

# Buckhill Farm CSA

## Newsletter

~~ Farming for a Healthy Community ~~

July 8 - July 18, 2015

### Rain, Rain...



“Be careful what you wish for...” In our case, we are trying hard not to wish the rain away, but when you are in the midst of one of the wettest growing seasons on record, the thought does cross your mind. Every time we feel like we are starting to dry out, the rain pours down again. The cultivating tractors have been sitting idle, and the weeds keep growing and growing. Wet conditions are not ideal

for many reasons, and it is difficult to stay optimistic as certain crops suffer. The average rainfall in June for our area is .22 inches, with a max of 1.6 inches historically. This year in June, we received 6.7 inches of rain, and so far another inch in July.

The time frame to work the soil and plant this season has been so very thin. On average our fields need a minimum of three to four days to dry out after a good soaking rain. This is assuming we have an abundance of sunshine and a nice steady breeze. Then we need another two days to plant. One misstep could mean nothing gets planted. Just about every field planting has followed such a pattern this season. Looking at the weather forecast has given me more than a few grays this past month; but the thrill and excitement is incredible when our crew pulls together, digs deep and accomplishes ground prep and seeding in just a few hours.

Cultivation has been a little less successful. For us it is all about timing. We have to hit the weeds with our hoes and cultivators at just the right time or they will keep growing. The rain has kept us from doing just that, which results in an increase in hand weeding. On multiple occasions, we have gone in and cultivated with our tractors only to have the weeds get watered back in the very next day. We have had to institute a carry out rule: pull it, put it in a bin, and walk it out to the end of the row.

The few upsides to all the rain are that we are not running our irrigation pumps and my

grass and clover-filled lawn at home has never been greener.

### **Bring the Heat**

I walk our fields multiple times during the week (this is called scouting). We look for good bugs, bad bugs, disease, and weeds pressure. We also look at and forecast when certain crops can be harvested. A few crops that have been on the 'coming up soon' list are tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and cucumbers. We are harvesting them, but in very small quantities. The plants are loaded with flowers and small fruit, but they just aren't growing. Then I remember that it has been rather cool the past few weeks. While you won't hear me or the crew complain about lower than expected temperatures when we're working, the above mentioned crops thrive in the heat. For the love of tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers, I say 'bring the heat' already.

### **New Faces**

As I am sure many of you who pick up at the farm have noticed, we have some new faces around the farm and in the pickup room. While Coral and I loved being at every distribution or market day, we were finding ourselves a little stretched thin with our recent growth. I would like to introduce our new staff members.

Tim Herrman is our farm apprentice. He was born and raised in Lancaster and attended Warwick High School. Tim has spent the last two years in West Virginia working on an Associate's Degree in business. His interests in relation to the farm lie in sustainable agriculture, permaculture, and foraging for mushrooms. Tim will be in the distribution room on Wednesdays and every other weekend.

Heather Hornberger is a part time member of our farm crew. She was born and raised in Ephrata and recently moved back the area from Asheville, NC. Heather comes to us with a wealth of farm work experience, as she has worked on a number of farms over the past 10 years. When she is not digging in the dirt, she has her own massage business and helps to care for her grandmother. Heather works at the market stand on Thursday afternoons and in the distribution room on Saturdays.

Naomi Beach is a new work share member who helps out on Fridays in the distribution room. She is a native of South Africa, but her family just moved to the States from Switzerland. She loves to weed, so we hope to get her out in the fields to dig in the dirt as soon as possible.

Please take some time to introduce yourself and get to know the staff. They can help answer any questions you might have, or pass along any concerns.

## **Recipe Corner**

### **Beets and Caramelized Onions with Feta**

~ Gourmet Magazine, September 2003

2 Tbsp. Cider Vinegar

1 tsp. Dijon Mustard (preferably whole-grain or coarse-grain)

¼ tsp. Black Pepper

¾ tsp. Salt

5 Tbsp. Olive Oil

2 Onions (medium), quartered lengthwise, then cut crosswise into 1-inch pieces

2 Small Whole Beets, drained and quartered

½ cup Crumbled Feta (1 oz.)

¼ cup Pine Nuts (1 oz.), toasted and coarsely chopped

Whisk together vinegar, mustard, pepper, and ½ teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Add 3 tablespoons oil in a slow stream, whisking until combined well.

Cook onions with remaining ¼ teaspoon salt in remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat, stirring occasionally until golden brown (18 to 20 minutes). Add onions to dressing, then add beets and cheese, stirring gently to combine. Serve sprinkled with pine nuts.

