



THE RED HILL ROOT



The Seasonal Weekly Newsletter for Members of the Red Hill Farm CSA, Aston, PA

Volume VI, Number 3

May 2009

Farm & Member News

SPRING PICNIC/ORIENTATION/PLANT SALE!

Please join us to welcome new members and learn what's going on at the farm! Bring boxes, bags, &/or pots to take some organic plants home for your garden!



- ❖ **Where:** Red Hill Farm
- ❖ **When:** Saturday May 16th, 2009
- ❖ **Time:** 1pm—4pm. Farmers will lead tours at 1 and 3pm.

Make sure to attend one of the tours to get oriented! Bring your own picnic

lunch; other refreshments provided. **Don't forget your checkbook or cash to pay for plants!**

Send in your form for pre-ordered off-farm products! If you can't attend the picnic but you want fruit, corn, sweet potatoes, or turkey, be sure to send the form *soon* that came with your member receipt! **If you're attending the picnic/orientation/plant sale, bring your off-farm order and CHECK ONLY (!) to pay for it! 16th May is the deadline for off-farm orders of the products listed above.**

BAGS!—Please start stocking up on bags that you can bring to the farm for use in the share room. We need a good supply to start with. Paper and/or plastic are fine.

Five-Gallon Food-Grade Buckets—Please keep a lookout for food-grade, five-gallon buckets that we need for use on the farm. They must have contained *only* food items in their previous uses and must be five-gallon size! **Thanks!**

Media Farmers' Market???—Local tomato-grower **Linda Coulston** is looking for folks interested in helping to start a farmers' market in Media! If you'd like to help or have ideas, contact Linda at lc341@comcast.net.

Ozone Monitor Available—The Sisters have an ozone-monitoring kit that they don't use anymore. If you'd like to use it, contact our farmer Aby at awright@osfphila.org. As Aby notes, it could be a useful educational tool.

Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick

Hi all. So much has happened since the last *Root*, it's hard to recount everything. So I'll focus on what's been going on most recently.

Marcy's back! We're so happy to have her at RHF again; see her write-up in this issue about her time at Heifer International in Arkansas! Welcome back Marcy, we missed you! We're also very excited about our new hire Kim, who will be starting May 4th. We'll include a bio on her in the next *Root*.

We've been doing a ton of seeding, planting and weeding, in addition to work on both tunnels: the old one and the recently relocated tunnel.



Alliums at Red Hill

Alliums in the field [photo above]—we've been planting a ton! Alliums include onions, scallions and leeks. We're also planting broccoli, kale, collards, lettuce, squash, tomatoes, & more!

We've still been chipping away at the baseboards, hipboards, and endwalls on the tunnel reconstruction [see right]. Much thanks to all the workshares, friends, fiancés, & husbands who



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have helped with that. A huge thanks to **Jim Kozub, our workshare [photo left]**, who has put in the most time on the tunnel and helped us immensely in the endwall construction.

This other photo [below] shows the tunnel that stayed put, now fully planted with onions, tomatoes, and lettuce. It looks gorgeous.



The Stay-Put Hoophouse!

I'm also thrilled about our new bean teepee! **Gerard, my husband**, helped me put up the frame this past weekend. And we have a school group from Rose Valley doing a science experiment with bean plants... on the 1st they'll be out to tell us the results and plant the beans around the teepee. Hopefully it will fill out and provide a nice shady hideaway for kids and adults alike! See photo of Gerard constructing the teepee [at left].



Guess that's about it for now. We look forward to the start of the CSA; we anticipate the first pick-up to be the first week in June. At that point, we'll start doing our weekly newsletters. Until then, please come join us at our first member event on May 16th! We look forward to seeing you all at the kick-off for the season!

Results of the Fall Member Survey

By Aby Wright



Results are in from the fall surveys!! We have tallied the totals and taken notes.

Survey says.....

The quantity of the produce is just enough, the variety is perfect and the quality is extremely fresh and clean. The share room is also organized and clean. Now we pat ourselves on the back for a job well done and call it a day. SIKE!

We bask in the appreciation of our members and use your positive feedback as fuel to keep our heads up and our hearts in the game. We charge on to make the farm even better this year!

Top three veggies: Tomatoes, Lettuce and Potatoes.

