



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993  
Local & Madison Edition - Brown Week Delivery

August 21-22, 2009

## Summer Reading by Terri Kromenaker

Since I'm immersed in the business of organic food and generally obsessed with cooking and eating, this summer I've been reading all the books I can about food choices and the rationale behind those choices. Marion Nestle (no relation to the company) is a professor of nutrition at New York University and the author of several books on food including *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*; *Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism*; and the tome I've tackled this week, *What to Eat: An Aisle by Aisle Guide to Savvy Food Choices and Good Eating* (2006).

Joining a CSA is one of many choices you've made about your diet, and perhaps an easy one to make. You decided to eat more local food, go organic, move away from the modern/industrial food distribution system in order to support a family farm, step up to the challenge of "eating out of the box", or realized how delicious truly fresh food can be. But what about all your other food choices? While our CSA can supply you with veggies, meat, cheese, coffee and fruit you still need to purchase grains, other dairy items, other beverages, oils, and maybe fish, eggs and poultry.

What drives our decision making with these items – how in the world do we know what to eat? Perhaps some of the same factors that inspired you to join the CSA help you make your decisions at the grocery store, co-op or restaurant. In *What to Eat*, Ms. Nestle methodically takes you through the supermarket, researching each food category both scientifically and politically. While it is quite educational and enlightening, her writing is easy to read and follow. I only occasionally was bogged down by the science or statistics; for the most part her explanations were clear and concise. The book is arranged logically, moving around the typical grocery store from the front door & produce section, around the perimeter (meat and dairy) and into the inner aisles (processed foods) and frozen foods, including sections on supplements, beverages, fresh baked goods, and prepared foods. Throughout the book, there are handy tables and many sidebar summaries, to reinforce the reasoning. The end of each section includes a review of the facts and

her opinion and recommendation for what to choose, with the general caveat that personal taste is always involved as well, so she can't tell you absolutely what to do.

I'm a strong believer in the healthfulness of an organic, diverse diet and I try to eat a wide variety of whole, minimally processed foods. This book was a nice pat on the back and reassuring to me that I'm already making some really good choices, while also helping me think critically about many other options. It also made me realize how much more work we consumers have to do to ensure food safety and security. We have to talk to store managers and ask them about the food they carry (is it GMO?

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

**ITALIAN GARLIC:** Even when used sparingly, garlic can heighten the other flavors in a dish. When you don't want a knockout garlicky meal, you can generally still get away with 1-2 cloves, if cooked completely. Garlic will make your food more flavorful, and you will get to benefit from garlic's healthful properties seven days a week! So keep the garlic flowing.

**YELLOW ONIONS:** Throw some diced onions on a grilled hamburger, hot dog, or brat. Summer's drawing to a close soon, so get your grilling in while you can!

**GREEN TOP CARROTS:** How about a cool carrot dill salad? Grate carrots and other crunchy veggies- perhaps onion and cucumber- and marinate with fresh dill and lemon or a little vinegar. Serve topped with a dollop of yogurt and toasted sunflower seeds.

**SUMMER SQUASH:** Toss hot pasta with summer squash, tomatoes, and eggplant in a light garlic oil sauce and top with cooked chicken or shrimp.

**CUCUMBERS:** Add sliced cucumbers to a chicken salad sandwich, or a hummus and sprout sandwich if you're veggie.

**TOMATOES:** Enjoy the summery taste of fresh tomatoes in a simple tomato and cheese sandwich. Make sure to slice the tomatoes extra thick.

**AMARANTH:** Brilliant bunched green, great for stir-fries, sautés and soups.

**GREEN BELL PEPPERS:** Add chopped peppers to fajitas, stir-fries, pasta sauce, or potatoes.

**JALAPEÑO & UW ROASTER PEPPERS:** This pepper variety is a hybrid created for northern climates by Jim Nienhuis and plant breeders at UW Madison. Richard obtained the seeds in exchange for teaching a class this past spring, and the plants have been doing beautifully. These peppers are flavorful, with just a teeny amount of discernible heat. Roast over a flame or grill, turning frequently, until equally blackened on all sides. Seal in a plastic bag for 10 minutes until cooled, and then peel off the blackened skins under running water. Trim stem, remove seeds, and use in any recipe that calls for roasted peppers.

