

November 16, 2005

Last Pickup

Please pickup and checkoff your share at 714 W Iowa in Urbana or 701 W Washington in Champaign between 4 and 7 pm today (use the garage service doors). Remember, eggs must be pre-ordered and paid. To order, call 815.432.6238.

Eggs Year-Round

Don't forget that eggs are delivered weekly year-round. In Urbana pickup will shorten by one hour, 4 to 6 pm after PCSA ends. Champaign will remain the same. Please mark your calendars.

From the Farm

Cooler weather the last few weeks has been the ticket for the kale, which is now quite mellow. However, the sudden drop into the 20s this week has spelled the end for the field crops. Out on the pasture, Jim scrambled to put together temporary shelters for the animals to weather the 20 degree weather and high winds. The hay wagons that provided shade were put back into service to provide shelter from rain and snow. Meanwhile, he lashed lids from the now empty mobile chicken pens to the sides of the wagons to provide a break from the wind for the sheep. Once the greenhouses are cleared out, the ewes will be brought indoors to lamb. The laying hens also will be brought into the greenhouses, as their scratching provides necessary deep composting of straw and other plant materials.

Thanks From the Moores

The Moores wanted me to pass along a letter:

To Our Valued Shareholders:

Please accept our sincere thanks for making this extremely tough season successful. It has been overwhelming and humbling to see how much community support there is for what we do. Thanks to everyone who has volunteered time and talents to Prairieland CSA this year. Thanks also to those of you who provided words of encouragement, and for those of you who donated so freely to the hay fund. We are grateful to all of you! We are looking forward to next year.

Thanks again,

The Moores

Thanks From Anna

Having grown up in East Central Illinois the 1980s, I watched opportunities vanish for my brother and other young farmers due to skyrocketing land prices and a misguided notion that somehow bigger is better when it comes to farming. You have helped me create opportunities that didn't exist for young farmers in this community 20 years ago and I cannot begin to thank you enough. When PCSA started working with the Moores three years ago, it was with the goal of putting Wes on the farm when he graduates next year. Despite floods, drought, hail, and other obstacles, your support has helped us stay on track. That we are closing in on our goal of putting Wes on the farm for 2006 is nothing short of amazing. I am reminded of the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." The members of PCSA have helped ensure that there will be wholesome, pesticide-free produce in our community regardless of what USDA determines is organic—AND that this produce will not be around just for the next few years, but for the next few decades!

We Couldn't Do it Without You

Thanks again to our Urbana site hosts: Sonia Newmark and Lisa Treul, who provide space and coordinate distributing extra produce to Urbana charities. Thanks also to Mary McKillip who does a wonderful job keeping PCSA's finances in order.

Hay Fund Fundraising Dinner at Great Impasta in January

The Great Impasta will be hosting a fundraising dinner in January. Ticket prices are not yet determined, I will send info. as I get it and post on the website. If you would like to help design or sell tickets, design or post fliers for the event, or provide other talents, e.g. helping chefs find sources of local ingredients, please email me at info@prairielandcsa.org or call 355-6279.

2006 Shares in the News

Thanks also to shareholder Sandra Ahten who used her column in the News-Gazette to help promote the 2006 shares. (Sandra's column follows at the end of the newsletter) As we have not yet reached our goal of 150 shares, we can use all the help we can get to spread the word about Prairieland CSA. Please pass along the URL. If you would like to put up a flier, or pass out cards with the URL, call 355-6279 or email info@prairielandcsa.org

If you haven't reserved your share and are continuing for next year, please see www.prairienet.org/pcsa/contracts.html ASAP. If you know that you will not be returning, please let us know this, as well, so we know how many shares we need to market in the next few weeks.

UPDATE: Organic Orchard-Direct Fruit for Winter

No news yet. I am hoping that we receive shipping info in time for winter citrus.

For more info on FruitShare see <http://www.fruitshare.com/products.htm>

If you, your co-workers, neighbors, friends, family, etc. are interested, please let me know if you haven't already done so at info@prairielandcsa.org or at 355-6279.

End of Year Survey

In a couple of weeks, you will have the opportunity to fill out an online survey to help determine the crop mix and improve PCSA for 2006. I will mail the survey to those without email access.

In Your Share Today

Carrots, broccoli, potatoes, red Russian kale, and spinach and lettuce from the field.

Storage and Recipe Suggestions

Red Russian Kale

Even if you don't braise or make soup out of this using the recipes in Recipes from America's Small Farms, it will still make a beautiful bed for your holiday turkey or tofurky.

Broccoli

Store broccoli just doesn't taste the same. Cut into florets, peel and slice the stem. Steam. Sprinkle with salt and/or a little lemon juice.

Field Lettuce and Spinach

These were grown in the field and have been rinsed. However, give them a thorough soak and spin to remove any remaining sand. Braise or eat fresh in salads.