So.....we are planting more tomatoes this year and adding lots of new varieties, including more tasty heirlooms as promised. You will also see a custom blend of 8 lettuces grown as a spring mix along with your usual supply of heads throughout the season. And we also love those potatoes – but they aren't grown on our farm. We purchase them from local farms as a treat and will continue to include some during the fall shares.

Bottom three veggies: Kohlrabi, Chinese Cabbage, Bitter Greens

We have scaled back the amount of kohlrabi and chinese cabbage and we're only growing them in the fall when we feel they grow and taste better. We have also scaled back on the bitter greens, but we will continue to throw them into the mix because of their incredible health benefits. Lettuce tastes good and is mild, but it doesn't have a lot of nutritional value. We want our members to be healthy so we encourage you give them another try. Ask a farmer for ideas on how to prepare them in a tasty way.

When asked whether satisfied with each off-farm product, the majority said yes to individual items. The winners, with the most people answering that they were satisfied, were corn and sweet potatoes.

Many of the off-farm products are going to be coming from different farms this year, but we are sticking with our farmer, Amos Beiler, for the corn and sweet potatoes.

48 people said they'd be OK with the switch to a market type system for off-farm products. Only 9 said they'd prefer

it to stay the same.

We are making the switch so you will be able to purchase items in the share room on a weekly basis. Many members expressed concern over quantities running out before the end of the day. It may take us a few weeks to figure out exactly how much to order, but since we will be placing orders once a week we should be able to curb this from happening too frequently after an initial period. If all goes well we can start bringing in more products in the future. We had some great suggestions from members including: yogurt, soap, grains, honey, etc.

Lots of feedback for event ideas!!

Our kick-off event will be the Welcome Back picnic May 16th. We are also working on plans for two cooking demos and two movie nights during the season. Then we will end the season with our Harvest Fest as usual. Stay tuned for dates and more details. Casual, sporadic potlucks and hanging out at the farm can happen anytime. We welcome and recommend it!

Improvements for the farm:

Comments ranged from wanting garlic and parsnips to suggesting we weed more to having nametags at events. We have read them all and taken them in.

Thank you to all who took the time to fill out a survey last fall. We are always welcome to feedback during the season, but we use the surveys to shape how our next season will look. We've got some great plans for this one and can't wait to share it all with you! See you out there.....

Back Again

By Marcy Magness

Back to the farm! Yay! Smelling the earth, seeing the sky, listening to the purple martins sing, working with Aby and Mira, watching the transplants take root and grow, and awaiting the members' arrival, are just some of the reasons why it is good to be back at Red Hill Farm.

This past winter was an incredible one in Arkansas. While spending my time and energies (lots of them as a matter of a fact) helping out, I gained knowledge of various farm animals working on Heifer Ranch.

Heifer Ranch is part of a global hunger not-for-profit, Heifer International. The ranch exists solely as an educational facility. About 30,000 participants come thru the ranch each year to learn about Heifer, hunger, the

environment and sustainability.

Thing of it is, as a volunteer, I learned much more than I had expected. Along with gaining hands-on experience with farm animals, more importantly, I gained new knowledge of self and others while working diligently taking care of the livestock.



Marcy & friends at Heifer International

Participating in a week long 'birthing workshop' with Heifer recipients, was a privilege and a highlight of my winter. It was an incredible opportunity to see the sum of what Heifer International accomplishes in poverty situations [for more on Heifer's charity work, see [here](#)].

My passions for goats grew as I took an active part in caring for them daily. And a love for great Pyreneese dogs took me by surprise.....

Returning to the crazy face-paced east has been extremely challenging, but there are two things that make it all bearable ---- grandkids and Red Hill Farm. Look forward to seeing y'all in this spring and summer.

New Sprouts at Red Hill!

Farm members **Mia Painter and Ben Chandler** welcome their second "sprout," born 28 March at 3:17 am, at home, as planned; it went so well it was amazing! He is **Zachary Thomas Painter Chandler**, or Zac! [photo at left is Zac and brother Wes]



Lou and Regina Pavone, farm members since Red Hill's second year, have adopted a baby girl, **Sophia Jean Pavone**. Sophia was born on

11 March 2009, and *Lou and Regina brought her home just two days later, on 13 March 2009!* We are thrilled for both families, and look forward to seeing both new “sprouts” up and around the Farm this summer!
Congratulations to all!!!!