**GREEN BEANS:** To save some beans for winter, trim beans and cut to 1 ½" length, blanch in boiling water about 3 minutes, drain, and freeze in a single layer on a cookie sheet.

**EDAMAME:** See veggie feature on back of newsletter.

**BROCCOLI:** Hey! You got your crudité in my aioli!

**MELONS, VARIETY:** You might have a Sweet Sarah cantaloupe (large, tan with webbed rind), a Butterscotch (green flesh with an orange swirl), or a Mini Musketeer (crisp, sweet, white flesh with either white or yellow rind).

**SWEET CORN:** All bi-color varieties, you might have Extra Tender Supersweet, Temptation or Ecstasy Sugar Enhanced. Grill, boil or make a sweet corn chowder.

**SALAD MIX:** How many veggies can you put on top of your salad?

**CHOICE: EGGPLANT AND BASIL:** Due to the cool weather, our heat loving crops are slow to ripen while our fall crops are loving it and coming in ahead of schedule. This means an overlap for the next few weeks; there will probably be items we can't fit in the box and will send along as Choice items instead.

Is it irradiated?) and demand that they carry safe and pure foods that we feel confident bringing into our homes. It seems the FDA and USDA are in the pockets of agribusiness (campaign contribution reform, anyone?), so they won't necessarily be looking out for our safety – much of that is left up to the consumer at home! Do not even get me started on the state of meat and poultry production in this country! Again, it's a case of industry's "rights" trumping those of the consumer.

In each section and chapter, the author defines terms, backs up arguments with science, and takes it home with her recommendations for what to eat. To me,

the issues are not black and white and she doesn't treat them as such (my one complaint with Nina Planck's *Real Food* where choices are presented as absolute). Nestle sorts through the latest nutrition research, explains it and applies it at the store. She helped me understand the Nutrition Label requirements and history, fat and sugar definitions and terms, the fish dilemma (the benefits of Omega-3s versus the dangers of methylmercury), and much more. If you have kids, she has a chapter on infant formula and baby foods and on "Foods Just for Kids." That chapter begins with the statement "You would never know it by going to a supermarket, but children are supposed to eat the same foods their parents eat." It continues with strategies for parents to counteract the massive marketing of mostly junk foods to kids. You've got a big job ahead of you, but if you want your kids to have a healthy relationship with food, the effort is worth it!

She also looks at the politics of food: USDA & FDA regulations on labels and health claims, slotting fees at stores that allow companies to purchase the prime shelf space, the complications of global conglomerates monopolizing food production, and the costs of marketing food products. She presents the facts, allowing you to make an informed decision based on your politics, priorities and tastes. At the end of the produce section, she asks,

"Does price matter? Of course it does. I view the price of organics as a political choice. When you choose organics, you are voting with your fork for a planet with fewer pesticides, richer soil, and cleaner water supplies – all better in the long run. When you choose locally grown produce, you are voting for conservation of fuel resources and the economic viability of local communities, along with freshness and better taste. Once you consider such things, the choices in the produce section are much easier to make. Whenever I have the choice, here are my priorities in that section: 1) organic and locally grown, 2) organic, 3) conventional and locally grown, 4) conventional."

She may be preaching to the choir with this CSA audience, but each section of the book gives similar well thought out advice on food choices. This book is a great guide to the confounding amount of information (and disinformation) out there produced by both scientists (some funded by the food industry) and marketers. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to get informed, get active and make the best choices for you, your family, and your life.

