



*“Where the Land, Food
and People Come Together”*

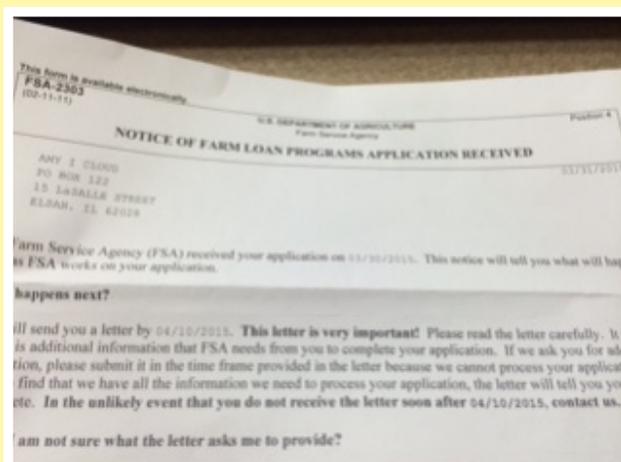
Hello from Three Rivers Community Farm!

April 2015

The CSA Season Will Be Starting Soon!

*It Has Been A Long Process,
But We Are Very Close to Being Landowners!!*

We are a little late sending out our spring newsletter this season, but for a good reason! We have been waiting, hoping to share good news with you all, and now we can!



After a process that began well over a year ago, we finally received the signed real estate contract from Principia College to purchase five acres of the total 45 acres that we lease. We were then able to submit our final loan application to the Farm Service Agency in Jerseyville on March 30. Cheryl Canavan is our loan officer and has been incredibly supportive and excited about our plans for these five acres. After being pre-approved with her agency, we finalized our building plans with Jeff Dunnagan of Eagleview Construction. Barring no complications,

we should be able to begin construction of our barn in June! The final loan approval should take about 60 days (but potentially 90), so until we sign our name on the dotted line we are anxiously sweating it out. Cheryl has assured us several times, however, that

she is very confident that the loan will go through.

A special thanks to our CSA members and Principia faculty John Lovseth, who is the land manager at Principia and has been our liason with the college in acquiring these acres. He has done so much leg work for us over the last year, presenting our farm and our future plans for our operation to the Board of Directors at Principia College. None of this would have been possible without him! Then to Chrissy McAllister and Scott Eckert who helped give the final push to the Legal Department at Principia College to get us the signed real estate contract. Thank you for lighting a fire and getting this deal closed! We are beyond thankful to all three of you and feel charged with growing our farm in a way that will continue to make you proud! We will keep you updated about approval of our loan and can't wait to show the first photos of the concrete being poured of our barn!



Our land and barn construction loan has taken a lot of our time as well as mental and emotional energy this winter. When we weren't being consumed by this project, we were pursuing several other big investments for our farm. In February, we purchased a new Kubota 7060HD with a front end loader, pallet forks, and creeper gear. We can now accept shipments at the farm location and be able to offload them using our tractor - so exciting! Then, the creeper gear on our new tractor allows us to drive very slow for transplanting and tillage, something we hope to make full use of next season when

we buy our transplanter. Instead of purchasing a transplanter this year, we opted for two new pieces of cultivating equipment: A fancy tine weeder from Austria (we feel like real organic vegetable farmers now that we have a European piece of equipment!) and a walk behind flame weeder from West Virginia. Both will go a long way to reducing the amount of hand weeding we do on the farm.

Our final major farm improvement for this season is an underground irrigation system that will be installed as soon as it dries out. There will be buried PVC lines from the main city water line back to our property and run throughout our fields with five strategically placed hydrants. We will now have adequate water pressure to water all our fields simultaneously and use some overhead irrigation as well. This was a major investment on our part (\$14,000), but should really reduce our labor when we do need to irrigate and give us a lot of piece of mind (which is worth a lot of money!).

While this year has been a big financial step for our family and the farm, we are pursuing all of it because we are committed to this area, to you, our customers, to organic vegetable farming as a profession, and more importantly, a way of life. There are not many models of farms out there that have done what we have done. Many CSA farms are non-profits, or located on family land, and have had major outside help or are on leased land situations with no option to own. Our farm started on leased land, but thanks to

the goodwill gesture of Principia College to sell us the five acres that all our buildings will be located on, we now have the financial stake in our enterprise for long-term financial viability. We started the farm with no infrastructure, but a committed group of CSA members, and we have slowly grown our farm and our CSA membership. It has been a lot of baby steps, but no regression, and now the farm is on a path to provide a good living for our family, living wages for our employees, and a secure source of food for our community. We feel a lot of pride for all that we have accomplished, but also, humility and gratitude that we have come this far. We have so many dreams for our farm and thank goodness, many decades to make them a reality!

- Amy

Information About CSA Start Date

It is a little too early for us to say exactly when the CSA will start this season. Looking at years past, we can give a good idea of most likely either the weeks of May 10/17 or May 17/24. As mid-May approaches we will send out multiple emails confirming your start date and location as well as details about how your CSA pick up will work. We are very fortunate to have so many returning members that it should be a smooth transition to the new season.



We are excited to let you know that we are incorporating a menu service with our CSA membership this year. Local Thyme Menu Service out of Madison, WI works with CSA farmers in the Midwest to come up with customized recipes based on the vegetables that are in your box that week. They will be targeting four of the more unusual produce items in your box each week and offering two recipes for each vegetable; one that is very accessible and weeknight friendly and the other will be a little more creative and adventurous. The recipes will be posted in our weekly email newsletter, and beginning in May you can sign up on the Local Thyme Menu website to have full access to all they offer. This includes thousands of recipes for all CSA vegetables, storage information and tips, recipe of the month, and “Ask a Chef” where you can ask your cooking questions and get helpful suggestions. We hope that all members will find this service useful and never find themselves asking what they should do with their kohlrabi!!

Planting Has Begun!



John planting one of the 10,000 onion plants that we have planted!

Thousands of transplants and seeds are in the ground. Now we just need a little sunshine and dry time and we will be off to a good start! Thanks again for supporting our farm. We are excited for all that this season will offer. We will be in touch again in early May!

Final CSA Payment Is Due

- Final CSA payments are due May 1!
- Email invoices will be sent out next week!
- Look for them in your inbox!

Enjoy the Spring!

*Your Farmers,
Amy, Segue, Diego, Lydia,
and our hardworking crew: Nora, John and Rachelle*

