

**STUDENT ORGANIC FARM**  
**CSA NEWSLETTER**  
January 27, 2005

**In your share this week:**

- Salad: *Ermosa* Butterhead lettuce\*
  - Chinese cabbage\*
  - Onions
  - Potatoes: Blue and/or red
  - Parsnips OR Carrots
  - Rutabagas
  - Fresh rosemary
  - (Brussels sprouts): this one's in parentheses because they are frozen solid in the field, even under mulch. If we get a hacksaw, jackhammer, torch, or other harvesting tool that can cut through solid ice, we'll get some out for you. Otherwise, they are pick-your-own until they defrost a bit, at which point there may be even more freeze damage. For now, if you bundle up and prepare to slog through snow and straw mulch, you are welcome to pick individual sprouts off the frozen stalks, as many as you want! That method of harvesting just takes a long time for a crop whose quality is already compromised by being frozen, so we probably won't harvest loose sprouts for you.
  - **Note on optional extras:** extra rutabagas, turnips – that's it for now
- \*items with a star were harvested from the hoophouses; the others were in cold storage or from the field (some leeks, root veggies, etc. still under mulch in the fields)

**Announcements**

1. This one is a repeat-- we're in dire need of more member involvement! Even if you just want to learn more about it, please contact Laurie: **Student Organic Farm Core Group Forming this winter:** A Core Group is a dedicated team of CSA members with the commitment to help make the farm survive, thrive, and better meet the needs of its members. The Core serves as the liaison between farmers and members, with both short-term and long-term responsibilities. Short-term projects may include organizing volunteer work parties at the farm, organizing/hosting potlucks, contributing to the newsletter, and staffing the CSA pick-up table (setting up, re-stocking, answering questions, cleaning up). Long-term projects may include helping with crop planning, fund raising, development of longer-term goals and directions of the CSA, and recruiting members.

First Core Group informational meeting in early February: to join, just send your name, email, and phone number to Laurie Thorp at [thorpl@msu.edu](mailto:thorpl@msu.edu). You will receive more info via email soon.

2. **Volunteers wanted this Thursday, Jan. 27!** If you get this in time and can come out and pitch in a couple of hours, please do. The best time is from 11-3, but

you're welcome any time from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Call the farm phone if you need directions: 517-230-7987. Bundle up – layer well, wear waterproof boots-- you may be chipping root vegetables out of frozen ground....

3. PLEASE if at all possible, **pick up your share at the farm** or send someone in your place. There are currently too many members who want to pick up on campus. We've offered PSSB on campus as an alternate location only for folks who can't make it to the farm, and can't find a friend to go in their place.

The SOF does not have a farm vehicle; we rely on students' personal vehicles to deliver shares to PSSB, and among us there is no vehicle big enough to haul to campus as many shares as members have requested.

If you can come to the farm Friday, it's not as much fun as Thursday, but it's better than campus. If you need to pick up your share at the farm on Friday, just give us a call anytime (517-230-7987) on Thursday, and we'll pack a share for you and leave it in the cooler.

Alternately, if you have a truck to lend/give to the farm, we will accept!

**IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY SCHEDULED TO PICK UP YOUR SHARE AT PSSB, AND CAN SWITCH TO PICK UP AT THE FARM THURSDAY OR FRIDAY, PLEASE CALL US BEFORE 3:00 P.M. THURSDAY AT 517-230-7987. Thanks so much.**

#### **What's up at the farm?**

We're in a planning dilemma. We can use your help. There are lots of potential changes afoot at the SOF, including new educational programming, collaborating with environmental science and other special topics programs, reducing our dependence on grants for funding sources, plans for buildings, and more. The farm as a whole is in debt, and there are lots of creative solutions on the table, but none so far are in place. What are our choices? What will the impact of each be on the CSA? What are our other options? We're fortunate to have the human resource base of all our members, as well as a faculty advisory board and all the student farmers. As a CSA member, you've agreed to help out the farm whenever possible, and we want to take you up on it. The nature of this farm is that it is student-run, and as such, staff turns over every couple of years, leaving us with very little continuity. If you, as a CSA and MSU community member, will be around longer than a couple of years (or even if you plan to leave next year!), the farm will benefit from your perspective, experience, and opinion concerning long term goals and planning, our financial situation, CSA logistics, and of course fun things like potlucks and volunteer days. Please consider joining the core group of CSA members, *especially* if you have any prior CSA experience and thoughts—contact Laurie Thorp at [thorpl@msu.edu](mailto:thorpl@msu.edu) for more information.

#### **New or Unusual Vegetables in Your Share this Week**

**Chinese or Napa cabbage** is a relatively new item – we've only grown it a few times. If you're new to Napa cabbage, I suggest trying it fresh first – the leaves are delicate and delicious. It's a member of the mustard family, so you might expect it to have a bite to it, but it's mild and sweet, and crisp. It makes an excellent non-lettuce salad – shred thinly, toss with rice vinegar and olive

oil, serve with sliced almonds, thinly sliced red onions, and a little fresh cilantro if available. Try sesame oil in place of olive oil, lemon in place of vinegar, add a little honey or maple syrup, powdered or fresh ginger, and voila, many versions of a delicious salad.

