

Weather can be very uncertain during this time of year. We often hear complaints about mud, ice, slush, and just about any other unpleasant weather conditions that one might imagine. But, to tell the truth, we are so busy during late March and April that we sometimes don't pay much attention to the weather—especially to road conditions, as we seldom venture far from home during this season.

We finished shearing the ewes on Saturday. Today, we sheared the bucks. Today, we also had three pairs of new lambs, the first of the season. The average gestation period for sheep is about 150 days. But, we can expect lambs to begin to come about five days short of five months. This year was no exception.

The rams went out into the pastures with the ewes on October 25th this year. And today, March 20th, the first arrivals met us when we went to the barn to do the morning chores.

Then, too, the maple syrup season that started early with a long interruption after the first “runs,” is back in motion now, so we also had sap to cook and syrup to bottle. This is just normal for this time of year.

Of course, we also have to look ahead to the gardening year. We have some onions, leeks, and tomatoes growing on the plant stand in the basement, and there are other seeds covered with our homemade seed starting mix that will soon be emerging. But, there are lots more seeds to plant.

I was in the greenhouse today, too. I raked a bed for spinach and made little furrows along the drip irrigation lines, but I did not have time to plant the spinach. Lettuce, arugula, claytonia, mache, more onions and leeks, plus all the other plants that get their start in the greenhouse are still in the little paper packets with the Fedco seed cooperative labels.

Of course, one must not forget the obligations of daily living, either—bread to bake, meals to cook, clothes to wash, house to clean (that I can neglect for a while during March and April), and one must also be careful to include the pleasurable activities that aren't “work.” I need to read every day, I have warp on the loom and try to weave a little during odd moments, and I have no guilt in taking time to write letters to friends—one of the most pleasant and worthwhile parts of my everyday life.

Oh, and one must always take time to pet the cats.