

THE COMMUNITY FARM

Issue #45
Spring 2009
Beltane

Celebrating Community Supported Agriculture and Local Food

Passing on the Farm (newsletter)

After 11 years of publication, we have decided to “offer up” *The Community Farm*. I have often wondered how we pulled this publication off in the midst of the other work we do here, and it suddenly became clear that we no longer could pull it off. We have hopes of finding someone in our readership, or that one of our subscribers might identify, who can take on this work and move it forward.

In the years since 1998, when we published our first issue, Community Supported Agriculture and the local food movement have both expanded and matured beyond our expectations. Part of the reason we started the newsletter was our feeling of isolation. At the time we started Five Springs Farm in 1994, we knew of a handful of CSA farms in Michigan, none of them nearby. We eagerly awaited the CSA newsletters that were published at the time, but none lasted for long. Now we are surrounded by colleagues, and there are well over 80 CSA growers in Michigan. This growth of CSA is reflected all over the U.S., Canada and worldwide.

Local food, too, has come into its own in recent years, and when a local apple made the cover of *Time Magazine* in 2007 it was clearly a milestone for ‘locavores.’

Community Supported Agriculture has been covered in the media to the point that finding someone who is not familiar with CSA is unusual. Several farming publications

of more general ag interest have regular features on CSA.

Does that mean *The Community Farm* is obsolete? We don’t think so. But it may need some new directions and it certainly needs some new energy.

If you have that energy, or know someone who might, contact us. The newsletter will come with a small but remarkably loyal subscriber list, a set of back issues (except a few that are missing) and some help in the re-launching process.

We want you to know that our experience with the newsletter has been great. We get to know growers and researchers, we get to learn and investigate, we get to be creative. On the other hand, like farming, the newsletter is at least as much a labor of love as of money. There would be potential, though, to make it more and bigger, given the state of CSA and local food issues and interest today.

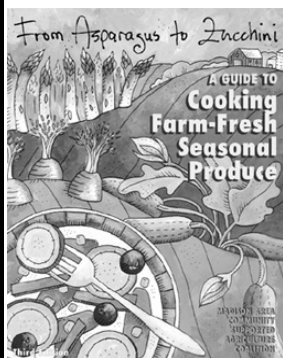
If there are no takers, we will dissolve the modest bank account by refunding subscriptions as fairly as we can.

Thanks to all of you who have stayed with us for so long... and to you new-comers as well. Best wishes in your ventures!

Contact:

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Update from the Robyn Van En Center

by Emily Gilmore

We have designed and launched an all-new Robyn Van En Center Blog (csacenter.blogspot.com). Please visit the blog and let us know what you think! The update to our National CSA Directory is well underway, as of today we have made initial contacts to all fifty states. Thanks to those of you who have already updated your farm's information.

Also, we are developing a needs assessment and would like to know your thoughts on how the Robyn Van En Center can better serve the CSA community. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

Contact Information:

The Robyn Van En Center, Wilson College, 1015 Philadelphia Avenue
Chambersburg, PA 17201; (717) 264-4141 Extension 3352

www.csacenter.org

csacenter@wilson.edu

See the Local Difference

Patty Cantrell, an economist and veteran journalist who founded the Michigan Land Use Institute's Entrepreneurial Agriculture Project writes about opportunities and challenges of building a local food economy, things local officials and organizations can do to help the local food economy, how investments in infrastructure fit in and much more in this six-part series of articles, starting at www.mlui.org/farms/fullarticle.asp?fileid=17269. While there is clearly a focus on Michigan in this series, examples and background from many other areas are incorporated.

For a hard copy, contact MLUI, 148 E. Front Street, Suite 301, Traverse City, MI 49684-5725 or email judy@mlui.org.

New Publications from our friends in Canada

Two resource books for farms hosting interns from Ignatius Farm CSA, Guelph, Ontario (Canada):

Oh to Grow!, 2nd Edition – a primer on organic agriculture perfect for interns and those new to farming.

Nurturing New Farmers – a guidebook for hosting interns on your farm. Includes considerations for hosting interns, lots of sample documents that you can adapt, and Ontario legalities that pertain to farm internships.

Order at 519-824-1250 ext. 275 or email csamarket@ignatiusguelph.ca for more information.

Fridays at the Farm (2006, 19 minutes, \$15)

Feeling disconnected from their food, a photographer/filmmaker and his family decide to join a community-supported farm. Hoffman moves from passive observer to active participant as he photographs the natural processes of food cultivation. Featuring lush time-lapse and macro photography sequences compiled from nearly 20,000 still images, this personal essay is a meditation on the miracles of life.

Your editor can't get enough of this video. It is visually appealing, with an engaging voice-over. This is fun to watch and share, and will make a great intro to CSA for a membership meeting or other farm event.

"The film made me cry. But I wasn't the only one wiping my eyes in the darkened theater. Maybe it was the image of Hoffmann's son juxtaposed against the beauty and nourishment of the farm that touched my heart or watching the cultivation of genuine relationships over honest work...we all long for bonds with the Earth, our food and community." –Melinda Hemelgarn, The Columbia Tribune

Order at www.coyopa.com or call 610-566-6524

Fishermen Create Seafood CSA

Fishermen in Maine have created Port Clyde Fresh Catch, which is a community-supported fishery (CSF). *The Boston Globe* reports participants sign up, pay a lump sum for the season, then receive a weekly share of seafood caught by the members of the Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative. CSFs work in much the same way for fishermen as CSAs (community-supported agriculture) do for farmers, with many of the same benefits. Consumers get the freshest local food, and the money goes straight to producers, with no middleman.

Weekly Harvest Newsletter, Sustainable Agriculture News Briefs - March 25, 2009

www.CSAtoolbox.com

Out of the office, back to the farm

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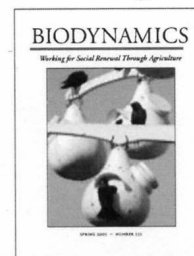
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