

Monroe Family Organics

CSA Newsletter

OCTOBER 14, 2012

Hello Everyone! This coming week is the last week of the season, and we hope you enjoyed the CSA. Thanks for a great 2012 season!

Farm Update

This week we saw some more freezing temperatures, which did nip some of the younger lettuces and finished off most of the outside tomatoes and peppers. Most of the inside tomatoes in the coldframe are still good, but the vines are on their way out and probably will be finished in another week or two. The pigs and chickens are doing well, but they were not thrilled with the rainy and almost freezing start to their morning on Saturday. Pretty soon though, the pigs won't have to worry about the cold, because they are going to meet the butcher on Wednesday. Construction on the new hoopouses is going slowly as we have had to still put most of our focus on harvest. After this week we should be able to move faster on the construction. If you are interested in extra veggies to preserve, this week we are offering the red beets for \$18 per half bushel. After the regular season we will still have eggs available for pickup on the farm for the same price as usual. We still have some vegetables in the field as well, so we will send a weekly list of what is available to pick up from the farm each week if you are interested. As we get farther into the winter, it probably won't be every week, but it will still be fairly often. Michele will be sending out a separate email with



The pigs are enjoying some of their last days on the farm.

instructions on the survey. This is your time to voice your opinion on the things you like most, would want to see changed, or would like to see added or removed from what we offer. We really hope you are able to take the time to fill it out.



What to Expect in This Week's Share

- ❖ Potatoes
- ❖ Carrots
- ❖ Brussels sprouts or winter squash
- ❖ Radishes, beets, or bok choy
- ❖ Sweet Potatoes, cherry tomatoes, or tomatoes
- ❖ Spinach, large salad mix, or cooking greens mix
- ❖ Arugula, green onions, or 2 red onions

Have questions or comments? Email us at mfororganics@yahoo.com or call Michele at

517-896-6884.

The Winter Months on the Farm

As much as we have really enjoyed the CSA season, we are looking forward to the slower pace of winter as we wind down for the year. It has been a very challenging but successful season that saw big leaps in the growth of our farm. We estimate that our farm did around 70% more business than last year although the final figures won't be done until December. This season we took on eggs and a blueberry patch, increased CSA membership by 45%, took on new or greatly increased wholesale accounts, had a new baby, constructed three greenhouses and a 10x22 cooler, and launched our retail prepackaged salad mix. It has been an intense year for our small seven-acre farm!

So what do we do now that winter approaches? After the rest of the field work is done and the coldframes are all planted up, it will be time for a serious amount of planning. With the amount of growth we saw this year, there were also glaring inefficiencies, and the need for better processes in our production system has become apparent. In the field, Fred carried a tough load of fieldwork and management, and he will be trying to figure out how to best build a team of strong farm help for the coming 2013 season. Labor is our largest cost even though so much of it is still Fred and Michele's, which doesn't cost the farm money. As growth continues, managing the cost of our labor will be one of the big determiners of our future growth and profitability. Also there is the longer term planning on things like general market trends, infrastructure investment, and how what we do in the next season fits into the long range vision of the farm.



Above: Once the CSA season ends, we'll finish construction on our new coldframes.

Below: We're definitely looking forward to having a lot more time to spend with our sweet little girls once the season slows down!





Chopped kale or other greens are delicious in this week's recipe for Easy Fried Potatoes and Greens.

During our time of planning, we create a several financial spreadsheets that are based on projected estimates for the following season. These are adjusted as we see the response from CSA signup and the level of interest from our wholesale customers. Then we estimate the amount of what we want to grow to meet the demands. This is where CSA member feedback on the surveys is very important. We then purchase seed and supplies based of the projected needs of our CSA members and wholesale customers.

On the more social side, it is time for us as a farm family to have more time with each other and rest a little more. Hopefully, we will spend more time with friends and family as the winter progresses. It will also be time for our family to take a vacation, read, and do other things that are not all farm-related.

Thank you very much for your support of our farm and local food here in mid-Michigan. We

appreciate your trust in us as we grow your food in the best way possible. I can honestly say it is hard to find fresher, higher quality, organic veggies in our area than what we offer. Hopefully, we can continue to improve what we offer and always see the level of support and interest that we have seen from you folks this season. Thanks again for your support!

Recipe: Easy Fried Potatoes and Greens

Ingredients (there are no set amounts, so you can play around with the proportions):

Potatoes, cut into strips
Chopped cooking greens, spinach, or kale
Shredded cheese
2 or 3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive oil

Directions:

Put a little olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add potatoes and garlic and let them cook for a few minutes, until potatoes are almost tender. Add cooking greens, spinach, or kale, and let cook a few more minutes, until greens start to shrivel. Turn off heat. Add cheese and stir around until everything is coated with cheese, then add salt and pepper to taste. Enjoy!

If you have ideas for an article, or you would like to contribute a recipe to a future newsletter, please email mforganics@yahoo.com or call Michele at 517-896-6884.