



BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

P.O. Box 227
Amherst, MA 01004

www.brookfieldfarm.org
(413)253-7991 info@brookfieldfarm.org

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Distribution Week #10

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Melon Town

Cantaloupes and Watermelons:

One of our favorite things about late summer is a sweet melon patch. We start with cantaloupes (orange flesh), and will add watermelons (yellow & red flesh) for the next 2-3 weeks. The crop looks solid this year.... They taste delicious, and are sweet due to some nice mix of moisture (for size) and sun (for sugar). We try to pick only perfectly ripe melons - they are ready to eat now. If you want keep the cantaloupes, put it in the fridge and they will last for a while. The watermelons will store in a cool dry spot for weeks.



Sweet Peppers: We grow long tapered "Italia" peppers and traditional bells - and all are sweet. If they are not completely ripe, leave them out of the refrigerator in a cool dry place and they will get more colorful and sweeter. We will have a limited supply for a few weeks, then it looks like a glut for a while after that.

Sierra Blanca Onions: These are our one of our sweet "Vidalia"-type onions, which are good for eating fresh, on sandwiches, or cooking. The crop is good this year - we expect to have sweet onions for the next 3-4 weeks.

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

TOSCANO KALE
BROCCOLI

BULK PRODUCE

KALE (GREEN, RED),
SWISS CHARD:
\$2 / LB

CUCUMBERS,
SUMMER SQUASH,
EGGPLANT: \$1 / LB

WAKEFIELD
CABBAGE: \$3 / PC

SWEET CORN:
\$4 / DZ

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

Near Miss. Keep Moving.

Monday morning we were met with blue skies, warm temps, and an ominous forecast. With a food to harvest and weeds to pull, we got to work. Just like last week the greens were bumping, as were the cukes, zukes, and eggplant - and the melons were now starting to ripen. The weeders headed off to "pull the bigs" out of the celery. And I set out to made some new roads next to the melons. By 11 am, Marlee had a melon-tossing team lined up, Ben had a wash crew at the harvest shed, and the rest of the weeders were onto the Brussels'.

In the afternoon, with the sun beating down we packed the melons into lugs, then onto trucks, then back to the cool of the shed. With some time left in the afternoon, Karen and Anna moved the cows to a new pasture, Marlee

harrowed the field for the fall kale planting, and Ben took The Ryans! to shore up the tomato trellises in the west field - looking a bit weighed down due to a burgeoning harvest to come. We went to bed feeling we were ready for the storm to come.

We awoke to a little shower, but nothing big yet. So we harvested corn as usual, and then Serena fired up the planter and Marlee took a crew to start putting the final plantings (kale, collards, escarole) into the ground. Still no rain, so we harvested eggplants, hot peppers, and carrots. Then the rain started falling, gently in the afternoon, so we planted right through it. The wind started blowing hard at about 330, so we retreated to the harvest shed to wash eggplants and lugs and then closed the doors and crossed our fingers.

Cantaloupe Cucumber Salad

- 1 cantaloupe, halved and deseeded
- 1 large cucumber, halved
- 2 ounces crumbly feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- juice of one lemon
- pinch of salt
- 10 basil leaves, coarsely chopped

Using a melon baller, create as many balls from the cantaloupe as possible. Add them to a large bowl. If cucumber has large seeds, use the melon baller or a spoon to scrape them out. Cut the cucumber into thin half moons and add to the melons. Combine the olive oil, lemon juice, and salt in a small bowl and whisk. Add the vinaigrette to the fruit and toss to combine. Then top with the crumbled feta and basil leaves. immediately.

From "This Healthy Table" - <https://thishealthytable.com/blog/cantaloupe-cucumber-salad/> - makes 2 large salad servings and keeps well in the fridge so you can make it a few hours in advance of eating.

In the morning, there were tree leaves blown around, and a limb down on the calf fence. And about 45' of tomatoes had fallen over. And the tent in the farmyard was flattened (with nobody under it!!). We were spared the worst - only about 3/4" of rain and no major trees or buildings damaged. We cut up the limb and the propped up the tomatoes quickly and by Thursday all was shining and standing tall again. By Friday afternoon, it was time for the melon harvest for real. Rolling on.

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

Your Farmer,
Dan (for Karen, Abbe, Ben, Jake, Joseph, Marlee, Serena, and Anna)

HOW WE FARM

CSA Distribution

As we settle into the big harvest season, we will be trying to fill your shares with a wide variety of produce to keep you well fed throughout the fall. I have been frequently asked how we go about figuring out just what goes into your share each week. And believe me, it's not always easy to decide. In general, we want to put the freshest produce in the box each week - but how much? And which items? Since there really were no CSAs around when we got started, we had to take a simple idea (you buy a share of the harvest) and come up with some specific guidelines to make it all work out in the real world of eaters and farmers.

The first thing we do each year is set specific targets for each crop, for each week that we want to provide it in the share and for the entire season. For instance, when we grow carrots we target 2 lbs per share per week and when we grow tomatoes we expect to pack 4 lbs per share. These targets are then used to determine whether the share will be light, heavy, or just right. If one crop is a little light (like the greens this year?) we try to make up for it with other crops that might be heavier (did you notice the extra cucumbers in your shares?). And if we have a lot of everything then we go ahead and put it in "bulk" so that people can buy our surplus.

At our Farm Shop in Amherst we have also developed the "Mix and Match" system, where we group some produce together and let people choose their own shares, not by item, but by volume. In order to do this, we simply calculate how much total poundage we have for any given harvest day, and divide it by the number of shares that we expect to come to the farm that day. Then we translate that into an average bag size.

One thing we learned early on about distributing produce is the economic concept of "inelastic demand." That is, even if we have 40,000 lbs of surplus kale, it is of very little value to us, because people will/can only eat so much. The demand for the kale is "inelastic." Of course, we can try to stretch it out a little with a clever newsletter article or a few recipes, but let's face it, getting a box full of kale every week, would just not be very valuable for most people. In addition, we have found that people want a variety of items in the box each week so we try to put something new in the share every week.

We continue to refine our targets listening to you, year after year. The Suggestion Box, Surveys, and just watching what leaves quickest in the "Mix and Match" have been good ways to find out what people want. Fundamentally, our farm has remained true to our initial idea - share the risks and rewards of local agriculture in order to let us grow and eat food that is produced in a manner that is in keeping with our deepest principles. Developing these techniques has been important in making this dream a reality.



FOOD PRESERVATION TIPS

Sweet Corn

The corn is very sweet & plentiful this year. Corn season feels long while it's here, but it's a short magic moment of the year! Luckily, corn freezes really well. If you want to save some, consider buying some extra in bulk or use the corn in your share to freeze. Shuck your corn and cut the kernels off the cob. Freeze in yogurt containers or fill freezer bags and lay in flat layers. Frozen corn can be used all winter in soups, cornbread, sautees and more.



Special Thanks

to The Ryans!

(Marlee's dad and brother) and

Victoria (Serena's friend)

for volunteering over the past two weeks - it was great to have extra hands during some very heavy weeks!

PIC OF THE WEEK

After the storm blows through, the crew gets the melons going for real

