



Farm life can be very busy and stressful in the moment but is also incredibly rewarding when we view it holistically. The best days here are when we do short bursts of productive work, intermixed with time spent with our children doing projects or exploring nature. We had a great day like this on Sunday, where positive attitudes all around helped us accomplish a lot on the farm while spending nearly all day engaged with the boys. It has taken a long time to adjust to a life where we don't leave home very often, and there is no work-life separation. I thought I'd dedicate this newsletter to some snapshots into our daily farm life!!!

We're not up as early as our dairy farmer friends, but we do rise sometime around 6:30 am to make coffee and check our e-mails and social media. It's a time to get mentally prepared for the day, which generally begins in full force at 9am when our employee and work shares show up. Sally and I are generally out before 8am to do the chicken chores, open up the buildings and greenhouses, and start making lists of what need to get done. A little organization in the morning goes a long way! In between all that our three boys awake at varying times and need breakfast, diaper changes, help with getting dressed, and mediation for the natural arguments that happen between brothers who like the same toys!

Our mornings right now revolve around harvesting veggies for the CSA on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays. On the other days we are planting, weeding, or packing boxes for delivery. The afternoons in July are typically hot and unbearable, but this year we've been able to get in the fields all afternoon and work comfortably on weeding, cultivating, and building projects. Any errands or shopping we have in town is done in the afternoons.

A major project lately has been the construction of our new walk-in cooler that we purchased from the restaurant in Henderson. Last week we had a refrigeration contractor out to do the final hook-up of the refrigeration components, and we officially turned it on this weekend!!! For many years we have had old truck coolers parked outside our washing/packing house, and it's been rather inefficient to carry boxes of produce from our washing sinks inside to coolers parked around the back of the building. Or we've been using old refrigerators which are never large enough for what we want. Now we have a large walk-in cooler within feet of our washing sink and packaging areas – all in our building away from the heat and sun! Sometimes the simplest solutions help a business become more efficient and this is definitely the case with our walk-in.

**Vegetable List:**

**Cabbage**  
**Broccoli**  
**Kale**  
**Beet Greens**  
**Cucumbers**  
**Zucchini**  
**Green Beans**  
**Basil**  
**And more...**

**Note: we may not have all of these every day, but rest assured you will get them all in the next few weeks as supplies increase**

**Kale, Collards, Swiss chard, other greens:**

Greens like these are a major component of many CSA's due to their reliability in our Minnesota climate. Plus, they are among the most nutritious vegetables due to their high vitamin content. Our Midwestern diet is not always used to eating greens like these but they have been gaining in popularity the past few years. The simplest way to use them is chop them finely and cook them with ground meats, rice, or pasta sauces. We encourage you to try them in soups or baked dishes, and we do have a lot of recipes on our website!!

Back to the farm life – we get tired by around 5:00 and are ready to rest a bit. That means some time indoors to make dinner and be with the kids. On good days they help out with dinner and are a joy to be around. On other days they are bickering, crying, breaking things, and complaining about being bored. I'm sure you folks with small children can relate! We usually go out as a family after dinner and do evening chores, play, explore, and maybe do a little work. Farm work can be addictive and we have realized that we need to cut ourselves off after dinner because we need to rest our minds and bodies. Of course, some tasks require us to work late, like when its haying time or the cows get out of their fence.

Speaking of haying, we do have a major project this week that involves cutting and baling about 12 acres of various grasses and legumes. We have 6 acres of alfalfa, 1 acre of oats, and about 5 acres of grass hay to cut and bale. It's a great week to make hay as there is no rain in the forecast for a while. Ideal hay is cut in mid-summer when there are stretches of dry sunny weather to cure the hay for maximum nutrients in the finished product. If the hay is cut and partially dried and gets rained on, the nutrients leach out and it is not very palatable or nutritious for the livestock. Our first cutting of alfalfa got about 10 inches of rainfall, and it is only useful for bedding, mulch, or compost now. The luck of the farming draw!

Now that the summer heat (if you can call the '70s heat) has come, many of our crops are growing rapidly. We lost our early season this year, and when that happens we have to be patient until late July and August when the summer crops begin to produce. We now have green beans, zucchini, cucumbers, basil, cabbage, and broccoli. What's even more exciting is to see the crops that are growing rapidly but not yet producing. This gives us an idea of what's to come! For example, the eggplant and peppers and tomatoes are vibrant and healthy but not yet producing. The Brussels sprouts, leeks, onions, and sweet potatoes are fall crops and will perhaps be our best crops this year. We have to be optimistic in years like this (generally considered terrible for farming) and celebrate what things are working out!

Vegetable farming is unique in that there are many crops that can be planted multiple times throughout the season. Our first beets and carrots won't produce much this year because of the weather, but I just planted more for the late summer and fall. The best root crops come in the fall anyway because they get sweeter under cool conditions. We are planting more salad greens this week, more cabbage and broccoli, more basil and green onions, and head lettuce for a fall harvest. It's our job as CSA farmers to keep the crops coming week after week, and that means we plant continuously through mid-September. If one crop fails due to pests or weather, there will be more of something else to supplement. Corn and Beans can only be planted within a certain window in the spring, but veggies and herbs can be planted throughout the season. It sure keeps us busy, but it's a rewarding life and we love it!!

Thank you! Josh, Sally, and the boys!