



The Weekly (Com)Post

A newsletter for the Live Earth Farm CSA Community

35th Harvest Week

November 8th – 14th, 2004

Season 9

What's in the standard share:

Fruit:

Apples

Veggies and herbs:

Broccoli

Baby chard/kale mix

Green beans

Lettuce

Bag of freshly dug butter potatoes

Radicchio (red or sugarloaf)

Winter squash (spaghetti or butternut)

Thyme

Mystery items

and if you have an extra-fruit option:

Apples and pears

(over for more)

Eating by numbers. Recently I read an article that started by saying, "Wouldn't it be nice if the cashier gave you a printout of the pesticides in the food you buy when you're at the grocery store?" There is even a website www.foodnews.org that can give you an estimated total number of pesticides in the food you selected. Are all these numbers from our scientific advances in biological and nutritional sciences making a difference in our dietary habits? Are we just eating by numbers? Isn't food much more than knowing how many servings of fruits and vegetables we need, or what percentage of calories should come from fats or what dosage of vitamins and minerals we should ingest daily? It almost seems silly, as useful as this information is, reducing food merely to fuel for our body and analyzing it as dietary details to be digested, both physically and intellectually. Instead of numbers we need more meaning, other ways of relating to food so that each time we eat we have an enjoyable experience that nourishes our entire being. As I was standing in line with my son to rent a movie, both sides of the aisle were lined with plastic-encased processed sweets and synthetic soft drinks making nutritional claims of being fat-free, low in cholesterol, or high in vitamin C, giving the impression of being healthy. With all the nutri-babble even the worst of the "fake foods" slip into our diet. On the other hand, the food we grow and deliver to you every week is not packaged and wrapped into a numerical nutritional analysis. Often it doesn't look fancy, but it's real food that comes from the earth: fresh, natural, whole, nourishing, healthful, and its original integrity is intact. Eating this more natural, earth-connected food helps us to heal our bodies, our emotions, our sense of spiritual connection, our social link to one another, our communities, and maybe even our planet. – Tom

"All nature's creatures join to express nature's purpose."

- Graham Swift

2005 Early Registration

[repeat from last week, for the benefit of share-splitters] After a bit of discussion with Debbie, I've changed my mind and decided to extend the deadline for the 2005 Early Registration until the end of the *year*, instead of the end of the season. Our objective is to get as many members registered as we can. By committing this year for next season, you will help us rent some additional land to both diversify and increase or production for next year, and, as I said before, help pay our bills through the winter months and offer our workers year-round employment. Thanks for your support! – Tom

The nitty-gritty, from Debbie: **You now have until Dec. 31st, 2004 to sign up and still lock in the equivalent of this year's rates – a \$75 savings** – since next year we will increase the standard share price by \$2 - from \$23 to \$25/week. **Early registration is easy.** Just go to our website and click on '2005 Early Registration' and follow the (simple) instructions. Then mail us your deposit for \$175 (which doubles as your payment for March and April's shares) and you're done! If you don't have internet access, call me at the farm and I'll set you up by phone (keep in mind I'm only on the farm on Tuesdays and Thursdays; mornings are best). Note: the website may still say 'register before Nov. 20th' but it should be updated at the end of the season to reflect Tom's deadline extension. 🐾

Goat cheese, milk and chevon

A warm greeting from Lynn at Summer Meadows Farm! We've had a great year serving you with our goats' milk. God has blessed this herd; they are glowing with health, and he's helped me through sunny days and tougher times to get all those cheeses and yogurts and sweet milk out to you. As I write this my daughter Meadow and I are basking in the sunny new pasture, freshly green from the early rain, and laughing at the goat's antics as they kick up their heels, gallop clumsily over the hills, nuzzle us for petting, and nibble on my writing paper and the wicker bench I'm sitting on.

Fall is breeding season, and the does are challenging each other for dominance with their ritual head-butting. But this is also the time when I need input from you in planning how many does to breed for next spring's milkers. If you've owned shares in my does this year, will you be continuing next spring? We'll serve you before new families. We have appreciated all of you so much! Thank you.

For those of you who haven't participated before but would like to, I'm planning to breed six new does so I can provide for new shares next year. I have brochures for more info. Please contact Lynn at 831.786.8966 or if no answer, leave a message on 831.345.8033 (or write to Summer Meadows Farm, 405 Webb Rd., Watsonville, CA 95076). I do not have email.

We've loved having our families visit us! Some have tried milking the goats, others made cheese with me. Meadow has even taken children for rides on her horse! If you'd like to come visit, you're welcome to come too.

