The Weekly Note

One Step at a Time Gardens

Jan Libbey & Tim, Andrew, & Jess Landgraf

Week of July 28, 2008 – Box #9

In This week's Box: Broccoli/ Cauliflower/Cabbage or Kohlrabi; Carrots; Onions, Green &/or Yellow Beans, Tomato or Zucchini

Veggie Notes – Mixed options provide a great variety for members to try. New on the scene this week are tomatoes, zucchini, cabbage and kohlrabi. More of each to come in weeks ahead. Kohlrabi – These large, roundish vegetables require peeling off the outer layer. In side you will find a sweet, crisp, crunchy vegetables. Delicious raw, but equally good steamed with butter, in stir fries or stews. Serve as you would any other member of the cauliflower/broccoli family. Tomatoes – of many colors. You may get a red, pink, orange or purplish tomato. The flavor of home raised can't be beat! This week's carrots are from our friend Gary Guthrie of Growing Harmony Farm near Nevada. Renowned as "the carrot guy", Gary grows our first round of carrots and we grow winter squash for his members. We grow our own late season carrots with nine beds looking good.

We are expecting the first of two sweet corn deliveries next week.

Connections – Michael & Sasha Mudlaff are WDM members since 2003 & have served as site host subs. Sasha works as a grief counselor for youth. With Michael's pastor's perspective, we occasionally find ourselves amidst theological discussions at the pick-up site. As we began to experience a tough season in June, Michael offered us this reflection. *You two (and your family and staff) have been so faithful over the years. Our family appreciates the care you give to us through your produce, and also to the land. We were fortunate to not suffer any consequences of the recent rains and flooding - at home or at church. So our role has been to serve others. It is a pleasure to suffer alongside you - you are the ones that are working so hard and lost much of the precious fruit of your labor. We recognize the risk we all assume in investing in you and the farm each year.*

From the Ground Up: Farm Bill Part III

Calling the bill that Congress reauthorizes every 5-7 years the "farm bill" is somewhat of a misnomer because it impacts more than farmers. While the bill successfully furthers the cause of the corn- and soybean-based conventional agricultural system that we have today, it significantly shapes our nation's food system as well. The bill determines most of what we eat by supporting the production of certain crops over others (corn and soybeans vs. a much greater diversity of foods) and using those crops to make many of the processed foods and meats in the supermarket today. With a recent understanding of the connection between the farm bill and the food we eat, it was in this farm-bill round of negotiations and politicking that the public health community became more involved. With the sharp increase in prevalence of obesity and diabetes in the United States, public health experts have started to ask how the food environment (where cheap, processed foods are readily available) enabled by policies such as the farm bill affects the rate of chronic, often times diet-based diseases. While the connections between health and farm policy are not obvious at first, people who care about health have started to realize that the type of agriculture system we have greatly affects our diets and health.

Farmers' Footnote – So how does this farm work? Over the next weeks I'll share this season on the farm, an overview of our weekly harvest and post harvest routine, a review of improvements implemented this year, and improvements under consideration for 2009.

In 2008 we are growing on approximately 6 acres, serving 118 members, estimated to involve 140+ individuals. We grow more than 35 different vegetable varieties. We also raise more than 900 broilers over the season. Managing this much area and diversity is enough to keep us busy on a good year. The demands of the 2008 growing year have required many extra hours and some additional help. What would normally be a fair split between harvest and weeding through the summer has become recovery from some lost beds, harvest among weedy beds and scramble to replant as well as stay on top of scheduled planting and harvest. The hoophouse, our most controllable site has been great – was the location for original greens and this first supply of tomatoes. The field tomatoes – all 8 beds - have been weeded and mulched. They still need some pruning. At this point we've made great progress with maintenance, but have some stickler sites on priority focus this week. Last week we direct seeded one last round. In our basement are numerous flats of broccoli, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage and lettuce that will be transplanted. The pressure to get "over the weeding hump" is on as some crew will be heading back o school soon.

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