

# Blackberry Meadows Farm



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June 30, 2014

## Dear Jennifer,

It looks like we are in for several days of rain. It's unbelievable how wet this year has been so far. Actually, it seems like it's the same story as last year, and the year before. Wet weather, in a sense is a double edged sword. The crops in the ground love it (usually), but so do the weeds. When it's a wet muddy mess out in the fields - there's no way we can use a tractor for cultivation of the crops or for planting (transplanting or seeding). We have to hoe and hand weed our crops. If it's too muddy, hoeing doesn't even work! There's a lot planted and hand weeding takes significantly more time than a quick pass with the basket weeder (used with a tractor).

Also - we're about 2 -3 weeks away from transplanting our fall brassicas (kale, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower) into the fields. To stick with our rotation, we have to utilize fields that haven't hosted that crop within the past 3 years. Well, if it stays this wet, we won't be able to mow, spade, fertlize and till the fields that we need (with a tractor). We'll have to break our rotation and plant crops into fields that are currently open (the Spring Brassica fields). There's no controlling the weather and we have to do what we have to do. Breaking our rotation isn't the worst thing - but not ideal! Like life in general, we just have to make the best choices based on what we've got.

That said, we were able to get ahead of the game with our pumpkin field. You can see it across Ridge Rd

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## Quick Links

[www.blackberrymeadows.com](http://www.blackberrymeadows.com)  
[www.frankferd.com](http://www.frankferd.com)  
[www.allegroearth.com](http://www.allegroearth.com)  
[www.natronabottlingcompany.com](http://www.natronabottlingcompany.com)

## The Weekly Menu

### What you can roughly expect to receive this week:

For the 4th pick up - we'll have Bergam's Green Lettuce, New Red Fire Lettuce, herbs, Kale, kohlrabi, basil, scallions.

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

#### Greens and Peanut Sauce

*1 medium onion (chopped)*  
*2-3 cloves garlic (minced)*  
-In a large pot sauté in 1 tsp oil

*1 medium tomato (diced; optional)*

when standing in the barn. There's about 9 300' rows that we have already laid a plastic mulch on. Soon, we'll plant a variety of carving pumpkins, pie pumpkins and winter squash in that field. They should be ready just before Halloween. We're planning on hosting a shin-dig for the fall - we'll be sure to keep you posted!

### Marcellus Shale in our Community: Greg

I'm glad to say that all's quiet on the fracking front. After completing our study with the University of Pittsburgh's Environmental Law Clinic on the [Risks to farmers who frack](#) we have been quietly letting the industry pass us by. While several letters have arrived announcing big opportunities, and several landmen have left us with a warped sense of where our culture is heading... we continue to ignore the 'opportunity' to welcome a pollution time-bomb in our neighborhood.



Serendipitously, a seemingly abandoned shallow gas well which was drilled in the 1970s to feed our farmhouse began leaking because a tree grew too close.

It was repaired by the original drillers by order of the DEP. Now operational, we've been enjoying our own fresh local gas without having to drill! We want to express our gratitude to the Universe for reassuring us to continue resisting the money to tap into an under-researched resource.

Farm Partners - Showman Farm

[Showman Farms](#)

-Add and simmer 2-4 minutes

*1/2 tsp ground coriander*

*1/2 tsp ground cumin*

*1/4 tsp salt or to taste*

*1/8 tsp ground cloves*

-Add, cook, and stir 2 minutes

*1 pound kale or collards (8 cups chopped)*

*1/2 cup water*

-Add and steam until greens are soft but not mushy. Avoid overcooking. Stir occasionally to coat greens with the spices.

*2 - 3 Tbs chunky peanut butter*

*1-2 tsp hot water*

*1 Tbs Honey*

*1 Tbs Tamari or Soy Sauce*

*1 Tbs fresh Cilantro*

-Combine and add to greens as end of cooking time.

Serves 4-6

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Farm Apprentice:  
Ian Lynch





We have a good connection to this gem of a farm in Edinboro, PA. Jen's parents live in Edinboro and are big supporters of the local food scene in that area. Not only do Allan and Kathy (Jen's folks) make lunch for the whole harvest crew on Tuesdays and entertain Evelyn while they are in town, they also serve as the I-79 Food Transport Service. This week, they are bringing us a half a cow from Showman Farms.

