

Fernbrook Farm CSA

Volume 9 Issue 4

November 2015



**Fernbrook
FARM**



Fernbrook Farm CSA Hours

Saturday
8:00 am to 1:30 pm

- Or -

Tuesday
10:00 am— 7:00 pm

- Or -

Thursday
2:00PM - 7:00PM

Hello and a very happy Autumn from the muddy fields of Fernbrook Farm CSA. Muddy is not a word we have gotten to use much this year. Seems like we get a downpour followed by 3 or 4 weeks of drought. But Hurricane Patricia (or the remnants thereof) is currently dumping rain on Burlington County. Our cabbage, kale, beets, cover crops and freshly planted garlic are loving it. I am too. 2015 was after all a pretty dry year....See. There it is. Talking about 2015 in the past tense! Well, it isn't quite over but it certainly is getting there. Today we took advantage of the wet weather by totally cleaning out and reorganizing our veggie coolers. Backs are a little sore tonight after moving 3 tons of food. After work, I took a little stroll around Fern-



brook's woods and fields. It was quiet. Lovely fall colors and that unmistakable damp, fragrant, musty smell that belongs to the woods in autumn. I didn't sense that buzz and high paced energy you can feel at the farm during the heat of summer. And for a moment I thought I could detect the smell of roasting turkey, pumpkin pie and stuffing wafting through the air...

Seems to happen every year. The conclusion of the farm season that is. Although at points during the season it seems as though it may never end. But we have almost made it to the finish line. Of course, we still have plenty of food to dole out to you. Looks like November at the farm shop will be filled with potatoes, brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, squash, cabbage, kale and more! (see the food list for more details). And if you are going to be sad without Fernbrook veggies this winter,

we still have a few winter shares left for sale.

This time of year we are looking to close out big jobs.

Finish digging all the cold sensitive sweet potatoes (done). Finish mowing, discing and sowing veggie fields with cover crop seeds (75% done...we sow crops like rye, vetch, clover, oats, peas and oilseed radish to protect our soils and build long-term fertility). Remove pig fences and tomato trellises (30% done). Get pigs safely to market and hold pork sales for our members (in process). And so on. We are also getting a jump on the 2016 season. We are fashioning a budget and spending plan; interviewing potential Apprentices; planting garlic (they say 'plant your garlic during the world series...') and thinking about which crops will go in which fields. AND of course we are selling shares!

2016 will be our TENTH year as a CSA. Where did that time go??? Larry and I started this venture back in the fall of 2006—just an idea back then. And in 2007 with the help of many people, we grew food for 65 shares on about 4 acres. We've grown quite a bit since then. It is a real honor that we



have maybe half of those original families still involved with the CSA. We have learned a lot but every growing season is ripe with challenges and we work hard to improve every year. The past two years I think have been pretty

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fruitful and we have been pleased with the product we have provided to you. We hope you agree! Every

fall we invite you to renew your CSA share. It is the ultimate barometer to measure how we are doing and how valuable your membership at our farm is. It is a commitment on your end to be sure. We also feel that by season's end, you have received great value for your food dollar. And we know that for most of you the food you receive is only part of why you are shareholders at Fernbrook. The u-pick crops, livestock, special events, being part of a community and moments of peace and tranquility all add value to your share. One shareholder told me recently *"You don't understand. Coming to Fernbrook IS my therapy!"* I am glad we can

help! And we are truly glad for you and your ongoing support for our farm.

The farm crew is doing well, working hard and having some fun as the calendar flips to November. The Apprentices have been taking turns managing the weekly harvest which is a challenge. He or she is responsible for knowing all the crops in the fields, their quality and quantity, how much to harvest etc. Then the harvest manager has to run the crew—people, trucks, knives, baskets, buckets etc so the harvest is done thoroughly and quickly! Tough job but they all have come early and stayed late



to do it right. We've spent a lot of hours behind our D-10 M potato digger this fall. Tens of thousands of pounds of spuds and sweet potatoes. We are nearing the end but not there yet. We are pulling some fabulous cabbage and your general feedback on the brussels sprouts has been very encouraging. We got most of our garlic in the ground—a bit early this year and some of it is already germinating (to be harvested July 2016). And so as we plan and grow for next year we still have LOTS of food for you to close out this season. Thanks again for being a part of our farm. We are only able to do this because of you and it is an honor!! Happy November and we hope our food will grace your holiday table! See you at the farm.

