



News from

Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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GOOD, AND GOOD FOR YOU!

OK, so we all know that organic vegetables and fruits contain lower pesticide residues – but are they actually more nutritious than conventionally grown foods? And can we prove it?

Organic advocates and detractors alike stress that more research is needed on the subject, and I think that's true. But after researching this topic a little, I'm convinced that there already IS a lot of proof out there. Over and over, studies show that organic foods have more vitamins, essential minerals, and phytonutrients (powerful antioxidants found in fruit and vegetable skins that fight aging and help prevent cancer) than conventionally produced foods. Often the difference is BIG - one review of 41 studies concluded that organic produce regularly contains 27% more vitamin C, 21.1% more iron, 29.3% more magnesium, and 13.6% more phosphorus than conventional produce. Another report for the Soil Association in the UK looked at over FOUR HUNDRED published papers and reached similar conclusions. In Australia, organic produce was found to contain TEN TIMES the

mineral content of conventional produce purchased in grocery stores.

Why? What makes one pepper more nutritious than the next? Certainly freshness is one factor. Chef Dan Barber summed it up well in his November 23, 2004 New York Times article 'Food without Fear,' "A serving of broccoli is naturally rich in vitamins A and B, and has more vitamin C than citrus fruit. But raised in an industrial farm monoculture, shipped over a long distance and stored before and after being delivered to your supermarket, it loses up to 80 percent of its vitamin C and 95 percent of its calcium, iron and potassium."

But freshness isn't the only factor; I was interested to learn that even the variety of vegetable can make quite a difference. This makes sense, when you think about it: organic farmers often grow vegetables for taste, texture, and aesthetics more so than just for super high yields and storability. Conventional vegetables are bigger, weigh more and look more grand than ever before, yet contain less nutrients - their size is due to higher water content. It's no secret that over the past several decades, the nutritional quality of conventionally grown crops has

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This Week's Box

- Broccoli OR Cauliflower**
- Cilantro**
- Cucumbers**
- Edamame**
- Garlic**
- Jalapenos**
- Onion - yellow or red storage**
- Peppers - assorted**
- Salad Mix**
- Sweet Corn**
- Tomatoes - assorted**
- Watermelon - yellow or red**

CHOICE
Basil AND/OR Kale

Fruitshare Members-

Please remember to return your Fruit Surveys! Thanks!



Benji with the last of the watermelons, and it's a beauty!

Grazier's Organic Beef

For many years, since selling Richard's sheep herd, we have managed our pastures by grazing cattle. In the beginning the USDA didn't even allow meats to be labeled as organic, so we certified our pastures and fed the animals organic feed, but purchased yearlings that didn't necessarily come from an organically raised herd. Then we teamed up with Jim and Phylis Munsch of Deer Run Farm in Coon Valley, who have maintained an organic Angus herd for years. We were so happy to have access to calves raised organically from birth and were able to certify our beef as organic as soon as the USDA created standards for meat several years ago.

We purchase Deer Run's largest yearling steers in the spring and graze them all summer long here on our pastures, supplementing their feed with organic corn and oats. By November they are lean with a little fat, and the pastures are going dormant for the cold months.

As I write this, I can see the herd of 12 making their way steadily across the far hillside. The summer has been good for them. Pastures were dry and short for a while, but rains came just in time to renew their growth and we have not needed to supply supplemental hay. And with fewer flies during this dry summer, the animals have thrived and grown even better than ever.

If you are interested in purchasing our frozen beef, look for information and an order form at the delivery sites or go to our website: www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com. Delivery dates are: Nov. 18/19, Dec. 16/17 and Jan. 20/21.

Quick ways to deal with Bountiful Extras:

Over the past week, Kyle has been busy dehydrating cherry and Sungold tomatoes. They are delicious, nutritious treats that he can't leave out in the kitchen unguarded. He even candied some red slicers - sprinkled sugar on them and roasted them in the oven with the fan on. But what else to do with excess veggies?

Cucumbers – refrigerator pickles – they're simple! See recipe.

Edamame – Rinse whole edamame, boil 3-5 minutes in enough very salty water to cover them. Plunge into ice water to stop the cooking process; drain and freeze.

Peppers – Cut into strips or chop, lay on cookie sheets and place in freezer. When frozen, transfer to plastic bags or containers for long-term freezer storage.

Hot peppers - Dry with a dehydrator.

Tomatoes – Can be frozen whole – just wash, dry and put them in plastic bags! Pull them out in winter for cooking with.

*Both tomatoes and peppers can be roasted, then frozen. Or try Kyle's fresh salsa, and freeze the extra!

