

# Blackberry Meadows Farm



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July 7, 2014

## Dear Jennifer,

So last week's rain never came! It's dry as a bone 'round these parts now. Although they are calling for a couple of showers this week, we've got to get our irrigation up and running. This is no small task, as we do our best to conserve money and plastic - meaning we re-use the drip tape (a type of irrigation system) from year to year.

Now, our fields range from 200' - 700' long. Some of them are covered in plastic mulch, while others have veggies growing in exposed ground. Drip tape that is under the plastic mulch is oftentimes hunted out by mice and voles, nipped at and used as an eternal fount of fresh water.... until we find the leak, a large wet puddle seeping out from under the plastic mulch.

The drip tape that is sitting on the surface of the soil, unprotected by plastic mulch is liable to be trampled by the deer, who enjoy frolicking and dining in our fields late into the night. Their hooves make tiny holes through the drip lines, creating mini sprinklers throughout the whole field.

Tractors are also known for wrecking havoc on drip tape - mowers and roto-tillers will get a hold of drip tape and wrap up 350' of plastic like a kitten with a yarn ball. It's a mess and takes time to unravel, then throw away.

On the other hand - *Thank God* - that we don't have

## In This Issue

Farm Partners  
Farm Help  
Weekly Menu  
Recipes  
Farm News

## 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)  
[www.normansorchard.com](http://www.normansorchard.com)

## The Weekly Menu

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

For the 5th pick up - we'll have Bergam's Green Lettuce, New Red Fire Lettuce, herbs, Kale, kohlrabi, basil.

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

**Chicken or Tofu Lettuce Wraps with Peanut Sauce (adapted from Cooking Light) - from our CSA member - Laura Saltzman**

the water problems that they have out west. It's too wet here, sure - it seems like it's always raining. But, when we have a dry spell (a week long 'dry spell'), we can use our irrigation system. Part of our farm is hooked up to the city water supply (which costs us \$\$ to use), and the other part is pumped from our pond. *Knock on wood* - that pond has never showed signs of going dry. If it did - that'd be the time to get those persistent cat-tails out of there!

**On a side note - if you would, or you know someone who would, like to volunteer some time to hand weeding the beets - let us know (it can be quite therapeutic!) We sure could use some help!**

Farm Partners

## Kopar Honey Farm



We've been selling Bill and Jenn's honey products ever since we got this farm in 2007. Bill keeps bees on our property - helping us out by providing us with live-in pollinators, but he also keeps bees on farms throughout the tri-county area. Back in 2013 he had around 100 hives - and makes more than just honey with their products. Along with beeswax, lip balm, and hand cream - he is also a great source of information. You can find him talking about bees at Harrison Hills and other local events.

A lot of folks come in, looking for local honey. It's known for helping to improve allergy symptoms

### **Peanut Sauce:**

- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Minced white parts of a few scallions
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup crunchy peanut butter
- 3 tablespoons hoisin sauce
- Sriracha to taste
- Juice of half a lime

### **Filling:**

- 2 cooked chicken breasts, chopped finely, OR 1 (14-ounce) package extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled
- 1 tablespoon dark sesame oil
- Sliced green parts of the scallions used above, (about 2/3 cup), divided
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro OR basil, divided
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger OR 1/2 teaspoon dried ginger
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- Juice of the other half of the lime
- Sriracha to taste
- Leaves of 2-3 heads of lettuce, separated

### **Preparation**

1. To prepare sauce, heat a small saucepan over medium heat. Add sesame oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add whites of scallions and sauté for 2

to regional pollens. Just a spoonful a day!

We sell the Kopar's Honey in the barn - for \$7 a jar. If you are at one of our drop sites- we'd be happy to bring a jar down for you too!

### Jameson Altott



Having spent last season as an apprentice here on Blackberry Meadows Farm, I found myself sticking to the idea of experiencing a second year... so here I am again! I'm glad I chose to stick around and learn more about the ins and outs of running this beautiful farm and taking on more responsibility.

This season, my job title can be roughly described as the "junior janitor"/ crew leader. I helped to teach all of the new apprentices the daily chores and rolls we need to accomplish to keep this farm in working order. I can't be more glad to be here teaching apprentices what I learned last year, and learning even more about this way of living. The "junior janitor" roll is me filling in for and sharing responsibilities with Greg. This roll includes fixing things, picking up, organizing, keeping the farm looking nice and a lot of tractor work.

