

DERI FARM NEWS

<http://derifarm.com/newsletters/>

FIRST DISTRIBUTION DAY - June 23 Next week is the start of the CSA distributions

Last weekend, a friend and volunteer at the farm speculated that some of the shareholders may have feared that I took their money and took off for Mexico (some of you may remember that same suggestion from last season.) With the number of phone calls and emails asking about the start date, I'm worried some of you may agree with his assessment! After a couple of sleepless nights, I decided to delay the start date for the share pickup by one week. When snow was on the ground, it was easy to plan to start harvesting this week; however, given some of the limitations of the fields and the weather (see the Farmer's Corner section), I think we will all be happier with a solid start next week. So, it's official, the first farm pick-up is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23 or Friday, June 26, if you are signed up for Friday. If you opted for delivery option, I will be contacting you within the next couple of days, but expect the first delivery on June 24.

For directions to the farm, see the website at:
<http://derifarm.com/directions.html>

For those of you picking up your vegetables at the farm, here are a few thoughts. First of all, I recommend you bring your own bags--I had thought about selling some bags; however, the bigger grocery stores in the area have excellent bags for just a few dollars. Also, I will provide a basket where you can put clean plastic grocery bags for others to use (a great way to recycle!) and helpful to me by reducing my costs in providing new plastic bags. Secondly, I recommend parking in the museum parking lot and walking to the vegetable distribution area in the ell between the house and the barn. I will post signs guiding you to the correct place. Lastly, further instructions will be posted on a white board in the vegetable distribution area and I will send another email with further details this coming weekend. I look forward to seeing you all next week.

HELPING HAND Welcome to Sarah Holden

I am happy to announce Deri Farm's newest employee: Sarah Holden. Sarah joined us about a month ago and has been indispensable with all the seeding and transplanting at this time of year. She is studying sociology at Saint Lawrence University and will be a junior in the fall. While we suffered through a long Maine winter, Sarah spent this last semester studying abroad in Kenya. In addition to several home-stays and coursework in Kenya, she did a one month independent study at Lamu Island on environmental issues, specifically on improving waste management for the island community. Please be sure to introduce yourself to Sarah the next time you are at the farm.



Sarah Holden seeds broccolli in to 128 trays inside the Deri Farm greenhouse on a rainy late spring day.

GREENS ARE GROWING

Even with all the doom and gloom of quack grass and the now usual unusual weather, most of the plants are still thriving. As you can see from the photo to the right, the summer squash are starting to blossom. I even saw a few flowers on the field tomatoes (mark your calendar because it takes 45 days from blossom to fruit!) The swiss chard (a favorite with many share-holders last year) has been doing quite well--I have an interesting recipe for chard for next week's newsletter. The flowers are looking great (though we won't see actual flowers for a few more weeks) and the sunflowers have germinated and are just poking above the soil. Let's hope for improved weather and for the deer to stay in the woods!



Zephyr summer squash about to blossom

FARMER'S CORNER

If you get a group of Maine organic farmers together at this time of year, the conversation nearly always turns to the weather. It's always too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry--perfect conditions would be one inch of rain on Sunday nights. I don't think any of us mind working in the rain or somewhat cool weather, but it can be problematic for the vegetables. The cool weather we have had this spring means that the soil hasn't warmed up and some of the essential nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous are not available for the plants. Unlike conventional farmers and their use of petroleum derived fertilizers, organic farmers are somewhat limited to how we can provide nutrients to the plants until the soil warms. The use of fish emulsions as a foliar spraying (spraying on the leaves when the pores are open, not the soil) is a great method for giving the boost a plant needs, but can be expensive and somewhat time consuming. Looking at the next week or so of dreary and cool weather, I plan to try a foliar spray of a Maine produced sea weed and fish emulsion fertilizer.

I know that some farms are already producing some great spring produce such as radishes, salad greens and baby bok choy. These are all direct seeded in the early spring. As you know, very little of the sod here was plowed up in the early spring. Therefore, we are a bit behind in the directly seeded vegetables. The biggest difficulty with this sod is the invasive quackgrass. It has an underground stem (a rhizome) that can easily grow several feet and send off new leaves every inch or so. After running a plow or tiller through the ground, the chopped up rhizomes then shoot up leafy growth and spread out in the loose soil--sometimes growing an inch a day. Once the fresh leaves grow more than four inches or so, they send sugar down to the rhizomes to store up energy. I won't even mention what happens when the grass goes to seed! So, we are frantically trying to till/hoe/cultivate the soil to keep the grass population down. Unfortunately, the rain means that it is more difficult to get the tractors out in the fields and we are therefore stuck with using a hoe and hand-weeding. Hmm...perhaps a volunteer day to help weed some beds should be scheduled soon...



If you have been by the farm in the past few weeks, you most likely noticed a couple of cows contributing to the somewhat bucolic scene. The cows belong to Luther Gray (whom you may remember from the Plow Day) and are the newest residents at Deri Farm. I have enjoyed watching them graze in the paddocks (with only one escape so far) and loaf around in the buttercups. They are about one year old beef cattle and Luther plans to keep the one pictured here for breeding. I hope you are able to take some time to enjoy them!

Your Farmer,
Justin

