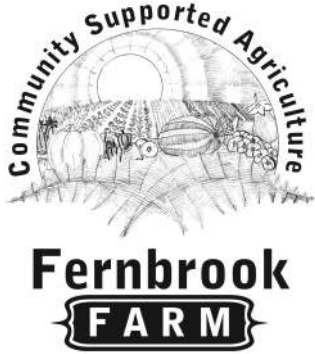


# Fernbrook Farm CSA

Volume 11 Issue 1

Winter 2018

## Winter Newsletter...(for lack of a better title)



Hello and greetings from Fernbrook Farm CSA. Last year at this time I was lamenting the lack of any winter weather.

Nighttime lows weren't even making it to freezing and the lack of winter was unnerving. One year later and look at that thermometer! At least at the time of this

writing we are near the single digits and there is still snow on the ground. I do admit I like a good, 'real' winter. I know from experience that after warm winters, insect populations are often early and large. This goes for plant pests like leafhoppers and things like ticks. A piece in the Philadelphia Inquirer recently described how prolonged

and / or extreme cold can push back on invasive species like the woolly adelgid (hemlock trees), Chinese lanternfly (hops and fruit trees) and the Southern Pine Beetle (pine trees). All of which pose real threats here in New Jersey. And yes, my family dealt with some frozen pipes this winter and my boys tend to get wound up without enough outside time. BUT the cold has its benefits...It also provides ample time for farmers to get seed orders, crop plans and winter newsletters done....Maybe get a bit more sleep as well. (I think I can hear Jess snoring at her desk...) But we start our onions in the greenhouse around Feb. 20th so...can't sleep TOO long. Spring comes fast.

BUT - before we start seeding onions and parsley and officially start the 2018 farm season, it is time to sit down, relax and gaze back upon what was and what shall always be...the 2017 farm season...'Once upon a time'...Jess and Nick endured the heat and draught of 2016 but decided to return for the 2017 season. Jess started a new, full-time role as Assistant Manager.

We are excited to have reached a point where we can have multiple farmers working year-round (our winter share helps in that regard). Having Jess AND Nick around during the winter was great and we got a good jump on the season. Winter is slower but there is always work to do - re-

pair equipment, spread compost, go to conferences and look at SPREAD-SHEETS...even in your sleep. But the 50 and 60 degree days throughout the winter continued to make things feel a little off.

Truth be told I even got to the point where I emailed a TV weatherperson who was, I thought, overly giddy about 64 degrees in mid

February. I expressed opinions like "the lack of cold is sort of not good" type of stuff. (She actually replied and they discussed my points at their staff meeting and it did get some play on TV the next evening....small victories...). Larry Kuser and I crossed the Delaware to present at a farmland preservation conference about our work at Fernbrook. Actually, Larry was the keynote and he did a bang-up job generating a lot of interest about the farm. (Hats off to shareholder Danielle Weiden who organized the conference.) And before you know it, the potting soil and seeds have arrived and on the morning of Feb 20th that first onion seed is placed into a fresh tray of soil and away we go. March is largely greenhouse time. We are seeding a lot like cabbage, kale, scallions, beets, lettuce and flowers. And March marks our final month of our winter share. Which means April is the only month of the year we aren't distributing food! April is also when our crew doubles in size as the Apprentices arrive! This year we welcomed Erik Dalton, Lindsey Wilson and Dan Mickey. Dan came up

*continued on page 2*



2017 Farm Crew: Lindsey, Jess, Erik, Nick, Dan and Jeff



from North Carolina where he worked at his college farm at Appalachian State and at a small family farm in rural NC. Dan's knowledge of bowling, Australia (where he lived for many years as a kid) and basketball played an important role at the farm throughout the season. Lindsey Wilson is a Michigander who did some farming at Pennypack CSA over in PA before we stole her. Lindsey had great experience as an urban farmer in Philly and Kalamazoo and worked as a chef and nanny - both of which were assets here at Fernbrook! She also has a killer great birthday (4/14 like yours truly). And we welcomed Erik Dalton to round out our 2017 crew. No one has ever been more local than Erik. He is a Bordentown native from just up the road. Erik had been getting into horticulture and greenhouse production at Mercer County Community College and decided maybe he was ready to try farming. We are glad he did! And so we had our 2017 farm crew. Hard-working, goofy, bright, unique and motivated would be how I describe the team. Certainly funny which is a big plus in farming (better have a sense of humor....) And a sense of humor was helpful as once again April started out hot and dry which can be a tough way to start the season. In fact, April and February 2017 set warmth records for NJ. September and October 2017 came close to setting records and even though it felt much cooler than 2016, 2017 was reportedly the 6th warmest year in State history since they have been keeping records. Once again we needed to set up pipe and drip irrigation to establish our April planted crops. We also had to take extra precautions this year to deal with a new 'friend'



