



Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members

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This Week's Box

Yes, we still have the following summer yummys:

Green and Colored Bells
Apple Peppers and/or Banana Peppers

Tomatoes- ripen on windowsill
Enjoy these fall crops, too:

Butternut Squash

Amber Cup - An orange kabocha type.

Celeriac - If you want to pronounce it right, accent the second syllable or just say "Celery Root."



Salad Mix

Green Top Bunched Carrots

Bok Choi - Great in Asian Stir-fry

Broccoli or Broccoflower

All-Red and All-Blue Potatoes -

Good for boiling. Some of the skins are scabby, so if you prefer, peel after boiling -- easy, even with the small ones.

Beauty Heart Radish - It's crisp and mild and pink inside. Outside it looks mostly like a turnip with green shoulders.

Choice: Eggplant

Organic Rules!

by Linda

This week Richard and I have been invited to be guests on Jean Feraca's "All About Food" call-in radio show on Wisconsin Public Radio. First we'll talk about organic foods and the new federal standards that go in effect this month to regulate the use of the term "organic." Surely there will be more to cover, however, as organic is not just a hot product line -- the fastest growing segment of the food industry -- it is also a hot topic -- debated in articles from the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel last month, in the NY Times earlier this summer, and now in Newsweek as the cover story. What is there to debate? Well, mostly people (people who are not currently buying organic foods) want to know why it costs more, if it is worth it and if it is actually, significantly different than what ever is "non organic". As you can imagine, it is a complex issue and most of the articles get it only somewhat right. Newsweek did a better than average. Because it is such an expanding marketplace in a world that finds growth sluggish, organic has gotten the attention of big business, little business and farmers of all persuasions. Why, you can find organic products in Wal-Mart, of all places!

For purposes of this article, I'd like to focus simply on the national organic rule. The rule has been a long time coming, more than a decade since the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 was passed to create national standards. Its purpose was: (1) to establish national standards governing the marketing of certain agricultural products as organically produced products; (2) to assure consumers that organically produced products meet a consistent standard; and (3) to

ened the application, but, after all, this is the federal government we're talking about here. It will live up to the purpose of making the standards consistent throughout the country -- though they were not all that disparate before the feds stepped in. I believe the rule is as good as it is because it had public input and because it didn't make any dramatic changes to what was already accepted as organic production and handling before the rule was enacted.

One thing it won't do is improve enforcement. While each and every certified producer, handler or processor receives an on-site inspection and audit of their organic plan, anything not caught during that process could go undetected. No federal enforcement agents will be hired, no federal dollars will be budgetted for enforcement or prosecution. Enforcement will be no better and no worse than before the federal rule. For the most part, I don't believe there has been a lot of cheating going on. Though some high profile cases have come to our attention, consumers are very unlikely to hear about the problems. However, as organic spreads to segments that see it simply as a marketing opportunity, I can imagine that cheating could proliferate, too. The organic certifiers that we deal with vow they will do their best to ferret out problems and will respond to all reported complaints. No one, not certifiers, organic farmers nor the federal government want to be soft on cheaters.

As farmers, the new rule is probably not going to have a major effect on us.

- This year we have been required to source organic seeds, something only recommended before the federal rule. This felt like a bit of a burden this first year, as the availability of organic seed is quite limited. In the next few years, I predict that more and more organic seeds will become available and sourcing them will become second nature. This is a good thing and means more land will be farmed organically to produce the organic seed in demand by organic farmers.

- The paper work required was lengthier but not unjustifiable, and promises to be shorter in subsequent years.

Along with more paperwork comes somewhat higher fees, though these are not mandated in the rule and vary by certi-

facilitate interstate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced. To accomplish the first purpose, the National Organic Standards Board was established. Incredibly, this is a collaborative board consisting of public representatives from various fields in, or related to, the organic industry, including farmers, retailers, processors, environmental scientists and representatives of consumer interests. We have personally known several members of this board. They are knowledgeable, respected people who bring their own particular expertise. The board has held many public hearings and their meetings are open to the public. While this may not be the only public board advising the government on its rule-making, it may be the strongest. After years of input, debate and attempts at co-opting the rule, the national program adopted rules very similar to those already in place all over the nation, used by various independent and state agencies for decades. It retained the basics considered widely to be the essence of organic, and it rejected some controversial ideas like permitting irradiation, use of sewage sludge or genetically engineered seeds, for example. It admittedly expanded the red-tape and length-

Celery Root, Celeriac

Excerpts taken from Elizabeth Schneider's book Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini.

It may be Americans' current demand for cosmetic perfection that explains celeriac's relative lack of popularity in this country. It is unlikely that the flavor is at fault, for this earthy prize-a pitted and whorled planet with snaggly rootlets- is imbued with herbaceous aroma. Few who sample the parsley- and celery-scented bulb, a variety of branch celery cultivated for its lowers rather than its uppers, remain indifferent.

