

# Fernbrook Farm CSA

Volume 9 Issue 3

September 2015

## “Ain’t No Chores For The Summertime Crews”



**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 greetings from..well from my dining room table. Another day more like mid-July than early September but who's counting? (Oh—do you get the reference for the title of the newsletter...like the Eddie Cochran song...) Baseball on the radio, a cold can of cerevza and this here typing machine. Yeah—looks as though I have been a trifle negligent in the monthly newsletter department. Oh sure I could make a pile of excuses (too much farm work, weekly emails fill the newsletter void, too much farmwork etc). But I won't do that. I'll simply apologize and say I hope I get this newsletter in your hands before Halloween. Wow. How did we get to week 16!?! The farm season—like life in the fact that it somehow manages to be fast and slow simultaneously. Seems like we have been busting our tails for a LONG time. But it also seems amazing that September, autumn, back to school and fall foods like spuds and butternut squash are upon us. Odd....

We hope this newsletter finds you well. We also hope that the CSA has been valuable and positive for you and your family so far in 2015. That goes for our new shareholders up in Hoboken who have been getting a weekly CSA box this year! Thanks Hoboken!! From our end we feel pretty good about the season and the food thus far. But of course it is your opinion that really matters. I do know that we have some pretty good prospects for the fall. More on that in a bit. Amazing how we can really feel a shift around the 20th of August. Up until that general time we have our heads down trying day-in and day-out to achieve as much as we can despite the heat of summer. Harvest, weed, move irrigation, run irrigation, tend to live-stock, seed crops, distribute food, water the greenhouse, repeat. New crops come and go and the farm takes on subtle shifts. But the summer is a slog and we just try to do our best every day. But around August 20th things change. For instance we are pretty much done seeding in the greenhouse (wow). We are done seeding most crops in the field—carrots, beets, rutabaga, beans....The pigs start to look big and the morning sun rises a bit later—noticeably so. We are entering the final

phase of the farm season. Don't worry— it's a big, long phase. And we still have LOTS AND LOTS of food to distribute to you. But nonetheless we are



wrapping up our summer work and preparing for a big, bountiful (we hope), fun autumn. Another example is the scale of some of our harvests. Spring and early summer are marked by cutting heads of lettuce, bunching turnips and radishes, and making constant trips to the scallion, cucumber and zucchini fields. In late summer, we start some of our bulk harvests—filling large bins with winter squash; digging thousands of row feet of sweet potatoes and potatoes, bringing in hundreds of buckets of red tomatoes and loading wagons with melons and later cabbage. Yes this is sore back season. It's also why we take a day (more like 3/4 of a day) at the end of August and sneak away to the soothing waters of the Atlantic Ocean. It is called the annual “Lloyd Gamble Hooky Day” in honor of my friend...Lloyd Gamble. At the mid-point of my first year at Fernbrook I was feeling a strong need to get away from the farm for a day (also had our first house closing



and first baby arriving in the next 30 days!) Needing a partner in crime I called my friend Lloyd then a doctoral student at UMASS and somehow convinced him to drive down from New England to join me for a day away. My truck broke down of course on our way home but...It is a tradition we've kept to every year (minus the truck break

down) as the hard-working farm crew deserves and probably needs a day in the sea and some dinner to boot. Good to recharge for the rest of the farm season which is no joke as they say. Yeah—we have a lot to do and a lot of FOOD to get to. Here is a quick, not complete and somewhat subjective look at some of our remaining crops for the year:

Potatoes—very glad to say this

*continued on page 2*

years crop is mountains better than the 2014 crop which was the victim if early spring floods. I think we'll have them for most of the last 12 weeks and we have 6 kinds out there! Sweet Potatoes - So far so good. They are a long season crop and they have been wanting water to which we have been acquiescing. We'll have our first ones out around week 16 and we have 4 kinds out there. Overall good and maybe great. Winter Squash - I'd say better than 2014. Have 6-8 types out there. The mothership of winter squash—butternut—look very good. And some strong pie-type pumpkins for October we think! Stay tuned. Fall



Roots - Mixed bag here. We have had some really good germination in some crops: turnips, winter radish, some beets, some rutabaga.

And rather poor germination in others - certain beets, rutabaga, and most carrots. The carrots we are most concerned about. It's really too late to seed them now and the ones we seeded have rather uneven germination. This can be due to moisture, temperature, seed quality, uneven seed depth, critter damage (like cutworms) etc. We love our fall carrots but I don't love how

