



2018

Weekly Note

Week of September 25

Farm Snapshot

This picture defines the conundrum we discovered upon returning from a weekend away. The road in and out of the farm is flooded. ...But deliveries will go forward!



By last Wednesday we had received a total of 6.5" of rain. We left Thursday late afternoon for a family wedding in northern MN. The river had risen, but the road in front of the farm was still completely drivable.

We left some minor chores in the care of our good neighbors. The storm we drove through Thursday night dropped even more rain north of the farm and by Friday afternoon, our neighbors reported that the road was flooded. That road sign you can see on the left-hand side of the photo is just about at the bottom of our farm lane. You'll note that it's as flooded either side of the sign.

This week we were anticipating the first cutting of our fall lettuce and tomatoes are still coming on strong (among other items); these items can't wait. Plus, with some more rain in the forecast, there's no telling just when our situation is going to dry up. So, what to do? Because we have our car on the "outside" of the farm, we decided to float the boxes by canoe to the car and from there making deliveries.

This is either a demonstration of just how dedicated we are? Or stubborn, or crazy, or ...pragmatic. Simply put - If we don't stick with the delivery schedule, you, our members are likely to miss out on some prime items and with just three more weeks of deliveries lost product would be a shame. And...after 23 years, darn it, we are going to get you your veggies!

After making these final deliveries, we really will have something to celebrate. We're thrilled to have more than 20 already planning to join us for the Oct. 13 OSTG CSA Party. Are you among those who have already signed up? If not please join us - we really do want to have as many

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Wednesday: Clarion, Belmond, Farm

Farm Contact:

Jan or Tim, 515/851-1690, libland@peconet.net

This week's box contents:

Zucchini or Yellow Summer Squash
Big Beef/heirloom Tomatoes
Green peppers
Red or Yellow, Sweet Peppers
Yellow Potatoes
Onion
Garlic
Buttercup squash
Lettuce/Spinach mix
Mixed Mustard greens

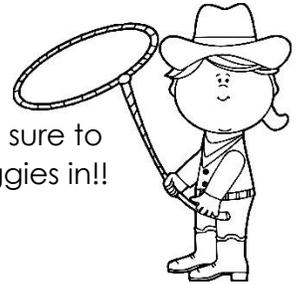
members participate as possible. We are looking forward to a delicious and lively time. See sign up directions below:

Have you signed up for the Oct. 13 OSTG Party? Go to this Eventbrite link:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/one-step-at-a-time-gardens-member-celebration-tickets-49536900202>

Use this passcode – **ostgparty**. Please join us!

So...now down to farm delivery schedule business... Our final weekly delivery is the week of Oct. 9. That means 1) we have just TWO more deliveries after this week; and 2) next week will be THE final week for some of our EOW members.

And... this means it's time for our **ANNUAL BOX ROUND UP** – Yee, Haw! The next 2 weeks we will use paper sacks that you don't have to return. Please be sure to return any lingering boxes over the next couple of weeks and bring those doggies in!! Thank you!!



In the Box **Featured vegetable of the week:** Winter squash

Three months or so ago these tiny sprouts began the journey that has ended in the winter squash you have begun to receive. Through thick and thin of this summer, they have come through.

We are providing a different winter squash each week and each time, they represent a different branch of the squash family: *Cucurbita maxima*, *C. moschata*, and *C. pepo*.



C. maxima's, including Buttercups - THIS WEEK'S FEATURE - Kabochas, and Hubbards, are

characterized by their large, spongy stem that turns corky as it ripens. As the name indicates, these also tend to be larger fruited varieties. These are excellent roasted



C. moschata's, the most commonly grown being the Butternuts, have rambling vines and a hard, slightly angular stem flaring out noticeably where it meets the fruit. With its smooth skin, this variety is often a prime go to for soup making.

Cucurbita pepo's, such as the Acorn squash you received last week, are usually the first to ripen. All *pepo*'s have a hard, angular stem with five sides. Where they touch the ground, *C. pepo* fruits develop an orange spot that darkens as the fruit ripens.



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This week also brings fall lettuce and you may find an occasional leaf of spinach (hopefully more of that next week). This new crop green is quite tasty as I can attest from Monday's harvest nibbling (a farmer has to sample the wears). We also harvested some of our mixed mustard greens – it's a small package that makes a nice addition to your lettuce salad. We should have more greens next week too.



