



Weekly News

Beans and onions in full stride now ~ Michele Roy

Onions. Lots of onions!

It's definitely a big year for onions this year. We planted 2 sweet summer varieties: White Wing and Ailsa Craig. The red ones are Red Marble. Dakota Tears, Clear Dawn, Copra, and Patter-son are yellow storage varieties. All are doing really well, but the Ailsa Craig is off the charts! This variety was developed in Scotland back in 1887. They are really, really big and are used to make Blooming Onions (like you see at the Common Ground Fair). They can actually store for 1-3 months, which is a good thing because we have a LOT. Our pretty White Wing onions are gone now, so you'll be seeing the Ailsa Craigs for a while until the yellow onions have cured a bit. I'm including some onion recipes on the recipe sheet. You can store left-over onions in the refrigerator.

In preparation for the onion harvest we cleaned up all the onion paths. This coming week we'll start pulling the onions and laying them down in the paths to begin curing. Then we'll bring them into the garage to finish the process. Once the necks have shriveled up we'll trim them and put them in mesh bags. We are generally able to eat our own onions right through until around

April, when we start eating chives and scallions from the garden.

The pole bean plants are really pump-ing out beans now. We will have to keep the stepladder in the greenhouse to pick them! If you haven't peeked in there lately you should—it's quite a sight. I'm still waiting for the first "Red Noodle Yard Bean" to appear. If it looks anything like how it sounds it should be interesting!

Carrots, beets, and turnips are in good supply right now. The broccoli looks good but I may have to take turns dis-tributing it between Monday and Thurs-day shares because of uneven ripening. Everyone should be getting lettuce heads this week. We've got lettuce mix coming, as well as mesclun (spicy greens) mix, but that may take another week or two. It's tricky to guess at har-vest times because of the very dry weather we are experiencing. We are irrigating and hand-watering, but it is definitely not as efficient as a good soaking rain.

The tomatoes are coming in nicely. If you get a tomato that is really weird-looking you can safely assume it's one of our heirloom varieties. At the pot-luck this Saturday we'll take a look at the different kinds side-by-side. (Don't forget to RSVP for the potluck, by the way!)

The cucumbers have definitely suc-cumbed to insect and disease pressure. We'll be pulling the sorry-looking rem-nants of them this week and planting buckwheat in the beds. We do have a second planting of cucumbers but they are still not looking very promising. On the other hand, our second planting of summer squash looks great and are already blossoming, so the flow of summer squash should be uninter-rupted!

The days are noticeably shorter already, and we are realizing that we've slid into



Onion tops are beginning to lie down, nearly ready for harvesting. The adjacent sunflower is a happy volunteer.

the beginnings of our favorite time of year. Between now and the first snow we'll continue working in the garden, getting ready for the 2011 season. This time last year we were in despair. Things couldn't be more different now! We are filled with so many ideas for our farm, and look forward eagerly to a long cozy winter of making plans. For now though, we'll enjoy this wonderful weather.

See you in the garden!



A beautiful assortment of pole beans. Top to bottom: Rattlesnake, Gold of Bacau, Blue Coco (actually purple!), and Fortex are pictured here.



The Gardiner Farmers' Market is in full swing. It's a great place to visit—to the right of our stand are my Uncle Georges and my mom visiting with Denis (in his trademark hat) and Anna.

Mathilda's very bad day and a health care epiphany ~ Denis Thoet

Friday the 13th, of all days, was an epiphany for me.

True to form, it started with near-tragedy, followed by redemption, and then — enlightenment!

It started when Mathilda probably put her nose up to the electric fence wire near the gate to the sheep pasture, and spoked right into a leftover gate hook (that I should have removed), laying open her right shoulder with a foot-and-a-half-long gash.

As soon as I saw the size of the cut, I knew it would not heal on its own. So I called our nearby large animal vet, Dr. Pete Caradonna, and left a message on his cell phone. He returned the call and I

since they couldn't be separated) with his anesthetic syringe. He then walked up to Mathilda and gave her the shot.

Within minutes she was down and we got Fiona out of the stall. He shaved around the wound, sprayed the area with Lanocain and began inspecting the gash.

It was deep — through the hide and muscle down to cartilage. He irrigated and cleaned the long gash and began suturing her up. I held a flashlight in one hand and tension on the sutures in the other.

In half an hour, after a shot of antibiotics and an antidote to the anesthetic, Mathilda was up and about. Pete prescribed three days of "bed

humans, we have a population of 250 million living beings (cats, dogs, cows, horses, sheep, and goats, believe me, I've checked the numbers) who already have health coverage — let's call it VETCARE.

And guess what, there is no health insurance involved, although a recent Hints from Heloise in the Kennebec Journal recommended that pet owners check into buying health insurance for their pets for as low as \$30-40 per month. I view this as an ominous trend.

Guess what again — it's not a Socialist plot. It's as American as apple pie, and maybe even predates socialism by a few hundred years.

So, instead of the Public Option, or Universal Health Care, or all the other failed attempts over the last two years, our goal should be to extend VETCARE into human populations in the U.S.

How to do this?

The first step is transparency: Publish all the costs for veterinary medical procedures (fractures, X-rays, MRIs, cancer treatments, medications, etc.) and compare them to similar human medical treatments.

Then use those numbers as bargaining chips when you enter your doctor's office, need surgery, or when you are doubled over in pain in the emergency room.

"\$30,000 for a hip replacement? Sorry, doctor, my vet can do it for \$1,000 per hip" you say, holding your ground.

Let the marketplace take over from there!

Of course, an epiphany (that word again) is just a beginning not an end. Other details need to be worked out, like are you really willing to lie down in the hay and be operated on by someone more used to cows and horses?

To me, it beats shelling out \$15,000 in health insurance per family annually just to get any treatment at all.



On the mend — Mathilda, our 16-month-old Angus heifer, shows off her stitches from a foot-plus long gash she suffered Friday. Thanks to excellent veterinary care, a full recovery is anticipated.

related the situation. He said to pen Mathilda up and he would be at the farm in about an hour and a half, after completing a call in Whitefield, about half an hour away.

His Ford F-250 Vetmobile arrived around 4:00, and he surveyed the situation.

He quickly decided to jump into the cow pen (with both Mathilda and Fiona,

rest" (confinement to the stall and some fly spray) and he would check on her Monday.

Total bill: \$176. That included a house call and follow-up, anesthetic, major surgery, and a good outcome for the patient.

So here's the epiphany (I love that word):

In the U.S., outside of the 300 million

RSVP please!

**Mid-season potluck
Saturday, August 21
5-7 p.m.**