



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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Happy Spring Everyone!

By Andrea Yoder

April showers bring May flowers.....and green hillsides on our farm! The pace of the farm has picked up and we're rocking and rolling again! This week we returned to the fields to harvest, work ground and plant.

Spring cleaning is happening in the packing shed and we're all starting to get back into our vegetable groove. Our CSA deliveries start in just three weeks and we're excited to return to Madison, Wisconsin this weekend for our first farmers' market of the season! Things are changing fast and there's quite a lot to fill you in on this month!

Our first group of field crew members returned from Mexico and started work on Monday. We were thankful for their safe travels and were happy to see their smiling faces. They hit the ground running on Monday. Rafael, Juan, Jose Ramon and Nestor started off the week getting tractors, trucks and equipment out of winter storage. By noon Nestor had already prepared ground for planting, so after lunch Rafael and Tomas were in the field doing our first direct seeding of the season! Manuel and Juan Pablo followed behind and planted our first baby lettuces on Monday as well. Angel and Juan Pablo have been working on fencing in the pastures.....the cattle are anxious to be back out on grass and are happy to see the hillsides greening up. Other crew members hopped on spring cleaning projects, joined the packing shed crew to transplant baby pepper plants in the greenhouses and started working on some field clean-up projects.



We decided to start our harvest for the farmers' market on Wednesday, seeing rain in the forecast for Wednesday night and the latter part of the week. While the ramps are still a little small, the crew was able to find enough to take to market and we anticipate they'll be ready for larger harvests next week. In the afternoon they went to the spinach field and spent

Even though our season is about to begin, it's not too late to sign up and we do still have shares available! If you have a friend, family member, coworker or acquaintance interested in signing up for CSA, please refer them to us! You'll receive a referral coupon for each new member who lists you on their sign-up form.

We look forward to being your CSA farm for the 2017 season!

the afternoon harvesting some sweet, tender overwintered spinach. The hum of vegetable sorting and washing has returned to the packing shed this morning.

We have had some rain this week, so some of our field work is on hold. We're hoping to see some dry days in the near future so we can get some critical things done. The onion transplants are almost ready to go to the field, but first we need to prepare their beds by covering them with the reflective plastic mulch that helps with weed and pest control as well as heat gain. Next week we will be receiving some rhubarb and strawberry plants and need to get those fields ready for planting as well. We are also anxious to plant some of our other early-planted crops including parsnips, burdock root and our first carrots and beets.

The greenhouses are almost at full capacity, with only about two tables left in the nursery greenhouse.....and we need those to finish the plantings on this week's schedule! The plants are looking very nice and many will be ready to go to the field within the next few weeks. This year we're trying something new. Usually we use our greenhouses for transplant production only in the spring and we have one small house we seed edible flowers in for our salad mix. This year we decided to try growing some early season head lettuces in these houses. Simon, Scott and Gerardo started preparing the soil for planting last week and on Monday Scott and Leonardo finished planting the lettuce. We're hoping they'll be ready for CSA boxes and the farmers' market by the first to middle part of May which is several weeks earlier than the head lettuce we'll harvest from the field.

Over the winter, Richard and Lisa spent quite a bit of time reviewing the results of the survey we did at the end of last year. We really appreciate the input we received from those who chose to participate. One of the questions we asked was for input on helping us choose three vegetables from our list of "unique crops" that you would like us to grow this year. The top three vegetable choices were Jicama, Broccoli Raab and Dried Beans! We're happy to report the jicama is planted and started sprouting this week. The broccoli raab will

be planted within the next few weeks and we'll probably do a fall planting too. It's a little early to plant beans, but we have the seed!



Farmer Richard is getting very excited for the May Woods Walks that he has planned. In case you haven't heard, we've invited our members to come to the farm this spring to join Farmer Richard for a walk through our wooded hillsides. You will have the opportunity to explore areas of the farm we don't usually feature at our other farm events. There are a lot of treasures to discover in our woods and Farmer Richard is looking forward to guiding you on a walking tour using the new trails he and his crew made last fall! As you hike through the woods, you'll have the opportunity to look for spring wildflowers, learn how to identify different species of trees by their leaves and bark, forage for wild edibles, listen and look for birds, and you might even stumble on a morel mushroom or two! The two dates are May 13 and 20. You'll find more information about the event in this week's email. This event is for CSA members only and space is limited, so we do ask that you email with an RSVP in advance.

We do still have CSA shares available for this year's season, so please remind your friends and neighbors to sign up soon! If you are in Madison, please stop by and visit us at the farmers' market starting this weekend. If you reside in the Twin Cities or our local area, please read your email for more details about some of the other events going on in the next few weeks. Ok, that's a wrap for now...time to water the greenhouses!