

McDougal's Farm LLC

What's Growing On!

December 14, 2017

Farm News

Every couple of years we go to a CSA convention and rub shoulders with some of the finest CSA farmers from 5 different states. We sit down, talk, eat the most farm fabulous food, talk, have a few beers and talk some more. We put it all on the table, the good, the bad and the ugly. Here's just a few take-aways:

- There was talk about **sharing the risk** and how most of the time the farmer absorbs most of it without his members ever knowing...is this right? Then one farmer got up and spoke of his farm being hit with 80 mile an hour winds, 20 trees down, gaping holes ripped through his greenhouse, his worries, his concern...until his "insurance company" showed up....his farm members:)) Lesson to farmers: *Allow* your members to have your back.
- **Lack of time** came up, over and over again. There were more CSA farmers than we would like to admit that raised their hand if they ate cardboard frozen pizzas because they didn't have the time to cook the fresh beans that were going into their boxes. *Time* has become more scarce and more valuable than money. Never came up with an answer to this dilemma but we ALL need time to prepare our own food and eat mindfully for good health. Something that needs much more of our consideration.....if we had the time:). No really, we are going to give this more thought from our end, as well as yours on the receiving end of a CSA box.
- Two years ago at the convention, diversifying took home the cake. This year I would say **simplifying** won. Diversifying can come with too high of a cost...like ending up bat shoot crazy, exhausted, with no quality of life.

The topics went on for two days. We were so impressed with the knowledge, kindness and integrity of the group... Really felt honored to sit amongst their numbers. And as we enter our 10th year, it was an eye opener to realize we were now the "old farts" at the convention.

You can't talk about CSA's without **community** coming up. It made us contemplate our group of farm members and helpers. We have been so impressed with attitudes and personalities of the people this little farm has attracted....good, wholesome people....individual thinkers. Our three hour trip home gave us time to highlight a few. We have new born Zara, and youngest farm member, whose parents credited us for her good health....like awesome! What other business do you get to grow adorable happy babies?

Then there is Donna. Donna will be 100 years old this Spring and makes it to the farm at least 3 times a year! She has been permanently "Grand- mothered in" as a McDougal's Farm CSA member and get's all the free radishes she wants. Then there's Renee, the farms best advocate and sales person. There's Tom who always thinks of us when he's cleaning out his tool sheds and increases our honey sales by 50% and then there is Val who showed up with a massage bed in tote, when my back went out.....seriously, does it get better then this? We work for a group of top notch people and *that* is our most value added perk of being CSA farmers. We hope you all consider joining us again for the 2018 season.

What's new in 2018?

We have a new additional drop site in Merrill!! Whoop, whoop! The Wellness Center has welcomed us with open arms. They are located on the east side of the old courthouse, just a skip south of the roundabout.

Accepting credit card payment: still working out the bugs, so not quite ready but we will let you know as soon as that gate opens

A smaller share size choice: This will be an alternating week 1/2 bushel size box called the Buddy Box. You will be paired up with somebody else at the same drop site to pick up alternately. *Note: we are just experimenting with this idea this year. If it goes well, it's a keeper. If it gets too confusing from our end or in the pickup areas, we may compost the idea altogether.* May the force be with us....

Our Share a Share program will now be called the Helping Hand Fund: This program was set up to help others going through a rough patch or can't afford the whole amount of a share. Other members are giving the opportunity to pay extra to reduce somebody else's amount due. We put the extra into an accumulating fund account and distribute increments as needed. The name has been changed to avoid any confusion with our new Buddy Box option.

"Do you know your Farmer?" T-shirt farm fund raiser: From what we understand, these open up a lot of conversation between you (the wearer) and others that know nothing about the CSA farm to plate connection. A good chance to educate. We would be looking for a core group of farm members that would be willing to spear head this for us. Interested? Know of someone who prints t-shirts? Great at fund raisers? Have ideas? Let us know, we could use the help.

We are now accepting CSA sign up forms for 2018

Our website has not been fully updated for 2018 yet but we have attached the new 2018 CSA sign up form. You can see our prices did not go up this year...you are welcome:) And seeing it's the season for making wishes, this would be ours. We wish everyone could be signed up

(even with a partial down payment) by January 30th....even if we are dreaming, it's still a good wish. Seeds, soil and row cover could be ordered and paid for, boxes could be delivered now, instead of last minute, charts could be made now instead of when we need to be in the field....Yep, that's my Christmas wish, it's a biggie:) but I'm sticking to it....and we've been good.

***Plenty of 8# bags of sweet carrots and 10# bags of potatoes left:
\$8./bag. Have cabbage and beets as well Give us a call 715-627-4418**