



# BLACKBROOK FARM

827 15th St, Clayton, WI 54004 | 828-702-0444 | blackbrookfarmstead.com | blackbrook.farm.llc@gmail.com

## Half way mark

July was sure a seasonable month! It was one of those rare times when it was actually really nice to work outside. It's really only about twenty percent of the time that it's truly nice to work outside. The other eighty percent: rainy, cold, cold and rainy, thunderstorms, mud, blistering heat, sweltering humidity, don't forget snow, ice sleet, and sub-zero temperatures. All of which is to say that we are especially thankful for the 70 degree days with sun and low humidity. That is something we can all appreciate.

One local food issue that is interesting to wrestle with is what I call economy of scale versus scaled economy. Economy of scale is an extremely important component of the success of small, local farms. Of course it is not realized in the same way as it is for huge factory farms. But it is equally important. For small farms with a small economy of scale, it is hard to access our operational inputs at reasonable costs. Therefore, our bottom line operational costs are higher, sometimes really significantly, than for a similar business operating at a larger economy of scale. Small farms can handle this in a number of ways. If we have enough capital in the bank, we can buy a couple years' worth of, say, waxed boxes on a semi-truck and save fifty cents a box. If you add fifty cents up over a few thousand boxes, that really adds up. The trouble with this approach is that it requires farmers to tie up their precious capital for a long time in order to realize a cost savings. The other approach that a lot of farmers in our area take is to collaborate on large purchases with other farms. If you split that truckload of waxed boxes up between four farms, we can realize the same cost savings without tying up extra capital. We take this approach with a lot of inputs, like fertilizer, harvest crates, and other supplies. The trouble here is coordination and cash flow. For one thing, getting a bunch of unruly farmers organized is no simple task. For another thing, every farm cash flows a bit differently, so not every farm will be able to buy the big bulk purchase at the

## What's in the Box:

**Red Potatoes-** Store these in the fridge.

The skins are still pretty thin.

**Sweet Corn-** Hooray! 5 for each box this week, but expect more next week. They are just starting to ripen. These are called Ambrosia and are a peaches and cream type. Eat raw just right on the cob! How do you eat yours? Recipe included

**Red/Heirloom Tomatoes-** Hooray for these, too! 2 lbs each. There are a bunch of varieties in there, so all members got a few types. **DO NOT REFRIGERATE!** It makes tomatoes less flavorfull and changes their sugar content. Keep in counter, top side down, until you are ready to eat. Recipe included.

**Cherry Tomatoes-** ROTATING. Half of all members (all half shares) got cherries and the rest will get them next week.

**Broccoli- 2 plus lbs** Our next flush is in! We could have given you more, but we didn't want to squish the tomatoes!

**Cilantro-** Recipe included. Great with tomatoes!

**Rainbow Chard-** A little on the bitter side, so we suggest cooking these greens into a frittata, bake, saute. Recipe included

**Colorful Snap Bean Mix-** We have been getting the mega-load of beans off our plants lately. Keeps well in plastic bag in fridge. Also consider pickling them if you have too many. Recipe included

**Cucumbers-** 4 per member. lact- fermented pickles are awesome!

**Summer Squash/Zucchini-** 3 each. Recipe included

**Green Onions-** Either huge Ailsa Craig onions (tops are browning) or white bunching onions where the bulbs are a bit smaller, but the greens are still edible.

**Celery-** Keep in a plastic bag in the fridge and it will keep for weeks!



Aunt Paula and Ronia



Lost of Mixed Snap Beans!

### Sweet Corn Salad with Tomatoes

from the splendidtable.org

- 3 ears corn, kernels sliced from cob
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus additional, to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large tomato, diced
- 2 ripe avocados, diced
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

1. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Drop

same time. It would really help if there was a Cooperative that coordinate, purchase, and warehouse the bulk purchases so that farmers could buy them at their convenience. Hmmm.

So, even though our farms are small, economy of scale is super important in holding costs down. This allows us to make a living and deliver our products to you at a competitive rate. On the other side of the coin, if you take this to the capitalistic extreme, which I call scaled economy, you get businesses that are far too efficient to maintain the values of, for instance, Organic farming principles or respect for workers. Small farms need to concern themselves with economy of scale in order to continue existing and thereby, in the case of organic farms, continue to realize ecologically sound methods of food production. By contrast, enormous farms, whether "Organic" in name or not, exist in the stratosphere of the scaled economy. In this scaled economy, you have businesses run by business people. You have corporate executives who are mandated by shareholders to increase dividends. Essentially, you replace the food chain values that consumers like you and farmers like us work so hard to sustain with a mere profit motive. Scaled economy does look at soil and crops as dollar signs. We look at it as quality of food, the environment, and the future of our family and our community.

