



Home on the HJW Farm: Sheep, Geese, & Foraging

The HJW farm and property is an established vineyard, workplace, and home to many. We wanted to share our newest additions to the farm and highlight some of the breakthroughs that we have had with our biodynamic project.

We have welcomed back a flock of sheep to the winery property. They are a cross of Katadhin and Dorper breeds and are being leased to us from local Starlight Acres Farm. They will live at the property throughout the growing season, spending time in the vineyards to help with weed suppression and contribute to the overall biosphere. This is the second time that we are working with sheep and as is true with most farming endeavors- we have learned a lot this time around! This year, we have avoided most of the beginner pitfalls of shoddy fencing and late-night sheep escapades. Sounds like progress.

We also introduced Heirloom Cotton Patch Geese to the vineyard team. They have settled in alongside the chickens and are a heritage breed known specifically for their expert weeding capabilities. When stewarding living creatures to be a part of the vineyard ecosystem, we are mindful of starting small and testing out not only the compatibility of the animals with the land but also our own learning curve and how to properly care for them. So far they seem to be flourishing!

And we would be remiss to skip over our adorable and energetic vineyard kitties, who joined the Wiemer team this year as well! If nothing else, they have been entertaining our many summer visitors with their playful antics and bringing us all sorts of "presents."



Farming biodynamically has also compelled us to shift our viewpoint on other areas of the farm like the surrounding fields and headlands. For instance, we are now utilizing and repurposing existing flora on the property for our own farming ventures. During this growing season, we were able to forage yarrow, chamomile, horsetail, and nettle right from the HJW farm (pictured above). We then dried these botanicals (which are immensely important to the biodynamic process) and are incorporating them into our teas and preparations for the vineyard. This was the first growing season that we were able to accomplish this on a large and impactful scale and it is inspiring that what might have been mowed away was able to contribute to the growing cycle and health of the biosphere.

It is essential to reflect that this working, breathing, and evolving farm with its fleeting growing seasons and many players (hands & hooves alike) can also be captured and preserved in the form of a bottle of wine and eventually shared among friends!

