RED FIRE READER

A bimonthly newsletter from Red Fire Farm, growers of healthy organic food for communities in Massachusetts

GRANBY, MASSACHUSETTS 01033 (413) 467-SOIL JUNE 2, 2009 ISSUE NUMBER I

IN THIS ISSUE

FARMER WELCOME
CALENDAR
CSA DISTRIBUTION INFO
PYO INFO
RIDE-SHARE INFO
RECIPE OF THE WEEK
FARM CAM

CALENDAR:

June 2nd : Ona's cooking demo at Springfield X Farmers Market / CSA distribution

June 8th: First week of Boston-area CSA distributions

June 10th: Ona's cooking demo at the Jamaica Plain CSA distribution.

June 11th: Hedgies Hot Stuff will be sampling Salsa and Chips at the Granby Farmstand, 3-6PM.

June 16th: Ona's cooking demo at the Springfield X Farmers Market/CSA distribution

June 20th: Strawberry Soiree. Dinner at 6 PM. Come earlier to pick strawberries! There will be live-music all afternoon with strawberry shortcake for sale at the farmstand. 2-5PM

June 25th: Ann Starboard from Crystal Brook Goat Cheese will be sampling chevre in the Granby Farmstand, 3-6PM.

IN SEASON

~lettuce ~ strawberries ~ radishes ~ hakurei turnips ~ beets ~ spinach ~ kale ~ mesclun greens ~ cilantro ~ green garlic ~ herbs

FROM THE GREENHOUSE

cucumbers ~ peppers ~ cherry tomatoes ~ carrots ~ basil ~

Welcome to the 2009 CSA harvest season! Here at the farm we are all very excited that the harvesting season is about to get underway in earnest. As it happens every winter, we have been working hard planning for these crops for months now. During the so called "off season," the Red Fire Farm crew has been busy doing things like tweaking the crop plans on excel spread sheets, ordering seeds and supplies, repairing the farm machinery and buildings, and dealing with the never ending bureaucracy that every small business must face. Since early February there have been the season start-up activities of seeding and transplanting first in the greenhouses, then in the fields starting in late March. More recently, we've been putting up acres of row cover to protect certain crops from cold nights and others from hungry insects and cultivating and weeding to keep all those pesky weeds from overtaking the crops. This all is coming to a head now. All these activities will continue for months still, but here at the farm we now kick into high gear to get all the early crops harvested each week on top of everything else. Our crew size will grow a little bit more, and the hours for everyone will increase in order to keep up with all the activity that June demands.

Growing great vegetables using organic sustainable practices that take care of the land is certainly the primary point of our jobs as farmers. However, as CSA farmers we greatly value the opportunity, and even consider it part of our jobs, to help educate and promote awareness about the food and agricultural system in our country among all of you, the people who enjoy eating our harvests. We wish to help start and stimulate continuing conversations about the food system, about how it is now, and how it could be better. I would like everyone who eats to have at least a basic rudimentary understanding of what farming practices might make something organic and sustainable, and those which don't. This newsletter, the Red Fire Reader, can be a great medium for discussions on these topics, so I encourage any of you who have specific questions, ideas for topics, or tidbits that they read or hear elsewhere about food and agriculture issues, to please pass those ideas on to us here at the Red Fire Farm office. We're looking forward to meeting you, sharing in this harvest, and actively and continuously changing this country's food system. Here's to a bountiful and dynamic year! -Ryan

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Strawberry Soiree, June 20th, all day!

Join us for the 2nd Annual Strawberry Soiree. There will be strawberries to pick for all CSA and Farmstand members all day with music by the Red Fire Farm String Band in front of the barn, Strawberry Shortcake for sale and free strawberry samples at the farmstand **2-5PM**. Dinner will be served next to the strawberry patch at **6PM**. Tickets are available; please reserve yours today since space is limited. The menu and ticket prices are on our website, www.redfirefarm.com/news/. See you there!

ALL MEMBERS:

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CHECK IN WITH COORDINATOR EACH WEEK ON THE MEMBERS LIST.
CHECK THE INFORMATION LISTED NEXT TO YOUR NAME AND MAKE SURE IT IS CORRECT.

MARK ON YOUR CALENDARS WHEN THE NEXT PAYMENT IS DUE. YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PAY THE SITE COORDINATOR. HOWEVER, WE RECOMMEND MAILING PAYMENTS.

LIMITED PLASTIC BAGS ARE OFFERED AT PICK UP. WE RECOMMEND RECYCLING OR BRINGING YOUR OWN REUSABLE BAGS. WE WILL CARRY RED FIRE FARM ORGANIC CANVAS BAGS FOR $10.50 FOR THE FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS.

OUR FARM STAND IS OPEN! COME BY AND VISIT!

