

Dear Farm Friends,

A collection of letters to Cycle Farm Share Members
and a record of a season on the farm
from April to November, 2020



April 19

Good afternoon farm share members and happy snowy springtime,

We hope this email finds you well.

The tempo and activity level over the last month have been slowly increasing on the farm. The intermittent lovely days have been full of farm work and celebration of this change in season, and these snowy interludes have given us a chance to finish up some books and pots of tea before the season gets really busy. Yesterday we spent a few hours in the greenhouse planting this year's tomatoes into soil blocks; 25 varieties including six new-to-us varieties and, even more exciting, fifteen that are from our own saved seed from past years. Planting saved seed feels a bit like saying hello to a dear, though long absent friend, and what a lovely feeling, especially now. The greenhouse is filling up with seed trays; greens, lettuce, beets, peppers, eggplant, onions, leeks, shallots, herbs and flowers have all sprouted and are putting on good growth. The greenhouse beds are all planted with the first succession of the year – the earliest beds are greens that overwintered from plantings last fall, but most beds were seeded in early March. We also took some kale and Asian green starts outside yesterday to harden off before we transplant them in the next couple days. With this snow, they may be getting a better hardening off than they'd like. They will head out to the field to join some just sprouted radishes, arugula, spring turnips, and spinach. The earliest peas are planted but not yet sprouted and all ten varieties of garlic are up and not minding the snow.

Taking just a bit more attention than the little greens at this point are our young pasture management team. We have three 3-week-old bottle lambs. Emily, Oliver, and Budbill have spent most of their time in a cozy pen set up in the north bay of the garage. Yesterday was their first full day outside in a fenced yard area. We will start weaning them from their milkshakes at the beginning of May and they should be outdoors full time and on a grass and forb diet by the time we start planting out the summer crops. In addition to the very endearing lambs we have seventy-four 2-week-old chicks that will become our new laying flock. These little birds have recently grown into their motley, half-feathered, punk teenager phase which has helped temper our excessive cuteness consumption of late. These little ones are still five months away from laying, good thing Jeremy makes such a mean bowl of oatmeal.

The perennials around the farm are comforting us with their reliability and general good cheer. Crocuses and hyacinths are sharing their lovely fragrances. Daffodils are sending up their buds. The fruit trees and grapes are all pruned and ready to leaf out and blossom. Hops, raspberries, and asparagus seem to all be patiently waiting, probably something that we should be taking lessons in.

There were honeybees on the hyacinths yesterday and we've seen quite a bit of other invertebrate activity, notably a Comma Butterfly at the end of March! Jeremy saw the first garter snake on Friday, and the spring bird migration is still just barely noticeable, except for the grackles. Sandhill Cranes overhead and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in the spruce trees being the most attention grabbing (though Jeremy's attention seems to be grabbed by all the other birds as well). We know some of you will be keenly interested: the first turkey vulture of spring was spotted on March 28th.

And we are ready to start harvesting produce for you! Next Saturday, April 25th 9-noon, we will have the farm stand open for farm share members. While our volume is limited and to simplify the distribution, we are offering grab-and-go bags for pre-ordering. We are planning to include a ½ pound bag of mixed lettuce (\$5), 1 bunch scallions (\$1.50), 1 bunch cilantro (\$1.50), a 2 oz bag of pea shoots (\$2), and garlic (free!). The value of the total is \$10 – you've already paid, which makes this so easy, thank you! The garlic is the last of our 2019 harvest, it's kept well and only is now starting to sprout. It's still firm and delicious and it's good medicine. And garlic is so easy to use during these times of social distancing. Please let us know by Thursday night (4/23) if you would like one of these grab-and-go bags next Saturday (4/25). Any extra produce after packing the pre-ordered bags will be available at the farm stand on Saturday to add-on. We will have garlic powder, and herbal tea blends at the farm stand as well.

We do still have a few farm shares available as well as more reduced cost (Double Dollar) shares. If someone you know might be interested, please help us spread the word.

And lastly, we have been trying to stay current on the news and the COVID-19 situation and have joined several small farm-focused COVID-19 webinars. We plan to have the farm stand set-up to facilitate social distancing and customer safety. If you would like curbside pick-up or have other requests, please let us know and we will try to accommodate. On a related note, Trish has been sewing cotton masks for hospital health care workers, local farmers, and community members, and we have a handful of extra masks we'd love to share, if you need one just let us know.

