



GETTING READY FOR THE GIRLS

Later this week we have a fresh flock of chicks coming, 600 of them to be precise. In the past we would order chicks from hatcheries out of state at least once a year. Those chicks would come in the mail. I know that sounds kind of crazy, which is what I thought the first time Nigel told me that. I have gone to the back door of the post office quite often and while waiting for someone to answer, I could hear our little chicks peep peeping on the other side. Eventually, we realized what worked best was to just get our chicks from Vega Farms; Nigel had started working with Ed Vega many years back. They are located in Davis and Dixon, so our babies are not traveling far. We place our order a couple of months in advance to get us on the schedule. The date is set and on that particular morning eggs start cracking early between 7 and 9 am, and if all goes well, they are delivered by noon.

It is pretty great to get our chickens from a hatchery so close to our farm. When freshly hatched chicks come in the mail, they have been in a box for up to 3 days. We have to take each one and dip their beaks into some sugar water to waken their desire and instincts to eat and drink. You can imagine there are several that don't make the journey; it is a rough way to get baby chicks. This is a good reason to stick with our local hatchery, not to mention, it is really important to me to support our local businesses.

Last week, Agustin brought one of the houses up from the fields. It is now parked close to the farm house, where the babies live until they are old enough to go outside. First task for prepping is to pressure wash the entire house. This particular house was rebuilt in the last couple of years, Cory put a new roof on, and it was re-painted, so all we needed to do was clean. Miguel spent a couple of days on that last week. Before the girls arrive, Agustin will put in cardboard walls to keep them corralled near the front of the house, hang the heat lamps and throw down some wood shavings. Feeders and water containers will get a good scrubbing and get filled, then we just have to wait for their arrival. Because of the time of year, we won't have to use the heat lamps for long; I am hoping just the first couple of weeks.

It will take about 4 months before they start laying. In the meantime, they cost us a lot in feed and labor while producing nothing. Our last flock of chicks came the end of April, and we are anxiously awaiting those pullet eggs! Because our main flock is a majority of old hens, production is quite low at the moment. But bringing in another flock now should get us through the winter with a good amount of eggs, unlike last year, when each week was always a worry if we would have enough eggs.

Pullet, if you are not familiar with that term, refers to a young hen before the age of 1 year. We also use that term for the eggs they lay. Those eggs are very small, but according to the experts, more nutritious. They are certainly my favorite eggs, the texture is silky smooth and



they are so delicious! Boulette's Larder in the Ferry Building has been asking about them for the past few weeks, because they know those are the most delicious eggs. I especially love them soft boiled. As hens age eggs grow larger, and you will find the ratio of white to yolk goes up. And as the hens get older, they lay fewer eggs. That means they are eating and not paying their way. Our feed bill currently is running about \$3700 every 3 weeks, so you can imagine I want to get a couple of young flocks going and get rid of old birds. This week we will be retiring about 70 birds down the road in the walnut orchard at Ruhstaller. The hens will live a good life under the trees, eating the bugs, and grass and of course they will fertilize.

Years ago, we would take old hens to be processed and turned into chicken stock. When we started we could take them to Grimaud in Stockton who would take care of the entire process. All we had to do was drop off the birds, then go back a few days later to pick up containers of delicious chicken stock. But they stopped making stock, then they closed altogether and eventually sold the facility. After Grimaud stopped processing we took our hens to New American Poultry in Sacramento, drop them first thing in the morning, go back before noon to pick them up and take them straight to Roli Roti in Oakland who would cook the chickens for 72 hours and make the stock for us. If you have seen Butchers Bone Broth in the markets, that who that is! But, as things have gone over the past few years, the company that owned New

American Poultry (who also bought the facility in Stockton) decided to close the Sacramento location. This made the logistics for chicken stock really challenging. So many members loved our chicken stock and had been asking about it I decided I would try to make it work. Wouldn't you know, they stopped taking new customers, so sadly, chicken stock is no longer an option for us. Thankfully, Ruhstaller will take probably as many as we can give them, because it is a problem keeping old hens. They have many jobs on the farm, fertilizing and eating weeds and bugs, but their number one job is laying eggs to cover the cost of the feed! And if they aren't laying they have got to go.

A COUPLE OF MENTIONS

Jose says the San Marzanos are ripening and we are ready to make them available to order. If you would like to order San Marzano tomatoes to pick up at the Ferry Building this coming Saturday please text (530-554-3971) or email me at organic@eatwell.com. I am not positive how much we will have available by Saturday so I would rather we handle your orders outside of the system to make sure you get what you need. You can, however, order the slicers for Saturday Market Pick up through webstore. The fact that they are ripening is fantastic news for our sauce parties. I scheduled so many days for saucing we have plenty of space for y'all. If you live close to the farm and would like to order cases for pick up here, that is available too. And of course you can always order cases to come with your CSA delivery.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

And Now For Something Completely Different, Chocolate-Beet Ice Cream!

Recipe from *Veg* by Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall
One of my favorite cookbook authors and food show hosts.
I can't wait to try this recipe!