In any event, we appreciate you making the conscious choice to direct your food-consumer dollars towards local family farms. We believe that this is the best choice you can make to further the cause of environmentally and socially sustainable relationships.

Mark your calendars for the...

### **Fall Harvet Party**

**Saturday, October 3rd**

**Pig roast!**

**Potluck**

**walk around farm**

**Pumpkin picking**

**bonfire**

**music!**

**camping if desired**

**more details to come...**

Have a great week!

### **Extras Options:**

**Cucumbers: 10/20 lbs: \$10/\$20**

**Basil (with 2-3 garlic bulbs): 2/4 lbs- \$20/\$36**

Let us know if you want any of these with your next delivery

### **Disclaimer on Peppers and Eggplant**

We are having a problem with blossom drop on these crops due to excess heat and rain a couple weeks ago. We will have these for you, but it is still going to be a week or two. We are very frustrated with this, but it is part of taking the risk!

### **What's in store for next week?**

these are some of the crops we are hoping for

Sweet Corn

Tomatoes

Carrots

Basil/dill

Cucumbers

Squash

Onions

Beans

tomatillos?

Broccoli/Cauliflower

Peppers?

melons?

### **Provençal Zucchini and Swiss Chard Tart**

1 whole wheat crust

1 pound Swiss chard

Salt to taste

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 pounds zucchini, cut in small dice (1/4 to 1/3inch)

2 to 3 large garlic cloves (to taste), minced

1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, chopped

1 to 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary (to taste)

2 ounces Gruyère cheese, grated (1/2 cup, tightly packed)

3 large eggs, beaten

Freshly ground pepper

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil while you stem the greens, and wash them thoroughly in several rinses of water. If the ribs are wide, wash and dice them, then set aside. Fill a bowl with ice water. When the water reaches a rolling boil, add a generous amount of salt and the chard leaves. Blanch for one minute, until just tender. Using a slotted spoon or deep-fry skimmer, transfer to the ice water, then drain. Squeeze out excess water and chop. Set aside.

2. Heat the oil over medium heat in a large non-stick skillet, and add the onion and diced chard stems, if using. Cook, stirring, until tender.

in the corn and cook until just tender, about 2 minutes. Drain.

2. In a bowl, whisk together the lime juice, garlic, salt, and pepper. Whisk in the oil.

3. In a large bowl, combine the corn, tomato, avocados, scallion, and cilantro. Add the dressing and toss well to coat. Serve immediately.

### **Pickled Green Beans**

6 to 7 ounces snap beans

1 teaspoon coriander seeds

1 teaspoon mustard seeds

¼ teaspoon black peppercorns

3 sprigs fresh dill

1 bay leaf

½ cup white wine vinegar

½ cup sherry vinegar

½ cup water

1 tablespoon raw brown (turbinado) sugar

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

1 large garlic clove, quartered

Rinse green beans and break off stem ends. Put them into a pint jar, standing them up and squeezing as many into the jar as you can. There should be 1/2 inch of head space in the jar, so you may have to trim down some of the beans. Once you've cut them down to fit, take them out of the jar and sterilize the jar in a boiling water bath for 5 to 10 minutes. Using a jar grip, carefully remove the jar from the water and tip out all water.

Place coriander seeds, mustard seeds, peppercorns and bay leaf in jar and fill with beans, standing them up in the jar. Push dill sprigs down into the jar.

In a small saucepan, combine the vinegars, water, sugar, salt and garlic and bring to a boil. Reduce heat slightly and simmer 2 minutes. Pour into jar with green beans. The beans should be covered but there should still be 1/4 to 1/2 inch head space. Push garlic down into the jar. Seal jar and allow to cool, then refrigerate for up to 2 months. For best results wait 2 days before eating.

**Provençal tart continued...** Stir in the zucchini. Season to taste with salt, and cook, stirring, until just tender and still bright green, about 10 minutes. Stir in the garlic, thyme and rosemary, and cook with the zucchini and onion until the garlic is fragrant, about one or two minutes. Stir in the greens, toss everything together, and remove from the heat. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

3. Beat the eggs in a large bowl. Stir in 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt (to taste), the zucchini mixture, and the Gruyère. Mix everything together, add pepper, taste once more and adjust seasoning.

4. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Oil a 10-inch tart pan. Roll out two-thirds of the dough and line the pan, with the edges of the dough overhanging. Freeze the remaining dough. Fill the lined pan with the zucchini mixture. Pinch the edges of the dough along the rim of the pan. Place in the oven and bake 50 minutes, until set and beginning to color. Allow to rest for at least 15 minutes before serving.