The Weekly Note

One Step at a Time Gardens

Jan Libbey & Tim, Andrew, & Jess Landgraf

Week of July 21, 2008 – Box #8

In This week's Box: Broccoli or Cauliflower, Snap Peas, Green &/or Yellow Beans, Lettuce, Garlic

Veggie Notes

Storms making tossed salad – Strong winds from the side tossed our lettuce around a bit last week. Two strong storms – Thursday and again Saturday – wind whipped the lettuce that had been looking so great. The result cut into our supply available due to culling out damaged leaves. Enjoy this last supply for this part of the season. We just started a good supply of lettuce for a fall supply. Another last supply is this week's snap peas.

We are watching the first blossoms on our zucchini and expect you will see zucchini in your box in a c couple of weeks. We contract with a friend for our first supply of carrots. Gary Guthrie, of Growing Harmony Farm near Nevada, is known as "the carrot guy" in our farming circles. We will be picking up carrots from Gary this week and packing them in the boxes next week. Our own fall carrots have been started in the field.

We have a break in onions this week and anticipate including some Walla walla onions in next week's box.

Connections – Meet Ariane, the second of our two summer interns. Ariane Lotti is a born and raised New York City girl. She became interested in agricultural issues in high school when she worked on a sustainable crop and livestock farm in Maine. During college, she focused her coursework and research on environmental science and agriculture, and worked for a farm-to-school project that ran a one-acre garden and organized many educational events. She has a master's degree from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, where she conducted research on alternative agriculture systems in the Basque Country of Spain. After working on the farm bill for a stint with the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition in Washington, DC, she came out to Iowa to learn more about conventional commodity crop production and the alternatives to it. Although she's really liking the Midwest, she can't quite get over the use of the word "pop" (it's soda!), the occurrence of tornadoes and flood-producing rains, and salads made of Jello.

From the Ground Up: The Farm Bill, Part II of IV

Despite my greater dissatisfaction with the farm bill and its lack of support for a sustainable agricultural system, there are some smaller programs contained within the bill that support an alternative, more environmentally and socially friendly agriculture. There is, for example, an entire section of the bill dedicated to conservation programs. Programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program reward farmers for incorporating conservation practices into production practices. Other programs, such the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Conservation Reserve Program, are land retirement programs in which lands are removed from production. Although these programs receive a small percentage of the bill's funding, they and other programs (stay tuned for next week!) are the important building blocks from which to create an agricultural policy that does not put conservation and production at odds. After all, good stewardship of land and resources ensures the long-term viability of agricultural production.

Farmers' Footnote- Garlic harvest done

Thursday afternoon we received a heavy downpour and loud thunder. Friday and Saturday more rain, bringing our three-day total to 3 inches. Be careful what you ask for! We needed some rain, but perhaps not quite so much. We needed to finish garlic harvest. The garlic bed lifter was not an option, but the garlic pulled easily. By the afternoon Tim and Andrew has accumulated many piles of garlic. The rest of us, finishing up the day's harvest, came to help gather, organize, and hang the garlic heads. This week we are providing some of this great garlic in your box. You may note that it feels a bit damp. This is fresh garlic – just harvested and still holding moisture in the "papers" holding the cloves together. The prime storage for garlic is a cool, dry place – preferably not in the refrigerator, which tends to dehydrate the garlic. But I'd encourage you to use it – it's just so good. I recommend a garlic press among your kitchen tools. I love pressing fresh garlic. It seems to snap right through. Garlic is a great addition to so many dishes – from stir-fries to roasts, garlic bread to creamy garlic dressing. For a little more information on garlic, check out page 5 of our Recipe Collection – posted on our website. We'll have more garlic throughout the rest of the season

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