Thank you all for your interest in local agriculture and for supporting our small farm. We feel honored to be growing produce for you and your families. As always, please let us know if you have questions or comments for us over this upcoming year.

We are wishing you all health, safety, and some comfort, as so much in the world right now seems uncertain and stressful. We hope you are able to take some time and be outside today, let those snowflakes kiss your face.

Warmly and with gratitude,
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

PS. So many of our farm friends are curious, creative, and imaginative young peoples (and young at heart peoples too!). We recently found this awesome wee (it's Irish) work book that delighted us enough that we thought we'd pass it along to you all. PDF - <https://cbi-anpost.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ImagineNation.pdf> or for individual pages the website <https://childrensbooksireland.ie/resources/imaginestation/>

April 30

Hello Friends,

This week we are putting together grab and go bags for \$350 and \$500 share members who are interested. We are planning to include a bag of lettuce (tender spring lettuce, very different than last week's greens), scallions, cilantro, pea shoots, and your choice of either a bag of arugula or spinach.

We are sorry about this short notice, please let us know by 9 AM Friday/tomorrow morning if you would like one of these bags. We will price the grab and go bag according to the volume of greens (probably 1/2 lb lettuce and 1/4 lb arugula or spinach) that are actually included, probably in the \$10-12 range.

We'll have pre-ordered bags available for pick up at the farm stand on Saturday (5/2) morning from 9:00AM to noon.

Thank you all and Happy May (eep! already!?),
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

April 30

Good Morning Farm Share Members,

Wow, all the assorted spring gears have shifted into their familiar quick and ever quickening pace. So many things coming to life. It has been busy around here; we've been weeding, prepping and planting (transplanted beets! greens! and flowers!) more beds, seeding more flats in the greenhouse, tending to rapidly growing chicks and lambs, and getting our irrigation set up and ready for the year.

The harvest this week is looking like it will be a pretty small one (we pulled out all of the overwintered crops last week, this will be the first harvest off of our earliest spring plantings). We have not tried this before, but this week we are going to send out another email to those of you that signed up for the \$350 and \$500 share options with a similar grab-and-go to last week. For those of you with the \$250 shares, please be patient, there are plenty of vegetables on their way. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions, we are trying out new things this season in response to COVID-19 and we are open to hearing any input.

Thank you - we hope you've all had a chance to enjoy the sunshine this week.
With sunkissed forearms and wind tussled hair,
Trish and Jeremy

May 8

Hello Farm Friends,

We hope this note finds you doing well! We've had another busy and productive week on the farm, no breaks! no brakes! Our first batch of chickens (new layers) we shuttled outside over the weekend and we have the brooder all cleaned up and ready for the next batch (broilers) that arrived this morning. We unloaded 2 tons of chicken feed into rodent proof bins and bags for our laying flock and for two batches of pastured meat birds this summer. This was done with five gallon buckets and pauses for back stretching. The lambs have been spending most nights outside and are we are just about to start weaning them, you should be able to hear their anguished and fervent demands for more milk from most locations in the Northern Hills. Crops that we have transplanted or direct seeded seem to be growing well. Flea beetles have found the arugula, but it should be big enough to survive their nibbling, although when we start harvesting the outside plantings in a few weeks it will have some holes. We put up the shade cloth on the greenhouse and have moved our field tunnels (with many thanks to friends, Marci and Dan) to their new locations as well as spread out a tarp (occultation, we have mixed feelings about this and are trying to sort these out) to prepare a new area for crops this fall. Ginger has been transplanted into the greenhouse. Parsnips, radishes, more peas, carrots, more lettuce, more beets, Swiss chard, and basil were all seeded this week as well. We've been moving flats of starts out of the greenhouse to harden off and make room for the newly seeded trays. And subsequently rushing to cover/and uncover said flats with these dips in night time temperatures. Spring time feels a lot like a juggling act around here.

The spring bird migration seems to have suddenly just reached Spearfish en masse, a flycatcher yesterday and wrens, warblers, cowbirds, kinglets, swifts, swallows, and so many sparrows (chipping, Brewer's, clay-colored, field, vesper, white-crowned, song, Lincoln's and a pair of towhees) earlier in the week.