This year we have become a part of two more Farmers Markets. We now attend the Shady Side Academy market on Wednesdays and the Bloomfield Market on Saturdays. This means more to plant, more to harvest and more transportation of goods to the markets. So far we have managed to do well and keep the ball rolling... I guess we'll see how hectic it gets when all other produce such as tomatoes, peppers and squash are ready to harvest! Jen tells me this is the most

minutes. Add 1/3 cup water, peanut butter, and hoisin sauce and stir with a whisk. Bring to a boil; cook 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in lime juice. Sauce will thicken as it stands.

2. To prepare tofu filling, spread crumbled tofu in a single layer on several layers of paper towels; cover with additional paper towels. Let stand 20 minutes, pressing down occasionally.
3. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add sesame oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add 1/3 cup green onions; sauté 1 minute. Add tofu OR chopped chicken breast; sauté for 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add 2 tablespoons cilantro or basil, soy sauce, ginger, sugar, and Sriracha; sauté 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in remaining cilantro or basil and scallion.
4. Serve family style, allowing each diner to make their own lettuce wraps by layering chicken, peanut sauce, and additional sriracha if desired, on doubled-up pieces of lettuce. Jasmine rice makes a nice side.

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produce they have planted yet in order to keep up with the two new markets, including a field of pumpkins for all you CSA members and others who would like to come out in October for some pumpkins for jack o' lanterns and pies!

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Thanks for all of your interest and support. We are very happy to be growing great produce for all of you great people! Spread the word!

Sincerely, Jameson Altott

## Farm News



### In the Fields

A quick perusal of the fields gives us both good and bad news....

Good news first - the cucumbers, squash, tomatillos, eggplants, tomatoes and peppers are all growing fantastically! The cukes and zukes are just around the bend and should be giving us a bumper crop pretty soon. Mmmm Mmmm! Cucumber salad!



### In the Pasture

We've got bunnies- Steph and Ziggy. There's not much to say about them so far.... They are pretty low maintenance (compared to a cow) and are super cute. Steph is a little more likable than Ziggy, in that she's fine with us picking her up and holding her. Ziggy always makes a run for it.

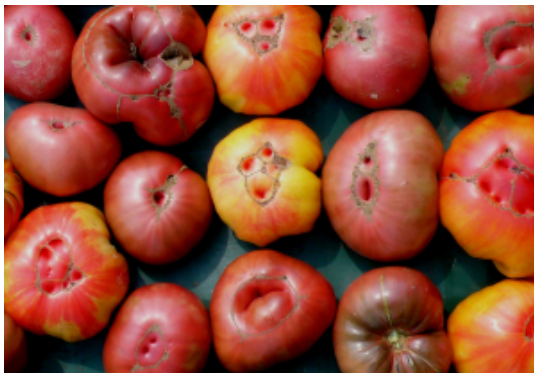
We're raising them with the intention of getting into the small-scale rabbit business -



On the sad note - the dreaded Striped and Spotted Cucumber Beetles are encroaching. They bring with them death and destruction! Not only do they eat the foliage, but they also carry a bacteria that causes Bacterial Wilt to the plants - incurable! Organic farmers have a couple tricks up their sleeves. We use row cover - a white cloth that lets in rain and sun, but keeps bugs out. (This is effective to some extent, but we have to take the cloth off to allow the bees in to pollinate once the curcurbit flowers form). We practice crop rotation - trying to trick the beetles by moving our crops around each year. We coat the seedlings in a kaolin clay mixture (pictured above), masking the smell of the curcurbit while it's still small. We spray the plants with a Chrystanthum derivative, called Pyganic. It's allowed for Certified Organic use, but we have to try the row cover and other means first. Our last defense is to plant successions, with the goal of out witting the insects reproductive cycle.

Conventional growers (local/sustainable /natural) can spray whatever they like to control these bugs - it's an easier (and cheaper) solution in the short run, but at the expense of the health of the farmer, the environment, and the consumer.

## The General Store



### Local Goods:

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

in other words, we're raising them for meat. Rabbits gestate for 31 days, then, wait another 6-10 weeks and the young rabbits are old enough to "go to market". "A rabbit can produce six pounds of meat on the same amount of feed and water it takes a cow to produce just one pound" ([link](#)). It's quite an economical animal to raise for meat - and it tastes good too!

Jameson built a rabbit hutch that is two stories, with the bottom floor, on the ground. This allows the rabbits to have access to grass, be outside, and get some fresh air and sunshine. Too many times we've seen rabbit hutches that are built at waist height - the rabbits spend their whole lives on mesh screens and never touching the ground. Although our rabbits are caged, they do have access to fresh grass, solid footing, clean water and hay, and plenty of vegetable scraps.



### 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

that Blackberry Meadows will pick up your order.

**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,

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

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.

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