they look at this point. We are doing what we can. Stay tuned. Fall Greens - We certainly plant and seed a lot of fall greens from kale, collards, and Chinese cabbage to spinach, escarole, stir-fry mix and broccoli raab. So far nothing too worrisome or spectacular. They generally HATE the heat so we are nursing them through to the cooler weather and shorter days but I think we are on track (I could be horribly wrong of course). Storage Onions - best we've ever grown. They are in the greenhouse curing and we hope to give you a goodly amount of reds and yellows throughout the fall. Fall Cole Crops - Cabbage looking good. Have a lot of it out there but it takes a long time....Same with broccoli, cauliflower and even some brussels sprouts (not my favorite to grow—long season and kinda finicky.) Like the greens we are waiting and seeing but so far so good. Sad to say parsnips were a crop loss. Don't think we'll have any this fall. Shoot—why would I end on a downer? Um....Celery! Fall celery looks pretty good to date although (broken record alert) it wants more water! We have more crops than those in the ground and we do our darndest to bring you as much as we can. AND of course the summer crops are still kicking. Lots of

eggplant, tomatoes and peppers coming in September. We are disappointed in the final bean seeding. It is usually a great crop for us but fair germination and serious critter damage have threatened it...stay tuned (wasn't I supposed to **not** end on a down note???)

You may have noticed some significant changes at the farm in August...Jess shaved her head. Taylor shaved his beard (although kept his moustache for a spell to honor the year 1977), and...well those were the two most significant changes. Despite hair changes, Fiona, Jess, Nick, Sam and Taylor have been doing great. Besides working very hard at Fernbrook, they have been taking advantage of farm tours throughout the state (including 2014 Apprentice Julie Pierre's venture in Audubon—"Our Yards Farm"). They also attended the Northeast Organic Farm Association's annual summer farm conference in Amherst, MA. Thanks to the many great part-time farmhands who put in some extra time at the farm while they were gone. OK—let's try to get this thing to print. Make tomato sauce, dry cherry tomatoes, freeze onions and peppers, and get your winter squash recipes out. Happy end of summer. Thanks for all that you do to support our farm!

## What to expect in September at the Farm

Your Farmer, *Jeff Tober*

"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.*



### September's Bounty



**Beets** – they should be back in the shop around the middle of September. They'll be distributed with their delicious, healthy tops for a while until we get to the bigger storage beets in the late fall. Crop looks decent and we'll try to bring you a lot of beets this fall.

**Broccoli** - A beloved fall crop. This years looks good. Has not been easy getting them through the hot, dry August but they look good and are getting ready to start cutting. Steam, stir-fry, use in soups or eat it raw! Hope to have it here and there in September and October.

**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.)

## September's Bounty (cont.)

**Garlic** - Really nice garlic crop for us in 2015 and we have already given you a taste. You'll get the remainder in September or early October. We still have to finish clipping the garlic, sorting it, saving what we need to plant and giving you the rest. At this point it is cured and should store well at room temperature well into the winter.

**Kale** - We grow maybe half a dozen varieties in the fall like "Red Russian". "Vates" and the classic Toscano. Our goal is to offer you a lot of kale this fall and even into the winter! Should see the first kale mid to late September. And don't forget to try your hand at kale chips. Even kids will eat them (sometimes...)



**Lettuce** - Man...been a tough go for lettuce this summer. We have some on the way but probably not a ton. Our hope is to augment it with lots of other greens like kale, spinach, escarole, etc. Stay tuned!

**Onions** - As I said, this is a nice crop. We tweaked our growing methods this year and voila! Lots of storage onions. We let their tops die in the field (seems to take an eternity) then we pull them, put them in the greenhouse to cure or seal up, then we pull the tops and move them to cooler storage. This way we can enjoy them well into the colder months. I think you'll start seeing them late in September. Really want to have them for you for your Thanksgiving table!!

**Potatoes** - Our 2014 crop was a MAJOR disappointment. I am very excited about our 2015 crop. You have been getting spuds for a few weeks now and we should have them most of the remaining weeks of the year. We grow a half dozen varieties - some new - like 'Purple Viking', 'Blue Gold', 'Russets' and the buttery 'Augusta'. Bake, boil, mash or fry. Keep spuds somewhere cold and dark (not in the light!)

**Radish** - We have been seeding them continuously and hope to have them throughout the fall. Later in the season we'll offer a unique crop called a meat radish or winter radish. They are big, crisp and not as spicy. They also do well in the cold and store very well!

**Swiss Chard** - One of the prettiest, tastiest and healthiest greens we grow. Had a nice, long lasting spring crop and we've been delving into the fall crop which looks very good. If all goes well we should have chard well into November. A HEALTHY and I think delicious cooking green. Steam it up with some lemon and a little salt. Goes great w/ potatoes.

**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** - Pound for pound this has to be a top 5 crop for us. Sweet potatoes (they are NOT yams!!) are an incredibly nutritious and tasty crop. Fresh out of the ground they don't taste that great. They need to be cured in a warm environment so they seal up and get sweeter. We'll start giving out the classic orange week 16 and we have a few others we grow like the white 'Bonita' and the purple-skinned Japanese 'Murasaki'! Should have for most remaining weeks.

**Tomatoes** - Boy this has been a pretty strong crop for us and we think they'll keep on chugging along deep into September. BUT they will decline at some point so if you want to can, freeze or dehydrate my advice is don't wait too long! Heriloms starting to come on now as well. Plums ('sauce') tomatoes took their time but are really coming on!

