



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

October 23-24, 2015

## Animal Welfare

by Sarah Janes Ugoretz

Our food choices look a lot different today than they did 70 years ago. Just one or two generations ago—prior to the industrialization and explosion of Big Ag—people living in the United States could feel comfortable assuming that any meat they consumed was raised the old fashioned way—on pasture, and as one member of a relatively small group of animals. But go to a grocery store or a restaurant today, and there are any number of stories that can tell the tale of how your meat made its way onto your plate. In this article, we're hoping to start a conversation that is driven by one simple query: How do we want our meat to be raised? As we contemplate this question, we'll consider not only our national production practices, but we'll also draw in a few examples from around the globe.

For many of us, when the conversation turns to the meat industry and animal welfare issues, certain images may come quickly to mind—birds in cramped cages and “downed” cows, too weak to walk. Documentaries like *Food, Inc.* and books such as *The Chain: Farm, Factory, and the Fate of Our Food* have shed light on the myriad costs—to animals, to the environment, and to our fellow humans—that often accompany the U.S.' industrial model of meat production. Meanwhile, when we think of responsible eating, we often tend to think of anything *but* large, feedlot-style production systems.

However, rather than viewing meat production as a binary, composed of either “good” or “bad” systems, we at Harmony Valley Farm look at these practices as falling along a spectrum. At one end, we have a production method primarily guided by a cheap, cram-them-in mentality. Farmers are largely operating within the parameters the U.S. market has set up for them. As we move towards the opposite end of the spectrum, however, we find that animals are afforded more entitlements, albeit to varying degrees. Their cages and pens may be larger, and their diets may consist less of grains and more of grasses and bugs. They may even be so fortunate as to be recognized as sentient beings—capable of feeling emotion and pain—that are deserving of a pleasant life. On this end of the spectrum, animals are typically able to exhibit their natural behaviors. Chickens can flap their wings, roam and scratch. Pigs can socialize, flop onto their sides and forage. Cows, as ruminants, can graze on pasture, interact with their fellow herd members and experience fresh air.

## This Week's Box

**PURPLE VIKING POTATOES:** This potato has a sweet, mealy flesh and is perfect for fall & winter cooking. It can be baked, mashed, roasted or used in soups & stews.

**BROCCOLI OR BROCCOLI ROMANESCO OR CAULIFLOWER:** Roast your broccoli, romanesco or cauliflower with olive oil and garlic for a quick & easy side dish. Check out *Bon Appetit's* recipe for Mac and Cheese with Chicken & Broccoli for a comforting cold weather dinner idea!

**YELLOW ONIONS:** Caramelized onions add a sweet & savory touch to anything you choose to top with them. Simply cook onions & butter slowly in a sauté pan until the onions are deep brown & caramelized.

**ITALIAN GARLIC:** Garlic soup is healing & restorative and perfect as we move into chilly weather. Head over to [101cookbooks.com](http://101cookbooks.com) for her take on Richard Olney's Garlic Soup Recipe.

**FESTIVAL SQUASH:** This squash has a sweet, mellow flavor and is great for stuffing. Try roasting your squash with bacon and rosemary for a savory treat or bake it with a simple filling of diced apples and onions.

**SALAD MIX:** Mix it up a little with your salads and try adding blackened chicken, mango, feta cheese, coriander and lime juice. Serve with a few dollops of Greek yogurt.

**ORANGE OR YELLOW CARROTS:** Make your own carrot chips! Shave the carrots into thin, even slices and toss with olive oil and salt & pepper. Bake until they just start to turn golden brown.

**SWEET POTATOES:** The first sweet potatoes of the season! Bake them and enjoy. Sweet potatoes store well, but don't handle cold very well. Their ideal storage temperature is about 50-60 degrees, so store them in a cool, dry location.

**GREEN TOP RED RADISHES:** Radishes lose some of their bite when sautéed in butter. Sauté in a frying pan until the radishes begin to turn translucent. The green tops are also edible!

**BUNCHED ARUGULA:** Arugula adds a nice bite to a green salad. Head over to [TheKitchn.com](http://TheKitchn.com) and check out their recipe for Potato Salad with Yogurt, Arugula and Herbs, which would be lovely using the Purple Viking potatoes in this week's box!

**PORTUGUESE KALE:** See this week's vegetable feature for more information.

**CILANTRO:** For those of you who also receive the fruit share we thought it might be nice to send some cilantro to go along with your avocados!

If we zoom out and look at meat production from a mainstream, market-based perspective, however, choosing to treat animals as sentient beings is not yet highly rewarded in this country. Should a farmer choose to operate from an animals-as-sentient-beings standpoint, the burden of this choice primarily falls upon their shoulders and it is not always the cheapest road to travel. As Farmer Richard mentioned to me earlier this week, Harmony Valley Farm's 15 pigs are all raised on 20 acres of pasture, which gives them the opportunity to freely roam, socialize, graze and root. The vegetable scraps and organic barley and flax they're given are delivered daily by hand. Although these practices are all in line with pigs' natural behaviors, this is not the way all pigs are raised. We prefer to reside on the end of the spectrum where animals are treated with respect for their innate

characteristics. Did you know that cows and pigs like to have their heads scratched behind their ears? If they trust you and are accustomed to your presence, you can move easily among these large animals! We recognize the animals we raise for meat are not our pets, nonetheless we treat them gently and with respect so they do not live in fear of human touch or presence. This creates a much more pleasant environment for them to live in and allows us as animal handlers and feeders to work amongst them more safely. When an animal is fearful, they will react to that feeling and can do serious damage in an effort to defend themselves.