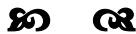
Your Farmer, *Jeff Tober*

What to expect in November at the Farm

"Wouldn't be much of a farm without some food" a wise farmer friend once told me. True enough. So every month, the newsletter will give you a snapshot of the veggies you can expect to see in the coming weeks. Please keep in mind it is our best guess – some crops will come in early and some late, but we'll try to give you an accurate forecast. We'll give you a brief description of the food, how to prepare it and we'll include recipes as well. And don't be afraid to experiment a little!

Please note that we recommend washing all of the produce before you eat it.

We soak most of the veggies to remove the field heat and give them a basic wash, but we don't 'clean' the food. Please treat these veggies as you would if they were purchased from the store.



November's Bounty



Beets – Our fall crop is OK. Not poor, not spectacular. We will have them available as often as we can for you. We have reds, a few goldens and the long, slender 'cylindra'! (Should be most but not all remaining weeks).

Broccoli - A beloved fall crop. The first round we thought was excellent. The second patch is coming along nicely and we should start picking it early November. We anticipate side shoot production too (you know—the little guys).

Brussels Sprouts - NICE CROP! First real crop we have had in 3 years. These guys are a long season crop meaning you have to keep them well-tended for a long time which can be a challenge. Happy to say this member of the cabbage family came in well and we should have the stalks most weeks from here on out. My kids eat them...maybe yours will too???

Cabbage - Great fall crop for us. We have smooth red, smooth green, savoyed (ruffled) green AND a new one called "Dead-on" which is a pink / green savoyed knockout! Cabbage stores very well in the cool and humid environs. Stuffed cabbage, slaw, kraut.....this is a fall big boy for sure. Available every week.

Carrots - Ah – fall carrots. One of the best. And after frost these babies sweeten up even more to a carrotly delight. Nothing beats a carrot after frost!! This years crop is disappointing. General poor germination coupled with heat and pest damage has given us a fair crop. Certainly not great. We will have carrots and will give you as many as we can!

November's Bounty (cont.)

Cauliflower - Yet another member of the cabbage / mustard family. The edible head or 'curd' is really a collection of undeveloped flower buds. And like its cousins, cauliflower is a champion of nutrition highlighted by vitamins C, B6 and K, folate, and the wonderful omega 3 fatty acid. Our crop this fall is...well the jury is still out. It is late and we hope to have it for you around week 23 or 24. Stay tuned!

Celery - Look for our stalk celery around week 23. Looking like a pretty decent crop. Enjoy raw or cooked. Also celery freezes very well so you can use it all winter long!

Chinese or 'Napa' Cabbage - Great fall crop of these big boys. Many shareholders have been loving them raw. Make kim chi or just stir-fry. Should have it most weeks from here on out.

Collard Greens - Savory & Healthy! A fall staple. Yet another green from the cabbage family, its great at soaking up the flavors it is cooked with. In the south, they commonly use ham hocks and black-eyed peas with collards in a stew. GOOD! Can also be steamed and stir-fried. Available near the end of September. And as is the case with many fall crops, they taste better AFTER they are sweetened up by a frost (same goes for beets, cabbage, kale, carrots etc.)



Kale - Lots of kale out there. Russian, Curly and some Toscano. You'll see it bunched or loose from here on out. Try it steamed, in soups, stir-frys and don't forget kale chips!

Leeks - Back from the spring we are happy to offer our fall crop. These leeks have that great, tangy oniony taste. Awesome for potato leek soup but their applications go well beyond that! Not a super crop for us but we'll have them most weeks from here on out.

Potatoes - So happy we have a GREAT potato crop on our hands. We have a lot in storage and some still in the field to dig. Look for more "Blue Gold", "Purple Viking", "Russet" and "Strawberry Paw". Will have them every week from here on out.

Radish - From here on out we'll offer "Watermelon Radish" also known as meat radish or Winter radish. They are big, crisp and not as spicy. They also do well in the cold and store very well! We have 4 varieties and they should really please salad and radish lovers. Give them a try!

Stir-Fry Greens - This is a general term that encompasses greens like tat soi, bok choy, komatsuna, mustard and more. Fall is an absolutely terrific time for these greens. Cook them up with onions, garlic, lemon, ginger, soy sauce, hot peppers etc. No shortage of ways to enjoy them. Crops looks good and you'll likely see them throughout the fall.

