



Where the Land, Food, and People Come Together!

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Season One Under Our Belts

Welcome to the second season of Three Rivers Community Farm. What a difference a year makes. This time last year, Segue and I were sweating bullets; it took a lot of guts to sell memberships into a farm that we had yet to grow one carrot on. But after the success of the first season, it just goes to show how resilient land and seeds are; that it really is as simple as putting seeds in the ground and letting the magic unfold. (Okay, it's not quite that simple, or we would be out of a job.) Before we officially move into 2008, let's recap our inaugural season for new folks joining the farm and for renewing members to get everyone's taste buds primed after a winter of pre-washed, bagged, wilted spinach and shriveled cucumbers. So, here's how last year played out:

First and most important: the weather!! After a warm, wet March; a severe freeze in early April, and then warm and wet again, the farm settled into production mode. We had our last real rain on June 29th and then after that the third hottest August on record with seven days over a 100 degrees. Fall continued on the warm side (we were harvesting tomatoes and peppers in the last week of October) and little showers here and there helped the farm pull through. Let's hope that this year we get some rain!!

The farm was happy to sponsor a number of gatherings including several successful potlucks (who can forget kids roasting snap peas instead of marshmallows) and our end-of-the-year harvest dinner inside the historic Farley Music Hall in Elsah.

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What's New in 2008

What does 2008 hold? More farm members to start. This year we are increasing our membership to 200. We have only a dozen on-farm memberships left and our St. Louis memberships sold out last November. If you have friends or family interested in an on-farm membership, please have them email (info@threeriverscommunityfarm.com). And for interested St. Louis folks, please send us an email to get on our waiting list for 2009 and support us at the Tower Grove Farmer's market this year instead. The market opens Saturday, May 10 at 8:30.

We will be increasing our production slightly this year, using all six acres; but we hope with better weed management and fertility we can increase our yields.

We got a number of comments from folks requesting less diversity and more of the things you love: cucumbers, melons, summer squash, carrots, and potatoes. We will be planting more of these items and trying to plant more successions of them. If everything goes according to plan (and it never does, by the way) we hope to have either canteloupes or watermelons for seven weeks this season. We also hope to plant many beds of carrots in May and June when the weather is perfect and harvest and store them in August and September when conditions are impossible. We are also going to try a new silver plastic mulch on our August cucumbers to discourage cucumber beetles (the shiny silver supposedly confuses the beetles). There are a few new crops we will be growing this year: broccoli raab, garlic, and strawberries (our strawberry crop could be

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Look for the 2008 3 Rivers Farm Calendar in your mailbox by late April....



What's New in 2008 continued...

less than extraordinary due to last year's drought--we will have to keep our fingers crossed!)

For animals, we will be raising six pigs that should make their grand entrance on the farm in early May. Our laying hen project is still in the works. After taking a chicken coop construction workshop at an organic farming conference in Louisville, KY in January, housing will be a snap. However, we need to find mature layers to purchase (most farms raise day-old chicks for seven months--but we do not have winter housing yet); so, if anyone has any leads please contact the farm. Finally, Jim Cranmer will continue with our small bee colony, hopefully adding a hive or two and collecting more honey in the Fall. Last year we sold about twenty pints worth of honey and it was superb!

And what are our plans for infrastructure? We have a lot on our plate again this year. We are going to mulch the road that leads up to the barn and hopefully plant a small perennial herb garden at the front gate. Last year, we received a grant from the Department of Agriculture to design and install a wash station that traps and reuses the water from washing produce and we have our plan in place. Now, we just have to build it. We will also be installing gutters on the barn and catching rain water from the roof to be stored in a cistern and used as needed. Segue and I have also started pondering the idea of building a small green house in the Fall if farm funds allow

As farm members, we hope to make this experience easier and more convenient. For our St. Louis folks, our website will have a page devoted to the unusual looking produce in your box--just click on the photo and discover the wonderful world of kohlrabi or collards, for example. In addition, it is our hope, for a few weeks, to try and include a small sampling of the PYO crops--a pint of cherry tomatoes or snow peas are possibilities (Of course, you are welcome on the farm to pick these crops when they are in full swing!). For our on-farm members, we hope to have available more locally produced items such as artisan breads, maple syrup, organic black beans, and gourmet dog biscuits! Stay tuned for details.

2008 is going to be a memorable year! We can feel it in our green thumbs! Enjoy your winter and we'll see you soon!



Final payments are due by April 15th (please call for alternate payment plans)

Season One Under our Belts continued...)

We also helped the University of Illinois spread the word about organic production by hosting a field day at the farm with over 55 participants. Many students from Principia College and Washington University visited the farm as well. Our four pigs gained their own sort of notoriety as locals from Elsau and Chautauqua walked and jogged on the “pig” trail.

In terms of production, we raised a whopping 49,972 pounds (excluding all the PYO crops which are impossible to keep track off). That means, on average, each member ate about 333.1 pounds of organic vegetables, about 12.3 pounds a week (much less in the spring; way more in summer and fall) with an average cost then of \$1.50 a pound--all numbers in line with other national CSA averages. So we came in about where we had hoped to as far as giving you good value for your food dollar. We hope you are satisfied and it seems from the renewal rate that for the most part you were. Of course, we always appreciate feedback and our proverbial email door is always open.

A Few More Fun Farm Food Facts:

--we lugged over 5,000 pounds of watermelons and canteloupes which translated into about 5-6 chin-dripping melon-moments of bliss for all!

--you all ate 2,831 heads of lettuce (that’s an average of 19 head per member--a lot of bunny food).

--we harvested 9,533 pounds of tomatoes (and according to the pigs, that wa 9,533 too few!)

--1,073 bunches of carrots--which averaged to be about 7 bunches per member (not as bad as we thought, but hope to do better this year).

--we grew 400 lbs of kohlrabi and 500 lbs of rutabagas, which might have been exactly 400 and 500 lbs too many!!

About the FOOD!

Unique Varieties=Unique Taste!

Deciding on varieties is a little like writing out a Christmas wish list. We try to grow a mix of productive hybrids and traditional heirloom varieties. Here is just a sampling of the new, quirky, downright bizarre vegetables that we will be trying out this season:

red noodle pole bean
green magic broccoli
purple haze carrots
suyo long cucumber
india paint eggplant
golden frill mustard green
red rosie lettuce
small shining light watermelon
paprika supreme hot pepper
big bertha sweet pepper
helios radish
thelma sanders winter squash
black cherry & chocolate tomato
pineapple heirloom tomato



Farm Events

see you there....

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

May 3rd, Saturday, 9-Noon: Volunteer Work Morning: Want to get your hands dirty and see how your food is grown? Come see the farm at the height of spring!!

May 13th, 15th, 16th: The first week of pick-up. Tuesday and Friday from 2-7 PM for on-farm; Thursday from 2-7 PM for St. Louis members at your assigned site.

June 7th, Saturday 5PM: The Best Salad Bar in the World !! Potluck at the farm. Please bring your favorite salad (or any other favorite dish) to share, chairs, and utensils. Bonfire after dark. Come enjoy the farm!



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