



Strong Roots Healthy
Farming LLC
Newsletter
October 10, 2021



It's Been
Awhile...

I know I said I would try and get a newsletter out in September, but things just didn't quite work out the way we had hoped. Wishful thinking on my part! Moving all the stuff at the old farm has been quite the time hog, but we're finally outta there! Well...technically we still have to go back to get the fruit trees in December, but all our other responsibilities are done. We should be able to spend the majority of October working on the new farm. At the very least, the goals are to have the new greenhouse up, and plants in the ground. We have beets, onions, cilantro, lettuce, and fennel sitting on the porch just waiting to go in. But the greenhouse isn't our sole focus. We also have new animals to attend to, a commercial kitchen to build, oh yeah, and kids to parent occasionally. Life has just gotten crazier, and we couldn't love it more!

The Farm Plan

Although we will NOT be offering a fall CSA as originally planned, please note that we have the [website](#) update-to-date on Sunday mornings. We still have things like eggs, pickled beets, spicy salt, granola bars, and the latest and greatest items...apple sauce and apple pie filling. We inherited apples, so we went with it. 🍏



Books to Read

I've been doing a bit of reading on how I want to start building our new farm and commercial kitchen. I thought I would share:

- [The Garden Awakening](#) by Mary Reynolds
- [The Herbal Kitchen](#) by Kami McBride
- [Seriously Good Freezer Meals](#) by Karrie Truman



News on the Farm

It was pretty evident within the first two weeks of being on the farm that there was just no way I could hold another job and work the farm. Unfortunately, I had to put my two weeks in at the Extension office, so I could focus on everything that needed to be done around here. One of the things that got assigned to me was the morning animal chores. I get to feed and water them, collect the eggs, and move the chickshaw.



The Farm Plan



Since we finally have everything out of the old house, the plan is as follows:

1. Finish building the first greenhouse.
2. Plant
3. Work on taking out the cabinets and putting in all our new auction items (three-compartment sink, stove, kettle, hand sinks, etc.) in the commercial kitchen.
4. Start working on getting the kitchen certified.
5. Start marketing our product!
6. Build the second greenhouse.
7. Plant.
8. Look at possibly getting pigs.
9. NRCS funding for a third greenhouse.
10. Vineyard? Orchard?

Of course there are a million other steps in between all these larger goals, but that's the overview for you. **Our next CSA option will be available to purchase in February with a start date of April 1, 2022.**



That being said, I expect we'll start attending farmer's markets in December. I know that sounds crazy, but the show must go on if we want to keep the farm. Money is a rather important commodity these days which is why it's so important to get our commercial kitchen up and running. Canned goods adds a significant amount of income to our business. I know I mentioned this before in a previous newsletter, but since fruit is naturally acidic, a license is not needed. Foods with an acid level above 4.6 (which all fruits have) cannot harbor harmful foodborne bacteria.

Above all, the plan is to get our customers back, and start building a community again. We've missed you!

Books to Read

I love Mary Reynold's book, *The Garden Awakening*, because it discusses our relationship with our land. Just like anything else, it's important to listen, talk, and understand the beautiful creation underneath your feet. Centuries ago, it was so important to do things like mark your boundaries, create microorganisms in your soil, harvest the fall mushrooms, and provide places in your pastures for predators to hide. These were all things that were done to provide a symbiotic relationship with nature.



Josh may be the logical and practical one in the family, but I love the spiritual side of things, and I think our old farm was missing some of that, so...we walked the boundaries of our property, we ordered mushrooms to add to a few of our gardens, and we're trying to be more cognizant of the balance that each animal plays in nature. In Ireland, marking your boundaries was called "beating the boundaries" as it was done with a drum, but we used sticks. Mushrooms are the great communicator of the Earth. They actually listen to other plants to find out what they need and send their root systems to supply if for them. Fascinating! And some of the animals we see as predators actually have some benefit in helping us manage our crops (i.e. falcons also eat mice, voles, and even rabbits).



The other two books are an attempt to find meals that I can create for those of you who need a "healthy" meal on nights that you just don't have enough time to make them. At first I was going to do frozen meals, but I think that may defeat the purpose. I'm also encountering issues with vegetables becoming mushy, and ensuring the meals are free from unwanted air (hermetically sealing them). All in all, I'm still working on the trials. One thing is for sure...the meals will include lots of vegetables and herbs!

News on the Farm



It is so much fun to see the animals in the morning right before I feed them breakfast. I swear all of them are saying, "Me First, Me First!" in their own language. The goats were standoffish at first, but now they insist on their daily back scratching. Since she originally wanted nothing to do with us, we affectionately called the older goat, Maleficent (a.k.a Mally), and the little guy we named Diabol in turn. If any of you have seen the latest Maleficent movies with Angelina Jolie you'll understand. Diabol is Maleficent's crow, her faithful sidekick.

We haven't let the old ladies (a.k.a the guineas) out of their pen yet for a variety of reasons. (Josh swears they look like old ladies with too much makeup). In theory, they should traipse around the whole property and eat all those annoying grasshoppers jumping around, but Josh has been reluctant to let them out because he doesn't want a hawk to get them, and he doesn't want them to get lost. We're supposed to feed them at dusk, so that they understand when and where to come home, but we just haven't been brave enough to let them out yet. Really, we should, because they've outgrown their pen!



I forgot how much I miss cats! They meet me at the back door every morning. They sashay around my legs looking for both a good petting and some cat food. Those people who say cats are not social animals have simply not known the right cats!

Last, but certainly not least, the chickens are loving their new space. Our egg laying has multiplied, and they are constantly squawking up a storm.