

# Fair Fields News

Volume 7, Issue 4. July 31, 2018

## On the Farm

Most of our hoophouse cucumbers have finally succumbed to bacterial wilt. Usually our field cucumbers have high disease and pest pressure and our hoophouse cucumbers are fairly strong till late August. This year it is quite the opposite and we imagine, as with everything, it is due to the high heat. We hope the field cucumbers continue to have a great year so we don't stop giving them too early.

Our tomatoes and eggplants are producing well. Like the cucumbers, the field tomatoes are not far behind our hoophouse ones. By August we should be inundated with tomatoes, which will hopefully make up for last year...

Our sweet peppers and melons are not far off. We are walking the melon patch weekly, to try and make sure we don't miss those first few ripe ones.

We have pulled in about half of the garlic and have it drying on racks in the barn. It is now competing with the fresh hay in there

for smell! Most of the garlic looks good. We have seen very little, if any, nematode damage (small worms that eat the bulb), which plagued us so much in the past. I hope we have broken the cycle on that particular pest, as garlic is a lot of work, very high in value and very expensive as seed!

With our transition out of the Guelph and Kitchener CSA, garlic is one of the crops we will try to wholesale this season. In anticipation of this we planted a lot of extra garlic in late April. Ideally, garlic should be planted in the fall, so it has time to establish itself and can start growing as soon as possible in the spring. We definitely saw the differences between our different plantings. The spring garlic is smaller, less vigorous and some of the bulbs have bent over and look as though they won't fully mature. This garlic is what we will be giving for the next couple of weeks as "fresh garlic," as we suspect it will not store as well.

We have been seeing a lot more of my father, Donald, lately. Donald was born in Newport, South Wales and

immigrated to Canada with his family when he was 4 years old. He always enjoyed being outdoors, where I get it from I think. When I was growing up he was also one of those hippy dads, who introduced me to many less common vegetables like kale and chard, good exposure for a market gardener.

Long before I took an interest in ecological agriculture, my father was working with farmers around reducing pesticide exposure and doing research to help move ahead regulations limiting the use of highly toxic pesticides. Being a doctor, who is very well versed on the negative impacts most pesticide have on human health and the environment, he was very supportive when I sought out a career in ecological agriculture.

As he moves towards retirement he is spending more time managing the woodlot, planting tree lines, caring for fruit bushes and generally helping out. This is wonderful as they are all important aspects of the farm that I don't have a lot of time for!

## Harvesting

- Beans
- Beets
- Carrots
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Daikon radish
- Flowers
- Garlic
- Head Lettuce
- Herbs
- Kale
- Melons?
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Salad Mix
- Zucchini

## Fair Fields Open House and Potluck

We will be hosting an open house and potluck for Fair Fields on **Saturday** from **2-7 pm**.

We will be throwing some food on the **BBQ** during that time and enjoying it with some **salads** and **homemade beer**.

We are welcoming CSA members, friends and family and encourage you to bring yours as well and enjoy a **tour of the farm** and some food and beverages with us. There will also be some games set up on the lawn.

Please **RSVP** if you think you will come so we can get a sense of numbers.

Hope to see you there!



# Preserving Ideas

Zucchini is one of those crops that we often have too much of... We plant a lot so that we can have many to give when the plants are starting up and slowing down (when production is a lot lower). When they are at their peak production, we have a glut of zucchini and, like you, can start to feel overwhelmed. When this happens, we often put some away in the freezer. Some we simply grate with the food processor, bag in convenient portions and freeze for use in baking throughout the winter

(think zucchini muffins, chocolate chip zucchini loaf, etc.). We also cut and roast some, before freezing, which makes a great addition to pizza, pasta, sandwiches and more.

Peppers are something else we roast and freeze and use in similar ways to roasted zucchini.

Cabbage is a crop we have had an abundance of this year. We planted enough to supply a much larger CSA. With our decision to drop the

Guelph and Kitchener pickups, our first plantings of many things were far too large. Cabbage will keep very well in the fridge, often for 2-3 months, even if it is not a storage variety. So if you don't want to deal with it right now then let it sit in your veggie drawer a while. If you feel adventurous, try making some sauerkraut. It is very straight forward and a good way to learn about lactic fermentation (the traditional method of pickling, think kosher pickles). Lactic fermented vegetables not only keep well,

they also have many probiotic benefits. A quick search online for sauerkraut, will give you plenty of good recipe examples.

The beans are coming on strong. They are great pickled, like a dill pickle. We also try to blanch and freeze some for soups, stews and curries in the winter. The texture is softer, but in a soup or stew they are a nice addition.

We are happy to help, so please ask for more ideas!

# Daikon Radish

We gave daikon radish last week and wanted to talk a bit about it as it is a vegetable that many people are unfamiliar with. The daikon radish originated in East and Southeast Asia, though it is also common in South Asia through to East Africa. It goes by several names, but is most commonly known in English speaking countries, by its Japanese name "daikon."

In Asia, daikon is commonly grown as a human food crop, with some varieties being shorter and stouter and others long and slender, like the

one we grow. Some varieties are much better suited to warm weather, where as others will tolerate quite cold temperatures and long term storage.

In North America daikon radishes are primarily grown as a cover crop, with the deep tap roots improving soil structure and preventing compaction, and the leaves being harvested as fodder for livestock. The deep tap roots also help bring up nutrients from lower in the "soil horizon." The roots die off in harsh winters and release these nutrients, along with

nitrogen, to spring planted crops. Radishes also put out sulphur compounds that can help suppress pathogens in the soil. We are also planting daikon as a covercrop in next year's garlic ground as nematodes are one of the pests daikon can suppress.

Daikon is a bit of a superfood. It is high in vitamin C and overall very nutrient dense. Daikon also contains antioxidants, compounds and enzymes that help with digestion, reducing inflammation, cancer prevention and a host of other benefits. So eat your daikon....

Like many other Asian brassicas, daikon radish is good in stir-fry, salads, and soups, but is also good steamed, roasted, pickled and even used in baking. It can be eaten raw and also develops a nice texture when cooked.



# NFU Associate Memberships

For the last four years I have been a member of the National Farmers Union (NFU). This is a national and provincial level farm organization that stands for everything our CSA is about. They are the only voluntary national level organization committed to:

- Ensuring family farms are the primary unit of food production
- Promoting environmentally-safe farming practices
- Giving farm women equal voice in shaping farm policy
- Working for fair food prices both for farmers and consumers

- Involving educating and empowering farmers and consumers
- Building healthy vibrant communities; insuring an adequate supply of safe, nutritious food for Canadians

Progressive farm organizations, like the NFU, have been important in fighting for social and environmental justice. This includes issues not directly related to agriculture, like fighting for Medicare (publicly funded healthcare) in Saskatchewan and eventually the rest of the country. The

With the decline in the overall farming population most farm organiza-

tions have seen a corresponding decline in membership numbers. The NFU is working to try to keep up membership and support for sustainable food production in a variety of ways. One strategy is to recruit associate members, who may not farm, but are committed to sustainable agriculture and social and environmental justice.

All of you already support these values through your membership in our CSA, and we thank you for it! If you are looking to further support this movement and would like to become an associate member of the NFU, you can do so at:

<http://www.nfu.ca/about/associate-membership>