



LONG MEADOW FARM CSA

Weekly News

Week 8 www.longmeadowfarmmaine.com July 25, 2010

Open Farm Day — fun for all, including us! ~ Michele Roy

We had our best-ever Open Farm Day today.

Of course, compared to last year's event, anything is an improvement—we were in the midst of the foul weather pattern/late blight time frame, and it was a dreary, drizzly day, and we couldn't let anyone in the garden because of the fear of spreading the late blight tomato disease.

Today could not have been more different! Sunshine, puffy white clouds, lovely breeze—perfect for a farm tour. We had a steady stream of visitors all day, and I don't think I stopped talking for the entire time. It was wonderful that so many people were interested enough in what we do here to make the trip out—and they all stayed for a long time, visiting all of the animals, exploring the garden from top to bottom, and asking lots and lots of questions. We loved it!

Last week we got a solid 2" of rain, then a nice hot sunny period, and last night, another 1". The garden seems to love it (the weeds do too, but oh well.) We've been busily transplanting seedlings like fennel and kohlrabi as well as lettuce, and did our last sowing of carrots and beets for the season. We



Starring, Ollie! Children feed a burdock leaf to Ollie, our Angora goat, who will eat just about anything that is fed to him by hand at Sunday's Open Farm Day. More than 75 visited the farm.

pulled the old broccoli plants and planted a cover crop of buckwheat, which grows very quickly and has a long taproot that "mines" the subsoil for nutrients and brings them to the surface where they can be used by vegetable seedlings. We'll let it grow for six weeks or so before scything it down and using it for mulch. By Au-

gust we'll switch to oats for a cover crop, because the 6-week frost-free window for the buckwheat will have passed by then. Oats can handle some light frosts, then winterkills leaving a nice mulch layer on the beds when it dies back. By spring we can just rake it away.

We are seeing some tomatoes starting to ripen now. I'm afraid we have a bit of a sad story to tell: we caught Lady Gaga, one of our white hens, red-handed in the backyard tomato garden pecking at the just-ripening tomatoes. I chased her down, we put her in the pet cage overnight, and first thing this morning we did in fact end her short but entertaining life. She's in the freezer now and I'm planning a special meal with her that will of course contain tomatoes in honor of her. We've admired her plucky escaping-from-the-coop tricks every day, but can't tolerate losing our tomatoes like that.

Beans and cukes and some celery, lettuce, beet greens and onions and MORE headed your way this week! See you in the garden!



In the garden — Open Farm Day visitors take a look at the Brussels sprouts beds.

We use the ‘non-profit model’ at Long Meadow Farm~ Denis Thoet

Capitalism, we love it; we hate it.

Luckily, within the capitalist system there is a model (or two) that works for us at Long Meadow Farm. It’s called the “non-profit model.”

The non-profit model is driven by mission rather than by profit making. Our mission is to deliver good, healthy food to as many people as possible in our local community.

We do this primarily through our CSA, whose 70 members provide roughly half of our yearly income. We also sell vegetables at the Gardiner Farmers’ Market and sell eggs and beef from the farm.

When we budget for the coming year, we list our expected expenses and come up with ways to match them with expected income.

When you are mission-based and not driven by having to make a profit, you only do things that fit within the mission. For a few years, we were taking a lot of baked goods to the market, and selling some to our CSA members.

We realized that most of the ingredients did not come from the farm and the baked goods were not at the top of the list of what we call healthy food. We (meaning Michele) stopped baking and redirected that time and energy to the garden.



Cow time — Katie Gilman of Decatur, Illinois, snaps a photo of her son Quinn in front of Angus heifers Matilda (left) and Fiona at Sunday’s Open Farm Day.

Our mission also means we are not likely to specialize in any one thing. Although we love to raise garlic and are getting quite good at it, we are not going to expand from eight beds and 2,400 plants to 80 beds and 24,000 plants, even though we know we could easily double our gross farm income.

In the profit-making model of farming, you grow what makes the most money for the least effort. There is no limit to

profit making activities. The search for markets is endless and there is no security in any one market.

In the worst case, the food you are producing turns into something that is not food at all. The example comes to mind — an Exeter potato farmer who has his entire production under contract with Lays to turn perfectly good potatoes into nutrition-less potato chips. He is not alone, obviously, joined by the French fry makers of the world, the high fructose corn syrup makers, and the vast array of wheat growers who see their production go into Pop Tarts, etc.

More than the economics of what we do is the connection that we make with people who really do want to get healthy fresh food and know they are not going to find it anywhere else than from a local farm — supermarkets, restaurants, health food stores can’t match fresh from the field vegetables no matter how they try.

It’s more than a job, or a business. It’s a life. If this be Capitalism, let’s make the most of it!



At the greenhouse —Michele, right, chats with a Farmingdale couple about growing food on their land during Sunday’s Open Farm Day.

Check it out!

<http://lawsonseatlocal.blogspot.com/>