



Where the Land, Food, and People Come Together!

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Season 2010 Outlook

Warm spring greetings from Three Rivers Farm! We hope this finds you well and enjoying the first day of Spring. This winter felt like a long and cold one, maybe because we lacked the usual odd January or February warm seventy degree day; maybe because so much snow fell out East and it made national news each time. A light switch has seemed to flip, however, and it looks like fifty degree days (and hopefully warmer) are here to stay. Now we just need some sun!

We jump the gun every year, hoping that it will be an early, mild spring by getting started in the greenhouse in mid-February. We were lucky to get over 5000 feet of peas planted last Friday. Broccoli, cabbage, kale, swiss chard, and scallions, were ready for transplanting in the field, but more likely they will end up in the ground this week. They don't mind the extra week of growth before they are shocked by the real world of windy days and cool nights. It is always amazing to see the first seeds germinate in the greenhouse--a reminder that this growing food thing really works--stick a seed in some soil, add warmth and water--and in a week (more or less) you see the first green shoots peaking through. Thank goodness it is that simple, but at the same time, if it only were that simple!!

There are only a few changes we are making to the 2010 season. Recently, we decided to hire a second full time intern. As a result we are bumping up our CSA memberships to 170 members and we have only **20 full memberships left**--so please help us spread the word! We are very lucky to have found Leslie and Liberty who have both worked on an urban organic vegetable farm in Kansas City--they come with both CSA and farmer's market experience.

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Diego has given a lot of thought to our fourth season!



And he can't wait for some real carrots!



Meet the Farmers of Live Springs Farm, Carrollton, IL



Hi! From Alex, Bobbi, and Rowan:

First and foremost I would like to say we are very excited to be working with Amy and Segue and Three Rivers Community Farm. It is especially gratifying to have local, family farms working together to produce high quality food! Live Springs Farm is owned by a wonderful woman who had a desire for her land to be a thriving biodynamic/organic farm and sought a young couple who, at the same time, were striving to have a place to be farmers. Our farm is located northwest of Carrollton, Illinois on a diverse 610 acre landscape. Apple Creek lines the northern edge of our property while various springs provide wildlife habitat and our own drinking water. There is a large area of hardwood forest on the western side of the property with small fields tucked here and there and larger field spaces predominate the eastern side of the property. This year we'll be offering pork and a small number of chickens. The pigs are raised primarily on pasture (except in winter when some take residence in the open-air barn for a few months) and in the woods. They see a good deal of the farm as they move around eating grass, clover, bugs, acorns, pecans, and hickory nuts. The grains in their diet are mostly from grain grown right here on our farm which is certified organic. The chickens arrive as day old chicks and soon move into portable pens where we move them daily to fresh pasture. The animals give us a wonderfully nutritious gift in their meat and it is our goal to care for them well and appreciate their life while they are on our farm. We have room to grow so we'll also be adding other livestock and crops to the farm in the near future and will be able to expand our product offerings. This year we'll have our delicious pork available beginning in May and later in the summer chickens at Three Rivers Community Farm. We'll be there on certain CSA pick-up dates so stop over and say hi and go home with some great food! **We have limited amounts of pork for sale off the farm immediately and we can be contacted by phone at 217.942.5060 or by email at bobbi.sandwich@gmail.com**

CSAs by the Numbers: You are Part of a Major Movement!

In most parts of the country, late winter is CSA sign-up season. Have you ever wondered about the scope of the CSA movement? And how does the Three Rivers Community Farm CSA program compare to others? Below are numbers, comparisons and projections for the CSA movement. Be proud! You are participating in a major local food movement!!

from www.localharvest.org

“There are 3,229 CSAs listed with Local Harvest. Of those, 2,202 have 100 or fewer members, another 504 have 101-500 members (aka Three Rivers Farm), and finally, 60 farms have more than 500 CSA members. Extrapolating from those numbers, we see that CSAs of 100 members or less serve 25% of all CSA members in the country. Those in the 101-500 bracket serve 52% of CSA members, and large CSAs of 500 or more supply 23% of all subscribers.

To put this in context, the total number of memberships offered by CSAs is about 390,000. That number represents one-half of one percent (0.5%) of all households in the U.S. That might not sound like a lot, but when we mapped out the growth curve, it was impressive! If the number of CSAs keeps growing at the same rate as CSAs have been over the last three years, **by 2020, there will be over 18,000 CSAs in the U.S.**”

Did you know that in Madison and Jersey County there are 5 CSAs: Three Rivers, Elsay; “R” Farm, Dow; La Vista CSA, Godfrey; Riverbend Roots, Alton; and Biver Farms, Edwardsville. St. Louis has six CSAs. You would need to drive to Chicago to find a larger concentration. We are fortunate to be in such good company!

About the FOOD!

Unusual Varieties=Exceptional Taste!

Deciding on varieties is a little like writing out a Christmas wish list. We try to grow a mix of productive hybrids and traditional heirloom varieties. Here is just a sampling of the new, quirky, and downright bizarre vegetables that we will be trying out this season:

japanese trifele black tomato
red bull red onion
tiburon hot pepper
churchill brussel sprouts
tango celery
lincoln baby leeks
deer tongue lettuce
white cherry cherry tomato
blue ballet hubbard squash
kennebec white potato
san juan asian melon
flavor burst yellow sweet pepper
pink beauty radish
mortgage lifter tomato
ping tung long japanese eggplant
jack be little mini pumpkin
deadon red savoy cabbage



Farm Events

see you there....

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

May 1st, Saturday, 9-Noon: **Spring Planting Day:** Want to get your hands dirty and help us plant flowers, tomatoes, peppers and eggplant? Come see the farm at the height of spring!! Pizza lunch provided for volunteers. *Rain cancels the event.*

May 18th and 21st: The **first week of pick-up**, Tuesday and Friday from 2-7 PM; with Mother Nature's cooperation of course!

July 31st, Saturday 5PM: **Tomato Potluck and Summer Barn Dance!** Come celebrate all things tomato followed by a contra-square dance with live music!



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We are excited for you to meet them!

Our only new crop this season is celery. Our success with this crop is entirely dependent on the weather (it likes cool and wet!)--so we'll see.... We are also planning on planting a beautiful row of perennial flowers near the entrance.

In terms of growing techniques, we will be switching about half of our plastic mulch to a biodegradable starch-based "plastic" which will break down in the field over a four-five month period. Till then it will suppress weeds and hopefully give us the great yields of cucumbers, melons, and winter squash we saw last season. We are excited about all that this year has in store--hopefully good harvests + happy CSA members= happy, but exhausted farmers!