You can of course stir fry it or stuff egg rolls with it – it's equally delicious lightly cooked. Go nuts, let me know your favorite way to prepare it.

**Rosemary** has been scarce in shares til now – this is fresh rosemary from potted plants in our heated greenhouse (no we haven't figured out how to grow rosemary in unheated hoopouses yet!). It's of course excellent with potatoes, and try it with roasted parsnips as well. Whatever you have left over you can hang in a dry place, and store leaves in a spice jar when dry. Add some fresh rosemary to the top of your pasta with tomato sauce that you canned from SOF tomatoes last summer..... or to that spaghetti squash that you cooked and froze in September.

Two pieces from CSA members: First, Cheryl Bartz sent in an even easier way to cook squash:

1. The even EASIER way to cook winter squash:
  - a. Wash
  - b. Put on cookie sheet
  - c. Place in oven at 350 degrees and cook until soft.

I do this all the time and they don't explode. You don't have to hack your way through a rock-hard squash, it doesn't dry out, and the seeds get cooked so you can eat them, too! After it's cooked, I pull out the seed stuff and place it in a colander. The squash "placenta" easily washes off the seeds under running water.

NOTE: this is easier, and yet it takes much longer for large squash (not the delicata and sweet dumpling squash you got last week – it's perfect for those smaller varieties), so for large ones, you can save time and energy by cutting in half. –MF

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John Schneider had a nice article on where to find locally produced stuff (in last Thursday's Lansing State Journal). I didn't know how long it would be available online from LSJ, so I took the liberty of lifting the text off their Web site. :-)

The link (for however long it works) is:

<http://www.lsj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050120/COLUMNISTS09/50120034>

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<<http://www.lsj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050120/COLUMNISTS09/501200340&SearchID=73197057804758>> &SearchID=73197057804758

From Linda Chapel Jackson, CSA member

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Home-grown products are all around us

In Saturday's column, I wrote about Craig Noonan's quest for Michigan-made products.

The response was surprising in both its bountifulness and its earnestness.

Obviously, a lot of people believe, as Noonan does, that mega-retailers can sap the spirit, and economic health, out of local economies.

Noonan, who lives in DeWitt, shops the mom-and-pop places and buys home-grown merchandise whenever he can. He asked State Journal readers for help in expanding his menu.

A smorgasbord of suggestions flowed into my e-mail box. Here are some of them:

. From Leslie Farris, president of the East Lansing Co-op board of directors: "Michigan-produced bread, honey, maple syrup, cheese, eggs, meat and other products are available year-round in our store, at 4960 Northwind Drive, East Lansing.

. From Fred Hall of East Lansing: "A good source of local produce is the Lansing City Market, 333 N. Cedar St., Lansing.

Contented cows

. From Marge Hall of Quality Dairy: "Although our milk is not in glass bottles, it is produced by local cows and processed here in Lansing at our dairy. We also make our own ice cream at the same facility. Our bakery, also in Lansing, makes all of our doughnuts, cookies and cakes, and soon will be making paczki."

. From Mena Castriciano, owner of Lansing's Roma Bakery: "We have been in Lansing for 36 years, and feature a full line of breads, rolls and pastries all made on the premises at 428 N. Cedar St.

. From Fred Clinton of Dansville: "Kudos to Craig Noonan for trying to buy local products and avoid 'big box' stores.

"I have done price comparisons on hardware, sporting goods and other items between the big stores and locally owned stores, and the local stores come out ahead more often than not.

"Plus, if I only need two screws, that's all I have to buy at the local hardware store – not a box of 20. And, I can find people knowledgeable about the products they sell."

. From Barb Mutch of MSU's Community Food Systems: "I belong to a 'cow share' program in St. Johns – My Family Farm and Dairy – where I get fresh milk (with the cream on top), eggs and cheese. The cows are grass-fed; the milk is wonderful.

"Also, Horrock's Farm Market (at 7420 W. Saginaw Highway, Delta Township) has many Michigan food products – cranberries, apples, dried beans, etc."

#### On the Web

. From Amanda Carpenter of Okemos: "I think Mr. Noonan's goal to support local shops is great.

"A Web site – [www. buymichiganproducts.com](http://www.buymichiganproducts.com) – showcases all sorts of products made and produced in the state."

. From Charlie Green of Elsie: "The Daisy Dell Farm and Market, on M-21, just east of St. Johns, offers an amazing variety of cheeses – made on the farm by the farmers that milk the cows."

. From David Aldrich of Pewamo: "I recently discovered a source of Michigan--raised organic chickens – Goodrich's Shop-Rite, in East Lansing.

"These farm-raised birds – sold under the brand name Nature's Premier Organic – taste like chicken used to taste before poultry producers began using chemical and antibiotics on them."

What do you think? Call John Schneider at 377-1175, send a fax to 377-1298 or e-mail <<mailto:jschneid@lsj.com>> jschneid@lsj.com. Include your name, phone number, city, or township.