Other recommended reading: Michael Pollan's *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. COMING in October 2009: *The Omnivore's Dilemma for Kids!* -Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable or Mineral: A year of food life* -Nina Planck's *Real Food: What to Eat & Why* -Susanne Friedberg's *Fresh: A Perishable History* -Samuel Fromartz' *Organic, Inc.: Natural Foods and How they Grew* -Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*

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## Veggie Feature: Edamame

A question that has come up repeatedly through the years is why our food seems to taste so much better than food grown elsewhere. One of the simplest answers is we are choosy with our seeds. We test and select the plant varieties with superior flavor.

Our edamame planting is a great example of the importance of genetics in the flavor of our food. There are many varieties of soybean on the market, and true Edamame, a variety developed in Japan and imported by several seed companies, sells for \$14 a pound. We plant about 80 pounds of seed per acre. Thus, it is a costly crop to grow. We have reduced some of this cost by growing extra edamame to save our own seed.

Most of the food companies that sell frozen, processed "edamame" beans are, in fact, substituting a different soybean variety that is cheaper to produce. Although a soybean is still a soybean and can be eaten the same way, the flavor of this false edamame is considered to be far inferior. True edamame lacks three particular enzymes that are responsible for the bitter aftertaste common among most soy products. Thus, if you are accustomed to the frozen bags of edamame sold at the supermarket, you may be surprised at the difference in flavor of our true edamame.

Edamame is the common term for green, young soybeans eaten fresh from the pod. The name edamame also refers to the dish most commonly prepared with the beans, boiled in salted water and eaten as a finger food. This is its common preparation in Japan, and it has gained popularity around the world in recent years, both through Japanese restaurants, and the increasing interest in natural foods.

The young soybeans have a mild sweetness and pleasant, firm texture. Though the most popular way of eating them is to simply squeeze the beans from the pod with one's hands and eat as a snack or appetizer, the bean is versatile enough to be used in a number of ways. High in protein, vitamins, and calcium, edamame adds a valuable nutritional dimension to any meal. Unlike the pea pods and green beans we have enjoyed thus far in the season, the fibrous pods of young soybeans are not edible and should be discarded during preparation. The shelled beans can be added to soups, stir fries, and salads. Shelling the beans is easier after several minutes in boiling water; the pod softens and the beans will pop right out with a little bit of pressure. Also unlike other fresh beans, edamame is best stored at a very cold temperature to keep its sweet flavor.

We are now taking Meat orders for delivery in November, December and January. We usually sell out, so order early to guarantee your tasty beef or pork package. Order forms are available online and at your site.  
[www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com/GrazierBeefOrderForm.pdf](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com/GrazierBeefOrderForm.pdf)

## Roasted Edamame

From Barbara Kafka's *Vegetable Love*

1 cup shelled edamame  
1 tsp vegetable oil  
½ tsp salt

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Toss beans with salt and oil. (If you have more or less than 1 cup of shelled beans, adjust quantities accordingly.)
3. Spread over a cookie sheet and roast until well browned in spots and crispy, about 14 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving.

Serve this healthy snack as an alternative to popcorn or chips. The edamame should be eaten soon after coming out of the oven; it will lose its crispness and become unpleasantly soggy if stored for later.

## Produce Plus

Produce Plus is a benefit of CSA membership and your opportunity to purchase some of your favorite items in bulk for preserving. This week's offers: **3# Italian Basil \$24, 10# Petite French Beans \$27.50, 25# Roma Tomatoes \$25, 10# Edamame \$35**

Place your order by phone (608/483-2143 x2) or email ([csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com](mailto:csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com)) by 5 pm Wednesday, August 26. Local, Mazo & Cross Plains members: Please send a check for payment directly to the farm; your order will be delivered to your site on August 28/29, in a box with your name on it. All other Madison orders will be available at our Farmer's Market stand on Mifflin, between 6am & noon on Saturday, August 29. Pay when you pick up. Thanks!