



Down on the Farm Notes: September 2nd & 4th, 2008

Hi everybody!

Hope everyone enjoyed their 3 day weekend. Interesting weather, wasn't it. I am typing this letter Monday morning and at this time I plan to go out and cover everything tonight. We will probably get just a light frost before the temperatures return to 98 degrees!! Oh my!!

So what is in the box this week? Finally, the potatoes made it into the box. Fresh Yukon potatoes (not washed...I wanted you to be able to experience the fresh earthy smell of soil), an onion, the "z" word, a variety of tomatoes, more melons (a variety), a couple of peppers (the dark green bullet looking things are the Jalapeños), more killer corn, a large amount of Italian basil (almost lost the basil last night. It has a funky hair cut...trim away the black leaves that froze. This may be the last time because of frost, so I loaded you up. Make pesto for later, you won't be sorry) and a cucumber. Some of you who didn't receive the Armenian cukes will hopefully get them this week. They are the big, light green, ribbed cucumbers. Rick has Black Krim, Cherokee Purple, Rainbow, Lemon Boy, and Juliet tomatoes. You will get a variety, but we'll have to wait to see what he picks!

Just to give you a heads up, Rick's organically grown corn is finished now. The only corn he has left is in a separate field that has been treated, although it still has worms. If any of you want corn for freezing, he will have this corn available. We just wanted to let you know though, that the organic corn is all finished for this year. It was sooo good, wasn't it!!! We have one more possibility of another farmer with organically grown corn available here in Smith Valley. We just need to see if he has enough. If he does, you will get to enjoy corn one more time.

Oh, so many good things going on!!! I'm happy to announce a canning/putting-up-your-harvest class held this coming weekend at the River School. The date is September 7th at 1:00pm at the River School. There will be a \$10 charge. The information is on our [website](#). Check it out for all the details of the day. For those of you wanting to learn, this will be a great opportunity and located right in Reno. Take advantage of it!!

The Hearts of Gold Festival is having one of its best turn outs. People are really

supporting the local theme, and another thing that is happening is that all of us are seeing more people taking an interest in canning. Not even 10 years ago, it was common to sell product by the case. People would buy a sack of potatoes, cases of cucumbers for pickling, tomatoes for canning, and corn for freezing. This was a common thing. But this all came to a halt. There just wasn't that much preserving going on. BUT, now all of a sudden there is a renewed interest. There are probably several factors contributing to this, but as a person farming and growing food for people, it is so comforting and for some reason so assuring to see people "putting up food." I love to see people become independent, and eat from their own supplies that they have put away. There is an independency about all of this. It doesn't matter how much groceries go up; you have your own personal stock on your own shelf.

Also some exciting news—we have some parents out there who are making a difference with their kids' meals at school. It is a small start, but it is so exciting that there are parents willing to organize getting fresh local fruits and vegetables into their schools and that the staff is willing to give it a try. Hats off to these folks who are actively making a difference.

Yay! The last 3 weeks of the summer basket will have the first winter squash! If cold weather comes on, it is just so natural to

move into the winter squashes and potatoes. I do love this time of year. The flowers are all blooming and are at their peak. The vegetables are overflowing and you are able to eat without restraint. It is such a short time, but it is fun. Many of you who have been with us for a few years now know you can definitely watch your menu follow the calendar. Fun and fascinating isn't it. Hope you have enjoyed it as much as we do.

Some bookkeeping information!! Next week we will be sending in your boxes, next year's Basket application. For those of you who know you want to commit to next year, you can return the application with a small fee to secure a spot for the 2009 season. We are so excited to see how much the basket program grew this year. Thank you so much to all of you people that have just joined up with us this year. I know it took some getting used to, but I have really enjoyed your comments and your efforts to make it work. To let you know, the Reno News and Review wrote a great article about the basket. The writer is a subscriber and described the process perfectly: a little overwhelmed when the box is overflowing, but wondering at the beginning if she did the right thing because the box just didn't have much in it. If you have a chance to read the article you should. I am sure she spoke out loud what many of you were also feeling and thinking.

We also want to let everyone know that our Thanksgiving Basket this year will be \$180. We chose to put a few additional special items in it like fresh olive oil right from Placerville, and we want to add more of our bottled product that we for the first time have tried this year. We have been working with a local processor and he is working with Pauline and trying to keep as much of the product local or organic.

