

Holcomb Farm CSA

Newsletter

June 18, 2007

This Weeks's Shares Will Include Some or All of the Following:

Pac Choi
Head Lettuce
Easter Egg Radishes
Salad Turnips
Kohlrabi
Napa Cabbage
Collard Greens
Kale
Scallions
Head Lettuce
Swiss Chard

Pick Your Own Crops

Strawberries
Perennial Herbs
Snow Peas (Later in Week)

Coming Soon: Summer Squash, Fennel, Beets, Broccoli

Canvas Bags are In

Each Half Share gets one bag. Each Full Share gets two bags. Additional bags are available for \$10. We provide the bags as an encouragement to reuse your share bags, thereby reducing the amount of plastic waste and the farm's packaging costs. If you forget you bag, we will still have plastic share bags available.

Is Holcomb Farm CSA Organic?

Our commitment to sustainable farming methods includes using non-toxic organic methods that are good for us and good for the the life in the soil and the surrounding environment. We use the USDA National Organic Standards as a guide to our farming practices, but we are not interested in becoming third party certified. Certification would cost us about \$2000/year and seems an unnecessary step for a farm that sells direct to its customers. Our member survey in 2004 confirmed this feeling. We are happy to answer any questions about what we do and we will use this newsletter to tell you about our practices as the season goes on. Because we are not certified, we do not use the organic in our marketing out of respect for Federal regulations and for those growers who do go through the certification process.

When we made the decision to drop our organic certification in 2004, we signed the Farmer's Pledge, a document of principles that embody the best of the organic tradition, some of which – such as fair working conditions for farm labor - has been lost as the Federal government assumed authority for organic standards from regional and state based agencies. We've posted a copy of the Farmer's Pledge in the distribution area.

Farm Store Spotlight:

Fair Trade Coffee from LaTorcaza Estate, Volcan Baru, Panama

I know, I know, coffee isn't exactly local. If you're on the 100 mile diet, then you'll have to pass. While we are firmly in the camp of those who think we need to move our food around the globe a little less (ok, a lot less), we think our efforts to relocalize a small part of the food supply meshes nicely with efforts to ensure that those tropical luxury items many of us want can come to us in a manner that ensures sustainable growing practices and fair compensation for the growers and farmworkers.

We do believe that it's a little absurd, for example, that New York State exports most of its apple crop while New York City buys most of its apples from Washington State. But we're happy to be able to offer coffee that comes from one model family farm in Panama.

Maico, Ricardo, Carl and Peter Janson are focusing on taking the social and environmental high road to coffee production on there 400 acre farm, which has near ideal conditions for coffee growing on its high altitude, level volcanic soils surrounded by pristine protected wilderness areas.

The brothers provide incentive pay, free medical care, housing, and meals for their workers as well as education and child care for the workers' children during harvest season. The Janson family also provides scholarships for farmworkers' children.

The farmers at Volcan Baru do not use pesticides and herbicides, and they maintain natural forest buffers between their coffee plots. They have received an award from Panama's environmental agency for clean coffee processing. The water used in processing the beans is stripped of excess nitrogen and completely recycled. Microorganisms are used to break down the pulp from the coffee cherry, which is then used as a natural fertilizer.

The Janson brothers continue their commitment to quality into the roasting process. Since they are producing directly for consumers and not a global commodity market, they do all the roasting themselves. The family knows their beans and how best to bring out the flavors of each crop. After roasting, they pack the coffee directly into the small consumer bags. The bags are shipped to Maine, where small farmer Richard Raeke has a side operation filling the orders for small farmstands, CSA's and natural food stores throughout New England. By minimizing the number of middlemen, we can ensure that these exemplary growers receive a fair return for their coffee.

For more information, visit www.estatecoffee.com.

Quote of the Week

"The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself."

- President Franklin D. Roosevelt