called the Alium Leaf Miner (ALM). ALM is a relatively new pest of

crops in the onion family introduced from Europe on contaminated plants shipped to PA in 2015 (they think). However it got here it is here and we are working with Rutgers to figure out the best practices to prevent and address this critter which lays eggs in the foliage in April and the larvae can be rather damaging later on. We used a combination of row cover, treatments and actual removing of infected leaves which was VERY labor intensive. But we had a great onion year so I think it generally worked. In May the rains returned making our big seeding and planting push pretty successful. It also is the time when we get our feeder pigs which we set up on pasture and raise until Fall. The middle of May marks the unofficial start of what I like to call the "Season Of Chaos". We are pretty much non-stop from then until the middle of September. We are wedded to growing, nurturing and harvesting hundreds of thousands of plants and every crop has it's own special needs. Safe to say that during the heart of the growing season we are *NEVER* in want for something to do. We meet early in the morning at the farmshop. But even before that the weekly chore person has tended to the pigs and the greenhouse and the Harvest Manager (Jess in the Summer) has prepared wash tubs and a harvest plan and I have concocted the daily work plan. And after Nick shares bagels and tells us what triple shot of songs he heard on the drive to the farm, we go over the daily list, figure out who will do what and then with hope in our hearts and determination in our guts, we get to it! We do our best to cross off as many jobs as



possible for the next 10-12 hours: *seed beets in 'K3', flame weed spinach in F5C, extend pig fence in 'C' field, uncover, hand weed and re-cover Asian greens in 'B3', 2-row cultivate spuds, update and email wholesale list, repair tractor tire, drip irrigate and trellis FH tomatoes and on and on.* Some days are overwhelming. Having a terrific crew is essential. And with a very productive May behind us, we readied the farmshop for the 2017 season - our 11th. Enter our beloved shopkeeper Paula Hughes, local and organic products like fresh eggs, organic milk and baked goods from the Inn (thanks to Shop Manager Tracy Kuser). Jess made a speech and we had a ribbon cutting and *VOILA!* Welcome Back Kotter (as it were). Fresh lettuce, spinach and bok choy never tasted so good. The return of our shareholders is exciting and kicks the farm season into another gear. And we always meet our newest shareholders born since Thanksgiving making their first forays to the CSA.



It was around this time that we made the front cover of Edible Jersey magazine. It was a great article on young (do I qualify?) farmers in NJ and it featured me, Jess and Nick. I was proud to show my Father a copy - finally hit the big time! Always great to get attention to the good works and challenges facing

young farmers in NJ. We were also fortunate to be featured in one of Rutgers University's Niche Crop Series. They produced short how-to films about different crops at different farms throughout NJ. They asked if they could feature our garlic production. So their film crew spent some time with us and produced a really well done piece on how we grow our garlic. It is on the internet and everything! (Search for

Cont on page 6



# Fernbrook Farm—Growing Food and Farmers!

2017 was the 10th season Fernbrook Farm CSA hosted farm apprentices. Since 2008 we have ‘graduated’ almost 30 aspiring farmers! Below you’ll see what some of them are up to today. Our Apprenticeship is basically a trade of their time, energy and hard-work for our knowledge. We hire people who are seeking to learn how to farm and we do our best to teach them the skills and give them the tools they will need to be successful farmers / growers of food. It is how I started my farming journey in 2003 at Brookfield Farm in Amherst, MA. This year we had new comers Lindsey Wilson, Erik Dalton and Dan Mickey at the farm. We also had Nick Delmar who in his 3rd year had the role of ‘Farm Assistant’ and Jess Brandeisky who became our Assistant Manager. All together, they formed one heck of a great crew. They are, as I say, the engine that makes the farm go. We throw a lot at them—tractor work, seed-



