

# CSA NEWSLETTER



## VEGGIE LIST

**LETTUCE**  
**POTATOES**  
**LEEEKS**  
**CANDYSTICK-DELICATA**  
**WINTER SQUASH**  
**CELERIAC**  
**COLORED PEPPER**  
**PIMENTO PEPPER**  
**JIMMY NARDELLO**  
**THYME**  
**GREEN KALE**  
**MIZ AMERICA**  
**TOMATOES**

## Finances from John

Sally and Haylee have asked me to do a short info piece about the financial realities of labor on our farm. That would be the cost to employ the humans whose hands tend the food we bring you from seed, till it is delivered in your box. Last year, that cost was 73.5% of every dollar the farm took in. We lost a lot of money last year because for us to break even, our labor cost would have needed to be 66%. Sally and I would like to be clear, we don't begrudge our employees the money they make. Wages for farm labor have increased dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic, but they are still below what our people deserve, given the skill level and focus required. Many could easily move on to jobs with higher pay and benefits, but seem to have stayed for the intrinsic rewards of growing good food for people to eat.

Two other big pieces in the cost to employ people are: overtime and the ACA. Oregon's Ag overtime law went into effect last year and we began paying overtime for hours over 55.

Seasonally we have historically had many employees work way over that ..... including Sally and I (me not so much anymore). When you lose as much money as we did last year you realize quickly, overtime must roll back. This year we have been employing more people and restricting overtime. The unintended and depressing result is the many who work here are making less total dollars than they have in the past and are having to find work on the side. The most positive response to these changes has been the stimulation of entrepreneurship. Several members of our crew have started their own businesses. Fontaine Farms started this year, with land we are leasing them, to grow and make beautiful flower bouquets. We also have Medina Landscaping and Nunez Landscaping, who do great yard maintenance and home project work for reasonable prices. You can also go to the Plato Al Pueblo food booth at the Corvallis Market buy some delicious authentic Mexican Cuisine from Zani.

With the hiring of more people to control overtime costs this year, the requirements of the Affordable Care Act are now becoming a reality we have to deal with. We will be shutting down the farmstand and restaurant three weeks early this year and with the exception of 3 PSU Farmers Markets we will be closing the farming operation down for all of December instead of our usual two weeks. This is to prevent us from going over a 50 Full Time Equivalent employee average per month and being a big company. That would present us with somewhere between \$380,000 and \$880,000 bill for health insurance or penalties. We would be out of business!

It all means we're going to be a significantly smaller farm next year, specially considering that overtime will be set at 48hrs/week next year. We are sure we will still be doing our CSA, but after that ..... Stay tuned!!!

This is not the most uplifting newsletter, but it is a snapshot of our reality.





*Pictures of the farm from Shawn Linehan*



We'd love to see what you're doing with your CSA box. Tag us [@GatheringTogetherFarm](#)

## On a sweeter note; Candystick delicata

We cannot get enough of this squash. We could eat it nearly every day all winter. It has thick flesh and delicious rich flavor. Most delicata have a honey sweet or even maple flavor, but Candystick Dessert delicata has a richer date-like flavor that is truly addictive. They keep very well and retain their sweetness better than other squash well into storage. Bred by Carol Deppe of Corvallis, Oregon, author of [\*Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties\*](#) and [\*The Resilient Gardener\*](#). She has created the ultimate dessert squash!

- To cook it, cut it in half moons and roast it with a drizzle of olive oil and your favorite seasoning, anything will do, from cinnamon to rosemary.
- It's also pretty fast cooking! You can chop it into tinny squares and cook it in a pan, for a morning hash, or get the oven to 400F and roast for 20 min approx.

## Cerleriac, celery root

I never know this existed before I started working at the farm, and usually I don't go for the weird new stuff, but if I had to pick my top 3 veggies/fruit I discovered in my adult life, I'd say they are celeriac, frisee and kiwi berries.

Think of Celeriac as the baby of potato and celery, the best of both into one.

it is really good in soups and stock, it gives the broth a comforting chicken like flavor. To cook it, just like other roots, chop it and roast it, boil it, or saute it. Don't worry about peeling the middle section, but clean up the bottom by slicing gnarly roots off, sometimes clumps of soil get stuck in between and no amount of power washing can get it out. Chop off it's hair and reserve for broth in the freezer.

Since you have potatoes and leeks in your box this week, I recommend trying a potato. leek, celeriac soup, You can also try using it for breakfast by sauteing it with peppers and leeks, combine the veggies with your favorite morning protein, fried egg, bacon, sausage, protein powder (just kidding), and enjoy!

Happy October!