



NEWS FROM PROVIDENT ORGANIC FARM

www.providentfarm.org



Season 2, Week 30

"dedicated to a safe, just and sustainable food system"

November .3, 2003

NOTES FROM THE FIELD...

While Jay and his faithful volunteers cover the greenhouse, your dear editor will supply you with a few "notes" that the membership has penned and gathered since "the change". Enjoy!

some thoughts from a member....

[The CSA] is an effort to change the way things happen in our world. Those of us who began this whole counterculture thing in our youths in the now distant '60's (lord, 40 years ago!) mostly began with the kind of vague idea that change happens societally as a result of big actions (protests, sit-ins, maybe even revolutions). What I have observed for most of us, however, is that that perspective changed as we have aged. What most of us seem invested in now, as opposed to wholesale political change, is change at the individual or maybe "tribal" level.

What most of us seem to have come to believe is that the choices we make as individuals, every day, the hundreds and thousands of them, are the crux of real change in the world. We wound up as scholars or therapists or entrepreneurs or homemakers (or farmers) or even corporate types who invest, not cynically but with some considerable conviction, in individual and group efforts rather than huge political movements.

I think the CSA is a classic example of that conviction. Most of us, having lived for a while, know that things do not always go smoothly, and the rough occurs for everyone always, eventually. These last two years have been the rough. The smooth will come in its own time, and we will have the privilege of grousing because there is too much produce to use.

What we will be doing, however, is trying to come up with the resources to join the CSA again next year. And the year after that. And the year after that, if we can, because the CSA is like cancer in reverse. It spreads the good stuff, on lots and lots of levels, and that's about the best we can do to with the time we have.

Thank you for all your incredibly hard work, your faith, your family's support, and the willingness to risk for all of us. It will, without a doubt, get better. And we will all be there when it does. Dare I say "Power to the Produce"? If we couldn't laugh, where on earth would we find the courage to survive?

some thoughts a member found and forwarded.... excerpted from "Fields Of Battle" by John Feffer

....Since genetic engineering and government handouts have been justified in terms of saving the American farm, you might think that U.S. farmers line up with the [Bush] administration on these issues. Guess again, city slicker. The majority of farmers in the United States find themselves in the same predicament as farmers in the developing world. They're earning less, trying to produce more, and digging themselves into an ever deeper pit of debt and dependency. Whether in Dakar or Des Moines, these farmers are all pointing fingers at Washington.

Going into the 2004 elections, the Bush administration faces a major food crisis, precipitated by a catastrophic drop in prices for basic commodities. In the last seven years, the prices of primary export crops such as corn, wheat, soybeans, cotton and rice have plummeted 40 percent.

To the average U.S. consumer, this drop in prices might not seem so bad. Cheap food, after all, has always been a crowd pleaser. The problem is, consumers don't see all the costs on their grocery bills. Safeway and Giant don't charge extra for exhausted soil, don't slap on a surcharge for aquifers poisoned by over-farming and don't pass on the medical costs incurred by farmers suffering the effects of heavy pesticide and fertilizer use. Nor do consumers see that low prices enable large U.S. producers to dump their products overseas, undercutting the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of farmers around the world. The costs to family farms in the United States are equally devastating. The 90 percent of farmers who gross less than \$250,000 a year can barely scratch out a living, since their profit margins narrow to near invisibility after the costs of all inputs are factored in.

Washington's solution to this crisis has only made the problem worse. First in the 1996 farm bill and then more so with the 2002 sequel, Democrats and Republicans have supported a set of subsidies that are spectacularly unpopular with almost everyone—European competitors, farmers in the developing world, the tillers of Iowa and the milkers of Vermont, and even the average taxpayer. Since 1996, direct government payments to farmers have tripled in order to compensate for the dramatic drop in commodity prices. But even these payments go disproportionately to agribusiness and don't help family farmers out of their fix. Genetic engineers, with their visions of bumper crops of easy-to-ship tomatoes and pest-resistant soy beans, will only add to the problem. The challenge is not underproduction but the massive overproduction of food in the United States, Europe and elsewhere that is driving down prices and flooding the developing world.

The Bush administration has handed the Democrats the perfect electoral weapon, a way to combine public concerns over a ham-fisted foreign policy with the perennial election-year fixation on the domestic economy. To be sure, the Democrats share responsibility for kowtowing so shamelessly before agribusiness. But that was last season, and now the Democrats have a chance to redeem themselves.

If you would like to read the whole article, please visit www.tompaine.com/feature2.cfm/ID/9221

Recipes!

Broccoli Almondine Serves 4

2 lbs fresh broccoli
1/4 cup butter
2 minced green onions
1/4 cup sliced almonds
2 teaspoons fresh squeezed lemon juice
salt and pepper

1. Cook broccoli, drain and keep warm.
2. Heat butter until melted, then add green onions and almonds and stir over medium heat for about 2 minutes.
3. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper and pour the sauce over the broccoli.



Broccoli and Raisin Salad Serves 4

2 2/3 cups broccoli florets, cut into bite-size pieces
1 1/3 medium carrot, shredded
1 1/3 cups shredded red cabbage or green cabbage
1/3 cup raisins
2/3 small sweet onions, chopped
2/3 cup raisins

Dressing

2/3 cup mayonnaise
1/3-2/3 cup milk (depending how thick you want it)
2-4 tablespoons sugar (depending on your taste)
2 2/3 tablespoons vinegar
1 1/3 tablespoons lemon juice
salt and pepper

Combine all ingredients and chill.



Good Stuff, Cool Stuff

The "Park and Flea" is giving CSA members 50% off their table fees. Please take advantage of their generosity.

Please let Farmer Jay compost your leaves. He needs them in abundance! Call or e-mail the farm to make arrangements.



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COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome your comments and contributions, including recipes! Please send to ubuubok@dmv.com or Provident Organic Farm CSA, PO Box 62, Bivalve, MD 21814.