ALL SHARES WILL BE DONATED TO A FOOD RELIEF ORGANIZATION IF NOT PICKED UP DURING THE DISTRIBUTION HOURS.

CSA DISTRIBUTION SITE INFORMATION

Cambridge – Distributions will be ready each Wednesday starting June 10th from **4:30-7:30PM** and Friday starting June 12th from **2:30-6:00PM** in the parking lot next to the Cambridge Harvest Coop (581 Mass Ave.) Your Wednesday distribution coordinator this season is Natalie Schmitt-Wampler. Natalie will be managing the distribution each week and can accept payments, answer questions and otherwise assist you. Natalie can be reached at 314-520-0329 and natalieschmitt@gmail.com. On Fridays, your distribution coordinators are Jeremy Angier (207-208-6557), j@machinegraphics.com) and Tamar Levi (617-921-3629), mobledqueen@gmail.com). Also feel free to contact us at the farm in Granby at any time.

Cambridge at MIT- Distributions will be ready each Friday starting June 12th from **3:00-6:30PM** at the Stata Center (32 Vassar Street). Your distribution coordinator is Ann Olson who can be reached at 857-919-2471 and at aolson@MIT.edu.

Brighton- Distributions will be ready each Friday starting June 12th from **3:30-7:00PM** at the back of the Whole Foods parking lot (15 Washington St.). Your distribution coordinator is Laura Owens who can be reached at 617-792-4163 and at laura.j.owens@gmail.com.

Jamaica Plain- Distributions will be ready each Wednesday starting June 11th from **3:00-6:30 PM** in the small fenced area near the front of the Jamaica Plain Harvest Coop store (57 South St.). Your distribution coordinators are Marina Ostrov and Tressa Jones who can be reached at 413-575-9651 and tressa.jones@gmail.com.

Somerville – Distributions will be ready each Wednesday starting June 10th from **4:00-7:00PM** at the Somerville Growing Center (22 Vinal Ave). Pick up will be under the tent outside. Your distribution coordinator is Eliza Barton Weeks who can be reached at 603-930-0373 and eliza.barton.weeks@gmail.com.

Springfield at the X- Shares will be ready for pickup at any time the farmers market is open (**12:30-6:00PM**) on Tuesday afternoons starting June 16th . The farmers market is on Sumners Avenue in the Trinity Church parking lot. Farm crew member Dave Grace will always be on hand to help. Shares will not be in boxes, so please remember to bring your bags.

Granby at the Farm- Shares will be ready for pickup each Tuesday starting June 16th and Friday starting June 19th from **2:00-7:00PM**. Pick up area is in the farm stand area of the barn and items are identified by Blue cards. Contact us at 413-467-7645 or thefarmers@redfirefarm.com with any questions. Most weeks, Deb Andre will again be coordinating the distributions in Granby.

Montague- Members are Old Depot Gardens Farm Stand Members (504 Turners Falls Rd, Montague). Each member has a page in the member binder at the stand by the money box. You can stop any day and use your credit toward any items sold at the stand. Just enter the item on your page and the price and subtract from your original credit in order to keep track of your balance. Produce deliveries will be on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays once the season gets going.

Common Wealth- Distribution will be each Wednesday starting June 17th from **3:00-6:30PM**. Pick up will be in the alley behind Green Fields Market. You may contact Suzanne Carlson (who is the Common Wealth bookkeeper and member coordinator) at 413-774-2112 or the farm at anytime for questions.

COOKING THE HARVEST

Our culinary chef, Ona, will be stopping by each CSA distribution site once throughout the season. There, she will be demonstrating recipes using the vegetables found in your weekly share. If you aren't sure how to cook that unknown vegetable, or would like to learn new recipes, stick around on those days to watch what she cooks up and to sample her tasty creations! The Red Fire Reader will post her visits two weeks in advance. Also, please send your favorite recipe to her at recipes@redfirefarm.com if you'd like to have it posted on the website or maybe in the next Red Fire Reader.

We now have gift certificates! Great for all occasions!
For more info see the website:
http://redfirefarm.com/farmersMarkets/giftcertificates.html

Soymilk: What's your score?