Sweet Potatoes - Been a great sweet potato year for us and you'll continue to get them from here on out. We'll have white, orange, burgundy and 'Murasaki' which is an Asian variety with purple skin and white flesh. Stores well at ROOM TEMPERATURE (botanically speaking sweets are not true tubers....)

Turnips - In addition to the 'Hakurei' salad turnips, we will have the great storing 'purple top globe' turnips as well as the heirloom 'Gilfeather' turnips which are more of a rutabaga / turnip cross bred in Vermont in the late 1800s. Turnips keep VERY well in cool, humid environs and are as healthy as the day is long. Enjoy!

Winter Squash These are the large, colorful, thick-skinned squashes. They generally keep very well and need to be cooked / baked before consumption. Like other fall crops, these have to go into warm environs post harvest to cure. This sweetens them and makes them better storage crops. From here on out we anticipate having the Native American 'Long Pie'; New England Pie Pumpkin; butternut; and some buttercup which is a drier, savory squash (I love them). These should keep very well at room temperature.



Thoughts For Food - Is 'BACON' A Carcinogen?!?!'

Last newsletter I wrote about the World Health Organization classifying Roundup (glyphosphate) as "probably" a carcino-

gen to humans (class 2A). Well, you likely have heard that the same organization recently revealed the results of a study looking at the possible links between meats and cancer. They determined that processed meats are a Group one carcinogen which means there is significant evidence that the item is a cancer causing agent to humans. Their definition is:

Processed meat refers to meat that has been transformed through salting, curing, fermentation, smoking, or other processes to enhance flavour or improve preservation. Most processed meats contain pork or beef, but processed meats may also contain other red meats, poultry, offal, or meat by-products such as blood. Examples of processed meat include hot dogs (frankfurters), ham, sausages, corned beef, and biltong or beef jerky as well as canned meat and meat-based preparations and sauces.

The study goes on to say that epidemiological studies show the link between exposure (consumption) to these meats and an increased risk of colorectal cancer. In addition, the study classifies unprocessed mammalian meats (pork, beef, lamb, goat etc). To be a class 2A or 'probably' carcinogenic. They summarize:

In the case of red meat, the classification is based on limited evidence from epidemiological studies showing positive associations between eating red meat and developing colorectal cancer as well as strong mechanistic evidence. Limited evidence means that a positive association has been observed between exposure to the agent and cancer but that other explanations for the observations (technically termed chance, bias, or confounding) could not be ruled out.

As a farmer, raiser of pigs, former vegetarian (10 years) and concerned parent, this news has interested me. I have read numerous articles about the findings and I encourage you to do the same! It seems to me that yes, processed meats like those listed above are unhealthy for you on multiple levels including increasing your risk of getting certain types of cancer. However there are many other factors at play like your frequency of consuming processed meats, your other dietary habits (do you eat a lot of veggies for instance?) Your level of physical activity, smoking, alcohol consumption etc...But the truth shouldn't scare us rather it should inform us and I think this study raises important questions and points to links we should consider as we make our daily food decisions.

Fernbrook Farm CSA Events!

Saturday, November 14th (tentative)

Grass-Fed Beef Sale!

8:00AM until noon (or sold-out)

We welcome back our good friends Marc and Cheryl from Meeting Place Pastures in Cornwall, Vermont. They will have their pastured beef for sale from their lush Vermont pastures. They are at www.meetingplacepastures.com Stay tuned for details!

Saturday, November 14th

Smoked Pork Sale

8:00AM

FOR CSA MEMBERS ONLY!! This is our second sale of our Fernbrook raised pork. The smoked pork includes bacon, ham, ham hocks, kielbasa, scrapple and smoked roasts. The smoking is done without the use of nitrates. This is traditionally a very popular day at the farm. The bacon for example usually sells out in the first 30 minutes even though we limit it. Look for an email with pricing and availability!

Sunday, November 15th

End of the year Harvest Potluck

4:00PM

Please join us at the beautiful Inn at Fernbrook to celebrate the farm season that was and the farm seasons yet to come. Bring a dish to serve 8-10 people with a label including all ingredients. The meal will take place under the tent attached to the Inn.

We'll recognize the people who make the CSA a reality and see a slide show of the 2015 season. BYOB.

****Please RSVP*** info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com*

Tuesday, November 22nd

LAST SHOP DAY!

10AM - 7PM

*This concludes CSA week 26. Come get all your Thanksgiving Veggies! ***It is also the day you must pick up and pay for your fresh Griggstown Turkey if you ordered one.*** (I may shed a tear at 7pm....)*