



CARDINAL CHIT-CHAT CORNER

So winter arrived officially the 21st of December with 9 hours 10 minutes of daylight or 14 hours 50 minutes of night. Cheer up - with days getting longer and nights getting shorter we should really be making strides towards accomplishing all our New Year resolutions!

The Iowa State Pigeon Association had their 87th Annual Show December 7 & 8 at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. The weather was ideal and there were about 4,500 show pigeons of all varieties. Quite an intense hobby!

With the East Coast trying to recover after getting hammered by Sandy, the many, many bereaved folks in Newtown, CT, the flooding in the Northwest, and continuing drought in the Midwest, we have plenty to keep us on our knees.

Some of us got a blowing, heavy, wet snow the 20th of December—nature's wintery blast from one point of view, and yet photogenic landscapes in the aftermath. Awesome forces and delicate handiwork of nature.

When the ground is covered in snow, our wildlife is more dependent on our supplying feed for them and fresh water. As the temperatures drop down into the single digits, the body requirements to keep warm greatly increase. Bird's calorie consumption increases 40-50% just to survive.

Ever wonder about the plight of the dairy farmer? He sells a gallon of milk for \$1.86 of which \$1.50 goes to cover feed costs. That leaves just \$.36 per gallon to cover his labor, utilities, vet costs, and depreciation on his facilities. Ouch! Then the dairy processors, shippers, and retailers add \$1.68 and we pay an average of \$3.54 a gallon, with most of the cream taken off! How many people know the taste of real fresh milk straight from the cow?

Have a safe holiday season!