Other Member News

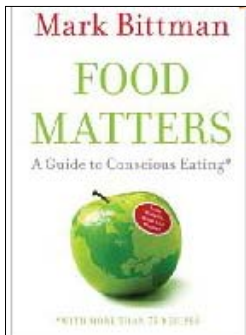
Farm member/filmmaker *Rich Hoffmann* has many irons in the fire, lots of possibilities (too many to mention here) for various awards and grants for his fabulous film work! In particular, his film *“Fridays at the Farm,”* about his family’s experiences at Red Hill Farm, has been picked up by Green Planet Films and will tour India later this year under the aegis of World Wildlife Fund!

We also plan to screen “Fridays at the Farm” this summer at Red Hill Farm! Stay tuned for details. For an excellent article on Rich’s work in *Mainline Today*, see [here!](#) For Rich’s website, click [here](#).

Tidbits—Food and Farming



Mark Bittman’s *Food Matters*—Mark Bittman, long-time foodie and cookbook author, has turned finally—as any thoughtful person will—to food politics. His new book *Food Matters; a Guide to Conscious Eating* (Simon & Schuster, 2009) incorporates recent research on the effects of overconsumption—especially of meats and junk food—on environmental and human health. Basically he argues that we eat uncritically, inattentive victims of government and lobbying policy, untruthful advertising and marketing, and insufficiently regulated food labeling. He runs through shocking statistics of the effects of this on environment and body, as well as the inefficacy of proposed solutions (e.g., if all farmers, world-wide, produced only pastured livestock, there wouldn’t be enough land—even if the world’s forests were razed!). Unlike other books, though, Bittman offers one workable solution: demand for meat and junk food **MUST** decline! He doesn’t advocate pure vegetarianism or veganism, but at least a major pull-back on amounts of such foods consumed. And he provides how-to’s and recipes! For a book review, see [here](#); for Bittman’s blog, [here](#).



Joel Salatin, “Lunatic Farmer”!—Joel Salatin [*left in photo w/ his son Daniel & porcine friends*] farms the old-fashioned way in middle Virginia. This makes him, he claims, a “proud lunatic” in a larger



industrial-agricultural world. He pastures his cows, puts chickens to forage fields where cows have just eaten (and deposited manure), and lets pigs eat in the woods or a pasture house, where they create compost that’s deposited back on the fields, completing the circle. This is the way most folks farmed a hundred years ago, but today, not so much. Salatin has authored 6 books on farming (as well as DVDs; see [here](#)) but was made famous in Michael Pollan’s 2006 book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*. Now Participant Media, the folks who financed Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth*, are making *a documentary featuring Salatin and other proud “lunatics” contrasted to large-scale industrial farms and CAFOs* (confinement & feeding operations). Called *Food, Inc.*, the film will be released 12th June. See [here](#) for an article on Salatin and his Polyface Farms, & [here](#) for a recent interview.

Mark Bittman’s *Whole Grains without Measuring*—6-8 cups. As Bittman says, a good way to eat more whole grains is always to have some on hand, and here’s a super-easy way to cook up a mess of any kind of grain!

- ❖ 2 cups brown rice (any size), or quinoa, barley (any type), oat groats, buckwheat groats, steel-cut oats, millet, cracked wheat, hominy, whole rye, farro, kamut, wild rice, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups wheat berries
- ❖ salt
- ❖ olive oil (optional)

Rinse grain in strainer; put in large pot w/ tight-fitting lid & a big pinch of salt. Add enough water to cover by 1 inch; if you want dryer grains, cover w/ $\frac{1}{2}$ " water. (Use 3 cups water for pearled barley.) Bring to boil & adjust heat to bubble gently. Cook, stirring a bit, till grain is tender. The time will vary from 7-8 min for steel-cut oats to an hour or more for some large whole grains like wheat berries. Add water as necessary to keep grains submerged, but as grain swells, add only enough water to keep grain from drying out & sticking. Test a grain for tenderness occasionally—they’re done when just barely tender, with a little “chew” to the texture. When done, if any water remains, drain grains & return to pot, cover, & remove

from heat. If no water remains when done, simply cover & remove from heat. They'll stay warm for ~20 min. Toss grain w/ oil if desired & refrigerate or freeze till ready to use.

