



The Whole Village

Bark

Winter 2019

Hell's Half Acre

Rare Breeds Canada has a mandate to actively encourage the preservation of and to increase the number of domestic livestock, including poultry, that have commercial value in Canada and are now in danger of extinction, i.e. heritage livestock. To that end Whole Village has been caring for Kerry dairy cows for three years, trying to keep the breed of only 2000 cattle in the world alive and increasing in numbers. This year we had a chance to increase our herd of heritage cattle with four

pregnant Red Polls, another breed needing protection. The heifers are integrating well and learning to follow the young Kerry heifer and bull. Luckily our neighbours have helped with extra hay and straw for bedding.

But five days before Christmas an open gate and weak electrical fence allowed them to investigate the east part of the farm. Then another breakout occurred the next day. Ten residents walked, ran and drove through the farm and further afield to try to guide

them home. The escapees just kept running. Residents searched the whole country block on the third day but to no avail – not even a sighting.

With advice from our local neighbour, Carl Martin, we changed tactics. After finding the cattle close to our fence line, we used hay and the Kerry cattle to seduce them back to the north pasture. It worked and now all our new Red Polls are back home – a wonderful Christmas present for all and many lessons learned.