



WEEK OF JANUARY 18TH, 2021 #3/52

Organic Inspection

Each year we are inspected by CCOF, our organic certifier. But what does organic mean? Back in the 1990's the term was officially defined by the National Organic Standards Board as "an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity." There is a good description and overview of the history of organics on the [USDA's](#) website. Here is a short excerpt:

Contemporary American organic farming has its roots in the humus farming movements that spread across Great Britain and continental Europe from the 1920s through the 1950s. These movements evolved largely in response to the increasing use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. The proponents of humus farming believed that the highest quality food and the sustainability of agriculture were achieved by "feeding the soil," thereby building soil fertility. Their goal was to increase the humus—the fully decomposed organic matter that has reached a stable state in the soil. Humus farming was typified by mixed farms that included livestock, food crops, feed crops, and green manures. Humus farming made little or no use of soluble commercial fertilizers or pesticides, in part because the health of the soil rendered them unnecessary.

Over the years, as the organic movement grew, it became clear that a set of standards would be needed. For better or worse, Congress passed the Organic Food Production Act, and under the USDA and the National Organic Standard Board the NOP, the National Organic Program was created. Standards were set, and continue to evolve. Before NOP you would choose which organic organization you wanted to be a part of and they certified you according to their regulations and requirements. Once the USDA started the National Organic Program, all certifiers had to become agent certifiers in order to certify a farm or producer as organic, and naturally they had to implement the USDA guidelines. I did say for better or worse because many in the organic movement felt the standards were watered down greatly, all to fit the needs of the newly evolving and fast growing corporate organic industry.

I often hear that farmers, particularly small farmers, find the process of certifying too daunting, time consuming, and expensive. I feel for them, because it is a lot of work. Eatwell has been certified organic, well this land has, since 2000, so for me everything was already in place.

Naturally, the degree of challenge and work also depends on the type of farm operation you are running. With CSA farms, like ours, we grow a vast array of crops, going into and coming out of the ground all year round. If we were,

let's say, a tomato farm, our fields would be empty right now, plants would go into the ground early March and we would wait until sometime in the summer to harvest. If we were growing canning tomatoes, our fields would be ready all at once, everything harvested mechanically and done in one fell swoop. The 40 acres next door to us, would begin harvest and be at the stage of an empty field in less than 72 hours if all went according to plan.

I'm sure you can imagine there is a great deal of record keeping, and over the years the list of required records has definitely grown. Unfortunately for me Nigel was not the best at this task, although he thought he was, his records probably made a lot of sense to him. So we have spent the last 3 1/2 years implementing new programs, and systems that work for us. One of my goals has been to create systems that anyone could walk in and understand. Not sure how successful at that I have been, but as with most things in life, it is an evolving process. Cameron got us set up with a program called *Tend*. This software helps us create our crop plan, track when transplants come in, and where they get planted. This year we hope to implement the harvest side as well. Using chickens as our only source of inputs (fertilizer/pesticide) means we don't have those reports to fill out, but we do have to track where the chickens are and have been. We must plan our plantings post chickens accordingly. Anything that grows on the ground, like lettuce, must have a time separation of 120 days from the last day the chickens were on that land to the first harvesting of that crop. If things are growing above the soil, like broccoli, the timing is shortened to 90 days. Records need not be complicated and I feel I have been over thinking some. This year, in addition to *Tend*, we are also using an amazing tool! An old fashioned paper calendar!). There is something different about looking at a paper calendar with everything right in front of you; it suits my brain better.

One of the steps we go through during the inspection is choosing a crop and showing what happens to it from start to finish. That means we find the seed/transplant invoice and delivery dates. We must show that the seed is either organic or if not, why we didn't use organic. Some seeds are pelleted because they are so small it would be impossible to plant them using the seeder. That coating has to be approved for organic use. Something I learned last week is just because the seed company says the coating is ok for NOP doesn't necessarily mean it is. What the heck? As an example, lettuce seeds are tiny and so are pelleted, but fortunately we know what coating is used and it is NOP compliant. The next thing you have to show is how much you have planted, harvested and sold. This can be really tricky for us because many of our crops are planted multiple times throughout the year, so I would have to follow that process multiple times. I like to pick crops like basil or eggplant, as they are planted once, and easy to show a complete trail. Then we need to cull the sales information for all wholesale, farmers market sales and how many times they went into the CSA box, come up with a lb total and show that we didn't sell 100,000 lbs of basil when we only planted enough to sell 5,000 lbs. The last part of the inspection day is to walk the farm and then inspect our warehouse in town. And this all happens after I have spent hours working on our total organic sales for the year. Since we don't certify everything we sell, like our eggs, or our herb salts, I have to back all of those figures out, from CSA sales, wholesales, market sales and direct mail order sales. You can imagine it was a very busy week last week, but we got it all done and passed with flying colors. Hooray!



RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

I really struggle with finding new recipes for Bok Choy, Tatsoi, basically, the Asian Greens. Most recipes you find are a combination of sesame, ginger, soy sauce. If anyone has any novel way of using them I would love to hear about it. I often use the crunchy stem of Bok Choy in place of celery. I think it was Cameron and Lilly who told me they eat it raw with peanut butter, just like they would do with raw celery. I bet it would be delicious dipped in a miso tahini kind of thing. Regardless, what I know is very few cookbooks will have them listed in the index, so if you have something a little different please share! In the meantime I searched for Bok Choy and Rosemary and found this delightful recipe :)

Rosemary Sage Bok Choy
Recipe from Scraping The Skillet
It does call for 5 heads baby Bok Choy, and some of you are getting Tatsoi, I suspect either would work, although you might have to adjust quantities down a bit. I think this would make a tasty veg side to roast chicken. You could stick with this flavor profile and do lemon and rosemary on your chicken. Couscous for a starch would complete the meal and it only takes 5 minutes to make.

5 heads of baby Bok Choy
1/4 c Extra Virgin Olive Oil
3 cloves of Garlic, sliced thinly (not minced)
1 TB fresh Rosemary, diced finely
1 TB fresh Sage, diced finely
1/2 tsp Red Pepper flakes
1 TB Balsamic Vinegar
1 TB fresh Lemon juice
Salt and Pepper
1/4 cup Pine Nuts
grated Asiago cheese, for garnish

Slice the heads of baby bok choy in half lengthwise. Soak in cold water for 10 minutes to remove any dirt hidden inside the heads. While your bok choy is soaking, heat olive oil in a medium skillet. Add the thinly sliced garlic and stir until it just starts to turn a golden brown (about 1 minute). Remove the garlic slices. Now you have speedy garlic infused olive oil. Combine your rosemary, sage and red pepper flakes in a small bowl and set aside. Take the bok choy out of the water and gently shake or pat dry. Slice off the upper dark green leaves, leaving the bulbs intact. Brush the cut side of the bulbs with garlic-infused olive oil and sprinkle with 1/2 of your herb mixture. Place your seasoned bulbs face down on a pan and brush the back side with olive oil as well. Broil heads for 8 minutes. Remove them from the oven, flip them over and drizzle the cut sides with Balsamic vinegar. Return them to the broiler for another 5 minutes. While the heads broil for the last 5 minutes, head back over to the stove and heat up the remaining oil in your skillet. Add the rest of the herb mixture, bok choy

leaves and salt and pepper to the pan. Sauté, stirring constantly until the leaves just barely begin to wilt, about 2 minutes. The leaves should still be very green. I usually pull them before I think they are done and by the time I get them out of the pan they are cooked perfectly. Set the leaves on aside. Toast your pine nuts in the pan for a minute or two. They should just barely be browned. To plate, put the heads on a plate and top with the leaves. Finish with a sprinkle of fresh lemon juice, toasted pine nuts and freshly grated Asiago.

This Week's Box List

Arugula
Beets or Daikons
*Bok Choy or Tatsoi
*Winter Squash
*Lettuce
Mizuna or Mustard Greens
Spinach
*Turnips or radishes
*Mandarins or Navel Oranges
Parsley
*Rosemary
*Pomelos

*Indicates Box for 2

Mushroom, Butternut Squash & Gruyère Tart

Recipe from Food and Wine

If you made a lettuce and citrus salad this would make a fairly light/simple meal. And I bet the leftovers would be fantastic for lunch the next day.

One 1 1/2 lb Winter Squash—
peeled, seeded and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1/4 cup Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
Kosher Salt and freshly ground Pepper
2 TB Unsalted Butter
1 large Shallot, thinly sliced
1 lb assorted Mushrooms,
trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 tsp Sherry Vinegar

1/4 teaspoon freshly grated Nutmeg
All-purpose flour, for dusting
14 ounces chilled all-butter Puff Pastry
2 large Egg yolks
1/4 cup Crème Fraîche
1/4 lb Gruyère cheese, shredded
2 tsp chopped Thyme

Preheat the oven to 375°. Spread the squash on a baking sheet and toss with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Season with salt and pepper. Bake for 25 minutes, until just tender. Transfer to a bowl. Increase the temperature to 400°. Meanwhile, in a skillet, melt the butter in the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until softened. Add the mushrooms, cover and cook, stirring, until tender, about 7 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and remove from the heat. Toss with the vinegar and nutmeg and add to the squash. Line a baking sheet with parchment. On a floured work surface, roll the puff pastry out to 12 1/2 by 14 1/2 inches. Using a knife, trim the pastry to 12 by 14 inches. Transfer to the baking sheet and prick the pastry with a fork all over except for a 1/2-inch border. Bake the pastry for 20 minutes, until golden; pierce with a fork if it puffs during baking. Let cool. Stir the egg yolks, crème fraîche, Gruyère, thyme, 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1/4 teaspoon of pepper into the mushrooms and squash. Spread the mixture on the pastry inside the border. Bake for 15 minutes, until the cheese is melted. Cut into squares and serve.