Sweet corn – Process as fresh as possible. Husk and trim the ears, remove silks, and wash in cold water. Blanch corn on the cob for 4 minutes; cool promptly in ice water for 4 minutes. Drain and cut corn from the cob at about two-thirds the depth of the kernels. Freeze in plastic bags or containers.

If you're interested in learning to can but don't have a lot of experience, there are several excellent resources available. It's important to follow recipes and instructions closely so your end product is safe – too much or too little acidity or sugar can cause canned goods to spoil. A few good places to start: the **Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series** available at County UW Extension offices or online: <http://cecommerce.uwex.edu> or **The USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning**; <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications.usda.html>

And Good For You cont'd

steadily decreased. The FDA has been lowering the nutritional values for fresh produce right along - so even if you eat your 5 servings of vegetables, if they are conventionally grown, you probably won't be getting your recommended daily allowances. A study done in the UK found that from 1940 to 1991 "most fruits and vegetables have dropped dramatically in nutrients, with fruit losing on average 20 percent of mineral density while vegetables lost nearly 40 percent."

This ties into my favorite circumstantial evidence: fresh organic produce grown on healthy soil TASTES SO GOOD! There are even studies to prove this - but do we need them? I can't help but believe our bodies know what's good for them – oh, sure, we crave sweets and fats. But in nature, we'd find these in ripe fruits and vegetables and other foods that would also be full of vitamins and minerals. By the way, a few weeks back we had a group of visiting Australian farmers and cattlemen. They agreed that our melons were the best tasting ones they'd ever had! Richard said that they were all very concerned about producing the highest quality in organics, including nutrition – and that they believed that good soil and mineralization was key. As Mary Howell-Martens puts it:

"We organic farmers have a very important mission. We know something that most of the most vocal agricultural experts do not. We know that soil matters. The quality and health of the soil directly affects the quality and health of the plants,

which in turn directly affects the health of the animals (including us) eating those plants. We organic farmers know that the practices we use to improve soil—crop rotation, increasing organic matter, adding deficient minerals like calcium, wisely and responsibly using animal manure for fertility, and avoiding devastating practices like using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers—also improve the nutritional quality of the crops and the health of animals." (From an excellent essay "Confessions of a Foodie" <http://www.newfarm.org/columns/Martens/2004/1204/foodie.shtml>).

It's true that not all organic farmers are created equal, but as HVF CSA members we are lucky enough to be connected to local, fresh produce picked ripe and grown on nutrient rich soil. So why isn't everyone convinced? One of the biggest complaints about nutritional studies is that they don't compare organic and conventional produce on equal footing in terms of varieties, freshness, and farming methods. Let's see: what they're saying is that organic produce more often comes in tasty heirloom varieties versus high-yield hybrids, organic produce often gets from the field to the consumer more quickly than conventional produce, and many organic farmers care for their soil through composting and remineralizing versus high inputs of synthetic fertilizers. I guess it's true; take all these factors together, and conventionally grown produce just isn't on equal footing!

by Mia Sondreal

EASY REFRIGERATOR PICKLES

From www.cooks.com

7 C cucumber slices

1 C onion slices

2 Tbsp canning salt

2 C sugar

1 C vinegar (5%)

1 Tbsp celery seed

1 Tbsp mustard seed

Put the cucumber and onion slices into a large non metal container. Sprinkle the salt on top and let stand 4 hours. Rinse and drain.

Boil the sugar, vinegar and seeds for 5 minutes. Cool and pour this over the pickles.

These pickles keep well in the refrigerator for many weeks.

SALSA FRESCA

From Chef Kyle

In order of greatest to least quantity, but all adjusted to your taste:

Tomatoes - dice or chop

Onions - dice or chop

Bell pepper - dice or chop

Cilantro - chop

Garlic - mince or dice

Jalapenos - dice

Lime or lemon juice

Salt

Suggested variations:

-Roast the peppers/tomatoes/onions

-Blend briefly if you like it smoother

-Substitute parsley for cilantro

Produce Plus for 9/10

The Produce Plus program allows members to order extra amounts of produce from our farm for preserving.

Place the order by **Tuesday evening**. E-mail or phone the farm.

Pick up your produce at our market stand (we cannot deliver to your site) and pay upon pick up. Park your car ACROSS the street from our truck, in the bus stop or walk to our stand. Ask Richard, Linda or one of our great helpers when you get to the stand.

COLORED PEPPERS (slightly blemished) - 1/2 bushel for \$18

EDAMAME - 10# for \$25

RED BEETS - 25# FOR \$20

BABY RED BEETS - 10# FOR \$12

ROMA TOMATOES (slightly blemished) 25# for \$20

RED SLICER TOMATOES (slightly blemished) - 20# for \$18