

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

Well, snow falling is a sure sign the summer CSA is coming to an end. We are ready for it this year, both in terms of preparation and energy levels...

The garlic has been planted and mulched, the last crucial October task in preparation for next year. The strawberries still need mulching and our own root vegetables need harvesting, but those things can happen anytime between now and when the ground freezes.

Jennifer has started to prepare the beehives for winter.

One decision still to make is whether to try

and get next year's field fall plowed or not. Fall plowing was the standard until recently. When fields are worked in the fall, they dry out quicker in the early spring. This can be a big help, especially during a wet spring, in getting onto the land for weed control and planting.

On the flip side, fall plowing exposes the soil to erosion throughout the late fall and winter. Early snowfalls that stay on the ground help to reduce erosion, but quick melts and little snow cover can lead to significant losses of top soil, and soil life.

Our ideal scenario

would be to have some of the future garden in oats that would die over winter, providing cover and the opportunity for early field work. The rest could be in rye or another winter hearty grain, that would provide cover and could be worked in during the spring, as soon as the soil dried off a bit. We hope to begin doing this next year, time and equipment permitting.

We have a large pick-up for you this week, so for anyone feeling overwhelmed with how to store all these vegetables, please see past issues of the news letter or contact us for storage tips.

This Week's Harvest

- ◆ Beets
- ◆ Carrots
- ◆ Cabbage
- ◆ Chard
- ◆ Garlic
- ◆ Herbs
- ◆ Kale
- ◆ Kholrabi
- ◆ Leeks
- ◆ Onions
- ◆ Parsnips
- ◆ Pumpkin
- ◆ Radishes
- ◆ Rutabaga
- ◆ Shallots
- ◆ Winter Squash

New Member of our Family

We are pleased to announce the arrival of the newest member of our family. Lillian Ahren Penney was born on October 15th at around 11:30pm. It was a long labour that started at home and ended in the birthing centre at hospital in Walkerton.

Lilly weighed in at 7 lbs. 15 oz., has her father's big head and lots of dark brown hair. She has her parents' blue eyes and is quite strong,

threatening to join Nicole with her yoga practice, if we are not careful.

Everyone is happy and healthy and we are starting to settle into some sort of routine.

It will be good to play with her out in the garden next season. We are also looking forward to her first solid foods, which will likely be the same foods CSA members are eating, but mushier!

Thanks to all for your support and for being understanding with some of the juggling we had to do around pick-up times and dates this October. With luck many of you will get to meet Lilly soon.



Looking Forward to 2014

New Crops

We will be trying to provide the CSA with two new crops this coming year. Many of you will have seen or heard of the raspberry canes we planted this year. They have filled in their respective beds and are thriving. If we can keep them strong we hope to have a pint per share for 3-4 weeks next

year. We also experimented with fava beans this year. They are some work, and we are still beginners in growing them, however we aim to have one pick-up of 2 quarts per share for 2014. For those who haven't tried fresh fava beans, they are sweet, nutty and delicious!



Growing the CSA

Next season we hope to more than double in size (from 20 to 50 members). We will have many new shares available and encourage you to spread word to your family, friends, neighbours and co-workers. Devan will be working full time on the farm from the beginning of April through to the end of September, maybe longer if finances permit. Nicole and Lillian will also be at the farm full time so

it will be a more lively place all around next summer.

This growth in size will mean we need to expand our infrastructure (irrigation, wash station and greenhouses) and look at mechanizing some field work. To this end you may see a variety of construction projects on the go over this winter and through next summer.

You may also see some draft horses. I have had preliminary discus-

sions with my neighbour about borrowing his horses as I build the infrastructure and accumulate the equipment necessary for the transition to animal draft power.

We will also be looking to provide more structured opportunities for volunteering on the farm. This may include a working share, where people pay a reduced price in exchange for a commitment to work a given number of hours

Help on the Farm

With a jump in size of the CSA we will need more help on the farm. Having Nicole and Lillian around will help, but we are trying to ease our new baby into hard labour so....

Starting in April we hope to have an intern joining us. We are still in the selection process, but will be looking for someone who is passionate about food and the out-

doors, and may be interested in pursuing farming as a career. Our intern will receive education, experience, room and board and a small stipend in exchange for their full time help throughout the season. Devan and many of his farming friends in the area started farming this way so we think it is a great opportunity both for us and for new farmers.

Thanks so much to all our CSA members for your support this season. We have really enjoyed getting to know you. It is wonderful to be part of a growing food community. We hope to see you next year.

Devan, Nicole, & Jennifer