Recently on my e-mail I got some information that was distributed by the Cornucopia Institute which is a watch dog non profit which keeps an eye on the organic food industry. What caught my eye is an extensive report that they recently released about soy milk and the integrity of all the different brands that you might see for sale at natural food stores or supermarkets. As a daily consumer of soymilk I checked out their scorecard of the different brands to see how they all stacked up in terms of the implementation of the organic and natural claims that they all seem to make on their labels. Not surprisingly some brands appear to have substantially more integrity and transparency than others. For instance are the soybeans used even organic? (one popular brand Silk subtly changed over to genetically engineered beans in most of their soymilk products recently, and they substituted the unregulated word of natural for the organic that they used to have on their label.) If they are organic do the beans come from US growers, or are they imported from Chinese farms that in some cases don't appear to have verifiable organic certification trace back? And does importing soybeans across the ocean, even if they are organic, really make any sense from a sustainability perspective, especially considering that the US has tremendous farm land resources that could provide plenty of organic beans if the land was transitioned to organic practices. For the full report see this website http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17999.cfm . By the way, the only national brand with the highest possible rating on the scorecard is Edensoy. –Ryan

THE HOW-TO GUIDE ON PICK-YOUR-OWN (PYO)

One of the nicest perks of being a member of Red Fire Farm is the opportunity to visit the farm and pick crops that otherwise do not show up in your weekly shares. These items, throughout the season, will include herbs, peas, beans, flowers, hot peppers, tomatillos, cherry tomatoes, husk cherries, strawberries, and raspberries. There will be weekly picking limits (seasonal limits for Boston members) posted in the farmstand. Strawberries and peas will hopefully be ready for picking starting the week of June 8th and the herb patch has a whole slew of herbs for your culinary pleasure. Watch for more current updates in PYO availability in the weekly emails. Here's how it works:

If you pick up your weekly produce share in Granby or Springfield, we will post a weekly limit for the maximum amount of each item that you can pick each week. This information will be posted inside the barn near the farm stand area along with maps of the fields and instructions about where you should pick. We also provide picking containers in the barn. You can do your picking when you are at the farm picking up your other produce, or you can come back any time during daylight hours 7 days a week. Check the board in the barn when you arrive for your weekly limits. You're welcome to bring friends, but we appreciate if a member is present for PYO.

If you pick up your weekly produce share at one of our Boston area distributions, then we assume you will probably only come to the farm about once during June and then again during July or August for beans and tomatoes. The farm is only about a 1.5 hour drive from Cambridge, so a visit is easy to fit into a weekend or any day off that you have. Car pool with other members from your distribution if possible (see below for more carpooling info). During June, Boston area members can pick at least **8 quarts of strawberries and 8 pints of peas all at once during one visit.** Upon arrival at the farm go into the farm stand area and check the member pick your own information board. This will have detailed information about which crops are ripe, amounts per share, maps of the fields about where you can find them, and containers to pick into. Depending on when you arrive, there may or may not be anyone from the farm around, but you can come anytime during daylight hours. Remember that for both strawberries and peas the picking is expected to be great during the weekend of June 20 and 21st (the Strawberry Soiree is also that Saturday). Picking is also expected to be excellent on the weekends of June 14/15 and 27/28. You're welcome to bring friends, but we appreciate if a member is present for PYO.

If you are a Farm Stand member you can use your credit toward the pick your own crops. Prices will be posted on the pick your own info board inside the farm stand area of the barn, along with field maps and picking containers. You can pick anytime crops are ripe and you're welcome to bring friends, but you must also be present for PYO.

NOTE: When you are out in the field, look for the new wooden signs directing you to the picking areas. When harvesting, always be careful not to step on the crop plants, and feel free to pull some weeds while you are out there!

RIDE SHARING TO THE FARM

GoLoco is an online ride-share website. By joining you can network with the other Boston-area CSA members to work out carpooling to the farm for farm events or just a visit to the pick-your-own patch. To join, follow this link: http://goloco.org/users/new?uuid=5f997177-dada-4335-a904-6a4cfbc15981

After signing up, join the group "Red Fire Farm CSA". With almost 700 members in the Boston area, there are bound to be folks in your neighborhood heading west every weekend!

Green Garlic Pesto

makes 1 cup

10 stalks green garlic
½ cup olive oil
½ cup walnuts
½ cup grated parmesan cheese
1 tsp salt
1 Tbs. Lemon juice.
1 Tbs. Water

Place all ingredients in the food processor and blend until smooth. Use on pasta, pizza or sandwiches.

FARM CAM: **Hatch Field**

This 10 acre field is the latest addition to the farm's cultivated land. Made up of 15 blocks, this field is very diverse and the Farm Cam will follow it throughout the season. Right now many of the blocks are covered in row cover which has to be heavily weighted down or it will fly away in the wind that often blows through the field. To the left, summer squash plants are poking out from under the hoops and row cover.

The Red Fire Reader is compiled and edited by Ona Lindauer, the Red Fire Farm culinary intern. Newsletter topic ideas, recipes, writings, poems, and CSA community announcements are welcome and should be submitted to thefarmers@redfirefarm.com.

Lauren and Layton harvest turnips.

RED FIRE FARM
7 CARVER STREET
GRANBY, MA 01033
(413) 467-SOIL
thefarmers@redfirefarm.com

VISIT US ONLINE!
www.redfirefarm.com