

The Farm Weekly

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BLUEBIRDHILLS@VOYAGER.NET

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DROUGHT LIKE CONDITIONS

This seems like a carbon copy of last year where the spring is incredibly wet and then suddenly we are into a drought. To make things more frustrating is we hear about the rain that is falling south, east and west of us. Fortunately Tim has the irrigation running full time and there might be some relief coming this weekend, but we certainly aren't counting on it, for we have heard that before.

I hesitate to complain about the weather though for it has been a gorgeous week for working outside. We have been out all week working or playing late and eating dinner closer to 8:00 each evening. It's absolutely fabulous in the evenings with the cool nights making perfect sleeping weather with windows wide open.

Cultivating is the name of the game right now. We have 3 folks working each morning to keep the weeds at bay. Armed with hoes, they chop the weeds that are growing between the plants and would otherwise steal light and

nutrients from the growing produce. At the same time, Tim and Luke are on the tractors kicking up huge clouds of dust as they till or cultivate the ground to eliminate the weeds growing in the rows. They have to wear masks and when they come home their clothes challenge the washing machine in ways it never imagined. The savings in sunscreen make up for the extra detergent, since the coating of dust Tim and Luke are wearing has an SPF of 200!

Tim hoped to have broccoli in the boxes this week and there are a few heads finally, but it will be next week instead. Some of the cabbage, which usually matures later than the broccoli is farther along now. All will even out in a few weeks and the boxes will be filled with a wider variety of veggies.

The onions in the boxes are one of our favorite varieties called Walla Walla. You will find that they are very mild and sweet rivaling the popular Vidalia. These are great for making onion rings and

wonderful added to the top of a burger.

The weirdo vegetable this week (not the kohlrabi) is fennel. You probably noticed the anise or licorice smell when you opened your box. I am not a fan of licorice and not wild about fennel either. You can actually treat it just like celery, for it can be eaten raw or cooked. You strip the stalks from the bulb just like celery and rinse each after removing the leaves.

Most folks will use them for dipping into a veggie dip, just like carrots or celery, or cook them in soups, and stews. You can also braise them to keep them slightly crunchy, but make their flavor milder. I don't have any recipes to share for fennel, but I know that there are plenty on the internet.

Since we have no irrigation in our pastures, they are looking dismal right now. There is no grass. A couple of tons of hay came 2 weeks ago to rescue us. The girls are eating close to 2 bales a day and going through close to gallons a day of water.

On Saturday I went to the pasture to check and see if anyone was in the throes of labor and found that a new cria had entered the world an hour or so before. The only problem was that her momma wasn't even supposed to be pregnant. It appears that a precocious 9 month old male

was doing a bit more than just nursing off of his mom and hanging out in the barn. I am a bit suspicious that there might be at least one more gal who enjoyed his amorous advances, so we are checking her now as well.

Last week I took about 18 pounds of alpaca fleece up to Amish country to a fiber mill in Apple Creek. I am having yarn made to sell to folks interested in knitting, weaving, or crocheting. This mill is just 4 miles from Lehmanns Hardware, an Amish store that has all sorts of great stuff including kitchen ware, tools, stoves, lanterns, and other homesteader types of equipment. This area is a great destination and if you are ever up near Wooster, plan a visit for it's a great store.

So that's a quick run down for this week. Be well!

BLUEBIRD HILLS FARM OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, July 25th

11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Invite your friends,
neighbors, and family.

We will have horse
drawn wagon rides to
the fields.

More details next week

This Week's Box

Lettuce
Onions
Summer Squash
Fennel
Kohlrabi

Next Week

Lettuce
Onions
Broccoli
Summer Squash
Cucumbers?