



Where The Land, Food, and People Come Together!

PO Box 185 Alton, IL 62002 22867 Chautauqua Rd. Elsah, IL 62028

www.threeriverscommunityfarm.com (618)374-9470

info@threeriverscommunityfarm.com

November 30, 2010

Final Newsletter

Field Walk...

Hello from Michigan! We hope all of you had a warm and delicious Thanksgiving. It feels weird writing our end of the year newsletter from my parent's house, but with the warm, dry fall, and with Leslie and Liberty's help, we were able to fully clean up and put away the farm in record time. The week before Thanksgiving all we had left to do was mow down old crops, put the equipment and tractor in the barn, and roll up the rest of the row covers--piece of cake! So, we've had some extra time to spend with my family. My father is a corn and soybean farmer here in Michigan and Segue has been helping him harvest his last field of corn and some construction and landscaping projects. While Segue helps my Dad, I am starting our winter work of bookkeeping, taxes, seed ordering and field planning. July and its 98 degree days seem like a distant memory at this point, thankfully.

At the end of the season, we like to write a short review of the past twenty-six weeks. During the harvest season we have a spreadsheet in which we record the quantity of produce harvested everyday. Here are the total numbers for our fourth year:

We had 185 CSA members, attended two farmers markets and grew on close to five cultivated acres. We also raised six pigs (which yielded seven hundred pounds of meat), and raised fifty laying hens (one-eyed Maurice became the kid's favorite). Segue and I were lucky to have two interns, Leslie and Liberty from Columbia and Kansas City, MO respectively. The intern program was a success for a second year in a row. They got their hands dirty in every aspect of our farm, from seeding in the greenhouse, to planting, cultivating, harvesting, tractor driving, and attending farmer's markets. In addition, we visited five different farms throughout the season, from a winery in Eureka, MO to a biodynamic livestock farm to several other CSA's in the area. We couldn't have done any of it without them and they have set the standard even higher for future interns!

Our total production for 2009 was 62,190 pounds--this does not include any of the Pick Your Own crops--(that's over 30 tons of produce picked by just four strong backs)! It is also about five thousand pounds more than last year, which accurately reflects the good growing weather in the early spring and early summer; but also the difficult time we had late summer through early fall.

Averaged, each member ate 460 pounds of organic vegetables, about 18 pounds a week (less in the spring, more in the summer), with an average cost then of \$.92 a pound (half total poundage if you were a 13 week member)--all numbers are in line with other national CSA averages. For even more interesting totals look across the page.....

With every year we gain important knowledge about what grows well in the St. Louis area, how and when to grow those things, how much of them to grow, and what combination of vegetables people want and will use. Not that there isn't a lot of room for improvement; here's our thoughts for next season.

Tomatoes: we will be planting even more successions of them--several rows at the end of every month starting in March through July. Hopefully (keep your fingers crossed) we will keep you in tomatoes later into the fall.

We will be saying goodbye to such crops as radicchio, brussel sprouts and kohlrabi (unless many of you tell us otherwise). These seem like less desirable crops and will free up more time and space for those that you all love.

Speaking of, we will be growing more broccoli (spring broccoli is highly dependent on cool weather though), no yellow or purple green beans--just regular green beans that are familiar to everyone. We are excited to try our hand at the italian roma beans that many of you have requested. And less radishes!

A big project for us next spring will be the planting of several rows of raspberries, blackberries and rhubarb. Look for an email about a volunteer planting day in early May! We'll need all the hands we can muster.

Lastly, we are hoping to raise a small flock of guinea hens for insect control. Unlike chickens, guineas love all insects--especially squash bugs, potato beetles, and japanese beetles; however, they won't bother the plants.

That's a brief look into 2011. Segue, Diego and I wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and we will see you again in May!

A Few More Fun Farm Food Facts:

--we harvested 2,500 watermelons this year, which yields close to 10,200 pounds. That's a lot of seed spitting!!

--we promised to do better with zucchini and summer squash and we did--we grew 6800 pounds. That's over 50 pounds of zucchini and summer squash per member!

--our spring spinach harvest yielded almost the entire amount for the season--1080 pounds--our best spinach harvest ever.

--tomatoes yielded a better 5500 pounds, about two thousand pounds more than last year. Members ended up with forty pounds overall.

--we improved our broccoli harvest by 40%--1,000 pounds all together; we had broccoli for two weeks in the spring and five weeks in the fall.

--1,500 pounds of radishes--for many of you that's about 1499 pounds too many! We'll try to grow less next year...