**Turnips** - ('Hakurei Turnips' / 'salad turnips') We featured some in August and hope to have more in September and October. Followed by the bigger, better known fall turnips for your fall soups, stews and roasts!

**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. So currently we are moving wagon-loads into the greenhouse. You've had the spaghetti squash now for a few weeks. Later on we'll have acorn, butternut, delicata, some buttercup, pie pumpkin and a delightful one called "long pie". We will offer you recipes and cooking instructions to help you enjoy these delicious and healthy foods! Available most weeks from here on out.



## Thoughts For Food - Is 'Round-up' A Carcinogen?

There has been renewed debate this year in agriculture about the use of chemical based herbicides—specifically Monsanto's product called Roundup used in enormous quantities by conventional farms and to a lesser degree by homeowners etc. What follows are some reports about the finding made by the World Health Organization in March. (Our CSA uses no herbicides or Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) at all in our food production!)

*“Concerns about glyphosate on food have been a hot topic of debate in the United States recently, and contributed to the passage in Vermont last year of the country's first mandatory labeling law for foods that are genetically modified. The U.S. government says the herbicide is considered safe. In 2013, Monsanto requested and received approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for increased tolerance levels for glyphosate. Glyphosate is mainly used on crops such as corn and soybeans that are genetically modified to survive it.” - Reuters News Service March 2015.*

“The cancer-research arm of the World Health Organization announced that glyphosate, the world's most widely used herbicide, is probably carcinogenic to humans. But the assessment, by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has been followed by an immediate backlash from industry groups. Robb Fraley, chief technology officer at the agrochemical company Monsanto said: “We are outraged with this assessment.”. *Nature* explains the controversy. The IARC regularly reviews the carcinogenicity of industrial chemicals, foodstuffs and even jobs. On March 20, a panel of international experts convened by the agency reported the findings of a review of five agricultural chemicals in a class known as organophosphates. A summary of the study was published in *The Lancet Oncology*. Two of the pesticides — tetrachlorvinphos and parathion — were rated as “possibly carcinogenic to humans”, or category 2B. Three — malathion, diazinon and glyphosate — were rated as “probably carcinogenic to humans”, labelled category 2A. Glyphosate is the world's most widely produced herbicide, by volume. It is used extensively in agriculture and is also found in garden products in many countries. The chemical is an ingredient in Monsanto's weedkiller product Roundup, and glyphosate has become more popular with the increasing market share of crops that are genetically engineered to be tolerant to the herbicide. The IARC review notes that there is limited evidence for a link to cancer in humans. Although several studies have shown that people who work with the herbicide seem to be at increased risk of a cancer type called non-Hodgkin lymphoma, the report notes that a separate huge US study, the Agricultural Health Study, found no link to non-Hodgkin lymphomas. This story was published on [www.scientificamerican.com](http://www.scientificamerican.com) March, 2015

## Fernbrook Farm CSA Events!

**Saturday, September 19th**

**Book Signing**

**10:00am**

Come meet author, Fernbrook shareholder and Lacto-fermentation Queen Natalie Winch (see below) as she signs fresh-off-the-press copies of her new book **Ditching The Drive-Thru !!**

**Friday, September 25th**

**Autumn Equinox Potluck**

**6:00pm – 8:00pm**

*Bring a dish with farm-fresh food and celebrate the arrival of Fall! We'll roast up some Fernbrook Potatoes on the fire to serve as sides to your wonderful dishes. Wagon Ride to follow. Please bring a dish to serve 8–10 people—main course, salad, side, or dessert. And please bring your own plate, cup and silverware! B.Y.O.B. We try to make these “No Trash Events”! Held at the farmshop. See you there!*

**Sunday, September 27th**

**Fernbrook 5K Farm Run**

*Come join the fun as runners wind their way through the farm fields, into the forest, across the creek, and through a little mud! With fun obstacles and varied terrain, the course is perfect for all skill levels. In addition, your participation helps us achieve our mission to engage kids in nature and create unforgettable experiences! Your support allows us to grow our unique programs, care for the animals, provide scholarships, and build life-long memories in nature! Call 609-298-4028 for registration!*

**Saturday, October 3rd Lacto-fermentation Workshop**

**10:00AM**

*Join teacher, shareholder and lacto-fermentation Queen Natalie Winch as she will demonstrate the age old practice of preserving foods with salt brine (i.e.kim chee, sauerkraut and so much more!) The class is TRULY AMAZING and free of charge to CSA members! Meet at the farmshop*

**Saturday, October 31st (tentative)**

**Fresh Pork Sale**

**8:00AM**

*We will be selling the fresh cuts of our Fernbrook Pastured Pork including sausage, chops, roasts, ribs and more! The smoked pork sale will likely be later in the fall. **This sale is for CSA members only!!***

**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](http://www.meetingplacepastures.com) Stay tuned for details!*