This week we are planning to open the farm stand up in a similar to our traditional market. However, instead of having the stand open to come into, we will have a list of what is available on a chalk board at the counter, give us your order, and we will put together bags for you. It is still early spring (see attached photo of the greenhouse where almost everything is being harvested from) and we may ask that you limit to just two bags of greens for this week, so that we can make sure that everyone has access to some of the higher demand crops.

This morning's harvest list includes lettuce, arugula, spinach, rhubarb, scallions, green garlic, and some great fresh herbs - thyme and chives, lovage, tarragon, cutting celery. We'll also have farm fresh flowers (Mother's Day! everyday!) to pick from at the farm stand in the morning as well. If you would like a bag put together for quick curbside pick-up, please let us know by tonight and we will try to accommodate. Also, lastly, the apple tree by the farm stand is in full bloom and is absolutely spectacular.

All the best,
we'll see you tomorrow,
Trish and Jeremy

May 15

Hello Farm Friends,

OooOo!, with so much good rain these past few days, our soil feels incredible, earthworms all seem exuberantly happy, *and* we have had to rearrange our plans a bit. We got about three quarters of our potatoes planted on Tuesday evening just in time for a good soaking from the skies. Our most recent rain gauge broke a few years ago and since then we have been using a five-gallon bucket set out in the field instead. However, this week all our buckets are in use in the pack shed or greenhouse, so we aren't quite sure what the rain numbers have been, just that it feels good and looks green.

Sometimes, when we are weeding, we make piles of pulled weeds in the walkways between beds to come back to later to remove/bring to the chickens. Our night crawlers seem to delight in finding these piles of fresh weeds and pulling them, bit by bit, down into their burrows and middens, effectively replanting them. (We've gone out with headlamps at night and watched them do this. Their bodies reach up from a hole in the ground and their mouth pinches around the bindweed (straw, grass, etc) – not unlike an elephant reaching out for a peanut from your hand. And they slowly drag the debris back to their hole and down into the tunnel with them. Little stinkers. And SO COOL.) The weeds are much easier to pull the second time.

Last Saturday, after our windy and cold farm stand market, we went out to the field and found that our recently and intentionally moved (but not yet anchored) tunnel had moved -unintentionally - about 25 feet east of where it had been. It sailed with the wind. After much frustration and grumbles, heavy lifting, heavy dropping, and a reminder that “operational tempo should not exceed conversational tempo”, we were able to move it back to where it belongs this summer and now have it well secured.

We have potted up more herbs and flowers and will harden off a dozen flats of greens for planting early next week. Jeremy found what we think is an egg sac from a black and yellow garden spider. The sac is tan, papery and a little over a half inch in diameter. And, possibly the most noteworthy of the week's farm activities: Jeremy delivered 30 pounds of rhubarb to Leones' Creamery for their springtime rhubarb ice cream, one of Spearfish's finest gastronomical delights. Ready your waffle cones, friends – it should be on the flavor board soon. Be sure to swing in and tell them thank you for supporting local farmers!

As regards the little fuzzy and feathered ones: the new chicks are figuring out their space, getting increasingly active, increasingly loud, and growing in their wing feathers in earnest. The layer chicks have figured out that when the lambs start baaaAAHing it means one of us is walking by, and they all come running and flapping (all 75 of them!), hoping we have chicken feed for them. The lambs are just wonderful.

Jeremy confidently identified his first swallow on the farm, a male barn swallow swooped over the orchard while he was checking on the trees. And we wrapped up and shared our 2019 bird summary ([here's a link if you are interested!](#)). The apple tree at the farm stand both looks and smells amazing AND you can hear the buzzing of honeybees, bumblebees, and other native pollinators from over 30' away.

We will have the farm stand market open on Saturday morning, similar to last week, with a chalk board of what we have available. This morning we are planning to harvest; lettuce, spinach, arugula, an Asian green mix, scallions, green garlic, rhubarb, herbs, pea shoots, and we should have a few bouquets of flowers as well. If you would prefer a pre-assembled grab-and-go bag for quick pick-up, let us know by this evening and we will try to accommodate. Depending on how harvest goes, we may ask that you try to limit greens to two bags. Lastly, we would appreciate if everyone coming to the farm stand would please wear a mask. For yet *more* rainy day reading [here is a link to a blog post about masks](#) and how we are working to keep our community safe and healthy.