10 oz Beets
1 1/4 cups Whole Milk
A generous 3/4 cup Cream
4 Large Egg Yolks
1/2 cup Superfine Sugar
3/12 oz Dark Chocolate, broken into small pieces
Preheat oven to 400. Put the beets in an oven-proof dish, add a 1/2" depth of water, cover with foil and roast until tender - at least 1 hour. Let cool. Peel the beets, cup coarsely, and puree in a blender with one-third of the milk. Measure the puree. You should have about 1 1/4 cup, it does not matter if there's a little less, but you don't want more. Set aside. To make the custard, heat the remaining milk and the cream in a saucepan to just below boiling. Cool a little. Whisk together the 4 egg yolks and sugar in a bowl, then pour into the hot milk and cream, whisking until smooth. Return to a clean saucepan. Cook gently, stirring all the time, until the custard thickens. Don't let it boil or it will "break". Remove from the heat and leave to cool until tepid, stirring often to stop a skin forming. Meanwhile, melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl placed in a larger bowl filled with just-boiled water, stirring from time to time. Stir the melted chocolate into the custard, don't worry if it looks a bit grainy at this point. Stir in the beet puree. Pass the mixture through a fine sieve into a pitcher, leave to cool, then chill. Once cold, churn the mixture in an ice cream maker until soft-set, then transfer to a suitable container and freeze until solid. If you don't have an ice cream maker, freeze in a shallow container, mashing with a fork after every hour for 3 hours, or until the mixture is solid. Transfer to the fridge 20 to 30 minutes before serving, to soften a little.

Chicken With Creamy Jalapeno Sauce

Recipe found on [A Taste Of Home](#)
Looking at this recipe I think I would add the tomatoes to the pan right after browning the chicken along with the onions and jalapeños etc. If you use cherry tomatoes you can cut them in half OR leave them whole
4 boneless skinless Chicken Breast halves (4 ounces each)
1/4 tsp Salt
1 TB good Vegetable Oil
2 medium Onions, chopped
1/2 cup Chicken Broth
2 Arriba Jalapeno Peppers, seeded and minced
2 tsp ground Cumin
3 oz Cream Cheese, cubed
1/4 cup Sour Cream
3 Plum Tomatoes, seeded and chopped (use the slicer OR Cherry Tomatoes)
2 cups hot cooked Rice
Sprinkle chicken with salt. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, brown chicken in oil on both sides. Add the onions, broth, jalapeños and cumin. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer until a thermometer reads 165°, 5-7 minutes. Remove chicken and keep warm. Stir cream cheese and sour cream into onion mixture until blended. Stir in tomatoes; heat through. Serve with chicken and rice.

Quinoa With Zucchini & Onions

Recipe found in *Veg* by HFW

So this recipe can be made in the fall with Winter Squash and Leeks, but since we have leeks in the box this week, I say use those instead of onions.

1 3/4 lb Summer Squash (zucchini)
1 TB Butter
2 TB good Veg Oil
3 Onions, halved and thinly sliced *Or* use your bunch of leeks
A few sprigs of Thyme
Salt & Pepper

3 cloves of Garlic, finely minced
1 1/4 cup Quinoa
A good handful of Flat-Leaf Parsley
A squeeze of Lemon Juice
2 oz Pine Nuts, lightly toasted
Cut the zucchini on the diagonal into 1/4" thick slices. Melt the butter with the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onions, zucchini, thyme and some salt and pepper. Cook for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring from time to time, until zucchini is tender and starting to turn golden. Add garlic and fry for another couple of minutes. Meanwhile, rinse the quinoa well in cold water. Put into a saucepan with a pinch of salt and cover with plenty of cold water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer for about 12 minutes, until the quinoa is tender with just a bit of bite. Tip into a sieve and leave

to drain and steam a little to drive off excess moisture. Add the drained quinoa to the zucchini, along with chopped parsley and lemon juice. Stir well, taste and add more salt and pepper if needed. Serve topped with toasted pine nuts.

Smoky Cheese Grits with Summer Succotash

Recipe by Sara Moulton NYT Cooking
1 cup frozen eEdamame
2 large ears fresh Corn or 2 cups thawed frozen corn kernels
1 medium Onion
1 TB Vegetable Oil
1 Garlic clove
1 cup Whole Milk
Salt
black pepper
1 cup quick-cooking Grits
2 cups Cherry Tomatoes
1 TB Balsamic Vinegar
1/4 lb smoked Gruyère, Gouda or cheddar cheese
1 TB unsalted Butter
2 TB chopped Chives
Cook the edamame following the package directions; drain well. Cut the corn from the cobs, if using fresh corn. Finely chop the onion. Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium heat. When hot, add the onion, reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for about 5 minutes, until it has softened. Push the garlic through a garlic press into the skillet. Stir and cook for 1 more minute. Meanwhile, combine 2 1/2 cups water, the milk, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper in a large saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Very gradually whisk in the grits, reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently, for about 8 minutes, or until the grits are thick and creamy. While the milk and water are coming to a boil, halve the tomatoes and add them, with the vinegar, to the onions and garlic. Cook for about 2 minutes, then add the edamame and corn and cook for 3 more minutes, stirring occasionally. Add salt and pepper to taste. Coarsely grate the cheese. Stir the cheese and butter into the grits and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve the succotash on top of the grits and sprinkle with the chives.

This Week's Box

*Slicer Tomatoes
*Leeks
*Potatoes
*Beets
*Cherry Tomatoes
*Fennel
*Summer Squash
Arriba Peppers
Basil
Chives
Eggplant

* = Items in Box for 2