Erik, Nick, Dan and Lindsey

ing, harvest, managing the shop, tending to the livestock etc. And we also send them to learn at other farms, workshops, classes and conferences. We are proud to be a part of ‘NJCRAFT’ (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) which is a network of small farms in NJ and Eastern PA committed to sharing information and developing beginner farmers. The idea is to give Apprentices a well-rounded, meaningful experience. Because this type of farming is complex involving everything from auto maintenance, managing workers, plumbing, bookkeeping, understanding soil health, carpentry, botanical disease suppression and so much more. We hope to be a place where young farmers can get a solid foundation on which to build their agricultural careers! I am deeply grateful to this year’s Apprentices for their hard work and dedication to the CSA. THANKS FARMERS!!



**Fernbrook Farm Apprentice Alum** Sindhu Siva (‘16) and Dan Reyes (‘16) got hitched! (In India and the USA). Sindhu returned to growing food and training farmers in Delaware at Bright Spot Urban Ventures. Dan is working on his Masters degree in Urban Planning at U. Penn. **Ray Leone (‘16)** also headed back to Philly where she has been landscaping and working on local food and environmental issues. **Sam Bryant (‘15)** is growing out in Boulder, Colorado and we got to see him recently in NJ. **Taylor James (‘13-‘15)** finished his 2nd season at Flipside Farm in Bedminster, NJ. He is doing well and was featured in Lancaster Farmer and a Rutgers video about growing basil.



**Kristin Hock (Ward) (‘14)** finished a 2nd year at Caramore Farm and just landed her “Dream Job” as a Director at the Farm Sanctuary in Colts Neck, NJ. (WooHoo!) **Julie Pierre (‘14)** just completed her third year running her start-up “Our Yards Farm” in Audubon, NJ. **Nicole Didero (‘14)** started a Masters program at Colorado State in Agricultural Economics! Study hard farmer. **Lo Pagan (‘11)** lives locally and was Fernbrook’s beekeeper this year! (aka ‘Queen Bee’) **Mark Tebben (‘12, ‘13)** is part of Fernbrook West, has been studying permaculture and doing well with his writing career. **Noah Zinter (‘13)** is out in Denver selling honey and playing in about 6 bands (and returned recently for a few beers in Bordentown). **Victoria Wicker (Francis) (‘11-‘13)**, husband Joey and daughter Zoey welcomed Arya! And just built a greenhouse in their backyard. **Alice Sturm (‘12)** received her Masters in Landscape Architecture at Cornell. She and husband Ahmed moved to Baltimore where Alice is working as a landscape architect. **Liz “Lemon” Keefe (‘12)** is at Brandeis University getting her MBA in Nonprofit Management and Masters in Sustainable International Development. And recently won a grant for an innovative way to help Ethiopian farmers get camels milk to markets! She said her Fernbrook experience gave her the idea. **Caroline DiGiovanni (‘11)** completed a successful season in Southern Virginia as the Field



Manager for Riverstone Farm. **Brooke McMinn (‘09)** continues her work as the ‘Plant Adventure Program Specialist’ with the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. **Rob Eckman (‘09, ‘10)** and his wife Maggie completed their second season in South Berwick, Maine growing their own veggies and managing ‘Baers Best Beans’. **Duncan Simonson (‘10, ‘11)** had a great 6th year as the Farm Manager at the Green Earth Institute in Naperville, Illinois. And brought son Diego to NJ this winter for a visit! **Danielle Szepi (‘11)** and her husband Dave Zelov completed their seventh season at Kittatiny Mountain Farm in Wantage, NJ. They are having a lot of success in North Jersey. **Jen LaMonaca (‘08, ‘09)** and husband Ryan continue to grow B & B CSA in Galloway Township and Jen is involved in the NJ Agricultural Leadership Development Program. **Lauren Hill (‘08)** completed her degree in Sustainable Ag at Cornell University in Ithaca and recently came to Fernbrook where we helped her develop her plans to start a farm in North Carolina!! Way to go Farmers!



