

Hold Your Head High

From John

Since we received the news that we would be losing our farmland we have been listening carefully to what our friends, family and members have had to say about it. What we are hearing is that the best thing for us to do is to tell our story; to let people know who we are and what we are all about, with an eye down the road rather than playing 'he said, she said.' We couldn't agree more, but telling our story doesn't come easy for us, we are a little uncomfortable talking about ourselves and tend to be private. Some of what I'll say is things we have never told even our closest friends with few exceptions. On the other hand our lives and experiences are what have made us who we are and inspire our dreams. Maybe the title should be 'A Concise History of Your Farmers.' Things have never come easily for us; we have become almost too familiar with loss and starting over. We have worked our knuckles to the bone our whole lives to get where we are and with success so close to being within our grasp we will fight harder than we ever have before.

When Lidia was born, Brasil was under the rule of a military dictatorship that was beginning to crumble. As it fell apart in 1985 the economy followed suit as the country tried to come to grips with its new found freedom. Her parents were poor farmers from rural Sao Paulo before moving to the city in the 1980's. With little education and a dream, her father gave up his job as a bus driver and decided to go into business for himself and open a market. Like any entrepreneur the hours were long and the margins thin and the changing culture in Brasil didn't make it any. As the military lost its grip on power rampant corruption took hold and a period of hyper-inflation ruled the economy. For a period of several years, the average monthly inflation of about 30%. It is hard to understate what that would be like. Imagine \$2.99 gallon milk costing over \$90 a year later. The price off everything changed every day, there was no way to predict what it would cost to make your next stock order or if the sales you made one day would have any value the next. This period of hyper-inflation crippled the entire nation. Brasil was a third-world nation in every sense of the

ON DECK

Look for collards, broccoli, cauliflower, onions, carrots, greens, parsley, winter squash, radishes and turnips. If the frost holds off we will keep the peppers, tomatoes and eggplant coming.

word. Even after managing to eke out a living through this, the government seized everyone's bank accounts with more than \$1300 in them in 1990. Once again the family was starting over. Lidia and her sister endured all off this spending much of their youth working at the market by day and going to school at night. Quit was never an option for the Dungle's. Even after losing it all twice, the family kept growing and bettering. While Lidia's father ran the business and took care of the girls, her mother went back to school and earned a teaching degree. Her parents never took vacations, her father didn't take a day off from work for nearly 20 years and saved every penny they earned. Starting from nothing they were able to send their daughters to college giving them opportunities that would have seemed unimaginable 20 years before. Lidia's little sister is well on her way to being a physical therapist and Lidia followed her dream all the way to America. The grit and toughness Lidia gained by working alongside her dad and looking up to her mother's quest for knowledge is evidenced in her life today. It took a whole family working together to move from third-world poverty to successful middle class.

My story isn't so different. I guess I might say my farming career started from birth on the homestead. We raised milk, meat, eggs, fruit, vegetable and harvested wild foods. Not because my parents were 'back to the earth' hippies, but because we were poor, dirt-poor. There was even a rumor that we had dirt floors in our house, not true but that was the perception. I was for the most part a really happy kid, I loved the freedom of the woods and the skill of raising food and all things outdoors. I have been weeding and stacking firewood for as long as I can remember. Work was just what I was used to. It never occurred to me that this wasn't how everyone lived. By age 10 though, it all started to fall apart and a different reality began to reveal itself. My mother also was going back to school like Lidia's mother. I didn't know at the time; she was planning her escape from a loveless marriage and abusive father. At that

point I had no idea how close my brother, sisters and I were to being separated and put into foster care. Shortly after that the divorce was going through. My father was in prison; my home was lost to the bank as was our car. We were left less than nothing, homeless and saddled with the bill for years of my father's tax evasion. Luckily while going back to school my mom met a man who became my true Dad. A man that saved our family. He fell in love with a woman and her four children unquestioningly. We were still broke but my dad worked double shifts and Saturdays. We lived off less than \$20,000/year for the next few years. I got my first job at twelve for a neighbor; gardening, taking care of the lawn, splitting and stacking firewood and milling lumber. I earned \$3/hour and used the money to help buy school clothes and supplies (a lot of baseball cards too). Much like Lidia's parents, my mom and dad worked endlessly for us to have a better life. Slowly and steadily my family drew itself up from the bottom allowing my siblings and me a better future. I was able to follow my passion and love of nature in to college where I found my true-self and my dream.

Both Lidia and I like many other kids, were often embarrassed about where we were from and ashamed of our families and circumstances. As we grew older the shame has turned to pride and appreciation. We are proud of who we are, where we are and how we got here. We appreciate all the love and sacrifice we received from our families and recognize how it has shaped our characters. We could very easily have played victim to those that hurt us, sought pity and felt bad for ourselves. But that's not what we learned from our families. What we learned, was that a vicissitude only represents new possibilities to be found on the other side of the glass. The horizon will always be brighter, and we will never stop running towards it

News and Notes

- If you haven't had a chance to respond to [Allison](#) about our upcoming meeting about the future of the farm on Sept. 30th, please do. We know there is great skill and talent within our membership that can help secure a bright new beginning.
- We will begin delivering chickens on October 9th, which is CSA Week #19. We will hold the price at \$4.00/pound. Please fill out and return an [order form](#) to reserve your birds.
- If you want more tomatoes for canning we have them for sale. They are #2 tomatoes (ugly but edible) in a 20# box for 20 bucks.

Featured Item

Cauliflower just might be one of the best indicators that fall has arrived. No frost yet but there is little doubt that the season is changing. Cauliflower (white) bucks the wisdom of 'more color for more nutrition', though our colored varieties would still adhere. It has all the nutrient density of broccoli with a very mild flavor. The heads are a bit on the small side right now but they will continue to size up. It's wonderful raw, baked, grilled or processed into a soup, cream or soufflé. Steaming and boiling works well too but you lose some of the flavor. It can be blanched and frozen just like broccoli or kept for several weeks in a sealed bag in your crisper drawer. For those more daring it will blow your mind in a spicy pickled veggie mix (hot mix) with carrots. onions. peppers and more.



Next year we hope to have more flowers for everyone!

Recipe of the Week

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large head cauliflower, separated into florets
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Directions

- 1) Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F (220 degrees C). Grease a large casserole dish.
- 2) Place the olive oil and garlic in a large re-sealable bag. Add cauliflower, and shake to mix. Pour into the prepared casserole dish, and season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 3) Bake for 25 minutes, stirring halfway through. Top with Parmesan cheese and parsley, and broil for 3 to 5 minutes, until golden brown.