

## Capon Crossing Farm

Thanksgiving on Capon Crossing Farm is a marathon of a few days of meals with family, and friends that are as close to family as you can get. We're likely to have a beef roast on the farm in lieu of turkey, because according to my cattle farming dad, beef is the only "real meat". If our boys have anything to do with it squirrel will be the type of gravy served this year.



Capon Crossing Farm (photo: Ibi Hinrichs)

My name is Aliza Dunlap. My husband Buddy and I manage and run our multigenerational family farm, Capon Crossing Farm, along with our 3 wild boys in the mountains of West Virginia. We raise grass fed, grass finished, dry aged beef and 100% pastured lamb. We are a family farm in the big transition from one generation to the next. Buddy and I are taking in my parents experience and know how, while implementing our new ideas and motivation. We spend most days together around the kitchen island planning, dreaming and working things out. Thanksgiving on the family farm looks much the same. We're more likely to grab our plates of food and stand around the kitchen island eating and talking, than we are to sit down around a set table. We often joke how Thanksgiving feels like any other day sometimes with maybe a better meal though.



Our family on the farm. We are on the left, my brother and his wife leaning up against the tool cat and my parents on the right. All of our farm boys are piled in the tractor.  
(Photo: Ibi Hinrichs)



Farm meeting. (Photo: Ibi Hinrichs)

A few years ago we started a new tradition on the farm. Thanksgiving morning we go out with the boys and squirrel hunt together. I scored some major cool mom points by being the first to bring home squirrel for our family dinner. Buddy skinned and processed it. We roasted it and added it to the table of food at Buddy's parent's house. It tasted a lot like acorn fed pork and was enjoyed as much as the turkey that year, not only because of taste, but because of the effort that went into harvesting the meat, plus some of the colorful reactions that we got from family.



Our first Thanks Giving Squirrel!



William practicing target shooting.

Even on holidays farm work doesn't stop. We usually squeeze in a few hours of work before dinner at some point, like checking on animals, fixing fence, or cutting some firewood. A lot of friends enjoy working cattle with us, so one Thanksgiving we made it a cattle working day with our guests. We separated, lassoed, and tagged calves before dinner, and it honestly felt more like a calf tackling party than work. Everyone was more than ready for a big meal that year.



Benjamin, Samuel, and William collecting firewood.



Dad, Buddy, and William on the back of the horse working cattle and separating calves.

Many Thanksgivings we're hopping mountains and going to multiple homes and meals over a few days time. This year that's the plan. Thanksgiving morning we'll throw on the camo and head out to the woods. The boys are well researched this year on how to prepare squirrel thanks to YouTube, and have been getting in plenty of target shooting practice. We'll end up back at the farm for dessert though, because nobody wants to miss Mom's apple crisp.



Sam helping make apple crisp.



Mom's apple crisp, a favorite family recipe.

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