## Education Center News!



*While you're at the farm, check out Fernbrook Farms Environmental Education Center, a nonprofit created to provide hands-on educational experiences for all young people by exploring the complex interconnectedness of our natural world in order to learn about food, agriculture and the environment. The Environmental Education Center provides year-round programs through summer camp, homeschool classes, school field trips and much more. Please visit [www.FernbrookEducation.org](http://www.FernbrookEducation.org) or call [609-298-4028](tel:609-298-4028) to learn more about all their terrific programs.*

Last year I wrote about the education center looking for more opportunities to engage kids with nature and I am happy to say that our expanded afterschool program is doing just so. You may remember (I won't be offended if you don't!) that we look at 'contact hours' with nature as a way to measure our growth. 'Contact hours' is the amount of time kids are spending with nature and unplugged from their screens. To help increase our potential contact hours, our afterschool program is now offered everyday and includes transportation for Chesterfield students. To see if our new program had an impact, we looked at the numbers. In a small sample size from months of Sept. – Dec. in 2016 compared to 2017, our contact hours grew from 200 in 2016 to 680 in 2017. That is 480 more hours in the fall of 2017 that kids spent outside and engaged with nature during the afterschool time! Our challenge for 2018 is to make these opportunities accessible for even more kids. As more and more research comes out about the physical, social, and emotional benefits of engaging with nature coupled with the negative affects of prolonged screen time, it becomes even more important for kids to have opportunities to engage with nature and we are committed to providing those opportunities.

Brian Kuser

Education & Summer Camp Director  
Fernbrook Farms Environmental Education Center



## YOU Can Help Us! Introducing 'Project Pizza Box!'

One of the reasons we farm at Fernbrook is to try to farm sustainably. Which means we want to grow great food and make a living but not at the expense of soil health or water quality, nor do we want to expose creatures and farmers to harmful toxins. These are short term and long term goals which we try to achieve through a variety of strategies. We fallow or rest land on a rotating basis. We make and spread our own compost. We forgo the use of chemical insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers. And we intentionally plant flowering crops to provide nectar, habitat and forage to our native pollinators and birds. Our work on sustainability is never done and it also extends beyond the borders of Fernbrook. We want our work to have a positive effect in the larger community. Along these lines, we are excited to announce ***PROJECT PIZZA BOX*** - (Huzzah!) Think of all the pizza boxes we use and landfill every year. How many in the State of New Jersey alone where we love our pizza...millions annually!? I know it is significant—and a giant waste. Most municipalities such as Burlington County do not recycle pizza boxes because the grease and food residues gum up the paper recycling process. So all that carbony

matter gets landfilled. But it doesn't need to. I know of many farms that are using cardboard including pizza boxes to mulch crops. The cardboard helps suppress weeds and add organic matter to the soil. We have done some of that using cardboard under straw in tomatoes and garlic production. Less soil tillage, fewer weeds, more valuable organic matter pumped back into our soil. ***And*** less trash flowing into our overflowing landfills. Can we call that a win win win win?! In a similar project at North Carolina State University, 9,400 boxes were collected and composted in 1 year! So we can do this. But we need your help...and your pizza boxes and cardboard. We will have a collection area for your boxes. Please make sure any cardboard is free of plastic (tape, pizza dividers etc) and relatively clean (food waste can go in our compost pile near the farm shop). We will collect, inventory and use this cardboard in our mulching system and report back to you on the progress. It is part of our responsibility to our soils, our community and the ecological world ...Thanks!





## How Much Does The Food Cost?

We frequently get the question—"How much does the CSA food cost" and "How much food do I get from my CSA share?" Good questions! Obviously, the better the growing season the more food you get for your dollar. As you will see below, I think shareholders got a very good value for their food dollars in 2017. It breaks down like this:

In the farm shop we gave out 349.6 pounds (341.5 in 2016) of food over a 26 week season for an average of 13.4 pounds per week. In the U-Pick fields, we distributed 91.4 pounds (72.5 in 2016) over that period for an average of 3.5 pounds per week. In 2017 a share was \$650. So if you got your food from the shop every week and did all the U-Pick, ***you paid \$1.48 per pound. If you only got food from the shop and didn't do any U-Pick, you paid \$1.87 per pound. And if you did half the U-Pick a share cost \$1.64 per pound.***

Our 9 year average is 12.9 pounds per week from the shop and 4 pounds per week from the u-pick fields. Our 9-year average is \$1.76 per pound doing no u-pick and \$1.32 per pound doing full U-Pick. And I should add ***that these prices DO NOT include U-Pick herbs and flowers*** (which were available for 18 weeks in the fields. If you got a lot of fresh flowers, sunflowers and herbs one could argue it easily ***added over \$200 to your value!!!!***)



