

Some Official Business

By John

It hardly seems possible but here we are 18 weeks into the season. It hardly seems that long ago that Lidia and I were fretting over our fields in late May. Wondering, will we have anything ready the first week of June? If something is out there, how many items can we put together for a share? We can distinctly remember how on edge we felt about meeting our members for the first time and praying that we would meet your expectations. Yet somehow by the by, here we are almost at the conclusion of our first season together. I have lots more to say about that in the coming weeks but right now we have some official business to take care of as the end of this season draws near and we prepare for 2012. I suppose I should dive right into the bad news first and try to wrap up on a higher note. There are several logistical changes that we need to make in the coming year. The most significant with regards to our members is that we will not be returning to the Inver Grove Heights Farmers Market next year. I would like to say that this was a much more difficult decision than it was. If it wasn't for our commitment to our members I have a feeling we would have pulled out of the market a while ago. We knew as a small mid-week market to curb expectations. We conservatively anticipated gross sales to be roughly \$5500 for the year. To date our sales have only been about \$1500 most of which has been from 3 or 4 loyal customers. It doesn't take an MBA to know that those numbers are very ugly. That income barely covers the gas for the week but doesn't even begin to cover Lidia's time. For the first couple months Lidia was coming home brokenhearted but since then she just comes home angry and frustrated. Whether we consider it financially or emotionally there is just no way that we can justify returning to that market or any other St. Paul affiliate for the matter. That being said, we don't want to abandon our Inver Grove Heights members. We want to work with you to come up with a creative solution. One solution would be to form a core group. Core groups are much more common to CSA's back east. Making this work takes more effort from the members but can be very rewarding. It basically means finding a place that we can run the distribution, it might in a members garage, a church basement or a health clinic. One advantage of this is that it allows members to be more intimately involved as farm volunteer members without having to come to the farm. Generally there will be a site coordinator and volunteers. The site coordinator is compensated with a

WHATS ON DECK

Potatoes, carrots, beets and winter squash will all keep coming in. Along with onions and garlic. As usual you can expect to see a variety of greens. Cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower are here and hopefully will be here until the end. The radishes and turnips are looking great too. Frost rang the death knell for the tomatoes, peppers and eggplant and other than some green tomatoes we think they are gone until 2012

comp share for the season and is responsible for coordinating volunteers, communicating with the farm about any issues pertaining to the site, making sure that the site is open and ready for delivery, restocking vegetables if necessary as well as making sure that the site is picked up after distribution, delivery crates are put away and that leftover produce is brought to the food pantry or composted if bad. Of course it isn't expected that the coordinator do all of this themselves each week (though some like to). The most critical part of the coordinators job is organizing farm volunteers to cover distribution shifts to help us set up the site and make sure the site is picked up and leftovers taken to a food pantry. The farm will supply everything that is needed; tables, sign-in sheets, chalkboards, and training etc. that is needed to run the site. This is a tried and true system for many CSA's and we would like to open up a conversation about it. We will still be attending the Saturday market in Bloomington as currently scheduled. We will also continue the farm distribution but we are going to move it to either Tuesday or Wednesday. This is in order to spread out harvests over the course of the week rather than being crammed into a few days at the end of the week. The idea is that this allows us to better manage crops and have more consistent yields and better take advantage of crops that are at their prime early in the week. We will be looking for another farmers market to attend, we don't have any details yet but we are hoping to be in or around Minneapolis. You should have gotten a membership renewal form this week. If you would like to secure your membership please fill out the form and return it to us with a \$25 deposit to guarantee your membership for next season. The deposit is non-refundable except for our Inver Grove Heights members who want to secure a share but want to wait and see what happens for next year. We will bill you for the balance or partial payment after January 1st. This

This is because our fiscal year ends December 31st and it is not advantageous to take in income in 2011 that is actually income for 2012 when it comes to filing our taxes. This is why we ask for just \$25 to secure your membership. All renewing members receive a \$20 discount towards membership. We have also instituted a referral program. If you refer a new member to us just make sure they let us know and we will credit you \$15 for the first referral and \$10 for each additional referral. They also will receive a \$10 discount for joining.

Ugh, I know official business is as boring to read as it is to write about but I suppose it is an essential part of staying *in* business.

Recipe of the Week

Kickin' Collards

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 3 slices bacon
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon pepper
 - 3 cups chicken broth
 - 1 pinch red pepper flakes
 - 1 pound fresh collard greens, cut into 2-inch pieces
1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add bacon, and cook until crisp. Remove bacon from pan, crumble and return to the pan. Add onion, and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Add garlic, and cook until just fragrant. Add collard greens, and fry until they start to wilt.
 2. Pour in chicken broth, and season with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes, or until greens are tender.



Seized idler on an interference engine; change your timing belt when it's due.

Featured Item

Welcome to the South, this week our featured item is collard greens. Often under appreciated, this delicious crops has diverse uses with a unique and delicate flavor somewhere between broccoli and kale. Plus the health benefits hard to find in other plants. Packed with cancer fighting phytochemicals, iron, vitamin A, C and K, folate and calcium. They are also high in protein so far greens go. A bit tougher than their cousin kale they require a bit more cooking. You can use it just like any other cooking green from salads, chips, soups and sautés and more. Collard greens should stay fresh in your fridge for upwards of a week if kept in a plastic bag. You can also de-stem, blanch and freeze them for well over a year.

News and Notes

- Inver Grove Heights members, we were informed that the market ends one week earlier than we had been informed. This means we need to make alternate plans for the final 2 deliveries October 13th and 20th
- Bloomington members, if you haven't already, let us know if you can pick up at the farm Friday October 21st or if we need other arrangements.
- Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about becoming a site coordinator or site volunteer, or if you just want some more information about what it is and how it works.
- If you have any leads on a potential drop site in the Inver Grove Heights area please let us know. If you would like to volunteer a site at your home or office you will receive a free full share as rent payment each and every year we are there.
- This week we will email you a link to the CSA member survey. It is critical that you take a few minutes to complete the survey in order to improve our CSA and the CSA experience as a whole. Your opinions count most of all.
- If you would still like to order a Winter Storage Box Let us know at your CSA distribution or order online.