

Think Grassroots

From John

The farming is starting to wind down but everything else is starting to rev up. There are a few things we would like to cover this week but I think we should brief you on the land search. We had about 18 members attend the meeting on Sunday to discuss the future of the farm. We had a very productive conversation and will be working to put that conservation into action. I won't get into too many details for now, but as soon as I get the minutes together you can expect and email from us with all the info you need to know about the meeting and how you can get involved. Many of you asked us to fill you in since you were unable to attend, so here is the gist with details to follow very soon. We defined a 1st, 2nd, 3rd and worst case scenario with regards to where we will farm next season and a corresponding timeline. In none of these scenarios is not farming for you next year an option. In all reality, a farm search will usually be a minimum of a one year process if not much longer. We feel that we need to have a home within the next 6 to 8 weeks, daunting doesn't seem strong enough word to describe the task ahead, yet we are optimistic that as a team we will pull it off. What we learned, is that we have incredible power and dedication within the membership of the farm. Our members are astoundingly diverse in their skills, talents, resources and connections all of which we will need to meet the challenge ahead. So here's the preview the game plan. We need as many people to get involved as possible in an organized way. This will take the form of an internet portal where we can maintain a task list, form teams to take on each task and check-in with their status and mark them complete as we finish them. This sounds a little bit complicated on the surface; like the first couple of CSA pick-ups, it might be a bit confusing at first but the logic will become clear and it will all make sense. The main point of using this portal is that people can check-in on the progress of the project and lend their skills without us having to arrange meeting after

ON DECK

We are expecting some heavier freezes so enjoy the last of the peppers and red tomatoes, though we may still pick some greenies and hold onto them for a while. Not much else will change from this week except that we should have some celeriac available next week.

meeting and bounce endless emails and phone calls back and forth. It will allow us to get done what we need to get done without redundancy or creating an information/communication bottleneck. We began to assign tasks to the meetings attendees and will soon expand to the broader membership and community. Some of these tasks are putting together a website, Facebook page or some equivalent which will serve of the public face of a media and/or fundraising campaign to raise awareness about the farm and our land search. We are working off the assumption that there are people out there that aren't even aware that they want to help a farm find a home but soon will. Some members will explore their own connections with people such as landholders, real estate agents, media contacts, foodies and anyone else that might help us to turn over every stone. We have heard many touching stories about what our farm and its food means to them and how it has affected them. Telling those stories is invaluable, whether on the Facebook page, the website or to the media at large, a little letter can go a long way. Down the road we may need help with tearing down, packing, moving and setting up at a new farm. This is in no way a complete list of ways to get involved but hopefully shows that there is a way for everyone to pitch in and that every contribution will help. It is our goal that we can quickly cast the biggest net we can, reach as many people as possible and make the few crucial connections that will lead us to our new beginning. This experience has been fascinating if not bewildering for us. Firstly, because asking for help is something that is truly novel for us. We both have a long history of a 'go it alone' way of doing things, we just aren't used to leaning on others to get things done. It hasn't been easy for us at all to get over a feeling of shame and weakness for

admitting that we really can't do this alone and putting the SOS out there. The response however, has been so humbling that we hardly know how to feel. We feel a little embarrassed when people tell us how much they really care about us and how much the work we do means to them. But their can hardly be something more uplifting than hearing it. We have poured everything we have into this farm, into our dream and into our vision for a better and more just world. With all the long days, sleepless nights and quite literally blood, sweat and tears; there are times we can't help but wonder, 'why are we doing this?', 'does any of this really matter? Because of your encouragement, generosity and kindness; we know that it does matter, what we do does make a difference and we are on the only path we would ever take. When we consider everything we have sacrificed, we look back and wouldn't change a thing. What asking for help has taught us is that community matters, that there is beauty in the human heart and that when you truly believe in something, the people who believe in you won't let you fall. It would be easy to become cynical, pessimistic and vindictive, and if we decided to stick it out alone we just have taken the bait and fallen in the pit. Rather, we are optimistic, excited, hopeful and confident. It will be difficult, but we aren't afraid anymore. We can't ever thank you enough for showing us that there is a better way!

News and Notes

- **BLOOMINGTON MEMBERS:** The Bloomington market ends one week before the CSA season so we will need an alternative sight for the last delivery as well as root box pickup. We are planning on picking up 2 markets on those days in Minneapolis, you can pick up there or we can do a box-drop in town if we can find a host for a couple weeks.
- Chicken deliveries will start next week and be available for purchase and pick up through the end of the season. Please fill out and return an [order form](#) to reserve your birds if you so desire.
- With the farm moving next year, the Farm pickup will be no more. We don't want to abandon our Farm members. If any of our Farm pick-up members have ideas about or interest in a host site in Lakeville/Farmington/Apple Valley please let us know. All CSA hosts are compensated with a Full Share.

Featured Item

The sweet potato rules the day. We are excited to have them available from now until the end of the season. I will avoid my sweet potato is not a yam pet-peeve diatribe. Other than to say that unless you've spent much time along the equator you have probably never seen a yam. That thing called a yam in the store; it's a sweet potato. Sweet potatoes are challenging to produce. You need to buy in slips (live plants without soil, usually from the south) for plant. They are harvested much like regular potatoes except they have very tender skins and need to be handled gingerly. Then they need to be cured at 80-90° and 95% humidity for 7-10 days before storage. I won't detail the curing process but it is absolutely critical. This is where the sweetness comes from. We sample the potatoes with a refractometer to determine when enough sugar has developed for the best flavor, otherwise they will remain starchy. NEVER put a sweet potato in the fridge. They are best kept in a brown paper bag on your counter or another cool area (50-60° is best). They should keep for 4-8 weeks in this manner.



Blue moon lighting the path to the market

Recipe of the Week

Sweet Potato Curry Soup

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. sunflower oil
- 2 tsp. mild curry paste
- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 medium-sized sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces
- 4 tbsp. red split lentils
- 1 1/4cup chicken stock
- 400ml can coconut milk
- 175g frozen peas

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a deep frying pan or wok, stir in the curry paste and fry for 1 minute.
2. Add the chicken, sweet potatoes and lentils and stir to coat in the paste, then pour in the stock and coconut milk. Bring to the boil, and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Tip in the peas, bring back to the boil and simmer for a further 4-5 minutes.
4. Season to taste before serving.