

Blackberry Meadows Farm



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June 15, 2014

Dear Jennifer,

There's a rhythm to farming, we plant, things grow, we weed, we harvest, we plow it in, and start all over again. That sounds pretty simple - but take it down another layer and the complexities begin. Our daily tasks are based on decisions made according to weather, weed pressure, soil conditions, harvest days, temperatures and equipment status (among a myriad of other factors).

What we're harvesting now - can be reflected on what was happening on the farm about 4 or more weeks ago. We live with the weather, are out in it everyday, and can see and remember how the weather patterns affect our daily tasks and the crops we grow.

Sometimes, folks who have indoor 9-5 jobs, can be a little out of touch with the weather, and as a result, be a little out of touch with what should be growing and ready to eat. This is often exemplified at our farmers market - folks come through asking for zucchinis in April, tomatoes in May, and spinach in August. Usually, veggies have a season that they do best in, being part of a CSA helps you to eat seasonally and become a more seasonal and locally in-touch eater.

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Quick Links

www.blackberrymeadows.com
www.frankferd.com
www.allegroearth.com
www.natronabottlingcompany.com

The Weekly Menu

What you can roughly expect to receive this week:

For the 3rd pick up - we'll have Bergam's Green Lettuce, New Red Fire Lettuce, herbs, Kale, kohlrabi, collards.

Recipes or What the heck do I do with this thing?

Kale, scapes, and beans

Just recently, some long-time CSA members said this recipe is what got them hooked on kale way back when they first joined.

[Garlic Scapes](#)



The low-down on the Dinner on the Farm

We lucked out with the weather on Sunday and had a great event. As a part of Brooklyn Brewery's Mash Tour - we played host to an on farm dinner. Cure, Vinegar Hill, Wild Purveyors, and Brooklyn Brewery all made a fantastic family-style picnic meal for 150 farm visitors. Live music, beer, sunshine and games kept everyone entertained and happy.



Other than making the farm look great (which was no small task that needed to be done), and providing the chefs with a few veggies, we had to give a tour. There was no way we could herd 150 folks around the farm and convey our message. So - we split up into stations around the farm and answered questions on a more personal and individual level.

We'll try to get the recipes from the chefs: they cooked up

Onions
Kale
Beans
Olive Oil
Rice (cooked)
Salt/Tamari/cumin

1. Chop scapes and onions
 2. Remove stems from kale and chop leaves
 3. Open a can of beans (black are great, but other beans will work too)
 4. Add olive oil to a hot skillet and add scapes, onions and beans. Sautee until scapes and onions are soft.
 5. Add cumin, tamari, and/or salt to taste.
 6. Throw in chopped kale and sautee for a while - put a lid on to keep moisture in. Stir. Cook until tender.
 7. Add more salt, or cumin, or tamari to taste.
 8. Serve over rice, quinoa, millet or mashed potatoes.
- (You can add a can of diced tomatoes too - it's quite good!)

This is Jen's random recipe - and a good default greens recipe.

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**Farm Apprentice:
Mariah Narwot**



scapes, kale salad, grilled chicken, roasted potatoes, grilled bok choy and a polenta/sorrel/berry dessert. They used our wood-oven and set up shop up by the house.

We had a great time - and would love to host more dinner events again!



Farm Partners - Frankferd Farm

[Frankferd Farms](#)

Hello everyone! It has been very exciting meeting most of you who are reading this over the past few months. I am so happy to be here on Blackberry Meadows Farm. I came down from Grand Rapids, Michigan in order to come spend a season on the farm. I first became interested in farming when my dad started his garden in our backyard in the city and I knew one day I would work on a farm. Though I went to college for Biology and Chemistry at Alma College, I am happy to see that I can put a lot of my knowledge to use here on the farm.

The great thing about being here is that I learn something new every day. I have taken on sheering sheep, working on a truck engine, milking cows, and gaining all the knowledge possible about the different plants we are putting in the ground and how we keep it organic. Spending time at market and at the CSA pick-ups are always a blast and I greatly enjoy getting to talk to the CSA members and their families. One of my favorite things is using all of the organic food that we have to make meals for everyone who comes and volunteers on the farm as well as the other interns. I am looking forward to seeing everyone over the

season!



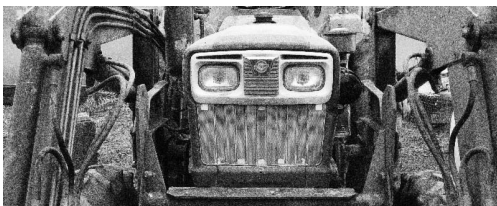
We are lucky to be in close proximity to Western Pennsylvania's largest natural foods distributors. Tlyle and Betty Ferderber own and run Frankferd Farms, and specialize in organic, local, bulk, and specialty foods.

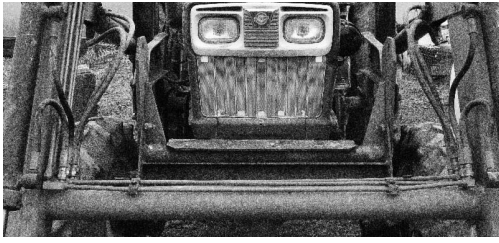
They started out as a flour mill and grew to be the distributorship and retail store. They serve customers in the seven surrounding states that include families, stores, buying clubs, restaurants, and colleges. Their suppliers range from large whole foods operations to local neighborhood bakers and vendors. They do their best to support local and small businesses.

