



Where The Land, Food, and People Come Together!

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Final Newsletter

Field Walk...

It feels weird writing our end of the year newsletter on a 60 degree day. November has switched months with October and who knows what December has in store. Every year since we started Three Rivers Community Farm we have broken some weather record. This year we will remember October as the wettest on record, with an additional fourteen inches of rain (the normal is just an inch and a half). All the rain put us behind in terms of fall cover cropping and clean up around the farm. But with your help we got four beds of garlic planted that warm Halloween morning. Now, Segue and I are left to mulch the garlic and strawberries (once we get a couple days of real cold weather), clean up the row covers, wire hoops, and a few final rows of plastic. We also will be taking down the plastic from the greenhouse so that the soil can recharge with moisture. The last thing we do is put all the equipment in the barn. Then starts our winter work of bookkeeping, taxes, seed ordering and field planning. A farmer's work is never done, but the winter time yields plenty of down time (or should we say, this year, Diego time)! July and its days where we worked till 8:30PM 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 second year:

*We had 152 members for our third year and grew on just over four cultivated acres. We also raised six pigs (which yielded seven hundred pounds of meat!!), and tried our hand again at raising fifty chicks, but were outwitted by a hungry fox or coyote. Segue and I were lucky to have two interns, Beth who was with us through October and Caleb who interned in the mornings during the summer months. Our intern program was a success this first year. 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 seven different farms throughout the season, from a lamb farm to a bee apiary to several other CSA's in the area. We couldn't have done any of it without them and they have set the standard high for future interns!

Our total production for 2009 was 58,903 pounds (that's almost 30 tons of produce picked by just four strong backs)! That is about ten thousand pounds more than last year, which accurately reflects the good growing weather and some improvements we made in our growing techniques.

Averaged, each member ate 400 pounds of organic vegetables, about 15 pounds a week (less in the spring, more in the summer), with an average cost then of \$1.27 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 at the bottom of the page....

The saying "If it's not broke, don't fix it" sums up our outlook for 2010. Of course, we will be trying to improve our yields on tomatoes, potatoes, and onions, as well as broccoli and cauliflower. We've also gotten requests for growing fava beans and celery and will probably give those new crops a try. We do plan to plant raspberries and rhubarb, but it will have to wait one more year as the best place for them is where the strawberries currently are. Finally, we hope to plant an area of perennial flowers where the zinnias used to be along the deer fence and do a better job with the perennial herb garden.

Our most exciting development will be to work with our new farming friends Alex & Bobbi who are raising pigs and broiler chickens biodynamically on their farm in Carollton, IL. We hope to offer their meat for sale several times throughout the growing season.

2009 was a blessed year with abundant crops, cool summer days, good rain, happy interns, and the addition of our beautiful baby boy, Diego. We have the same optimism for 2010 and we are glad that you will be a part of it. We know we don't exist without your support, so many, many thanks.

Have a wonderful Christmas,
Amy, Segue, & Diego

A Few More Fun Farm Food Facts:

--we harvested 2,000 watermelons this year, which yields close to 8,500 pounds. That's a lot of seed spitting!!

--we promised to do better with cucumbers and we did--we grew over 3500 pounds. That's close to 25 pounds of cucumber per member! Can you say pickles??!!

--1,800 pounds of beets--which according to many of you was about 1,000 pounds too many, but if you loved beets--this was your year!

--our tomato harvest this year yielded a pale 3,265 pounds, even less than last year's harvest. We will do everything humanly possible to grow a bumper crop next season.

--we figured out how to grow winter squash this year and harvested 4,800 pounds of it. Hopefully you still have a butternut sitting around...

--cauliflower attempts failed again; will next year be the year??