For the Thanksgiving Basket and the new sign ups, we would probably like to have your information in by the last summer basket delivery which is the first week of October. Just a reminder that our Grateful Fall Basket will begin that second week of October and run through to the 2nd week of December. We are beginning to plant greens for the fall. You will also receive plenty of potatoes, winter squash, onions, leeks, pumpkins, some of our homemade jams, and fall fruit.

Hope everyone makes it through tonight's cold temperatures. Have a good week.

Tina

Recipes

To Freeze Basil

Pull leaves off of stems. Wash. Put about 2c. of leaves in a food processor. Pulse a few times. Don't over process. You don't want paste. Then pour about 1/4c. olive oil from top while hitting the pulse button.

Process until fairly minced (not pasty though) Place in a small plastic container and throw in the freezer for later use. Great to add to soups, sauces, pasta, you name it. If you add to pasta, remove from freezer, and place basil in a pot with butter. Then add your garlic, pinenuts, and cheese. Tastes just like fresh. You won't be sorry you did it.

Basic Italian Basil Pesto

1/2c. lightly packed chopped basil leaves
1/4c. Parmesan cheese
1/4c. toasted pine nuts
1 clove minced garlic
3 tbl. olive oil

Put basil in food processor and process until the basil is evenly chopped. Add the cheese, pine nuts, and garlic, and scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl. With the processor running, gradually add the olive oil until a thick, heavy paste forms. It should have a distinctly coarse texture, but not oily.

Basil Rice Salad

2tbl. lemon juice, 2 tbl. vinegar
1/4 tsp. salt and pepper
2 tbl. fresh parsley, 1/2c. chopped basil
1 clove garlic, minced, 1/4c. olive oil

Salad:

1/4c. green onions, chopped
2 tomatoes
1 1/2c. kidney beans
3c. cooked rice
2 large shredded carrots and add some of your purple cabbage from last week. Pour dressing over salad ingredients. Toss and serve!

Bacon Tomato Sauce (Very, very good!)

1/2c. olive oil, 1 tbl. Italian seasoning
pinch red pepper flakes
5 cloves, minced garlic
1/2 lb. bacon, cut into small pieces
1 1/2c. white wine

1 28oz. canned crushed tomatoes (or a couple cups of chopped fresh tomatoes)
Cook bacon until just done. Drain oil but don't clean pan. Put olive oil in pan and lightly sauté the garlic. Don't overcook though. Add pepper flakes, Italian seasoning. Then add tomatoes and then wine. Let slowly simmer for a couple of hours. This was great on top of sautéed zucchini!!

Basic Pizza Dough

1 tbl. sugar or honey
1c. warm water
1 pkg. or 2 1/2tsp. yeast
1 tsp. salt
1/4c. olive oil
About 3 1/4c. flour

Stir in yeast and sugar into the water. Stir until dissolved. Let stand for about 5 minutes. Then add salt and olive oil. Slowly add flour into mixture until dough is kneadable. Don't add too much flour all at once. Knead until smooth. Let rise. Sarah likes a very thin crispy crust. I like mine a little more bulky. But we have both decided we like to roll the crust out, place on a pan and pre-bake until crust is firm, but not golden. Then we take the crust and add the toppings. Pop it back into the oven to finish cooking. When toppings and cheese are cooked to desired doneness then eat!! We have found that by prebaking the crust, we don't have soggy centers. Especially if you like to pile on the toppings!!

Basic Pizza Sauce

One 28 oz. can San Marzano tomatoes, with juice or 2 full cups of cooked fresh tomatoes (skins removed)
some fresh basil leaves, torn into pieces
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tbl. tomato paste
1 tsp. dried oregano (Note: if you don't have fresh herbs, especially in winter, we use

Italian seasoning)
salt and pepper to taste

We don't like big chunks of tomatoes, so I usually chop the tomatoes into pretty small pieces. I also don't care for all of the seeds in my sauce, so I always squeeze the seeds from the tomatoes before I begin chopping. Let all ingredients simmer for 15 minutes or so. Make this right now with all fresh ingredients and then freeze in servings for later use this winter!!!

Toppings for Pizza.