If we expand our scope and take a look at this conversation in a more global context, sadly we see that the U.S. is fairly far behind when it comes to the welfare of our animals. For instance, a growing number of countries—including the entire

European Union and, most recently, New Zealand—have extended legal recognition to animals as sentient beings (McIntyre, 2015). In publicly acknowledging that animals experience both positive and negative emotions, these countries have not only made it easier to prosecute animal cruelty, they have also demonstrated to the world that they are willing to place their morals and the wellbeing of animals above the bottom dollar. In turn, with the support of the government, the market is more favorable to discerning farmers and consumers alike.

Meanwhile, innovative approaches to raising animals can be found worldwide—including here in the U.S. Imagine a piggery (though this set-up works with cows and chickens, as well) that produces no runoff or odor and attracts zero flies. In Mountain View, Hawaii, you'd find such a system. Operating in accordance with Korean Natural Farming (KRN) animal husbandry methods, this system incorporates a layering schema, whereby four feet of bedding—primarily consisting of twigs, logs, and green waste—serves as host to an active microbial, aerobic environment, kept dry by a vented, overhanging roof and an open-sided building plan. The lactic acid added to this system digests the pigs' waste, thereby neutralizing the smell and maintaining a healthy environment. Once this system is up and running, bedding doesn't need to be changed, only added to every few months (Prell, 2015). Farmer Richard encountered such a system when he was visiting Germany several years ago. Imagine his delight when he discovered that his hosts had established this set-up *directly off of their kitchen!* Contrasting this with what we are most familiar with in the U.S.—CAFOs, or concentrated animal feeding operations—is a powerful exercise that demonstrates very succinctly the range that exists along the animal-rearing spectrum we spoke of earlier.

When it comes to animal welfare standards at play in the U.S., broad, sweeping change is possible. However, at this point in time, I would argue that farmers and consumers are primarily on the hook when it comes to working towards this change. Farmers who decide to raise animals humanely, in a system where they can exhibit their natural behaviors, will continue to depend on consumers who choose to opt out of the mainstream, cheap meat mentality—and are able and willing to pay a premium for this. As the world—along with a selection of our own farmers—continues to provide us with examples of what is possible, we can stay strong in our convictions and strive to tip the scales to favor a higher and more just standard for the animals that some of us choose to consume. Please refer to our blog at [www.harmonyvalleyfarm.blogspot.com](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.blogspot.com) for a complete list of article sources.

### Vegetable Feature: Portuguese Kale

by Andrea Yoder

This is one of those vegetables that you will likely never find in a grocery store or co-op in this country. This vegetable caught our eye in a seed catalog several years ago. We only grow it once every few years, so take advantage of it this year and have some fun with it!

You'll be able to identify this vegetable in your box pretty easily this week. It has large broad green leaves that are mostly flat but do have a little waviness on the edges. The leaves are thick, like a collard green, and have sturdy white ribs. It's been really fun watching this plant grow—first it forms the large outer leaves, and towards the end of its growing season it forms more of a center head as the leaves curl towards the center. First it resembled collards, now the plants are behaving more like cabbage. We spaced the plants pretty far apart which has allowed them to grow up to 2 feet high and wide in some cases! It's quite an impressive plant!

In Portugal, this kale is the key ingredient in one of their national dishes called Caldo Verde. There are many versions of Caldo Verde, but all of them include several basic ingredients that characterize Portuguese cuisine. Some of the ingredients that complement Portuguese kale include potatoes, onions, beans and a spicy sausage (most often chorizo is used in this country). The recipe we've included in this newsletter is our favorite version of this Portuguese national soup. We've looked forward to eating this soup all year and think this is a great way to prepare this vegetable and you'll only get to eat it once a year! This soup does freeze well, so make a big batch and put some in the freezer to enjoy later this winter!

One of the interesting things about this kale is that it is a little different from other kales in that the thick ribs can be eaten raw—simply remove the leaf from the rib. Thinly peel off the outer layer of the rib to expose the tender, sweet flesh—very similar to peeling and eating the stem of broccoli. The rib can be cooked separately or eaten raw. The leaves should be cooked. If you slice them thinly, they do not need quite as much cooking time. You should plan to cook the leaves in some kind of liquid—either added to soup, steamed or simmered in a small amount of water or stock. Store your Portuguese kale in the refrigerator wrapped loosely in a plastic bag. We hope you enjoy and appreciate trying this new kale as much as we've enjoyed growing it for you!

### Caldo Verde-Portuguese Kale Soup

by Chef Andrea Yoder

Serves 6-8

¼ cup olive oil

1 large onion or 2 leeks, diced

2-3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 cup of Portuguese kale ribs, peeled and sliced in ½" pieces

5-6 medium potatoes, peeled and large diced (Purple Viking potatoes are our favorite ones to use in this soup)

8 cups cold water or pork/chicken stock

10 ounces chorizo, diced

4 cups Portuguese Kale leaves, thinly sliced

Salt and Ground Black Pepper, to taste

1. In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions or leeks and cook until they are translucent. Add the garlic and kale ribs. Cook for 3-5 minutes.
2. Add the potatoes, and water or stock. Cover and simmer over low heat for about 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
3. Remove the soup from the heat and take off the cover. Allow the soup to cool for 5-10 minutes. Puree the soup in a blender until smooth.
4. Return the soup to the pan and put it over low heat. Add the chorizo, cover and simmer over low heat for about 5 minutes. Add the kale leaves, return the cover and simmer for another 5-10 minutes or until the kale is tender. Adjust seasoning with salt and black pepper to your liking. Serve hot.

**\*\*Note:** If you'd like to make a vegetarian version of this soup, you can eliminate the chorizo and season the soup with a bit of smoked paprika.