

The Farm Weekly

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BLUEBIRDHILLS@VOYAGER.NET

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AMBUSHED BY THE DEPT. OF LABOR

Two weeks ago while I was in Colorado, Bluebird Hills Farm was the beneficiary of a surprise visit by the Department of Labor. We aren't really sure why, but it seems a bit odd that as employers who bring their foreign workers here legally, we were being inspected. There was no appointment, no phone call that day to let us know they were coming, nothing.

Tim and the Mexicans were in the field working, and they immediately took each of the men off by themselves to interview them about the particulars of their employment, including whether we paid for their housing (which we do), paid for their travel (which we do), provide the appropriate wage (which we do) etc, etc.

At the same time, Tim was asked multiple questions and then was required to provide documentation of pay records

etc etc. Then they had to inspect the apartment that we rent for the men, and evaluate its suitability.

It seems to me that after paying thousands of dollars to the Department of Labor to acquire permits to apply to the Department of Homeland Security to acquire visas, and then to follow all of the rules for the past 7 or 8 years regarding bringing folks up from Mexico, that we should at least be given the courtesy of a phone call and appointment.

And of course there are the 2 hours of lost labor while catering to them. It certainly gave us pause to at least wonder why we go through the expense and considerable hassle to bring folks into this country legally when we could hire illegals with fake papers and save ourselves thousands of dollars doing things that way.

Of course we won't break the law. We are para-

noid enough to think we would be the first ones caught, but why go about things legally only to be ambushed by the very people you have been so open with. Thank heaven it was the end of the week with the boxes already packed.

We are back into the heat and a miniature drought. The spinach was doing fairly well until this weather hit, and even though the irrigation is running, it is looking a bit under the weather now.

Tim says the hot weather is taking its toll on several things, including the tomatoes. In spite of irrigation, they just aren't producing. My personal belief is that the sun's angle and the shortened days are a sign

to several of the veggies to slow down production. In light of this Tim wanted me to convey that there will be a week or two of a slow down when we switch over from the summer veggies to the fall veggies. This will probably translate into a bit less variety in the boxes next week, as well as fewer tomatoes, summer squash etc. However, this will be a temporary state for the winter squash is looking very good right now.

Only a small bit of space left to tell you about the Woolgathering, that is happening behind Youngs Jersey Dairy on St. Rt 68 just north of Yellow Springs on September 18th & 19th, soi mark your calendars and we will have more later.

Panzanella Salad (sent last year and don't know source)

7-8 small or 4 large tomatoes, cut in bite-size chunks (no peeling or seeding!)

4 green onions, sliced (including green parts)

1 clove garlic, minced

2 ribs celery, sliced thin on bias

½ cup olive oil

¼ cup red wine vinegar

Salt and pepper

Combine above in non-reactive bowl; allow to marinate at room temp for at least an hour.

When ready to serve, toss with salad greens, 3 strips of chopped crispy bacon and about 5 cups *homemade* croutons. (Store-bought are too small and full of nasty chemicals – won't work at all). Serve immediately. The tomato mixture will be very juicy, will dress the salad, and soak into the croutons. Yum! Serves 4

Homemade croutons: Cut ½ baguette or other crusty bread into 1" chunks. Drizzle with olive oil (optional) and bake at 350° for 20 mins, stirring twice.

This Week's Box

Onions
Potatoes
Green Beans
Lettuce
Summer Squash
Green Peppers
Tomatoes
Eggplant
Basil
Garlic

Next Week

Lettuce
Potatoes
Onions
Peppers ?
Eggplant ?
Tomatoes
Summer Squash