That's a lot of numbers. But like with any statistics, the numbers only tell part of the story. For instance, measuring in pounds makes the analysis skewed toward the heavier crops – tomatoes, melons, winter squashes, etc. You could have an amazing year in high value crops like lettuce, spinach, garlic and kale but that won't change your pounds per dollar as much as a bumper crop of eggplant or pumpkins. And raw numbers don't rate the variety and quality of the food. We're trying to demonstrate that in fact organic (we are not USDA certified) ***is not prohibitively expensive.*** We don't get crop subsidies, we don't use any synthetic fertilizers, insecticides or herbicides, and we don't use any GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms). And we do our best to protect biodiversity, use open-pollinated seeds, promote soil health and provide you with fresh, safe, delicious and nutritious food. I promise we'll do our best to beat the 2017 totals this year! And of course, we always value your feedback. How can we do better going forward? Please send any ideas to [info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com](mailto:info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com). Thanks! Here's to your health AND your wallet.



\$\$\$\$ - Reminder that a share for the 2018 season is \$650. \$100 was due with your registration, \$275 is due Feb. 15th and the remaining \$275 is due by May 1st. Checks can be made out to 'Fernbrook Farm CSA' and mailed to the PO Box listed on the front. If you have questions about your balance or want to talk about a payment plan, contact Jeff at [info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com](mailto:info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com)

\*\*\*We still have shares for sale for 2018. If you recruit a new family we will offer you \$50 off of your share! Make sure they include your name on the registration. \*\*\*

**According to the National Young Farmers Coalition, 60% of new farmers nationally are women and 75% do not come from farming backgrounds**



'Rutgers Ultra Niche Garlic'). Many thanks to Rutgers and the production crew for their partnership. And to add to the fame, Fernbrook Executive Chef Christine Wendland

won the cooking show **CHOPPED** on the Food Network! So besides being super famous, we actually had a lot of farming to do. In the summer we add on to our farm crew to keep up with the mounting workload. Many thanks to our workshares: Susan McIntyre, Lillian Ball, Cori Bell, Jill Welborn, Jared and Jenny McGrath, and Lo Pagan (our resident beekeeper). And of course, those hard-working part-time farmers we fondly call our "Weeder Crew". They come on board in May and June and - as the name would suggest - do a lot of weeding! And harvesting, moving pipe, trellising etc. Thanks so much to this year's part-time farmers - Fallon Dombrowski, Richie Kaden, Laura Pekata, Vanessa Raditz, Jake Winegrad, Sara and Hannah McIntyre, and Beth Wright. We also want to give a big shout out to our veteran weeders Danielle Bowman, Megan Murtha and Maryanne Murtha (who is working full-time now after graduating from Cabrini College but she still managed to come out a few times! ) And some of the Fernbrook Nursery



guys who do some afterhours field work for us. It is great for the farm to have these experienced helpers coming back from year to year. One new thing for 2017 was the complete renovation of our perennial herb area. After languishing for years near the brambles, we decided to move them back to the 'A' field where



they get more, sun, better air flow and are used by more shareholders. Jess spearheaded the effort and formed the Fernbrook Garden Club to help maintain these plantings (always have to have a maintenance plan!) So twice a month they came out to plant, prune, weed, mulch and water. And it worked. The herb area was 10x better than it had been in years past giving us terrific herbs like chamomile, rosemary, lavender, mint, sorrel and thyme. Many thanks to Christine and Richie Kaden, Meaghan Longenecker, Janice Needham, Ian Clarke, Nicole Garlic, Sara Dyson and Farmer Jess for making it happen. The summer was (as it always is) kind of a blur. I can say that we got more rain than we did in droughty 2016 which was **NICE!** Moving pipe and running water every day gets old quickly. **But** as the saying goes, wet years are weedy years. Sure your crops get well watered but so do the billions of weeds like pigweed, lambs quarters, galinsoga, bindweed, nutsedge etc. So we spent a lot of time doing our best to keep our crops clean. And we did pretty well. As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, 2017 was a pretty produc-

tive year. Some of our better producers include garlic, blackberries, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, beets, sweet onions, okra, cherry tomatoes, flowers, fennel, cabbage, greens (even in summer!), peppers, spring lettuce and carrots. Some



average crops include watermelons, cauliflower, acorn squash, summer squash, cucumbers, storage onions and potatoes. And on the poorer end of things were Cantaloupe (total crop loss!), parsnips (not enough) beans (we missed a seeding) and basil (basil downy mildew strikes again...) Ah yes—every year our goal is to hit a homerun with every crop we plant. But even in good growing years we have crops underperform or fail outright.

