

The Farm Weekly

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FIRST FARM FEST A SUCCESS!

While previous Open Houses have always been successful, our new improved event seemed to draw more folks and was great fun for us. The only bad part was that we didn't have a chance to meet and talk with everyone that came.

We were a bit concerned that the gray day kept folks away, but when the sun briefly showed itself, I was thankful that it hadn't been out all day or we would have been hotter than the buffalo burgers and hot dogs.

The alpacas were very tolerant of visitors, not because of special training by their owners, but because they all had stomach aches from eating too much clover. On Friday while mowing the pastures, I noticed that the grass was nibbled to the quick with the lack of rain. I decided to allow the girls to graze a new area to fill their bellies. Even though there is a fair amount of grass, they went straight to the clover, just like a child goes directly to the candy display at the grocery store.

The clover is too rich and upsets their stomachs, which made the girls less willing to venture away from the barn. A few of the girls needed a dose of Prilosec, the same medication some 2 leggers take for ulcers or indigestion. All had recovered just fine by

Sunday morning,, but the gate to that pasture is closed once again.

The only other problem generated by Saturday's event is that now our kids want reindeer. Because buffalo are not very tame, the Lockwoods brought a reindeer instead. Hannah said she was willing to give up her pleas for a camel if we would acquire a reindeer. I don't think so, however, they are kinda neat! And even if we were to acquire a reindeer, I am sure the pleas for a camel would start right back up again. Saturday was the first time I have seen a reindeer, and I would have liked to talk to them about the particulars of raising them but there wasn't enough time.

We hope that everyone had an opportunity to check out the offerings of soaps, alpaca clothing, rug hooking, and spinning supplies. These artisans seemed informed us that they felt it was definitely worth their time to come and have already committed to next year. We don't want this to become a huge commercial event, but we do like the idea of giving artisans a chance to offer their wares to the public, especially if they are affiliated with us somehow through our CSA or alpacas.

The buffalo burgers were a hit and the Buff Orp-

ington chickens were well loved by some of the kids who came to visit. In fact they were loved so much they were carried around the entire day, and I had to ask them to put them down for a bit so the chickens could eat. The other variety of layers called Black Australorps kept their distance as they always do, and didn't come out of hiding until everyone had left. I confess that we may have selected these layers based on their bizarre names.

The focus of last week's labors was picking for the boxes and sprucing things up for the Farm Fest. Weed eating around the fencing has had the dual benefit of making things look nicer as well as maintaining a higher charge on the wires to deliver more of a deterrent. Tim feels that our efforts have been paying off with less deer damage evident.

Now we focus some of our efforts on the raccoons who yearly help themselves to the sweet

corn. These critters have a communication system that rivals the best that AT&T could offer, and their technology for determining the exact time for harvest, rivals ours. Without fail, in years past, these little hellions have partied well into the wee hours the very night before we planned to pick the very corn. They have contacted all of their friends from miles around, inviting them to the feast. And just to rub our noses in it, the knock down the stalks, tear open the ears and consume only part of an ear, unless their networking has worked too well and there isn't enough to go around.

I had a few raccoons as pets when I was younger, and think that they are pretty neat, but have been unable to convince Tim of thinking that they are anything more than sly, cunning vermin.

Friday night brought $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch of blessed rain. Irrigation helps keep things alive, but to thrive, the plants need a good old fashioned soaking and we received

This Week's Box

Walla Walla
Onions
Summer Squash
Beets (?)
Cucumbers
Cabbage
Eggplant

Next Week

Garlic
Onions
Cucumbers
Green Beans
Summer Squash
Cucumbers
Tomatoes (?)

that early Saturday morning.

The tomatoes are slowly maturing. Tim pruned them a few weeks ago, removing the suckers to help focus the plants' energy on the fruit and to help reduce disease problems by allowing more air and sunlight to move through the vines. In retrospect, he thinks this may have shocked them a little and delayed ripening by a week.

On this weeks' agenda aside from the regular picking, cleaning, packing, and transplanting lettuce, Tim plans to start running an electrified wire above each row of lettuce to keep the deer from snacking. We did this last year successfully and know that it will be effective. The disadvantage of this is that it makes cultivation around the lettuce impossible, so there will be a trade off.

In some boxes this week, you may receive an eggplant. Each year we struggle to have enough of these come on simultaneously to get them in each box in the same week. It has never happened that way, and this year the situation is the same. Some of you will find an eggplant this week and some next.

The funny looking mini onions are shallots. Unfortunately this will be the only time they appear in your boxes. These are planted in the fall like garlic, did not make it through the winter well, which provided little for the boxes.

The shallot is a cousin of onion and garlic and is usually cooked, although that certainly isn't necessary. Some say the flavor reminds them of a cross between onions and garlic. As a lazy cook, I find it tedious to peel so much to get so little, but they are one of those hip gourmet veggies that are favored now. To impress your friends pronounce them as shallOW, with emphasis on the low.

The beets are just getting there. Please give these a try, even if you hated them as a kid. Beets fresh from the garden are far better than those from a can. To prepare, scrub, cut off the top leaving an inch or so and boil or steam till fork tender. Trim and peel the skin and serve warm or cold, sliced or diced.

We're out of space, have a good week!

Cabbage Salad provided by CSA member Julie U.

- 1) **1/2 head of cabbage - chopped**
4 or more green onions - chopped

- 2) **Sesame Seeds**
Slivered Almonds
Chicken Ramen Noodles (1 package)
Toast the above at 350 degrees

- 3) **2 TBS Sugar**
3 TBS Vinegar
1/2 cup Oil
1 Tsp Sake
1/4 Tsp Pepper
1 Pkg Ramen Flavoring

Keep 1, 2, & 3 separate until ready to serve. Toss & Serve!!

BEET VINAIGRETTE

(an excellent way to use beets if you absolutely can't stand to eat them)

- 1 cup cider vinegar**
- 2-3 cloves garlic**
- 2 teaspoons fresh ground pepper**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1/4 cup sugar**
- 1 large, cooked beet, chopped (about 1 cup)**
- 1 cup oil**

Combine all of the ingredients except the oil in a blender or food processor and puree. With the blender still running, slowly drizzle in the oil. This is a very pretty dressing and will keep in the fridge for one week.

ZUCCHINI BREAD OR MUFFINS

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3 eggs | 1 tsp. salt |
| 1 cup oil | 1 tsp. baking soda |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1 tsp. baking powder |
| 1 cup white sugar | 2 tsp. cinnamon |
| 2 tsp. vanilla | 2 cups shredded zucchini |
| 3 cups flour | (unpeeled) |

Beat the eggs in a bowl, then add oil, sugars, and vanilla. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and cinnamon. Add to the first mixture and mix till just combined, then add zucchini. Pour into 2 loaf pans or about 20 muffin tins. Bake at 300 degrees until toothpick inserted comes out clean (20 to 30 minutes for muffins and 35 or more for loaves).

An excellent variation is to add 2 one ounce squares of semi-sweet baking chocolate that have been melted in the oil and allowed to cool. Then when adding the zucchini, also add a cup of chocolate chips (either semi-sweet or milk chocolate)