What to do w/ cooked grains: When you add the oil,

- 1) also add cooked veggies of your preference, or...
- 2) add a couple spoonfuls of any sauce you like, homemade or bought, or...
- 3) add chopped fresh herbs, or...
- 4) add cooked beans, as much as you like, or...
- 5) add dried fruit and/or chopped nuts or seeds, or...
- 6) add cooked chopped sausage, bacon, ham, or any cooked meat or fish, or any combination of items 1 through 6. [source: Mark Bittman, *Food Matters*]

Provencal Vegetable Soup (Soupe au Pistou)—serves 6

- ❖ 1 large leek, white & pale green parts, washed & thinly sliced
- ❖ 1 celery rib, cut in ½" pieces
- ❖ 1 large carrot, cut in ½" pieces
- ❖ 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- ❖ 1 large sprig thyme
- ❖ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ ½ lb boiling potatoes, peeled & cut in ½" pieces
- ❖ ½ lb Swiss chard, stems cut in ½" pieces & leaves coarsely chopped
- ❖ 8 cups water
- ❖ 2 cups thawed, frozen edamame (fresh soybeans)
- ❖ ½ lb zucchini, cut in ½" pieces
- ❖ ¼ lb green beans, trimmed & cut in 1" pieces
- ❖ ¾ cup medium pasta shells

For pistou:

- ❖ 1 small tomato
- ❖ 1 cup packed basil leaves
- ❖ ½ cup packed flat-leaf parsley leaves
- ❖ 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ❖ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 cup coarsely grated Gruyère cheese



Cook leek, celery, carrot, garlic, & thyme sprig in oil w/ ½ tsp salt & ¼ tsp pepper in 5-6 qt heavy pot on medium heat, stirring a bit, till veggies brown & stick to pot, ~10-15 min. Add potatoes & chard stems w/ ½ tsp salt & cook, stirring a bit,

till they start to soften, ~5 min. Add water & bring to boil, stirring & scraping up brown bits. Stir in edamame, zucchini, green beans, pasta, chard leaves, & ¼ tsp salt &

simmer, uncovered, till pasta is *al dente* & veggies are tender, ~10 min. Discard thyme sprig. To make pistou: Heat dry small skillet (not nonstick) till hot, then char tomato on all sides. Core tomato, then purée w/ basil, parsley, & garlic in food processor. Add oil & cheese & blend well. Remove soup from heat & stir in half of pistou. Season w/ salt/pepper to taste. Serve soup w/ remaining pistou in separate dish. (*Gourmet*, May 09, photo by Romulo Yanes)

Mark Bittman's Bulgur Pilaf w/ Vermicelli, and Meat or Cauliflower—serves 4 (note small amount of meat [if included] per serving)

- ❖ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ ¼ - ½ lb ground lamb, beef, turkey, or chicken; **or** 1 small head cauliflower, cored & rough-chopped
- ❖ 1 lb any fresh mushrooms, sliced
- ❖ 2 medium or 1 large onion, chopped
- ❖ ½ cup vermicelli (preferably whole wheat), broken into 2" or shorter lengths, or other pasta
- ❖ 1 cup coarse- or medium-grind bulgur
- ❖ 1 tbsp tomato paste (optional)
- ❖ 2¼ cups veggie stock or water, heated to boiling point
- ❖ ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

Put oil in large pan that can later be covered & turn heat to medium. Add meat or cauliflower, sprinkle w/ salt/pepper, & cook, stirring a bit to break it up, till browned all over, ~10 min. Remove from pan & spoon off all but a couple tbsp fat. Put pan on medium-high heat. Add mushrooms & onions; cook, stirring, till everything is soft, ~5 min. Add vermicelli & bulgur & cook, stirring, till coated w/ oil. Return meat or cauliflower to pan and add all the remaining ingredients. Turn heat to low & cover. Cook for 10 min. Turn off heat & let mix sit for 15 min. more. Taste & adjust seasoning, fluff w/ fork, & serve, garnished w/ sprinkling of parsley. [Mark Bittman, *Food Matters*]

Linguine w/ Arugula, Pine Nuts, & Cheese

- ❖ 1 lb linguine
- ❖ ½ cup olive oil
- ❖ 4 oz arugula, trimmed
- ❖ 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ❖ ½ cup toasted pine nuts

Cook linguine in large pot till tender but firm to the bite. Heat oil in heavy skillet on medium heat. Add arugula & stir till just wilted, ~30 sec. Remove from heat. Drain pasta & return to pot. Add arugula & toss well. Add cheese, salt/pepper, & toss. Top w/ pine nuts. ([source](#))