



Down on the Farm Notes: July 15th, 17th, & 19th

Hello everyone!

It is about 5:30 am. We are driving out to the field to begin picking lettuce before the heat arrives. It is a cool, beautiful morning. The birds are out singing and the sun hasn't quite popped up yet. (Have you noticed how the days are getting shorter already?) My husband is driving and I am enjoying the cool breeze on my face on the passenger side. One thing about the desert, the mornings are so fresh and pleasant. We begin to slow down as we approach the lettuce bed. Then something catches my eye; I'm thinking it's the dog because we have a black and white dog. It is in the middle of the lettuce bed with a tail...a tail sticking straight up pointing south, right up the bed. Our black lab had just run by the bed right ahead of us. Well, it is early morning and maybe I am not totally awake yet, but I finally process that it isn't the dog and took a deep breath and squeaked out..."keep going Jim"..., "keep going fast!" So we drove on by and had to WAIT. Here I had gotten everyone up at the crack of dawn and we are all standing out in the field waiting for this cute little stinker of a skunk to go on its merry way. We are all calling the dogs, trying to distract them... because if that skunk let loose...that would have been the end of your lettuce. So we

waited... (from a distance) and he finally turned around and walked up the field.

A skunk has the cutest darndest waddle when they walk. He meandered over the road and then we could see the alfalfa swaying where he was walking away from us—thankfully. This happened to us last summer, too. Our lab, Sam, found one walking up the ditch. Sam began to bark that funny little bark he makes when he sees a snake, so of course we got right on it to make sure it wasn't a bad snake. It was the funniest thing. That skunk would turn around and I swear was shaking its little paw at Sam and saying "don't push me." Sam followed a little further, and again the skunk would turn around and shake its finger..."now stop that!" Well, skunk gave dog one last warning...dog didn't take warning...skunk sprayed...dog ran off. We lucked out this time, don't you think!?!??

Well, what do we have in the box this week? Thankfully, we have some lettuce or mixed greens, arugula (we have some great arugula [recipes](#) for those of you who have never used it before), garlic, fresh garlic chives, Swiss chard, fresh tomatoes, mixed zucchini, a few Antohi Romani peppers,

fresh dug Yellowstone carrots, a tiny little bit of broccoli, more fresh peaches/nectarines, basil, and as I understand a little round thing that is full of holes and Rick claims is the ugliest thing on his farm right now—cabbage.

Those moths...Some years are worse than others for moths, but this year is really bad. People in Gardnerville, some of you in Reno who have gardens, Fallon, and Yerington have all made the same comments. I guess it is the year of the moth/ worm. They are even in my flower beds at home.

We threw a large zucchini in your basket for stuffing, or for slicing thin and frying, or grating for cake or breads. We won't do this to you too often, but I felt like cooking one up so I decided you were going to get one too. See recipes for our favorite Chocolate zucchini cake. I know I am repeating for some of you, but zucchini breads baked in something pretty make great gifts. Once upon a time I would get together with a friend and we would bake over 300 mini loaves. We would put them in the freezer and kept them until Christmas. (Any fruit bread keeps well in the freezer. Flavor actually improves!) Believe it or not people enjoy zucchini bread in December. So did we...all winter! The peppers are a great cooking pepper. They aren't very exciting cut up raw, but they are great sautéed in olive oil. Yum!

You know sometimes you just crave something, well Sunday for lunch we had bacon, lettuce, fresh tomato, basil, sautéed pepper, avocado sandwich on grilled sourdough bread. We don't do this often but it was soooo good. When fresh tomatoes are on, BLT's sound really good. This is the first year for Rick raising broccoli. We didn't know if it would grow in Fallon's heat, so he is surprised with all the side shoots. You have just a taste to add to your salad. This Sunday was my Mom's birthday and Sarah made a white cake and put fresh peaches and berries in the center. Topped with whipping cream and we had a delicious birthday cake/dessert!

Rick picked a few cucumbers today. He is hoping he will soon have enough for the basket. He also pulled an ear of corn, and next week we should have fresh corn. You would be amazed at how fast things can change in the fields. The corn may or may not be ready at the beginning of the week but then, boom...at the end it will be ready. That goes for other things, too. So if you don't see something on the list of what is in the box, but you get a nice surprise, it is because I write the letter on Mondays and we do our best to try to figure out what will be in the box, but in 6 days things can change. We have on the list what we hope you will have, but there can be some "unexpected fun surprises" too!

By now you have probably noticed how ripe the fruit is and how it doesn't keep for very long. We aren't used to ripe fruit, are we, but isn't it a tasty treat?! If it is too much for you, Dawnne, our webmistress, gave me a great idea. She sliced the peaches and dipped them in water with lemon juice added to it. Then she froze them to put in smoothies later on. This is a great idea because we won't have peaches much longer. It has been a real treat. Check out the [recipes](#) also for a fresh peach pie.