Keeps us humble. And more importantly it reinforces that **DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH**. To bring 400 families fresh produce for 26 weeks we better plant a wide variety of crops. In summer and fall we take an

annual "Hooky Day" to the beach (well an afternoon anyway) and we each take a weeks vacation. Every farmer needs to get out of dodge for a week. This year destinations included Scotland, Seattle, Georgia, Michigan, Germany and my family and I took an actual vacation and visited friends in England! Such a treat to leave the farm in August. I O.D'd on fish and chips. Couldn't have done it without a solid farm crew (**THANKS!**). Fall came on warm and dry. We participated in a new market on the campus of Rutgers University once a week which was a nice addition for us. Fall is in many ways a race—get the final plantings in, get the cold sensitive crops out of the fields and into storage and seed those important soil building cover crops while you still can. We also get some time to go over crop plans, budgets, soil tests, and general farm planning which is essential for our Apprentices to learn. Well, I am about out of room I see. You can read more about our farmers and our farm in this newsletter. I would be remiss if I did not offer a **very big thank you** to our terrific Shareholders. Every year your support, participation and passion for our farm makes all of this possible. And we never take you for granted. Thank you Thank you for being part of our **FAMILY**. And here's to a fruitful, healthy, delicious 2018 farm season!

Your Farmer

*Jeff Tober*







## Good Luck Nick and Dan !

We are very excited to have Lindsey Wilson and Erik Dalton as well as our Assistant Manager Jess Brandeisky back for the 2018 farm season! They will be joined by new farmers Samantha Metz and Matt Casey and together they will make a really good farm crew. But it is bittersweet to lose 2 of our great (and funny) farmers. Dan Mick-

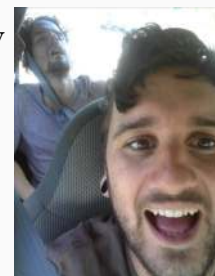
*"Nicky Knock Knocks"*

ey joined us at the start of 2017. He and his partner Aubrie are headed to Maine where Dan has landed a job at Bumbleroot Farm in Windham,

Maine. (Dan has already connected with Fernbrook Alum Rob Eckman who also farms in Maine). And after 3 years Nick Delmar and his partner Bitnari are headed to our nation's capital. Nick has been hired at a farm called 'Love and Carrots'. They grow produce and also build and install planting boxes in residential and commercial areas. Nick started here in 2015 after doing grounds keeping for the Lakewood Blueclaws. As I like to tell people, "There is no one like Nick" His energy, sense of humor and overall enthusiasm will be missed. Nick really got proficient at mechanical work and fixing things. He operated every tractor we have and perhaps was at his happiest with his radio headphones and cup of coffee operating our spader to prep fields for planting. Nick also either already knew or befriended just about every person in New Jersey. His parents Chip and Kim, sister Rachel and his Grandmother all came to the farm for food, events and volunteer opportunities. It is undisputed that Nick won more radio contests (Steely Dan and Black Sabbath tickets, a turkey fryer...) than any farmer in the state in the past 3 years. Mostly Nick worked his butt off for the farm and we will miss his passion for the work and the farm's mission. We loved having Nick and Dan at the farm but part of our goal is to train young farmers so they can pursue their own agricultural goals. So despite our desire to keep them in the nest, we also want them to fly! Thanks Nick and Dan. Best of luck. Anytime you want to go bowling you know where to find us. *(PS trust the process... 1,2,3,4 7 8 9 and 10...If you will it Dude., it is no dream)*



*Dan Is Farm Fashion*



In 2017 a new restaurant called "Properly Fueled" opened in Bordentown by CSA Shareholder Dr Denise Evans and her daughter Aubrie. We have been providing them with some fresh produce and plan to do even more in 2018! We also work with them to compost some of their organic matter. I talked recently to Aubrie and Chef Matt Harris about working with us. "We absolutely love Fernbrook's kale! It is featured on the menu throughout the year in salads, smoothies & soups. We also love crops like cucumbers, turnips, sweet potatoes and beets from Fernbrook. Sometimes when we get Fernbrook produce we have to stop to take a photo and admire its beauty! We are extremely proud to be approaching our 1 year anniversary. We have achieved much and have big plans for the future!