There are three forms of celery: "regular" stalk celery, leaf celery, and the gnarly root. All are Mediterranean in origin but are now wide spread. Celery root is highly regarded throughout Europe. Although celery root has been available in the United States since the start of the 19th century, most cooks who were not raised with it on the table ignore it. In this country it was grown in limited amounts and used mostly by French and German immigrants.

Basic Uses

Raw: For a jazzy, chewy salad, grate, shred, or julienne peeled celery root (always cut very fine) and toss with sharp dressing. Do not serve at once, but allow at least several hours of marinating time to tenderize and mellow the dense vegetable.

Celeriac tends to dominate in salads, and is best when balanced by fairly strong flavors and defined textures such as water cress, beets, apples, carrots, walnuts, smoked meats or sausages, capers, mustard, anchovies, and onion.

Cooked: Celeriac shines in soup, where it seasons, lends body and complexity, and blends seamlessly with other ingredients. It works particularly well in concert with earthy roots, whether cooked and served in chunks or pureed. Peeled, sliced, or cubed celeriac needs 15 minutes to cook through- more, when used in purees.

RAW CELERIAC, APPLE, AND WALNUT SALAD

Serves 4

1 head celeriac, peeled and julienne
3 tart apples, julienne
½ cup toasted walnuts or pecans, chopped
¼ cup honey
Salt and pepper (the pepper is important)
The julienne cut is a thin matchstick size cut. Use a sharp knife for this, but if you can't cut it that small you are better off chopping it to get the small pieces. Combine all the ingredients and season. Chill for at least 1 hour to marinate, and then serve.

CELERIAC SOUP

Serves 4

2 medium onions, diced
2 carrots, diced
2 head celeriac, diced
½ bottle Riesling wine (dry), or Sauvignon Blanc
2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
2 stems thyme
Salt and pepper



On medium-high heat sweat the onion and carrot in a large heavy-bottomed pot with enough oil to coat the bottom. When the vegetables are translucent, add the wine and turn up the heat. Reduce the wine by ½, then add the celeriac, stock, and the thyme. Simmer for 20 minutes. Check to see if the celeriac is soft and then put all of it in a blender, minus the thyme stems. Be careful not to start the blender on high or the contents will spray all over you. Blend until completely smooth then adjust the seasoning. For garnish, you can top with fresh croutons or diced celery.

from front

fication agency.

- The list of approved products is somewhat changed and some previously approved products are in limbo, waiting for approved status (or denial, perhaps.) At least all farmers are using the same acceptable products now, one area that was somewhat inconsistent before.

- Parts of the rule that seem impractical or unnecessary have been revised, are being reconsidered, or are receiving new, clearer interpretations, thanks to that public board and public input, I believe.

- And, finally, some very unacceptable requests by various interested parties for relaxation of the rule have been denied. (Representatives of the state of Georgia, home to many poultry producers, requested that the requirement for feeding 100% organic grain to organic birds be waived. They claimed that the feed was unavailable. In fact, the organic grain was very available, but simply cost more. The feds didn't cave in to the pressure and stood their ground. Almost laughably, leaders in the same state later requested that the rule requiring a three year transition period before agricultural land can become certified organic be scrapped in favor of a

1 year program. Also denied. This may be the beginning of a slew of requests on behalf of constituents, but so far the program has remained steadfast in upholding the rule. Will organic rules become more politicized in the future? Only time will tell.

As consumers you will probably not notice any changes unless you are looking for them. Reading labels will at least yield consistent results. "100% organic" is just that, "organic" without the 100% in front means that up to 5% of the ingredients may be non-organic, "made with organic ingredients" means at least 70% of the ingredients are organic and it will list which ones on the ingredient panel. Each label on fresh or processed product must list the certifier's name, the independent agency authorized by the government to inspect and affirm that organic practices are being followed. (We have always done that.) One thing you can be sure of after Oct. 21st is that if a producer says their product is organic, it must be certified by an independent agency. One who does not go through that process may not use the term, unless they are very small -- sell less than \$5,000 worth of product in 1 year. You may notice a proliferation of alternative labels, some being different than organic -- "local" or "the product of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)", for example, or some trying to be "as good or better than" organic but without the federal government getting in on the act. The latter, I feel, can be deceitful. What assurance of true, independent oversight does a consumer have? Some hardly require more than an affidavit signed by the producer. Knowing one's farmer may be a substitute for buying certified organic, but most consumers don't know what questions to ask or what to look for on a farm visit.

We, of course, think that certified organic produce is head and shoulders above conventionally produced food. (Certified organic that comes from a local source is even better!) What other production system can make the claim that they use no synthetic chemicals, have systems in place to protect the soil, surface and ground water, use only carefully composted natural fertilizers, and maintain an audit trail of the field history of each and every crop grown. (A certified organic farmer can tell you everything that was applied to any field and the date of application, as well as dates of harvest of each crop they grow, for as many years as they have been certified organic.) And you don't have to take their word on it, an independent agent attests to it annually.

Announcements:

Check your HVF Farm calendars. New delivery schedules begin in November. Don't be caught off guard. No Produce Plus this week.