Fruit shares begin this week. Look for them in our funny **Mad Mary** boxes, and only those people who have paid for the fruit share will pick up these boxes. Everything is going to be fresh picked and tree or vine ripened, so enjoy it right away because it won't hang around on the counter for long. Berries freeze well. Place them on a cookie sheet and freeze. Then later scoop them into a Ziploc bag. You have fresh berries at your fingertips—that is if you can keep the kids out of the freezer. They taste so good on a hot afternoon, pull a frozen berry out and pop into your mouth. MMmm! Great snack!

A great big thank you to those that have emailed us with great constructive comments and the encouraging [comments](#). We sure appreciate your support. For those of you who have friends who are thinking about the basket for next year, encourage

them to look at our [website](#) and maybe keep up with what is going into the basket this year and the letters. That way they will have an idea of what we have, and what tribulations they will be put through!!) Thanks to all of you. Have a great week!

Recipes

Chocolate Zucchini Cake

(Our all time favorite! A must make at least once this summer. I will try my best to include ALL the ingredients. Some of you remember last year?????)

1/2c. Mayo, 1/2c. oil
1 3/4c. sugar, 4 tbl. cocoa
1 tsp. salt, 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda, 2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla, 1c. buttermilk
2c. grated zucchini
2 1/2c. flour

Combine oil, mayo, sugar. Mix well. Add rest of dry ingredients to sugar mixture. Add eggs, vanilla, buttermilk, zucchini and then the flour. Pour into a greased and floured Bundt pan. Sprinkle top with chocolate chips and chopped pecans. Bake at 350 for about 45 minutes or until toothpick comes clean. Enjoy with breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, coffee break, dessert, and midnight snack!!!

Colorful Veggie Sauté

1 small zucchini, sliced
1 yellow squash, sliced
1 onion, sliced
1c. sliced fresh mushrooms
1 small pepper, sliced
1/2c. thinly sliced fresh carrots
1tbl. butter
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
3c. chopped fresh spinach

In a large skillet, sauté the zucchini, yellow squash, onion, mushrooms, green pepper and carrots in butter until crisp-tender. Add the spinach, salt; sauté 3–4 min. longer or just until spinach is wilted.

Pie Crust Recipe

2c. sifted flour
3/4c. shortening
1 tsp. salt

Mix together until crumbly (the size of a pea). Place 2c. of dough into a bowl and gradually add 5tbl. of cold water. Mix to form a ball. Don't over handle crust. ***If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!!! (or bail out and go to Whole Foods and buy a prepared frozen crust!!)

Fresh Peach Pie

Peel and slice 4–6 peaches (depending on size) Sprinkle with lemon juice. Add 1 tsp. almond flavoring(optional). Mix together 1/3c. cornstarch, 1/2c. brown sugar, and 1/2c. white sugar. Mix in with peaches.

Pour into unbaked prepared crust. Put a top crust on pie. Bake 350 degrees about 45–50 minutes until the crust is golden brown and the pie smells yummy!

Strawberry Pie

1c. mashed berries
1c. sugar
3 tbl. cornstarch
1/2c. water
2tbl. butter

Cook all ingredients except butter until thick. Turn off heat and add butter. Meanwhile, slice fresh berries into a baked pie shell. Let cooked mixture cool slightly. Pour over fresh berries. Serve with whipped cream on top when cool.

Olive Zucchini Spread

2 pkg. cream cheese
3c. shredded zucchini
1 jar marinated artichoke hearts, drained
and finely chopped
1/4c. stuffed olives, chopped
18 cloves garlic, minced
3 tbl. chopped red onion or garlic chives
2 tbl. minced fresh cilantro (optional)
2 tbl. lime juice, 2 tbl. olive oil
1 green onion, chopped (or chives)
1 French Baguette, sliced

In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except bread. Beat until blended. Transfer to a serving bowl; cover and chill for at least 4 hours or overnight. Serve with baguette slices. Yields 6 cups.

Colorful Veggie Sauté

1 small zucchini, sliced
1 yellow squash, sliced
1 onion, sliced
1c. sliced fresh mushrooms
1 small pepper, sliced
1/2c. thinly sliced fresh carrots
1tbl. butter
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
3c. chopped fresh spinach

In a large skillet, sauté the zucchini, yellow squash, onion, mushrooms, green pepper

and carrots in butter until crisp-tender. Add the spinach, salt; sauté 3–4 min. longer or just until spinach is wilted.

Tossed Salad with Peaches

4 med. peaches, peeled
2 tbl. sugar
2 tbl. lemon juice
2 bl. cider vinegar
1 tbl. rice vinegar
1/4 tsp. salt
1/3c. olive oil
6 c. mixed spring greens
4 c. torn romaine
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1/2c. thinly sliced cucumber
6 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
1/3c. chopped pecans, toasted

Slice three peaches, set aside. Cut the remaining peach in half; place in a blender. Add the sugar, lemon juice, vinegars and salt. Cover and process until blended. While processing, gradually add oil in a steady stream.

In a large bowl, combine the greens, onion and cucumber. Pour about 2/3c. dressing over salad and toss to coat. Transfer to a serving platter and top with sliced peaches and bacon. Drizzle with remaining dressing; sprinkle with pecans. Serve immediately.