We are so grateful to our local partners like Fernbrook for their continued support and inspiration!" Learn more at [www.properlyfueled.com!!](http://www.properlyfueled.com!!)

## LETTER FROM 'FARMER Q'

Dear Friends: Every year our apprentices spend time on other organic farms sharing ideas and learning different farming practices. Similarly, apprentices from other farms spend a day here at Fernbrook seeing how we do things from growing to marketing to use of equipment.. This is all loosely organized under a program called C.R.A.F.T. (Cooperative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) which started in New England and was brought to New Jersey by Jeff & others several years ago. CRAFT is all about learning through sharing, getting to be better farmers and better business managers; all critical skills for farmers. But the biggest dilemma is what's next. Our apprentices gain skills, knowledge, and confidence but where do they go to further their careers in farming, where do they go to get a job? To help solve this dilemma, I started a dialogue last spring with key people that I know in the NJ Dept. of Agriculture and other key players in the State to address this issue. Folks got excited and more people wanted to be a part of the dialogue. Last month we held a meeting here at Fernbrook between government and apprentices. Doug Fisher, Secretary of Agriculture and his assistant were here; Susan Payne, Director of the State Ag Development Committee along with some of her staff were here; Nancy Trivett, State coordinator for ag education (FFA); Brian Shilling, head of Rutgers extension; Brian Wilson from Burlington County Ag Development Board; and Mark Kiriluk from Farm Credit East (the bankers!) were all in attendance. Perhaps the first time those folks had all sat at the same table! Also about 12 farmers from all over the state were able to be spokespersons for the state's many young aspiring farmers. Ideas were exchanged, solutions were explored, information was shared. Everyone went away energized with a sense of optimism and possibility. This week is the New Jersey Ag Convention in Atlantic City; an opportunity for all facets of agriculture to come together and develop goals for the future. We now know that our Secretary of Agriculture, Doug Fisher, supports young farmers and wants to make providing opportunities for them a high priority. There is still a lot of work to be done and I am proud to say that Fernbrook is instrumental in taking the first step to insure that our future will be filled with good farmers and good food! After all we are the 'Garden State'. Thank you and God bless you all for your support of our farm. We look forward to seeing you in Spring.





## Fernbrook Farm CSA 2017 ~ By The Numbers:

Total Shares: 370    Weeks Of Distribution: 26  
Acres Used For Veggies: about 20  
Acres in 'Fallow' (given a year off to build soil health) 2.4 acres  
Total Lbs Harvested By The Crew: 143,546  
Total Lbs From U-Pick Crops: (does not include herbs and flowers!) 38,020  
Average Weekly Farm Shop Distribution: 13.4 Lbs  
Average Weekly U-Pick Distribution: 3.5 Lbs  
Largest Share: 8/27/17 33.3 Lbs; Smallest Share: 5/28/17 4.6 Lbs  
Heaviest Crop: Winter Squash 17,371 LBS  
Lightest Crop: Cantaloupe - 6 LBS (Crop Failure.....ugh)  
Lbs of Peppers Harvested: 6,825  
Lbs of Kale Harvested: 3,432  
Lbs of Cabbage Harvested: 7,146  
Lbs of Sweet Potatoes Harvested: 13,335  
Lbs of Beets Harvested: 8,465  
Lbs of Lettuce Harvested: 4,966  
Lbs of Tomatoes Harvested (non-u-pick) 12,948  
# of Weeks Cutting Flowers Were Open: 18  
Lbs Of Food Donated To 'NJ Farmers Against Hunger': 5,653  
Pigs Raised: 18  
Pounds of Compost Spread (roughly): 250,000!  
Number of Winter Shares Sold: 80  
Unofficial Song Of The Year 'Break A My Stride' - Matthew Wilder

Fernbrook Farm CSA

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