Something new: we will have chevon (goat meat) for sale this winter, as we had many new bucks amongst the babies this year. These bucks are so healthy and robust; they are still mostly milk-fed (supplemented with grazing and alfalfa). These are happy, loved animals; the meat will be very wholesome. No antibiotics or hormones in these guys! What does it taste like? Think: similar to beef but much leaner; like venison without the gamy flavor. If you're interested in a whole or half share of a meat-goat, contact me. The meat will come cut, wrapped, and frozen. \$165/whole. \$85/half. 🐐

Notes from Debbie's Kitchen

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Contact me at deb@writerguy.com or 408.288.9469.

Visit the recipes link on our website for a comprehensive list of recipes 'by key ingredient' (pictures too!). Includes recipes from newsletters back to 1998.

As I was freezing veggie overage last week in preparation for the off-season, I thought, "hmmm, maybe our members would like some freezing tips!" – Debbie

Freezing broccoli and green beans

from Debbie's kitchen

You can apply these basic principles to freezing other veggies as well, but let me tell you what works well for broccoli and for green beans, since we've been getting both these last few weeks.

For either veggie, you'll need a large pot of boiling water and a big basin or sink full of cold water standing by. First prepare your veggies. Top and tail the green beans (and cut into segments or leave whole, however you prefer). Cut the broccoli into florets, and I like to peel the fat stem and cut it into bite-size pieces too (plenty of nutrition in the stem; why let it go to waste?).

The vegetables need to be blanched before they are frozen. According to Joy of Cooking, "enzymes continue to be active in vegetables even after harvesting and, unless arrested, will bring about change which lead to nutritional loss and off-flavors. Blanching greatly lessens enzymatic activity..."

To blanch, drop prepared broccoli or beans into the boiling water for 2 to 3 minutes (kind of depends on how much volume you have relative to boiling water). I do it until they are bright green. Immediately drain veggies and plunge into the cold water, swishing and moving them around until they are completely cooled.

The next important step is to get rid of as much water as possible before freezing. The green beans are pretty easy; you can drain them and pat them briefly in a towel. I found I could de-water my broccoli with great success using my salad spinner! Go

two or three cycles in the spinner, dumping the accumulated water each time.

And finally, freezing: don't just dump your veggies into a bag or container and put in the freezer or you'll just end up with a big frozen lump that has to be cooked all at once. What I do which works great is to spread the drained veggies out on a rimmed cookie sheet and stick them in the freezer this way, then as soon as they are frozen hard, remove them from the sheet and pack them in ziploc bags (remember to squeeze as much air out as possible before sealing). This way the veggies don't stick to one another and you can decant them in any quantity you want and leave the rest in the bag for later use!

About Thyme

excerpted from an old Bon Appetit clipping

"Of all the great – if unheralded – leaps forward for American cooks, one of my favorites is the advent of widely available fresh thyme – as opposed to the dried kind, a coarse and coarse-tasting powder reminiscent of snuff. If you don't believe me, just try this: Put some olive oil in a pan and turn the heat to medium. Drop in three or four cloves of garlic and about ten sprigs of thyme. Stir slowly. Then breathe deeply. See what I mean now?"

"Of course Thyme's traditional use is not as culinary aromatherapy, but rather as part of a bouquet garni, tied up in cheesecloth, with bay leaves and parsley and used to subtly flavor stocks and stews. It is also often combined with other savory herbs, like marjoram. But I find that its contributions are most notable when it is allowed to stand on its own.

"Take that fragrant garlic-thyme oil, for example. In the sunny Mediterranean, where thyme grows like a weed, it would be

put to all sorts of delicious uses: sautéing chicken parts or chunks of [meat] destined for stew, basting chicken or fish while roasting, or as a dipping sauce or in a vinaigrette.

"Thyme's distinctive flavor is an essential component of many cold-climate dishes as well. It is, after all, the classic Thanksgiving herb, traditionally added to everything from the stuffing to the potatoes to the turkey." [The article continues, but this was the most appropriate info for us! – Debbie]

And a **storage tip** from me: I've had thyme last for more than a month(!) if I carefully snip off the fresh, leafy stems (discard woodier parts) and enclose them tightly in a ziploc bag in the fridge. Do NOT wash or wet them in any way before doing this. They need to be completely dry (not dried as in dehydrated, just completely free of wetness) or they will not last nearly as long.

Thyme and Garlic Cheese Dip

from Bon Appetit, same article makes about 1 cup

1 tbsp. (packed) fresh thyme leaves
1/2 clove garlic
1/2 tsp. coarse salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
1 7/8 oz. pkg. farmer cheese, or an 8-oz. package of cream cheese
1/4 C sour cream.

Blend first 4 ingredients in processor until garlic is finely chopped, occasionally scraping down sides of bowl. Add cheese and sour cream; blend well. Season with more salt and pepper, if desired. Transfer to a serving bowl; chill at least 30 minutes.

"This dip has almost nothing else in it to mask the thyme flavor. Serve with crackers, lightly toasted pita bread, and raw vegetable sticks."