The cupboard is bare!

BOX NOTES

This is it!

BOXES AND LINERS: PLEASE RETURN THEM TO YOUR DROP SITE AND WE’LL PICK THEM UP NEXT WEEK!

We will also take any of the mason jars back with the rings please. We can reuse them with new seals.

Lots of mix and match in this box as we use up what we have left of frozen and canned items. We will do our best to divide it up evenly! Ingredients are for all possible items in your box. You will not have every item on the list in your box.

From the field:

Potatoes: Just 2 pounds this time...mixed varieties
Carrots: Still going strong, 3 pounds of yummy Mokums!
Onions: We are growing more of this copper variety this year. A bit smaller but really hold well for these late boxes and a really nice onion to eat.
Spinach: Nice big bag of hoop house spinach. Big and spinachy (is that a word?)
Mixed greens: From the hoop houses and over-wintered in the field. Eat them fresh in a spicy salad or steam them o-so gently with a drizzle of olive oil, salt and pepper.
Radishes: A few “cherry belle” radishes. Eat em raw or cooked.

From the Kitchen: (ingredient list on back)
Whole Wheat Bread (refrigerate)
Granola (Maple vanilla) With big flakes of toasted coconut.
African peanut stew: We used up the last little sweet potatoes to make this really tasty soup. (CONTAINS PEANUTS).
Carrot raisin salad: We started playing around with this salad a couple of weeks ago to utilize the last of the carrots. We love it. If it is too plain for you, spice it up with ginger or curry or more lemon and apple cider vinegar. I have also been grabbing a handful and throwing it in with curries, fried potatoes etc.
Hummus: a bit of a mix and match...either roasted garlic, red pepper or beet.
Pickled beets
Tomato sauce or dilly beans, or bread and butter pickles or Apple sauce or kim chi......who knows!!!!
Tomato salsa or Green salsa
Frozen Broccoli or red peppers or butternut squash
Frozen Pesto
Frozen strawberries or sweet corn: strawberries are un sweetened so add a little sugar and drizzle on a waffle or ice cream.
Frozen Kale:

Farmers in the trees...pruning!

Well, with this delivery, we are wrapping up the 2014/2015 Winter CSA season. We hope you have been happy with the boxes. In general, we’ve been happy with what we have put together although there are always lots of things we think we can improve on.

We have to keep reminding ourselves that this is really a new business that we’re starting and that we are the first farmers we know of who are doing it. What an adventure and what a potential disaster! There is still so much that we don’t know and that surprises us. We are the last of the Napa cabbage that we picked in November...at the end of March!! It was excellent...who knew! Red Russian kale is incredibly winter hardy...unless you grow it in a hoop house and it doesn’t have time to acclimate to cold temperatures before sub-zero temps in November...over half died.....now we know.

People have asked us how we decide what to put in the boxes. Turns out that it’s much more complicated than you would think. Our goal is to put as much fresh veg in the boxes as possible however, if we put all fresh veg in it would be difficult or maybe impossible to fill the box with $76.25 worth of veggies. They just wouldn’t fit. So, we add higher value “value added” products such as the breads, pie, soups, granola and canned goods to the box. Contrary to popular belief though, value added can mean “really thin profit margin” Take tomato...more on reverse
sauce for example. It takes about 2 lbs of red ripe tomatoes to make a pint of sauce. The kitchen has to pay the farm enough to grow the tomatoes. Lets say 80 cents per pound. That’s a buck sixty for the tomatoes, a buck for the jar, a buck for labor to can the tomatoes and then another thirty cents or so for electric, insurance, mortgage etc. That’s just shy of four dollars for that pint of tomato sauce. Not a lot of margin left, which makes seeing a profit on the value added stuff difficult. That being said, sour kraut is cheaper to make than granola...by about 10 fold and worth about the same if you go to the coop to buy them. Unfortunately, one can not live on sour kraut alone. So, the challenge we face is putting together the best possible box while still making a living. Well, I guess we’ll just have to have another crack at that next fall!!!

On a happier and sadder note, Sarah and Ben, our stalwart apprentices are moving on to bigger and better things. They have bought a farm near Owatonna MN and will be moving there as soon as they finish deliveries this Saturday. We are sad to see them go but it is something that we have gotten used to over the years and something that makes us fundamentally happy. Two new farmers making the jump to their own operation.

We have tried hard over our own farming career to train and mentor new farmers and many of the folks who have worked for us have moved on to their own farms. We take pride that we have had a small part in the formation of some twenty new farms out there. We take pride in it but we also worry about these new farmers. It seems to be getting harder, not easier to make a living growing veggies in this area. Nobody is sure why but many of the new farms out there are struggling much more than we did when we started, even though there are lots more resources available to help them. The CSA market is becoming more saturated both with people who really care about the idea of CSA and with folks who just see it as a way to make a buck. Farmers markets are springing up on every corner in the cities and “organic” is being sold everywhere in the cub foods and walmarts.

Farming has never been an easy way to make a living - the hours are long, the work hard and the pay meager but in our experience, it’s been possible. That all hangs in the balance now and “organic” may end up as just another cog in the industrial food machine.

Don’t buy from the industrial food machine! Join a Summer CSA and come back to us this fall! We need you, and trust us, you need us! Thanks and have a great summer!

Odds n Ends

Please respond to the Survey Monkey survey that we will be sending out by email in the next couple of days. We REALLY need your input. What you like, what you don’t and what you want to see more of. Understanding of course, that everyone has a different opinion!

Signing up for the 2015-16 Winter CSA: We are still crunching the numbers from this last season. As soon as we know the member numbers we need and any price adjustment we will let you know and we can start taking sign-ups. The plan is to set up a shopping cart and take credit card payments on the new web site. That should be done in the next couple of months

Thanks for trusting us to grow and make your food this last season. We are looking forward making the boxes even better in the fall.

Ingredients:

Note that we make all of our kitchen goods in a facility that uses dairy, wheat, nuts, soy and eggs
*grown at foxtail farm, ** indicates certified organic