Check out their online catalog - and place an order with them by the end of the month. We'll swing by the warehouse and pick up your order for you and have it ready for you to pick up at the farm or one of our drop off locations. We'll pay for your order at the warehouse - and you can pay us when you pick it up!

It's a more affordable way to buy products (you can buy individual items or a case) and your money is going towards a local business - keepin' it local!

Farm News



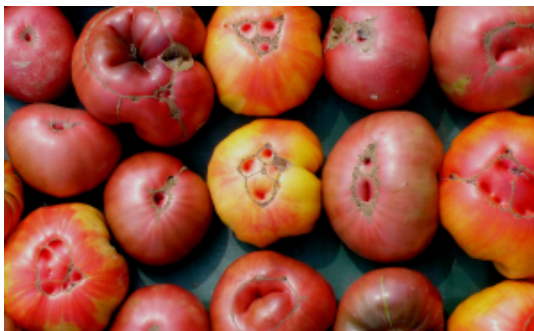


In the Field

We're coming into a lull here - where, about 4 or so weeks ago - we had a wet spell and nothing could be planted. We're waiting for beets, onions, beans, and herbs to be ready for harvest. It looks like we lost a few of our crops to the heat as well. Our Bok Choy and Vivid choy never really headed up and went straight to seed. This is called bolting - which means the plant has kind of given up on growing, sends up a flower stalk and goes to seed. This results in a tough, bitter product - that isn't easy to eat. We just have to tear them out and start again. It's disappointing, because there's a lot of work involved in prepping and fertilizing the fields, growing the seedlings in the greenhouse, transplanting the seedlings into the fields and then weeding them - just to till them into the ground at the end of it all..... Farming is weather dependent and in some situations, there's just not much we can do. Just move on and wait for the next crop.

Growing a diverse selection of veggies helps to defray the risks - imagine if we had a mono-crop of bok choy -we'd be in trouble!

The General Store



In the Pasture

Meet our chickens: we have mostly Barred Rocks and Dominiques. They lay brown eggs (although there's no difference between the white and brown eggs except for how they look), are good foragers, and a 'heavy' breed - meaning that they make pretty good soup birds in the end. They average about 1 egg every couple of days.

Every 2 years we'll get a new batch of chicks - we rotate colors - so we can keep track of which hens are the oldest. Next year - we'll get a batch of red hens.

That said, it's fun to let a broody hen sit on a clutch of eggs and hatch them out. That kind of messes up our color coding system - but it sure is cute to watch those little peeps skitter around and follow their doting mother.

We have a rooster - Captain Jofferys. His job is to protect the flock and let them know when predators are near. He respects the farm folk and, so long as he doesn't attack any of us, he's welcome to hang around and Cock-a-doodle-doo!





Local Goods:

Frankferd Farms - place an order with them at the end of the month and we'll have it on hand at your CSA pick-up

Natrona Bottling Co. - Brewed fresh here in Natrona, this beverage is High Fructose Corn Syrup Free and Local!

Allegro Hearth Bakery- Fresh bread and sweets available at the farm pickup only.

Jarosinski Farm - we're excited to be working with Kevin, a young fellow in Buffalo Township who is tending high quality pasture raised chickens for eggs and meat. Chickens will be available at the end of June.

Kopar Honey Farm - talk about local! The Kopars keep bees on our farm, as well as other locations in southwestern, PA.

Clarion River Organics - we purchase potatoes, watermelon, winter squash and other items from them that we may not be growing this year.

Conneautee Creamery - grass fed cheeses.

Showman Farm - supplies us with pasture raised, grass fed beef. We'll have various cuts and ground beef on hand - the first delivery will be ready in Mid - June.

Hunter Farms - keeps us supplied with the best Certified Organic Blueberries around. They usually start up in July.

Una Biological - creams, salves, and balms. All made in small batches, with organic and some locally sourced ingredients.

Thanks for choosing our CSA. We strive to grow nutrient dense, wholesome foods for you. We think what we do is hard work - but important for our family, friends, and community. There are a few things that we find important: growing good food, participating in the local economy, being good stewards to the environment, providing our community with access to a farm, farm animals and the outdoors, and teaching new and beginning farmers what we know. By being a CSA member and supporting our endeavors, you're helping us to achieve our goals. Thanks!!

Sincerely,

Your Farmers,

Greg, Jen, Evelyn, Jameson, Matt, Mariah, and Ian

Value added from the Farm

We dabble in a few hand crafted items. We'll purchase fair trade, organic, green coffee beans and roast them in our wood oven.

We also make cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream, chocolate milk, kefir, sour cream, ricotta, skim milk and full fat milk. If you'd like to purchase any of our raw grass-fed dairy products, you must become a member of C.A.R.E. first - just \$20 a year for membership. Ask Jen for more details.

There will also be a few batches of Kombucha, maybe some jams and jellies, salsas and canned tomato products.

Blackberry Meadows Farm | | jen@blackberrymeadows.com | <http://www.blackberrymeadows.com>
7115 Ridge Rd Natrona Heights, PA 15065

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