Sliced fresh tomatoes, basil, herbs, sautéed beets that have been minced, thinly sliced zucchini, caramelized onions (Sarah's absolute favorite), garlic chicken, roasted eggplant, thinly sliced herb roasted potatoes, spinach or wilted Swiss chard. We don't use much meat in the summer months.

Roasted Summer Squash

1 1/2lbs. patty pan, or summer squash
3 tbl. olive oil
1 medium shallot, or onion
salt and pepper to taste
1 tbl. minced parsley (or basil)
1 tsp. grated zest and 1 tsp. juice from 1 lemon
2 tsp. honey
1/4c. grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oven to 425. Toss the squash, 2 tbl. olive oil, onion, salt and pepper. Arrange

the squash on a rimmed baking sheet and roast until lightly browned and tender, about 20 minutes. Mix the remaining 1 tbl. oil, parsley, lemon zest and juice, and honey together in a bowl. Season to taste. Sprinkle with cheese and serve immediately.

Sautéed Shredded Zucchini with Sweet Corn

3 tbl. butter
1 medium shallot, minced (or onion)
4 medium squash, shredded
2 ears corn, kernels cut away with a knife
1 tbl. minced chives

Heat butter in pan. When the foaming subsides, add the shallot and cook, until soft, 2-3 minutes. Add the zucchini and corn and cook until tender, about 7 minutes. Stir in the chives, salt and pepper.

Steak Fries

1 3/4lb. potatoes, cut into 1/2" sticks.
Preheat oven at 450. Toss potatoes in olive oil. Arrange potatoes in a single layer on baking sheets. Coat with a little more olive oil. Sprinkle with 1/4tsp. Kosher salt. (Kosher is good because it is coarse) Bake at 450 for about 40 minutes or until golden brown, stirring potatoes and rotating pans halfway through. Toss potatoes with 1 tsp. thyme. Eat immediately!!

Slow Roasted Tomatoes

1/2c. olive oil
4 cloves garlic, sliced thin
1c. basil leaves, coarsely torn into pieces
2lbs. tomatoes, cored and cut crosswise into
1/2" thick slices
1 tsp. salt

Adjust oven rack to the lower middle position and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Lightly coat the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish with 2 tbl. of oil, and evenly sprinkle half of the garlic and basil leaves across the bottom of the dish. Lay the tomato slices in the dish, overlapping the edges if necessary to fit. Cover the tomatoes with the remaining garlic, basil, and oil and sprinkle with the salt. Roast until the tomatoes are slightly shriveled and their juices have been replaced with oil, about 1 1/2 hours. Allow to cool at least 20 minutes or up to 1 hour before serving. Serve with freshly shaved parmesan and balsamic vinegar if you choose.

Potato and Zucchini Bake (Smith family favorite)

Place in a bowl: thinly sliced potatoes, thinly sliced zucchini, thinly sliced onions. Toss with a generous amount of olive oil. Salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle a package of Good Seasons Italian dressing over potato mixture. Toss well. Pour into a 9x13 baking dish. Cover with foil and bake until done.

Tomato Salad with Warm Ricotta Cheese

2lb. ricotta cheese
1 tsp. salt
1/4c. olive oil
1tsp. coarse grind pepper
3 tbl. diced shallots
3 tbl. red wine vinegar
2 tbl. sherry vinegar
salt and pepper to taste
1 sprig basil
1c. olive oil

2 lb. tomatoes 3 tsp. minced basil. To make the warm ricotta cheese, preheat the oven to 350. Mix the cheese and salt together well. Put the mixture in a small baking dish or casserole.

Drizzle with the olive oil and pepper. Bake until browned on top and bubbly around the edges, about 20 minutes. Let sit for about 10 minutes before serving.

Meanwhile, combine the shallots, vinegars, salt, pepper, and basil in a bowl. Let sit for 20 minutes. Remove and discard the basil sprig. Whisk in the olive oil. Adjust the flavor as necessary with additional vinegar, salt, and pepper. Cut any large tomatoes into halves or quarter, leave small ones whole. Add the tomatoes to the vinaigrette and toss to coat. Divide the tomatoes among six salad plates. Add a spoonful of the warm ricotta to each. Scatter the minced basil over the top of the salads. Eat up with a crusty piece of bread. Yum!