Goodness, what a whirlwind.
All the best,

Trish and Jeremy

May 21

Hello Farm Friends,

Mid-May mayhem. We have fully entered the familiar yet uncomfortable part of spring where our to-do-list is increasing at double the rate of our done-list, which is daunting based on how busy this week has been.

The pea trellis for snap and snow peas are up, which adds a whole new dimension to the field - a z-axis! Transplants are still making their way out to the field including a side-by-side comparison of 2016 and 2019 lots of our Cycle Farm kale breeding project. A few more beds have been weeded and are ready for crops as well, and in doing so, Jeremy's hands have completed their annual transition to 80-grit sandpaper. And Trish harvested and is drying the first cutting of stinging nettles for our tea blends

The lambs have been weaned off their milkshakes, they are now on a 100% grazing diet. They would no doubt be a bit more disappointed in this, however we planted a cover crop of hairy vetch and rye last fall that we are letting the lambs into to munch on these past few days. Pretty exciting - this is our first go with grazing livestock on a planned cover crop. With no more guidance than an open gate, they are doing exactly what they are supposed to do. Brilliant. Some of our young layers have decided that the best spot to roost in the evening is tucked as deeply as possible into our spruce trees, which makes it tricky and prickly (and all the more rewarding) to find them to get them into their tractor for the night.

On the farm we have no shortage of house sparrows and garter snakes, but curiously we had never seen them interacting until yesterday morning when Trish peeked into the old unused chicken coop and saw a garter snake about halfway through the process of swallowing a fledgling sparrow. (!) Better this than the other way around.

Butterflies and day-flying moths came in along with the warm weather, and a male Baltimore Oriole and Western Tanager as well. Along this Rainbow Brite bird theme, we have had a charm of goldfinches eating dandelion seed heads. Do you suppose this must be kin to flamingos being colored pink by their shrimp heavy diet? (; AND the first bats of the season swooped overhead on Tuesday night, low circles around the Ponderosa pine in our front yard.

On Monday evening, we sprayed Biodynamic preparation 500, this was a late afternoon meditation and walk-about the farm with a special focus on leafy green solar panels collecting energy from the sun, exuding sugars into the soil, and feeding our soil microbes to help us grow good, healthy food. Jeremy and his father, David, were working on a construction project over these past couple days in the pack shed. We now have a big, empty, sparkly new wall. A potential location for a mural - we are accepting any and all ideas. (fyi octopus is off the list, we already have the [world's most amazing octopus](#)).

And, lastly, we took the good farm dog to the creek while the temperature was in the mid 80's for a swim to our favorite spot for a dunk in. Certainly refreshing, and the highlight was that she actually got in and swam a bit with us. She's not a swimmer. But maybe we all make a few exceptions on the first 80 degree day of the year.

This week we are planning to harvest; lettuce, arugula (from the field, not greenhouse), spinach, Asian green mix, scallions, rhubarb, thyme, oregano, chives, tarragon, celery, lovage, and pea shoots. And as a reminder we have garlic and garlic scape powder as well as an assortment of loose leaf teas at the farm stand. Let us know if you would like a grab and go bag pre-assembled for quick pick-up and we will try to accommodate.

Thanks so much!

All the best,

Your farmers,

Jeremy and Trish

May 28

Dear Farm Friends,

It feels hard to describe the week when it has been a bumble bee journey from task to task to back field to packshed to front field, zigzagging in all directions. Here are a few highlights of the week.

Jeremy has been spending early mornings scything around the house and on the path along the south edge of the field. This has provided us with both breathing room *and* hay for supplementing the lambs grazing later this fall when the grass quality declines. We've never tried to dry and store our scythe-cuttings for feed, hopefully we don't create either a moldy or flaming mess.

Trish has been transplanting while Jeremy is mowing. Broccoli, kohlrabi, cabbage, onions, more lettuce, and chard all made it into the field earlier this week, and we have more flats hardening off to go out this weekend, hopefully including the first tomato transplants. Part of this spring's transplanting tasks include amending a mistake we made late last summer. Imagine, if you will, a late summer day, lots of things happening, and maybe we're frazzled as per usual, the nettle patch has gone to seed and we only just notice in the nick of time. We cut off all the seed heads before they escaped into an out of control mess - for us and our neighbors. And in a moment of what we now recognize as collective idiocy, we decided that the best spot for them was into the vermicompost bin. At the time, this seemed to make a whole lot of sense - you give the worms waste and they turn it into magic. However, this did not seem to do anything to reduce the seed's germination as we discovered this spring when using the worm castings as an ingredient in our soil block mix. Now almost every one of our seed flats requires a patient weeding out of tiny nettle seedlings.

