



BROOKFIELD FARM SHOPTALK

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Distribution Week #12

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Sweet Tomatoes & Onions

Field Grown Tomatoes: These big beefsteaks and crazy heirlooms have taken a LONG time to ripen. The foliage on the plants still looks incredible, due to low moisture all summer (this is strange as tomato vines tend to die in the northeast moist humid summers). They are beginning to ripen for real this week and we expect to see the size & quantity increase in the share for the next few weeks.



Ailsa Craig Onions: Here they are - the last of our very abundant crop of early sweet onions. This is one is big, yellowish, and juicy. It doesn't pack a wallop - in fact it is just perfect on any sandwich. We will have them for a week and then onto storage onions in September.

what's up with my corn? We were in the midst of a truly epic corn season....and then.....from the sublime to the ridiculous. The corn was truly otherworldly, and then we changed fields and everything just got weird. Small. Stunted. Barely there. That section of Snyder 4, looks to be somewhat nutrient starved - and there's nothing we can do about that now - It appears that the last two sections look a bit better - fingers crossed - we'll keep you posted.....

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

BROCCOLI
KOHLRABI
LEEKs
BRUSSELS' TOPS

BULK PRODUCE

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

SWEET PEPPERS:
\$2 / LB

SHISHITO PEPPERS:
\$4 / LB

CARROTS: \$1 / LB

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM

Same. And Different.

Monday dawned with a familiar forecast, but with hints of the change about to come. The fields were pretty dry, but there was a chance of showers on Monday night, so we harvested as usual, continued irrigating, pulled weeds, but also put some seeds (spinach, arugula) and plants (late winter kale) in the ground in the hopes of catching that wave. Sure enough we got 1/3" - and felt lucky to get some help with germination. We also felt a chill in the air on Tuesday morning.....what's that? It was 49F. Something we hadn't felt in who knows how long. I found my sweatshirt and reveled in it. But also, I was disoriented.

On Tuesday, after getting the shares packed and the peppers and eggplants picked, we moved towards the job-of-the-week; harvesting all of the storage onions. Marlee loaded the flatbeds with lugs, we drove to the Junk Field, tossed them into the first bed and away we went. You gotta bend down and scum to find the onions as they are hidden in the weeds (not nearly as bad as last year!). After all the work to grow them we don't want to leave any behind. Lugs are filled. And then more lugs are filled. And then loaded (now full) back onto the flatbeds. And then back to the farm, and unloaded in the greenhouse. There they will "cure" for 3 weeks in the hot, dry air circulating with a fan. If all goes well they will last until April!! Every time we found a few hours and a few people, we went back to the field. Two beds on Wednesday. And one on Friday and it's was done - about 5000 lbs in storage.

The rest of the week ticked along as usual - harvesting, irrigating, and weeding. The cukes and zukes now giving way to the peppers and tomatoes. The fall kale & collards getting a good drink. The weeders putting finishing touches on the purple daikons and strawberries. Also, the sweatshirts stayed around for every morning this week. A change is coming.....

We hope you enjoy the harvest,

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

Stuffed Peppers

a little oil
1 cloves garlic, minced
1 onion, chopped
1.5 c raw brown rice
3 c water or stock
1/4 tspn allspice
1/4 c almonds, chopped
1/2 c chopped tomatoes
1/3 lb cheddar, grated
salt and pepper
4 large peppers, tops cut off, seeds removed

Heat oil in lg skillet. Saute garlic & onions. Add rice and brown ~ 5min. Add desired liquid and allspice. Cover and cook until rice is done ~ 40min. Toast almonds in dry skillet or hot oven ~ 3 min, tossing often. Stir in tomatoes, cheese, almonds, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook peppers in boiling water for 2 min. Drain and stuff peppers with rice mixture. Bake at 350F for ~30 min.

This is from Lizzie Breuer, Zephyr Community Farm member - published in "From Asparagus to Zucchini" from Madison Area Community Supported Ag coalition.

FARMING IN COMMUNITY

Neighbors

Our farm is different than many others in that we are located in the midst of a densely populated area with many residential neighbors surrounding our fields. Not only that, but we have over 20 fields, far flung over a 2-mile radius, all with their own specific ownership and partnership agreements. In addition, our mission is public centered - as an educational non profit (501c3) the center of our work is engaging the general public with information about sustainable agriculture to help create a vital partnership between our human community, soil microbes, flora, fauna, air, and, well, everything. In short, we are really in this together with a lot of other people - this is not a family farm - it is a farm of many families.

One thing that stands out to me in all of this is how many deep and long-standing connections we have with so many of the neighbors who live around the land we work; Helen Fortier, the daughter of the farms' founders Claire & Dave. Nicki Robb, our original farmer. Cynthia (longtime board member) & Lee Barstow who have allowed us to use a part of their land to grow (carrots this year) in the West Field. Leila Tunnell & Jake Mazar, who were apprentices at the farm and can walk out their back gate into our fields to pick veggies to cook in our crew lunches or Wheelhouse Farm creations. Elaine Kenseth, whose father Arnold a beloved pastor at the S Congregational Church wrote poetry blessing our fields. And on and on it goes. The farm has been dependent on the good graces and generosity of all of these neighbors who have let us cross their property, put up with our loose pigs in their gardens, and encouraged us with support in so many ways over so many years.

One other neighbor, the Hubbs' family, has been especially important to the development and operation of our farm since their land sits right in between our two main fields and their

house is literally surrounded by our barn, pick-your-own fields, and pathways. I know it goes way back before me, because when I first visited the farm in 1992, Ian Robb gave me a farm tour and showed me the Brookfield herd of Dexter cows grazing in Hubbs' pasture (next to the West (left) road of the farm) and explained his plans to use these cows to clear the land in a sustainable fashion. I do know that our farm has grazed cattle (usually young stock) on their pasture for nearly 30 years and they have graciously (and for no fee) let us use their road as a farm by-way to get from the Lower Field to the West Field countless times over those years. When the poison ivy started to get bad in the pasture, we raised pigs there for a number of years and they eradicated most of it from the West and South areas of the pasture. And I even remember having a few goats

out there in 1995. Basically we have been bouyed by the generosity of the Hubbs Family (Clay (a Missouri farm boy who passed away in 2007), Joanna, and Victoria) as we have continued the long-standing Brookfield tradition of trying to figure out creative ways to farm in the midst of lots of house lots.



Now, in 2020, our herd has gotten a little bigger and we are starting to outgrow the Hubbs' pasture. This week we hit a milestone and moved our young stock to other rented land nearby. We are going to take our cattle fence down next week so that they can once again walk freely around their beautiful field. We expect to continue to use the road and keep the field mowed twice a year in exchange. When you visit Brookfield, please respect the boundary, stay on the existing roads and paths and don't stray into their pasture. You might see Joanna or Victoria here and there walking their sweet little black poodles around - if you do please remember how much our farms' current success is due to the ongoing flexibility and patience they have shown with our smelly, early-rising, noisy farm operation keeping them company all the time. We remain thankful for all of our neighbors who encircle our farm with support and generosity which continues to keep this farm afloat in our little corner of South Amherst.

PIC OF THE WEEK

The greenhouse is filled with onions