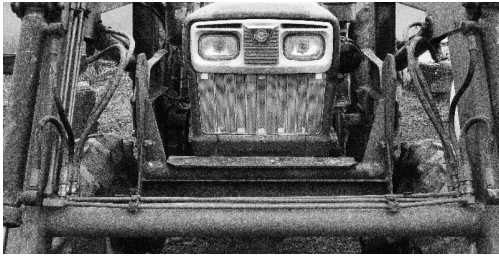
The Showmans have been raising dairy cattle for 5 generations and feed their herd solely on grass and hay. Because you only need so many milking cows - they occasionally send their Heifers (a younger cow that has never been bred) and Steers (young castrated males) to "market". We purchased a 1/2 a steer and will be getting mostly ground beef and several roasts.

We find that the meat is terrific and affordable (we will post prices in the barn and in the next newsletter) - although not certified organic, we feel that, because we have a personal relationship with the Showmans, they are reputable farmers and we are happy to support what they are doing and provide a good product to you all.

## Farm News



Hi everyone! I'm Ian, a Pittsburgher born and raised, and I have been very fortunate to be able to come to the farm and get involved with locally grown produce. I've been an apprentice at the farm for about a month now, and I love it more every day. I found the farm through a mutual contact, and after volunteering for a day, I decided that it was something I would like to do. Since coming to the farm, every day has become a learning experience, and there is always something to keep busy with. Work on the farm is always changing as the summer moves on with different veggies to plant and tend, and as we rotate through the different positions of being in charge of crops, animals, and homesteading. My favorite experiences on the farm thus far have been my interaction with the people I live and work with, as well as all of our volunteers and CSA members! It has been terrific starting to know everyone and I look forward to building a larger relationship within the organic community.



### **In the Field**

[Tokyo Bekana Na](#) and [Vivid Choi](#) are two new crops to our farm. The first one can be eaten in a mixed salad or quickly thrown into a stir-fry at the last minute. Vivid Choi is known for doing pretty well in the summer heat. (I don't know about that part, as our Vivid Choi bolted already). We're always looking for something to grow in the spring that likes cool weather in early spring and then can hold its own when the weather turns hot and muggy. It's not easy! So far though, the Bekana Na looks like it's happy and growing well. I'm very curious to see how palatable it is!

On a sad note - we've got a family of ground hogs that have decided to munch on our broccoli. They like to crawl around under our white row cover (which we leave on the broccoli to prevent deer browsing and the white cabbage moth from laying eggs), and can live a happy gluttonous life until we find out what they've been up to. We set traps in their holes which are scattered around like apartment complexes in the brush on the field edges. A few years ago, we trapped 65 ground hogs! This year - we're up to 6 or 7. There's still lots of time!

### **The General Store**

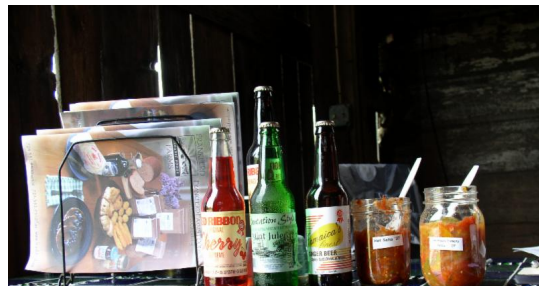


### **In the Pasture**

If you spend much time on the farm - you'll notice a racket. Like little dinosaurs, we've got a flock of Guinea Hens running around. They call to each other, chirping and cackling across the farm. At almost a year old - they've finally paired up and we've found clutches of eggs hidden in the brush. Apparently, they aren't old enough to know that they need to sit on their nests in order to hatch out those eggs.

It's a toss up as to whether we like having these guys on the farm. They are great for pest control - eating lots of bugs (think tick management) and not scratching in the vegetable patches all that much. That said, they make a heck of a racket, making good watch dogs, but also cackling late into the night and bright and early in the morning.

We keep them around as comic relief - free ranging around the farm, eating bugs and laying eggs in random locations!





### 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 (\$1.50/bottle)!

**Allegro Hearth Bakery**- Fresh bread and sweets available at the farm pickup only (\$2 - \$6).

**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. (\$5/lb)

**Kopar Honey Farm** - talk about local! The Kopars keep bees on our farm, as well as other locations in southwestern, PA. (\$7/lb)

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

**Conneautee Creamery** - Raw cheeses from grass fed cows.

*Goosey Gouda* - creamy and flavorful.

*Jenny's Jarlsburg* - sweet but sharp.

*Bear Cheddar* - old world flavor

*Ticky Swiss* - sweet and nutty

*Lumpa Jack* - wow garlic! or hot..

**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 this week (probably around \$5/lb for ground beef).

**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,



### 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 (\$6/ half lb bag).

We also make cheese, yogurt, butter (\$1.50 per 1/2 cup pat), ice cream (\$5/pint), chocolate milk, kefir, sour cream, ricotta, skim milk and full fat milk (\$3.50 per 1/2 gallon). 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.

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

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