Right after the farm stand last Saturday we headed to the back field to roll up one of our occultation tarps before the rain. We have now rolled this tarp out in the front field up by the farm stand where it will hopefully shade out the smooth brome and other grasses that are in the middle of that field since we will not have a chance to pull these rhizomes by hand. When you swing by the farm stand, you'll see an ugly, but very helpful sheet of black plastic that may inadvertently create some amazing habitat for aquatic invertebrates; this will probably be a great summer for dragonfly watching at the farm stand.

We were also able to successfully relocate two rabbits from our back field. Bunbuns and Lady Bunbuns are off to feast at greener pastures on the south side of town.

We've been eating a lot of great, fresh green salads these days and hope you are too. One of our favorites has been using the stir-fry greens, chopped into thin strips and topped with scallions, pea shoots, dulse, and a toasted sesame oil vinaigrette. We had a chunk of tofu in the fridge so that was fried up and put on there, but you could dress it up with grilled chicken or pork, mushrooms, noodles, you name it. Also, if you feel like greens are accumulating in the fridge, please check out this link to a recipe for [fried green meatlessballs](#).

This week at the farm stand we plan to have: spinach, lettuce, stir-fry mix, bok choy, scallions, rhubarb and radishes, celery, thyme, oregano, mint, chives, tarragon, and lovage, We will also have some arugula from the field that is perforated by flea beetles, still delicious just not as pretty as the greenhouse arugula was. Let us know if you would like a grab and go bag put together and we will try to accommodate.

And lastly, we put together a montage of May farm photos [here](#). We are truly missing having time and connecting with you all and we're hoping that through these updates you are still able to feel connected to where your food is coming from.

All the best,
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

P.S. Big thanks to the mystery baker that dropped off a bag of cookies on our front porch on Tuesday. They were savored.*

*that is to say - inhaled with gratitude.

June 4

Hello Farm Friends,

This isn't how we had been planning to start this email, but this evening's hail was one of the more substantial events on the farm this week. The animals are all fine, chickens found cover on their own and we tucked the lambs into the old chicken coop for the duration of the storm. The crops are in varying degrees of ok. Most are young enough that they should recover well (hail even gives a little pulse of plant soluble atmospheric nitrogen to help with the recovery). Some of the greens we were getting ready to pull out this weekend after harvest, and plant summer crops in their place, we'll do this anyway, just without the harvest part. The garlic was probably impacted the most, the bulbs are just initiating their swelling so we may see a reduction in head size from all of the lost leaves. We had a number of garlic snapped off at the ground or partway up, these may get salvaged/harvested early as green garlic. The scapes have not started forming yet, so hopefully there will still be a good crop of those in a couple of weeks. We haven't done a thorough check on the buildings or young orchard yet. Putting new plastic on one of the field tunnels has been on our to-do list for the last two weeks, at least in this regard, we are quite grateful for our chronic inefficiency.

Aside from tonight's storm this week has been good and productive. We have been making good use of the early mornings before temperatures get warm. Jeremy has been scything most days, however the rain (which we are delighted by) the last three days has made the hay making difficult. Trish has been either weeding or transplanting, this morning another row of slicer tomatoes (varieties Italian Heirloom, Pale Perfect Purple, Trucker's Favorite, Chocolate Stripe, and Piroka) went into the ground and look like they are mostly still there. We also transplanted more onions, shallots, leeks, lettuce, cabbage, beets and finished planting the last of our potatoes. The leek transplanting in particular was the smoothest and most pleasant experience we have ever had with that crop (they get planted super deep and tend to be a hassle/pain in the ass), we are looking forward to fall souping weather.

The young birds in the brooder will be headed out to pasture after the farm stand on Saturday, they seem eager for fresh grass and bugs. The lambs and chickens have grazed down the cover crop and now we are doing a final weeding and hope to have it planted to corn (flour), beans (dry) and squash (winter) this weekend. We are going to try to plant these in a similar method to that described by Buffalo Bird Woman about traditional Hidatsa agriculture along the Missouri.

