



Where The Land, Food, and People Come Together!

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Final Newsletter

Field Walk...

With the first snow on the ground, it seems the appropriate time to wrap up the year with a final newsletter. We will remember this second year as one of the wettest on record, with an additional twenty-three inches of rain (that's in addition to the usual thirty-six). The River Road flooded this year, and we had plenty of days with standing water in the fields, mud up to our ankles, and wind-blown buckets, row covers, and a few poor plants taking the brunt of a very wild weather ride. Over the last two weeks, we've been busy shoring up the greenhouse with a few extra supports (there are new pictures on our website!), mulching the garlic and perennial herb bed, rolling up the row covers, and changing the oil in the tractor and the truck. 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 210 members for our second year and grew on every square inch of our six cultivated acres. We also raised six pigs (the biggest weighed in at over 250 pounds!!), and tried our hand at thirty laying hens. Segue and I had one part time employee who helped us a few weeks during the summer, plenty of volunteers, and three Principia interns--Luisa, Amanda, and Jenny--who helped us in April and May. We couldn't have done any of it without all of them! Our total production for 2007 was 45,062 pounds (excluding all the PYO crops which are impossible to keep track off). This is about five thousand pounds less than last year, which accurately reflects the growing challenges we faced in such a wet year. That means, averaged, each member ate about 212 lbs of organic vegetables, about 8 lbs a week, with an average cost then of \$2.35 a pound--all numbers in line with other national CSA averages. For even more interesting totals look across the page.....

We've learned some important lessons this year, which have led to some major changes on the farm. We realized that too much of our time was spent in distributing the food and not enough time growing it. Our soils, we've

realized through extensive soil testing, need a lot of TLC to repair decades of corn and soybean farming. We had incredible luck with our cover crops this year and that is just one of the many things we will be devoting our extra time to in order to restore fertility. We are excited to be partnering with a soil consultant to build a more long-term plan.

Meanwhile, this winter we will be studying up on growing cut-flowers, crops in our greenhouse, and raspberries. We will be working with Principia College to design a summer internship program and our one equipment purchase will be a mulch layer. To cut down on some of our weeding load, we will be growing certain crops on biodegradable and plastic mulch (hoping eventually to switch over to biodegradable mulch entirely). Our deer problems have led us to the solution of building an exclusion fence over just one part of our field and growing the most delectable crops there. Finally, we will be doing more honey-suckle clearing to widen the main road into the farm and we hope to devise a sort of drive through option for those with physical challenges. All in all--a lot of changes, a lot of new projects, but still the same great food and hopefully, an even more beautiful farm!!

Thanks again for cultivating your passion for local food with us. We have an amazing feeling about next season. And we can't wait to share it all with you! Have a wonderful Christmas, Amy & Segue

A Few More Fun Farm Food Facts:

- we harvested 1,500 watermelons this year, which yields close to 7,500 pounds. That's a lot of seed spitting!!
- we promised to do better with carrots and we did--we grew close to 1500 pounds, which meant about ten bunches per member over the season.
- 1,280 pounds of bok choy--which according to many of you was about 1,280 pounds too many, but if you loved bok choy--this was your year!
- our tomato harvest this year yielded a pale 4,625 pounds, about half of last year's harvest. Tomatoes hate rain--that is the lesson from this year.
- our first garlic harvest brought in over 500 pounds (in which we planted fifty of it for next year's harvest). That's 2 pounds of garlic per member (garlic at the farmer's market can sell for \$10/lb)--not bad!!
- cauliflower attempts failed again; will next year be the year??