I do think this is our final week of summer squash.

Recipe Spotlight **Summer Vegetable Bread Pudding** *(Serving Up the Harvest)*

Serves 8-12

1 lg. tomato, diced; 1 med. Zucchini/summer squash, quartered and sliced; 2 t salt – combine in colander, set aside to drain for 30 min.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 9-10 inch spring form pan with butter.;

In large bowl, whisk together - 5 lg. eggs; 3.5 C. milk; add 12 C. dried bread cubes and let soak while you cook the veggies;

Melt -2 T butter; with 2 T olive oil in lg. skillet over medium heat. Add;

*2 celery stalks, thinly sliced; 1 leek, white and tender green parts only – trimmed and thinly slices; 1 red bell pepper, diced; until softened. **[Our unique delivery system this week cut into harvest time. Leeks are coming next week]***

Add the zucchini, tomato that's been draining; 1 carrot, grated- saute until all vegetables are tender about 3 minutes longer

Add the veggies.; ½ lb. cheese (Cheddar, Swiss), grated about 2 C, packed); 2 sprigs fresh sage, finely chopped; 2 sprigs fresh thyme, finely chopped; ½ t. grated lemon zest; to the bread cube mixture and gently toss. Season generously with freshly ground black pepper and mix well.

Pack the mixture in the prepared pan. Place the pan on a baking sheet and bake for 55-65 minutes, until the top is crusty brown and a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean. If the pudding begins to look dark before its finished, cover with foil.

Let cook before serving. If you want the pudding to serve in firm slices, cool overnight in the refrigerator and reheat or serve at room temperature.

Gluten sensitive? Try toasting gluten free bread and cutting into squares or diced potatoes.

Spotlight: Crops Challenges of 2018

It's been a challenging growing year, for sure. Remember the snow lasting well into April? Then heat. Then rain and more rain and more rain. While we've been able to work around most of that, we are feeling some of the impact in one of our signature crops...our **carrots**. We will be assessing their status over the next week and we hope to include some in the next two week's boxes. We've had some leaf die-off which we attribute to the heavy rains in September and are unsure just how that's going to impact the final crop yield. I've done several test digs and what I found was smaller than I wanted (reflects really good seed germination with all this rain leading to a few too many carrots per foot), but otherwise fine and tasty. We should be sending along some great carrots, but the result will be in the digging coming up soon. And then there is the **broccoli**. We love our fall broccoli – it's the best of the season. However, where we planted this crop of fall broccoli has two strikes against it – shade from a tree planting we underestimated and water holding capacity of their location - both impacting the productivity of the broccoli. What has headed out looks great. But the portion of the bed that's most in the shade and in the

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wettest zone are stunted and delayed, cutting into available supply. We're not sure yet, just how much we will have and if that can be included in deliveries. Time will tell.

And finally, the **herbs**. We had planned several deliveries of herbs – parsley, summer savory, cilantro, etc. But persistent rains have simply beaten these young plants back. They are giving it their all, but supply is not what we expected. We should be able to provide a sampling over the next two weeks, but you won't get one of each variety as we had planned.

We're really glad, on the other hand, that the watermelon exceeded our expectations and that the tomatoes are still coming on strong. We still have two weeks to go and will be sending along **leeks, butternut squash, and beets** as some new (or renewed) items.

Food for thought: A Salute to Becky



Becky Ahrendsen, a Clarion member and our Clarion site host, has worked with us at OSTG for more years than we can remember. She works two days a week and believe it not, she came to work this Monday from the east side of the farm, walking up through the cornstalks.

Anyone who knows Becky, knows she has a heart as big as the sky and a desire to reach out and help just about anyone open to her embrace. She's active with a Latina support group in Clarion that encourages these young women to explore college after high school, has hosted exchange students for years, including a young woman from Kenya this school year. She and her husband, Jon, also host another Latino in their home who simply needs some support. Becky oftentimes can be found singing in the fields (probably one of the reasons the crops have

pulled through this challenging season) and is an enthusiastic worker at all farm tasks.

As we anticipate the end of the CSA phase of our business, we salute Becky for the energy she has shared with us and our members over all of these years!!! Becky, we love you!

Don't forget

the 2018 North Iowa Studio Tour, Sept. where you can meet up with 20 artists in 3 days! For



more, find them on facebook.

Mark your calendars and enjoy North Iowa's creative food and art community this month!!

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