What we had thought would be the highlight for the week is that yesterday we saw a hummingbird. A HUMMINGBIRD! We have only seen these guys in late summer as they are headed back south. What a treat. She was visiting the bleeding heart, alliums and Scarlet Dropmore honeysuckle. The farm has been busy with flying invertebrates as well, the bumblebees are all over the scallion flowers, we saw our first dragonfly and damselfly of the season, and the butterflies (at least 12 species) are everywhere. Maybe related to the abundant pollinators, this week we made a list of the plants on the farm that had flowered by May 31st, there are over 65 species of trees, herbaceous perennials, crops and weeds that we know of. Holy Nectary!

Usually we try to avoid working on major construction projects during late spring when there is also all sorts of planting and weeding to do, however a few days this week Jeremy's father, David, has been out to run new plumbing for our packshed. As of 7:30 this evening we have running water to the faucet in our produce wash sink and hand washing sink too, And yes that time frame does mean that Dave was soldering copper pipe at the same time as our rhubarb (and garlic and mustard greens...) was being juiced by sky ice. (Thank you, David!) Tomorrow's produce washing should be so lovely.

And speaking of tomorrow's harvest, it will be a bit sparser than anticipated, but we should still have; lettuce, pea shoots, radishes, scallions, bok choy, cilantro, mint, oregano, tarragon. and maybe some garlic greens and maybe some rhubarb. Again let us know if we can put together a grab and go bag for you for quick pick-up - we will try our best to accommodate.

Lastly, in light of recent events around the country, this weekend at the farm stand we are collecting donations for the [American Civil Liberties Union](#). We are matching up to \$100 in direct donations.

We hope you all are doing well, undamaged, safe, healthy, and eating well,

Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

June 11

Dear Farm friends,

We hope this note finds you, like us, with wind-swept hair, sun-kissed cheeks, and big smiles.

On the farm this week: The young Freedom Rangers (meat birds) have been moved out to their tractor in the orchard where they are eating grass and bugs and fertilizing the pasture for future growth, and (hopefully) setting back the brome to allow for a more healthy diversity of plants – generally doing exactly as they should. What usually takes us several hours and 5-6 trips with crates and a wheelbarrow, took only two trips with a large dog kennel and the garden cart – our method for moving the birds back to the pasture area is now just as gentle on the birds and about a billion times less stressful for the farmers.

The not-yet-laying flock has outgrown their tractor and have begun roosting in the evening ON TOP of their tractor. They are also spending more time up and on the lambs, which might sound pretty darling except that Emily's patience for this is DONE. She will go after and nip at the birds – she's even pulled feathers (!). It may be time to separate the flocks.

And this morning we welcomed our second (and last) batch of freedom rangers to the farm. Such adorable little fluff balls.

We got another 13 beds planted and a good amount of weeding done this week. This is HUGE for us (all hand work – compost shoveling, mulch spreading, transplanting, rhizome pulling) and would have us feeling pretty damn pleased with ourselves, if it weren't for all the rest of everything that still needs to get done. This year we have two different three sisters gardens planted – it has been a couple years since we've planted corn, beans, and squash together and it feels really good to have these in the ground, many of these are with seeds we've been growing on the farm for several years, and some seeds shared from farmer friends. We were able to plug in replacements for a number of the tomato plants we lost in last week's hail storm. This adds some complexity to our planting map and seed saving record keeping, but what's a little more complexity? There are a few different types of peppers we're excited to be trying out this year (ie Stocky Golden Roaster and Gabi Hot Wax) and, of course, some familiar favorites (ie Chimayo and Hot Portugal). We lost a whole bed of spinach and all of our stir fry greens in the storm, so these next couple weeks will be scant on our diversity of greens. We will have plenty of lettuce this week though – it was safe in the greenhouse.

Both snap peas and snow peas have started flowering. We thought these might have been set back by the hail (they LOOK set back, that's for sure), but maybe the storm just triggered a carpe diem sentiment* in those tender, resilient little tendrils.

Yesterday we were able to pick up a full truck load of horse manure from our neighbor, which we unloaded in lasagna layers with our own compost as we flipped it. And, related, the pack shed [hand washing sink is getting much attention](#).

