

ROXBURY FARM

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september 10, 2007-pick-up week #15

www.roxburyfarm.com

Letter from a farmer

Yesterday we went to the Farmaid concert at Randall's Island in NYC. We enjoyed the music but our heart was with the farmers that are less fortunate than us. Compared to Hurricane Katrina very little attention has been given to the farms that were affected by numerous rounds of showers and thunderstorms that moved last month across southeast Minnesota, northeast Iowa, and west central and southwest Wisconsin. The heaviest rain fell from the morning of August 18th through August 19th. In the following letter Richard de Wilde and Andrea Yoder will describe how the weather has affected their farm. The members have initiated a fundraising campaign to help the farm pay for the many repairs needed. While the financial loss of produce is significantly higher; the goal is to raise \$160,000. During the first five days the campaign has already raised \$20,000.

Why this particular farm? Harmony Valley farm is a special place and Richard is a beacon in the Midwest. I first met Richard in the early nineties as he and I taught a vegetable crop production course at Michael Fields Institute. Richard is not just one of the best farmers I know he is an inspiring teacher and he has helped hundreds of vegetable farmers get started. He has changed the landscape and outlook of many vegetable farms in the Midwest. Last time I visited Richard was in October of 2005 with our mutual friend John Peterson. Richard, as always, gave generously of his time to show us his farm and techniques. This visit helped us make many changes that have had a great impact on the quantity and quality of your weekly share. This is a time for us to give back to him for all the things he has given to the development of organic agriculture.

Our governor Eliot Spitzer has declared September 10 Farmaid day; let's all take this opportunity to pick him up on this great initiative by assisting this farm in need.

~Jean-Paul

FLOOD UPDATE

By Richard de Wilde & Andrea Yoder

It's hard to believe another week has gone by already since our last flood update. The remainder of last week brought us more rain on a daily basis. Since August 11, we've had 26 inches of rain! Come the weekend, we saw sunshine and parts of the farm finally started to dry out a little bit. Monday (*con't*)



Flooded fields at Harmony Valley Farm



Harmony Valley farm crew harvesting

(letter con't) morning brought with it another three inches of rain and today we had another inch, but the clouds parted and the afternoon was sunny. Over the past week, we have been assessing our damages and putting together a recovery plan. We have a lot of work ahead of us and now realize that the cost of our losses is greater than what we had originally estimated. We value your continued support and plan to keep you up-to-date on our status. Here is where we are as of now: We spent the weekend compiling a report of our crop losses. Over 50 different crops on about 50 acres were lost or significantly affected. Many were destroyed immediately when they were covered with water, while others are now a loss because the plants are dying or rotting due to so much moisture, and some plantings have been prevented. Using our production values from last year, we estimate our crop loss at a value of about \$800,000. Our crop insurance is a government program through the USDA. This is a poor program at its best and has been very frustrating to deal with in the past.

They have never used and are still resistant to using organic prices to estimate value. We will continue to pressure them to make the distinction between organic & conventional pricing. Despite our best efforts & lobbying, we do not expect to receive any money for these claims for quite awhile. Other damages include over 2,000 feet of washed out fencing. In addition to the cost of materials, this repair project will require several weeks of labor. Large equipment will be necessary to repair clogged and washed out drainage ditches, remove rock and debris, replace washed out top soil, repair river crossings in order to access fields, and creek and river bank repair. We have leased a bulldozer to accomplish a lot of the major land repair and rehabilitation to our fields and stream banks but we have been very limited in what we have been able to accomplish yet because of the continued rains. We still don't have access to some fields and will just have to wait for the river to go down more before we can do anything. A lot of trash and debris washed down the river and some of it was deposited in the fields and riverbanks. This will just take a lot of manual labor to remove. There are concerns that, as in any flood situation, runoff and pollution from neighboring farms and areas could have gotten into floodwaters that washed over our fields. We have already initiated our own testing for microbial pathogens in soil, water and vegetable samples from affected fields. Results are still pending. In addition, last week our largest wholesale account put a hold on purchasing from producers in flood-affected areas. We have hired a USDA GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) inspector to re-verify our GAP certification so we can continue to do business with that account. We are only harvesting crops from acres not in the river-bottom and not affected by floodwaters. This cautious stance has increased the number of acres adversely affected by the flood and therefore our losses are greater than estimated before. Be assured that the only crops we will bring to you are from those acres of crops that were removed by a good distance from the floodwaters. We had hoped to be able to continue with our full crew for the remainder of the season. Unfortunately, we had to lay off 10 full time and 20 contract workers last Friday. Our contract workers came in on an as needed basis to do weeding and onion cleaning; we simply do not have a sufficient harvest to keep them busy.

Many of you have expressed concerns for our crew's well-being and have communicated an interest in helping them. If you would like to support the farm and our employees with a monetary gift, you can send a check designated for flood recovery directly to the farm. Harmony Valley Farm, S. 3442 Wire Hollow Rd., Viroqua, WI 54665 608-483-2143 CSA@HarmonyValleyFarm.com

<http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com/>

COMING NEXT WEEK (OUR BEST GUESS)

salad mix, sweet-corn, winter squash, yukina savoy, red peppers, fennel, broccoli, mei-ching-choi, beefsteak and Juliet tomatoes, roma tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, garlic, basil, parsley, cilantro.

FRUIT SHARE: pears

PORK IS AVAILABLE:

We are sold out of mutton. We still have plenty of sweet pork sausage, hot pork sausage, and breakfast sausage. They are sold by the package. Look for order forms at your pickup site.

MEMBER WORKDAY:

Join us Saturday, September 15, to harvest potatoes and winter squash from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. There will be a potluck lunch around 12:30 pm so please bring a dish to share. Join us for the morning, the potluck, or the whole day. For directions and workday information go to the website www.roxburyfarm.com

DONATIONS TO HARMONY VALLEY FARM:

Please make your check out to Harmony Valley Farm and send it to

Harmony Valley farm
S.3442 Wire Hollow Road
Viroqua, WI 54655

Broccoli and Bok Choy Stir-Fry

- 1 T. peanut oil
- 1 red bell pepper, julienned (matchsticks)
- 1 green bell pepper, julienned
- 1 bunch of green onions, chopped
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 two-inch piece of ginger, grated
- salt & pepper
- 1 pound bok choy, shredded
- 2 T. sherry
- 1 T. soy sauce

Heat oil in wok or deep skillet. Stir-fry peppers, green onions, broccoli, ginger, salt and pepper until broccoli softens slightly, 3-4 minutes. Add bok choy and sherry; cook 2 minutes. Sprinkle with soy sauce. Serve immediately. Two servings. (*Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition*)