

The Gannick* Weekly

Norwood CSA Newsletter

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* Gannick /GAN-nik/ - One who raises, eats or advocates organic foods and/or lifestyle.



New Studies Confirm Benefits of Organic Food

Recent studies done in Canada and the United States have confirmed the health benefits of eating organically grown foods. Results have shown that organic foods protect children from the toxins in pesticides and that commercially grown foods using “modern” agricultural processes contain fewer nutrients than they have in the past.

Researchers from Emory University, located in Atlanta, Georgia examined urine samples from children ages three to eleven who ate only organic foods contained little or no metabolites of the two most common pesticides used in commercial agriculture, malathion and chlorpyrifos. Children who returned to conventional foods saw the metabolite production quickly rise to concentrations as high as 263 parts per billion. Malathion is commonly used on crops and is present in household insecticides. Despite it being classified as “safe,” it has been linked with prostate cancer and interrupts transmission of nerve impulses. It is the same chemical that is routinely sprayed around New York to combat mosquitoes

Another recent prior study in Great Britain had already arrived at the same conclusions. Needless to say, these indisputable facts sent up howls of despair from the purveyors of mass-produced foods as they quickly attempted to dispute the indisputable. The British study also concluded the nutritional value and minerals of beef and dairy products had severely declined in the last 65 years by as much as 70 percent.

The research concluded that parmesan cheese had 70 percent less calcium and magnesium, beef had

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ATTENTION! NO DELIVERY NEXT WEEK!

There will be no vegetable delivery on Wednesday, September 28. Norwich Meadows Farm explains below:

As you can see, the share is a little light this week... We will not have enough stuff for next week. So we will skip one week while the fall crops are developing. We have a fair amount of cabbages, cauliflower, and broccoli that needs another 2-3 weeks to mature. We will add another week to make it up. Having done an inventory of what we have left, we should be able to do 19-20 weeks this year. This will also give us an opportunity to plant a few late things that will help for the winter CSA.

This gap occurred because of not being able to plant at the time of the floods and for 2-3 weeks after-wards as well as losing crops to the flood.

Winter CSA Program



If you forgot to send in your winter season registration form and check, don't fret -- you have a few days left. The final deadline is next **Thursday September 28**. The registration form was in last week's newsletter, and also on our website,

www.norwoodfoodcoop.org

Meanwhile, down on the farm...

Crops for the Week

We have been asked on a number of occasions if we can notify the CSAs early in the week to let them know what produce they will be receiving. Unfortunately, this is not possible because we do not know exactly what crop will be ready until as late as Tuesday night. By then, the newsletter has already been mailed. Much of what is picked depends upon (you guessed it) the weather. On Tuesdays, the workers go through the fields and tunnels and determine at that time, what shall be picked. There are some crops that are already known, but there is no way we can give a full accounting.

This week we know there will be onions, peppers, potatoes, beets, and possibly kale, collards, and chard. Winter squash is a “maybe” as are tomatoes.

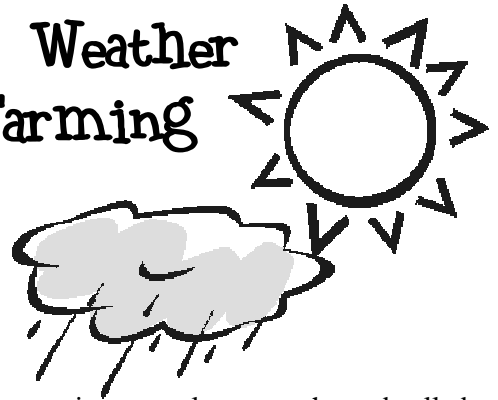
Farm News

The weather continues to be wet with moderate temperatures during the day and night temperatures hovering around 50 degrees. Saturday, the sun finally broke through and the forecast for the week is temperatures in the mid to high 70s until Tuesday with the temperatures dropping to the mid 60s and high 50s on Wednesday. Night temperatures on Tuesday and Wednesday are predicted to be in the low to mid 40s.

The cooler temperatures mean nothing will grow fast and temperatures below 50 degrees will arrest most plant growth. In mid July a lot of crops in the Brassica family (cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts and mustard greens) were planted and should be maturing soon (weather permitting). Brassicas do well in cool weather. Within the next couple of weeks all the winter squash that has matured will be picked. Out of the three to four tons of expected yield, we shall be fortunate to harvest one ton. Last year the CSAs received four weeks of winter squash, this year it most likely will be one week.

Celery is finished for the season as two thirds of the crop were ravaged by insects. Melons did not do well either. Out of a 300 foot bed, only one paltry melon developed. The problem with the melons was that during the flowering stage we experienced heavy rains. When it rains, bees do not come out and do what they do well, and that is to pollinate. Consequently, without this vital service bees naturally perform, we have no melons.