And, friends, we would like to share a very sincere apology for the state of affairs around the farm stand. It's a jungley weedy mess; we know. Trish has some very strong, very colorful words to describe this mess, but it would be inappropriate to share here, especially as her mother-in-law is on this email BCC list. It appears as though all the beautiful self-seeding flowers we originally planted neatly under the apple tree have escaped the flower bed and decided to take over the walkway and parking area. Along with a whole lot of accomplice weeds. Tending to this is on our list. We hope to get the farm stand cleaned up and sparkly soon. Just as soon as we get the greenhouse empty of transplants.

This week we plan to harvest; lettuce, radishes, scallions, green garlic, herbs (we'll have thyme, oregano, chives, tarragon, mint; no cilantro or basil this week) and pea shoots. And as per usual, let us know by Friday evening if we can put together a grab and go bag for you.

Depending on how quickly the peas set fruit and the state of the field lettuce the next two week's selection will be pretty slim. We will keep you informed on how things are growing and going. And, we are planning on sending out account balance updates next week, and if you are ever curious just ask at the stand and we can let you know.

Masked smiles,
Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

*for our own bit of carpe diem, we took a hint from our three-year-old neighbor that the kite flying conditions on Sunday morning were quite acceptable.

June 18

Hello Farm Friends,

As summer solstice approaches the tasks on the farm are starting to shift. We are getting close to having our spring plantings complete, we still have a bunch of flowers, a few more tomatoes, green beans, and another try at carrots to get in the ground. As most of the field is planted we find ourselves spending more time moving on hands and knees weeding down the rows. The first pass of weeding is certainly the most time consuming, we have a lot of oat seed coming up from our straw mulch this year, but once it is pulled up and the crops grow a little, the mulch should minimize future weedings. So far the trickiest/most frustrating part has been attending to the leeks rows where the main weeds are 1. bind weed (pull that out and the leeks come out too) and 2. oats (which look 99.98% just like the leeks). The summer solstice is also about the time when we start into more earnest harvesting and drying of herbs for tea blends and spice mixes. We have a big harvest of chocolate mint drying currently as well as some chamomile and arnica. This week we also processed a fresh batch of garlic powder with the very last of last year's garlic heads - it's delicious - we should have this available at the farmstand shortly.

We've found some good opportunities for listening to podcasts and interviews while weeding during the day, and have been enjoying the thoughtful reflections and challenging conversations sparked by trying to comprehend some of what is happening around the country and world.

Along with BunBuns and all his extended and ever extending family, we are dealing with a few insect pests. Our main concerns right now are a large group of grey blister beetles that have found our fava beans and eaten about 2/3rds of the leaves, and, in the greenhouse, roly polys (that's right, cute little doodle bugs) have been munching on the recently transplanted eggplant. Trish sprinkled both the fava and eggplants with some diatomaceous earth to help protect them. Diatomaceous earth is a finely ground limestone that is microscopically quite sharp. This powder cuts up the exoskeletons of invertebrates and they desiccate. (eep!) It is effective, but also non-discriminatory, it will get spiders, beetles, lacewings or any other beneficials that

also happen to encounter it. So we use it with deliberation and only as a last resort to protect some crops - in general, we would rather lose a crop than harm our invertebrate neighbors.

Speaking of invertebrates, we saw two new types of spiders in the field this week. And EVEN MORE EXCITING than the hummingbird last week is that Sunday evening we saw our first fireflies on the farm. Trish grew up in Eastern Pennsylvania and has many fond memories of lightning bugs, it was such a treat to see them here.

Jeremy is a compulsive list maker and nearly every surface in the house has a scrap of paper with some sort of list on it. Most are to-do lists, written to be checked off, completed. There are some however that exist to be added to, including a new one for us this year, a list of flowering plants on the farm, loosely lumped by the date of first flowering (we mentioned this in our email a couple weeks ago). Last weekend the list passed 100 species that we have noticed in flower on the farm so far this season. That's a whole lot of food for bees, et al.!

As the field is still recovering from the hail, there are not a lot of leafy green crops to harvest this week, we plan on having; pea shoots, radishes, rhubarb, the first GARLIC SCAPES of the season (recipe ideas [here](#)), and a number of fresh herbs including thyme, tarragon, chives, oregano, mint, dill weed, and a few bunches of parsley and basil. Let us know if we can put together a grab and go bag for you for quick pick-up - we will try our best to accommodate.