Potatoes and Carrots

Cube potatoes with peel on. Scrub carrots and cut into 1/2 to 3/4 inch chunks. Brush with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and rosemary or other favorite herbs (parsley, tarragon, chervil, chives). Roast at 425 until for tender. Thanksgiving sides don't get any easier.

Eggplant

Make caponata from this week's or any other eggplant hiding in your fridge. You can freeze caponata and use it for appetizers throughout the holidays.

Caponata

1-lb eggplant
salt
olive oil
1 c chopped onions
1/2 c chopped celery
1/2 c peeled, seeded, and chopped tomatoes
1/2 t dried rosemary
1/4 c pitted, halved green olives
1/8 c rinsed and drained capers
3 T red wine vinegar
2 t sugar
Freshly ground pepper

Peel and cube eggplant into 3/4-inch pieces. Salt and let drain for 30 minutes; pat dry. Pour a thin layer of oil into a large frying pan. Saute half the eggplant until golden brown, 6-10 minutes. Remove to a strainer, drain. Add more oil, sauté the rest of the eggplant, and drain. In the same oil (or add 1 T additional oil if necessary), saute onions and celery until just tender, then add the tomatoes, and rosemary. Cover pan and cook for 4-5 min., uncover, and cook 5 min. Add the eggplant, olives, and capers. Heat the vinegar and sugar until the sugar dissolves, and pour over the mixture. Simmer, covered, for 5-10 min. Season to taste and cool. Makes 3-4 c. Use to top pasta, bruschetta. Can be served warm or at room temperature. Or, freeze for later use.

The Reasonable Diet

By: Sandra Ahten

Column Title: "Self-Love as Diet Motivation"

If you are uncomfortable with your weight, should you try to take off some pounds or endeavor instead to accept yourself as you are? I faced this dilemma in my middle 30s. My life, although moving in a wonderful direction, was a hotbed of stressors. I had quit smoking, moved from my hometown, and sacrificed my income to become an artist and a full-time student. In addition, I was a single parent dealing with an adolescent child who was, to say the least, rebelling. I gained more than 30 pounds.

Someone made a negative comment about my weight, and I was outraged. I argued, "I don't have to look like a model. Your concern with my weight is your problem, not mine. I am perfect just the way I am." However, as I was defending myself, one question loomed in my own mind: If I love myself so much, why aren't I taking better care of myself? My diet did not reflect self-love. In addition, while I was arguing for the right to self-determine my own weight, I had to admit my weight was not consciously determined but simply the result of some unhealthy eating habits. Eventually, I internalized that I loved myself enough to stop the weight gain.

Thankfully, I had done a significant amount of spiritual and emotional healing in my life before my weight started climbing; in addition, I didn't have a history of dieting fueled by the motivation of hating my body size. So after I worked through the turmoil caused by the comment about my weight, I approached dieting, not as so many do -- motivated by self-loathing -- but instead motivated by self-loving. I really wanted to be taking care of myself. I have determined this to be the biggest factor in my long-term dieting success.

Many people have a long history of self loathing with regard to their bodies, some since childhood. Some people hate their weight; others go even so far as to hate themselves because of their weight.

But most of us have a measure of both self-loathing and self-loving in us. What dieters need to do is reinforce the self-loving as they put to rest the self-loathing. This needs to happen immediately. It is not enough to say you will stop the disparaging remarks about yourself when you reach such-and-such weight. Don't wait to start until you've been following a diet successfully for a week, or month, or year. No. The time is now.

Most anyone can follow a diet and lose weight. Many folks have done it time and time again. But a secret to keeping it off is to approach it not just from a physical or nutritional point of view, but from a holistic mind-body point of view. You have to change your thinking as well as your eating habits.

Try this as a first step if you are contemplating changing your diet or are already in the process: Read the affirmation below several times a day. Say it when you brush your teeth in the morning, each time you eat or make a food decision during the day, and again before bedtime. Say it as you step on the scale.

"I love and respect myself. I choose a diet that nourishes me and reflects this love." Try saying it out loud right now.

Note: Do remember the "affirmation dorkiness factor," that is: The dorkier you sound when you say affirmations, the more likely they are to work!

Healthy Living Tip:

This year I fell in love with beets: grown organically, fresh from the ground, and in one of my weekly shares from Community Supported Agriculture.

CSA members are individuals who pledge support to a farm. Growers and consumers share the risks and benefits of food production. "Share-holders" pay in advance and in return, they receive shares in the farm bounty, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land and participating directly in food production. Locally, I have participated in Prairieland CSA for two years and have been happy with my shares, despite near draught conditions on the farm this year.

The link for PSCA is www.prairienet.org/pcsa/pcsa.htm.

To locate other CSAs go to www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/. Now is the time to purchase a share for 2006.

Sandra Ahten has been a professional diet coach and motivational speaker for six years. She lives in Urbana and can be reached at sandra@reasonablediet.com or 217-367-6345.