



This Week's Word From the Farm

Week of 9/15/08

What's In Your Box?

- Salad Mix/Endive
- Tomatoes
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Shelling Beans
- Green Beans
- Scallions
- Peppers
- Eggplant
- Summer Squash
- Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Cilantro
- Garlic

Dear Friends,

Even with all the benefits of the natural landscape that make Riverhill Farm what it is—gentle slopes facing south and west, good soils that are relatively deep, good water from a productive well, a pleasing place to work that's relatively close to town for our customers—the success or failure of this farm depends on the human element: the competence and management of the farmer, the quality and quantity of labor, customers to buy the produce of the farm and the availability of money to keep things going. Without at least these four things, the farm ceases to exist as anything more than a landscape—or someone's dream.

All of these four things could stand to and probably will improve over time. All the same, each of these four things—even with this year's particular shortcomings—have come together and combined this year in a way that is very encouraging for the future of this farm. On balance, it has been a good season.

The crops have grown well and without significant pests. The 120 boxes we fill each week have been full of the freshest high quality produce in at least sufficient (and sometimes excessive) quantity. You've had a regular supply of staples in adequate quantity and a new item practically every week through the season. When compared to store prices for organic produce, the value of the produce in the boxes has often well exceeded the \$25 price you have paid, and while grocery store prices have gone up, you're still paying the same for your produce. As a result of everyone's hard work the farm looks beautiful and well tended. The increase in subscriptions has resulted in more income to the farm than in any previous year. CSA pick up days flow like clockwork with all the picking getting done carefully and efficiently. As subscribers, you have all been perfect: punctual in getting your boxes and a pleasure to see each week. We've enjoyed putting food on your table.

It was a big leap to go from 55 boxes a week to 120. It would have been easier to simply repeat the success of last year, but the economics of farming would not allow that. My hope is that next season will be a year in which all the elements of this farm—the farmer, the labor, the customers and the income—come together to ensure a stable and economically viable Riverhill Farm for this and future generations. Thank you all for your support!

Recipes of the Week:

Roasted Poblano Guacamole

This recipe comes from our CSA member (and talented webmaster) Chip Carman. Thanks Chip!

2 med. fresh poblano chilies	salt
6 oz. ripe tomatoes	1-2 T. fresh lime juice
2 garlic cloves, unpeeled	2 T. grated Mexican queso afiejo or Romano or
3 T. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley or cilantro	Parmesan
3 med-large ripe avocados	

Put chiles, tomatoes, and garlic on baking sheet 4" below broiler to roast. Turning every few minutes until soft, blistered and blackened in spots, about 10-13 minutes. Put chilies in bowl covered with towel and let stand for 5 minutes, then wipe off blackened skin. Peel and discard tomato skins and peel garlic. Add parsley or cilantro and chop, blend, or puree in food processor. Add the avocados and coarsely mash with back of spoon, fork, or potato masher. Season with scant teaspoon salt, and lime juice to taste.

Roasted Pepper Casserole

6-8 whole large peppers; see note below	2/3 cup flour
1 cup sharp cheddar cheese; shredded	1/4 teaspoon salt
4 green onions, sliced	1 cup Monterey Jack Cheese; shredded
4 eggs	1 handful cilantro leaves, fresh; chopped
2 cup milk	

Note: This recipe works with lots of different kinds of chilies. Thick walled peppers such as ancho/poblano, Anaheim or even bell peppers, need to be roasted first (see the above recipe) so that the skin blisters and most of it can be peeled off. You can mix hot and mild peppers as well. If I was using very hot peppers along with mild ones, I'd probably chop the hot ones up so that they are more evenly distributed. Split roasted peppers lengthwise and remove seeds and pith. Spread chilies in a single layer in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle the green onions, cilantro, and most of the cheese (reserving some for the top) over chilies. In a bowl, beat eggs, milk, flour, and salt together until smooth. Pour over chilies and cheese. Bake in a 325 degrees oven for 40 minutes or until a knife inserted in custard comes out clean. Sprinkle remaining cheese over casserole and return to oven for 10 minutes or until cheese melts. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Serve with a tomato salad or a salsa.

Summer Salad with Shelling Beans ~ Shelling beans can also be added to your favorite risotto or pasta after being shelled and steamed or boiled

To make a gorgeous summer salad with shelling beans, simply tear open the pods of the beans and pluck out the beans. Bring a pot of lightly salted water to a boil and drop the beans in. Let them simmer for about 20 minutes, until slightly firm, but not too crunchy. Most fresh shelling beans cook in 20 to 30 minutes. While they're cooking, make a simple *vinaigrette*. When the beans are done, drain them. Toss the beans in the *vinaigrette* while they're warm, allowing them to absorb the lovely flavor of the *vinaigrette* better. Add halved cherry tomatoes and some sliced green onions and crumbled feta cheese and black olives. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

