



2018 Weekly Note Week of June 11

Farm Snapshot

Harvest, planting, weeding, hosting visitors... a full week at the farm!

You get the end results of our **harvest** work, but we haven't described much of the process. First, we start with how much we need to harvest. Sometimes it takes multiple trips with numerous tubs back and forth from field to wash station (lettuce, for example). Sometimes it's just a couple of tubs (radish). We have a slick system of a small trailer that hauls harvest totes back and forth pulled by an electric golf cart. The golf cart is a perfect fit with our solar energy system at the farm. Next, we weigh and record all of our harvest (this feeds into yield records which feed into crop analysis and future planning). Then crops move toward our wash station (Jan's standing between our two wash station lines in this photo) where we do our the cleaning and bunching. For those items that need bagging, that's the final step before all the prepared



veggies are assembled for the "Pack out" on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Both bagging and pack out take place in our "Pack out shed". We have two coolers – one that runs 34-35 degrees F for cool season crops such as we are harvesting now. The other runs 45-48 F mid- summer crops that like it a little warmer. Once packed, the boxes are staged in the cooler until loaded for delivery. Then you find the final product – boxed, clean veggies patiently waiting for you at your pick up location.

Planting this last week included watermelon seeding in the field and fall broccoli planting in our starts area. We also planted some additional cover crop in a couple of beds we don't need for vegetables and did some replanting in our potatoes that were hit hard by early rains.

Weeding...well, that's an ongoing task and I suspect you all know what that's about. This last week we made great progress on the storage onions.

Visitors – Now, you know you are all welcome to visit the farm, right?. Just give us a holler and we'd be happy to show you around. We've hosted many a field day, but don't have plans to do so this season. You'll just have to follow the model of these four new friends.

This week's box contents:

- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Chard
- Salad Turnips
- Broccoli
- Radish
- Green Onion
- Rhubarb



Janet Cook, on the far right, asked to come visit the farm while she and her classmates were going to be in Clarion for their 50th high school reunion last weekend. Janet said she's been following our farm for a while and finally decided it was time to check it out. She lives in Texas, but visits her mother in Clarion fairly regularly. They graciously listened to my long story of how the farm came to be and our other involvements in North Iowa. We looked over the systems we use and the main production areas. They ood appropriately at the vegetables and shared their own stories of gardening and family farmland in Clarion area. It's always fun to make new connections and share a passion of food and the land!

So – follow their clue. Give us a call and make plans to stop out and visit the farm sometime this summer!



Stan & Jane (Seattle, Wa), Jaimie (Nevada, Ia) , Janet (Texas)– visited last Saturday during a break in their 50th class reunion festivities in Clarion.

This coming week Tim will be in St. Paul Tuesday and Wednesday so we did some early harvest to get a jump on the week. The reason Tim's going is because he's on a grant review committee for SARE Education & Research grant program, based at University of MN. This is his third and final season. He's reviewed 28 grants and says the meeting should be interesting as there are a lot of good proposals and only so many dollars. The deliberation with other committee members is always intriguing process.



One last piece of last week's story at the farm... a tragedy. Here's the story. Wednesday, when Tim went to tend chickens for the morning, he discovered a predator (we think mink or weasel) had dug under the pen and killed all 70 birds. We'll spare you the gory photos, but suffice it to say, it was a shock and great disappointment. We had just started the compost pile so it was hot and "cooking" - that's where all the bodies went. Due to our summer schedule, we can't work another batch in this season so we spent the afternoon cleaning up all the equipment and storing it back in its proper place. We've already contacted our chicken customers and suggested where they might go to purchase farm raised chicken this season. The 400-500 lb. of feed we have on hand has been sold to a farmer friend who is one of the suggested sources of chicken. I had just taken several photos of them the week before. So, here's my ode to our chicken. Cute – even at 5 weeks of age!



In the Box **Featured vegetable of the week: Chard and Beets.**

Beets (beetroot) evolved from leafy Swiss chard, both share the same genus and species name - *Beta vulgaris*. They are indigenous to coastal parts of the Mediterranean, and eventually spread to the Atlantic Coast of Europe, the Near East



and India. Mostly we have the red beet, but there are a couple of the Chioggia variety (an Italian heirloom) scattered across our supply. You'll notice the Chioggia root for its lighter, pink color and candied pink and white circles when sliced. Both eat the same – delicious! The greens of both the chard and beet are as nutritious as they are beautiful! Great source of vitamins A, E, and C, minerals like iron and calcium.



Minerals from chard are more readily absorbed than they are from spinach – an element present in spinach that tends to bind the minerals, rendering them unavailable during digestion.

Recipe Spotlight - I've got a few more

recipes in mind this week than I have space so have included several additional suggestions and links.

Lemon-Basil Dressing (Farm member Nikki Gutman, Kanawha)

This is delicious and quick and imparts such a bright flavor.

1/3 C. vegetable oil

1/4 C. apple cider vinegar

1/4 C. pure maple syrup

1 T Dijon mustard

1 1/2 t minced fresh basil (1/2 t. crushed, dried)

1/8 t. lemon zest

Salt & pepper to taste

OSTG Food Book on the website now

Looking for more ideas? Find our Food Book under "Feast" on our website – www.ostgardens.com.

