12:33](#)):

And man, I just gotta say like being able to take a cooler full of beef to town and give it to people. You know, I'm not giving it, they're buying it, but you know, sell it to people who need it and want it and are excited to get it and know that they have good local options that I'm playing a part in providing. It's like really cool. I'm, I'm kind of loving it. And it's kind of making me think what else can we produce? Cause I, I like being the farmer. I've always bought from the farmer, but it's kind of fun to be on the other end. So that's opened up a lot of horizon for us as far as how can we expand this out, how can we continue this operation? We're really wanting to, you know, with our, with our beef business, keep it farm to fork, right?

Speaker 1 ([13:19](#)):

And we kind of want to avoid the whole middleman process that's really the traditional path in the industry. Not that there's anything wrong with that, it's just not the model that we want to follow. So I'm really hopeful that we can continue this on and potentially start shipping beef out and, flush this process out. Because Christian and I, you know, we really like having the cattle that's part of this lifestyle that we really are drawn to. And so hopefully we can make a go of it, so we'll see how it goes. But yeah. Anyway, that's what we have going on. The homestead I feel is in this state of sleeping right now. It's a little bit dormant, but it's getting ready to awaken and as the days are getting longer, this, I don't know, when the light changes, maybe you feel the same way.

Speaker 1 ([14:04](#)):

You can just sense the light changing this time of year and you know, that spring is coming. You can just feel it and the smells start to change outside as things thought. And the little green grass pokes up even with snow storms still covering the ground. And it's just an exciting time. Even though I've done this year after year. And even though I know there's disappointments to come in the summer when things don't go the way I want with growing or birthing babies or whatever, like it's just exciting and I get pumped up every single year all over again. And I think maybe even more so this year with the things happening in our world. The farm is just giving me an added measure of peace and, and contentment at this point. So I'm thinking I'm more thankful than ever. I just want to encourage you that you can have a piece of this lifestyle as well.

Speaker 1 ([15:00](#)):

And I say this over and over and I'm going to keep saying it over and over cause this is my mission. I want everyone to know that this idea of having more of a role in your food supply or growing more things or just being more aware, it's not just for people like me who live a million miles from the store. You can do this too, even if you're living in the suburbs or the city. And I hope that this podcast and the content I

produce and the other homesteading influencers that you follow, I hope we're inspiring you to see that and to make those changes. Because let me tell you, I can't think of any better lifestyle that I would want to be a part of.

Speaker 1 ([15:43](#)):

So kind of the whole world is home right now with the kids and our spouses and it's a little bit crazy. But if you have more time than usual at this moment and you're feeling inspired to use that time to beef up your home setting efforts. Well I've wanted to make it a little bit easier for you. I have put together every single resource basically I've ever created from the cooking courses, the canning courses, the eBooks, all of the things I've stuck them in a giant digital master bundle and slashed the price way down past 50% if you want to check it out, see if it strikes your fancy head on over to [theprairiehomestead.com/masterpack](http://theprairiehomestead.com/masterpack) to have a look and that isn't for today. Don't forget to hit subscribe so all the new episodes show up automatically in your podcast player. And if you enjoy today's episode, I would really appreciate it if you could leave a quick review or rating. It just helps more people find the podcast. Thanks so much for listening. We'll chat again next time on the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.