About Weather and Farming

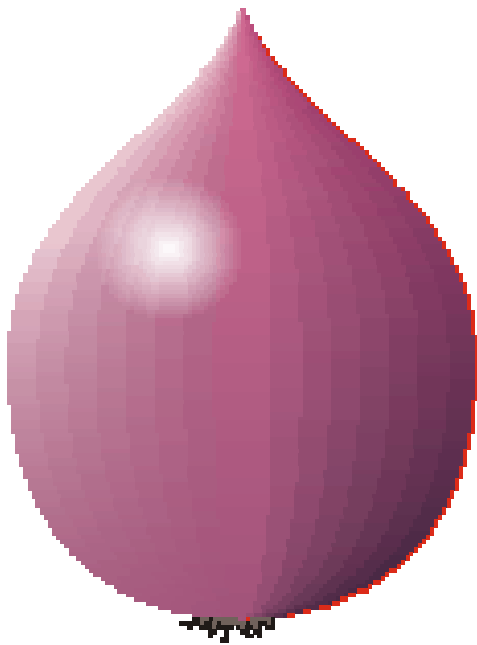


In many of the previous newsletters we have dwelled upon the weather and its relationship to farming. Most people are involved in businesses where the weather has little significance or no impact on their continued successes. Farming is obviously not one of them. The success and existence of every farmer in the world is totally dependent on the weather. It is unfortunate that in the last seven years of farming, Norwich Meadows Farm had only two outstanding years. The remaining five years were plagued with problems caused by disruptive and extreme weather patterns ranging from drought to floods. Needless to say, this is not very good news. But no one is ready to “throw in the towel.”

A great effort is underway to raise money to construct additional tunnels which can mitigate many of the weather factors (but not all). There are proposals in the works to diversify sources of income, such as the Farm Tour Program. Another idea being pursued is to bring additional farms into the CSA program to diversify products and to fill in the gaps when there are crop failures on one of the farms. Each farm would grow whatever does best on their land. For example, one farmer has sandy soil which is good for growing carrots and asparagus. Another has soil that is best for potatoes, etc. There would also be an overlap of some staple field crops, such as lettuce. All the farms would be certified organic growers spread across upstate counties. Norwich Meadows Farm would continue to do the marketing and trucking.

Another advantage of other farms participating in the program is that Norwich Meadows Farm can take 2 - 3 acres out of production to build up the soil. This would be done by planting various cover crops, such as sorghum, buckwheat, rye, bell beans and clover. Crops such as sorghum, rye and buckwheat add quantities of organic matter to the soil and also smother the growth of weeds, one of the arch nemeses of all farmers. Bell beans and clover will add the all important nitrogen fixing bacteria.

Vegetable Spotlight



Onions

Onions, like garlic, are members of the Allium family, and both are rich in powerful sulfur-containing compounds that are responsible for their pungent odors. Onions are very rich in chromium, a trace mineral that helps cells respond to insulin, plus vitamin C, and numerous flavonoids.

Bulbs from the onion family have been utilized as a food source for millennia. In Palestinian Bronze Age settlements, traces of onion remains were found alongside fig and date stones dating back to 5000 BC.

Onions have numerous health benefits, such as lowering blood sugar levels. They also lower cholesterol levels, high blood pressure and the regular use of onions can significantly reduce the risk of developing colon cancer. Many other health benefits have been shown, all are attributed to the sulfur compounds present in onions.

These are the same compounds that produce tears while slicing onions. Powerful enzymes break down the sulfides and generate sulfenic acid which immediately decomposes into a gas. This gas reaches the eyes where it combines with water to form a mild solution of sulfuric acid which irritates the eye's nerve endings. Our body reacts by producing tears to remove the irritant.

Onion Rings

- 5 medium onions (yellow or red)
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup beer
- 3-4 cups vegetable oil for frying
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt

Combine flour and beer in a large bowl, blending thoroughly. Cover and allow batter to sit at room temperature for at least 3 hours. Afterwards gently stir in the sugar and salt. Cut onions into one-fourth inch or larger slices. Separate slices into rings. Heat oil to 375 degrees F. (Determine temperature by dropping a sample ring into the hot oil -- it should begin to immediately sizzle and quickly rise to the top. Dry sliced rings and roll in flour. Then dip onion rings into batter and fry until delicate golden brown. The batter can be made thicker by adding more flour or thinner by adding more beer.

Serves 6

Onion Casserole

- 3 lb. onions, sliced and separated
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- paprika

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In medium saucepan combine onions with water to cover. Bring to boil; boil 1 minute. Drain. Transfer to 8-inch square baking dish. In bowl combine egg, cream, salt and pepper; pour over onions. Sprinkle with cheese, then paprika. Bake 25 minutes.

Serves 6

Preserving Onions

Onions can be chopped and dried in the oven. Use the lowest setting and remove when thoroughly dry but not brown. Store at room temperature in airtight containers.

Onions can be frozen. Chop and place on a cookie sheet in the freezer. When frozen, remove and place in freezer containers or bags, and seal. This allows you to remove the amount you want when you want it. Freezing changes the onion's texture, so frozen onions should be used for cooking only.