Another suggestion - *This looks like a tasty way to use the beet and chard greens -*

<https://www.annabel-langbein.com/recipes/asparagus-spinach--lemon-risotto/327/>

Stuffed Beets (allrecipes.com) *Our beets are so large, I thought this might be the ideal time to try this recipe*



2 Large beets

6 oz. bacon

1/4 C. shredded Gruyere cheese

1/8 C. grated Parmesan cheese

1/8 C. sour cream

1 T. chopped garlic

Salt & pepper to taste

Directions: Place the beets into a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until tender and skin slides off, about 20 minutes. Drain and allow to cool, then remove skin, and cut off roots and stems so that both ends are flat. Scoop out the inside of the beets using a melon baller or spoon, leaving about 1/4-inch on the sides and bottom. Set the hollowed beet cups aside.

While the beets are cooking, place the bacon in a large, deep skillet, and cook over medium-high heat, turning occasionally, until evenly browned, about 10 minutes. Drain the bacon slices on a paper towel-lined plate, then crumble. Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Dice the remaining chunks of beets, and place in a large bowl. Mix in the Gruyere cheese, Parmesan cheese, sour cream, crumbled bacon, garlic, garlic salt, and pepper until well combined. Gently fill each beet cup with the cheese mixture. Place filled beets in a shallow baking dish. Bake in the preheated oven until the cheese melts and is heated through, 20 to 30 minutes.

Another suggestion – Beet

Humus. Try <https://www.annabel-langbein.com/recipes/beetroot-hummus/3468/>

Food for Thought: The Rules of Eating

Last week I referenced the book "It Starts with Food" (2012). The book addresses the biochemistry angles of our nutrition and its Preface opens with what appears as a

common sense set of practices related to the food the authors

eat: "We eat real food – fresh, natural food, like meat, vegetables,

and fruit. We choose foods that are nutrient-dense, with lots of

naturally occurring vitamins and minerals over foods that have more

calories, but less nutrition. Food quality is important – we are careful about where our meat, seafood, and eggs come

from, and we buy organic, local produce as often as possible. Eating like this allows us to maintain a healthy metabolism

and keeps our immune system in balance. It helps eliminated sugar cravings and reestablished a healthy relationship

with food. It also works to minimize our risk for more lifestyle-related diseases and conditions, like diabetes,

cardiovascular disease, stroke, and autoimmune conditions. ~ Dallas & Melissa Hartwig

"Eating is an agricultural act"

~ **Wendell Berry,**

The Pleasures of Eating

Well, the authors are not alone in developing lists. Their list sounds a little like the list of seven guidelines from Wendell Berry's (1990) **The Pleasures of Eating** essay - a list of how eating responsibly represents a greater embrace of being involved more fully in agriculture.

1. Participate in food production to the extent that you can.
2. Prepare your own food.
3. Learn the origins of the food you buy, and buy the food that is produced closest to your home.
4. Whenever possible, deal directly with a local farmer, gardener, or orchardist.
5. Learn, in self-defense, as much as you can of the economy and technology of industrial food production.
6. Learn what is involved in the best farming and gardening.
7. Learn as much as you can, by direct observation and experience if possible, of the life histories of the food species.

I read Berry's list inspired Michael Pollen who has developed a whole series of rules – 3, 7 rules, 10, and when that was not enough, he stretched it to 64 – apparently Pollen is really into food rules. You can look these up. The central teaching of his original Food Rules is that eating doesn't have to be so complicated, and food is as much about pleasure and communion as it is about nutrition and health.

The book addresses the biochemistry of our food. Berry is trying to unpack the connection between eating and the land in order to extract pleasure from our food, strengthening the relationship between eater and for production of the food that sustains them. Pollen's ongoing list of rules are his every evolving work to change the way America eats.

Since we're on a roll here, I thought I'd try my hand at food rules. I came up with five:

1. Savor the flavor – food should taste really good, awaken the nuances of flavor and eating in season produce, harvested at peak maturity, is an important first step.
2. Be curious about and creative with your food – food should awaken us on so many levels
3. Appreciate the connection – Eat to bring a sense of wholeness to your life – on the very immediate level as a farm member, you are connected to this farm's rolling land in southern Hancock Co.; you are connected to Tim and myself and to Becky who do that harvest work; and you are connected to our other members, who participate in this circle of humanity. There's a story in every bite.
4. Anticipate the power of food - I believe food is a foundational building block in sustainable development strategies that has profound significance.
5. Be patient with your evolving relationship with food - I recognized 20 some years ago my own tendency to not only find connection between many threads, but to want to achieve that vision sooner rather than later. Our farm name has many layers – one of which is a constant reminder to myself that building sustainable life and living skills does come ...one step at a time.

What would you list as your rules? Please share them!

Delivery schedule

Tuesdays: Garner, Clear Lake, Mason City
Wednesdays: Belmond, Clarion, Farm

Farm contact

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