We should have lettuce again next week; scallions will be a while before they return.

And lastly, all three batches of chickens and the three sheep seem to be doing quite well. We've figured out a way to distinguish the young layers from the younger birds from the, now, youngest ones: "June" are the week-old birds, "May" are out in the orchard in the chicken tractor, and "April" are the not-quite-yet-layers that free range in the grapes and spruce trees. We should have regular crowing by next week from April.

Happy Summer!
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

June 25

Happy Summer, farm friends!

With these long days, we are getting out into the field early in the day and back in usually just after sunset, with a good lunch break in the shade midday. This week's morning weeding chores have seen vast improvements in quality, quantity, and FHI (farmer happiness index) as our friend Tom has been out to join us. Tom has helped out on the farm during the summer for the last two years and we are mighty grateful to be seeing his mask-covered face again this year. Along with getting loads of work done, we also enjoy Tom's company for the wide ranging conversations that help keep us from rooting too comfortably under this rock; everything from economic and political theory, foreign language, biodynamic agriculture, invertebrate ID, and modern technology (Jeremy has finally learned what Reddit is).

In addition to trying to keep up on the weeding, we cleaned up the hail damage in the rhubarb patch. The rhubarb is right along our central walkway, so having this cleaned up, all the broken, junky rotting leaves and stems hauled out, is a significant spirit lifter. We planted out a big (huge!) block of cut flowers - zinnias, cosmos, snapdragons, flamingo feathers, gladiolus and dahlias. This coincided with Trish learning a new word, "coruscate," which she is taking every opportunity to use whether it is appropriate or not. In addition to flowers, we transplanted out several more perennial and a few annual herbs for drying into herb blends and teas.

The lambs have been enjoying the incremental shift in their fenceline and access to new forage. Oliver has devoted considerable time to her bipedal practice in order to reach branches of chokecherry, grapes, and wild

plums. It seems Jeremy is not the only one with circus inclinations around here. The roosters of the April flock (the young layers) have started crowing, real legitimate crows, but not quite yet at full volume. No one is laying just yet, but construction on their coop-cabana is almost finished and the nesting boxes will certainly send some hints.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: garlic scapes, kale, the very first harvest of snow and snap peas(!), a return of lettuce(!), bunches of dill, other herbs (tarragon, oregano, thyme), and pea shoots. There is also a fresh batch of garlic powder processed and packaged and ready for you. Let us know if you would like a grab and go bag and we will try to accommodate.

Two final things!

One. How are things going? We regret that with the way the farmstand is set up this season and the precautions in place, we are not getting a chance to visit and connect with our share members as we have in previous years. At a very personal, very selfish level, we miss you. We miss hugs and seeing our favorite four year old and reading butterfly books together, catching up on your fun summer adventures and delicious meals you've made recently. And from another level entirely, we miss hearing feedback from you about how the share is working, how's the quality of the produce? are things keeping well? is pick-up at the farmstand working for you? what could make things better?

and Two. A Covid update from the farm. We very much appreciate all of your continued mask wearing and physical distancing at the farm stand, everyone has been so kind and courteous and patient - with each other *and* us - thank you for this. Although Spearfish is opening up and, in many ways, returning to business-as-usual, we have still been minimizing our off-farm trips and have been strict about mask wearing and physical distancing when out. We are continuing to practice utmost care with farm food safety, at this point we are doing all the harvest, wash and pack ourselves. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns at all, any suggestions or comments, anything. And we will keep you updated.

All the very best,
Trish and Jeremy

July 2

Greetings Farm Friends,

We hope this note finds you well and getting ready for a festive and safe holiday weekend. We will have the farm stand open at our usual time, Saturday morning 9-12. Most importantly, most appropriately, this week: our two plantings of corn (Cascade Ruby-Gold and Taos Blue, both flour corn, not sweet) are not quite to knee high yet but solidly at upper-calf and reaching. We had hail on Sunday night, the second biggest (after last month) that we've ever seen, but it was sparse enough that it didn't shorten the corn much at all. We planted another succession of scallions, seeded some of our fall brassicas into soil blocks, and another planting of carrots into the field. We are still getting some of the last of our spring transplants out into the field as well, mostly flowers at this point, but we did find room for some more tomatoes and peppers too. We were able to fill in gaps in our three sisters field with cleome, the quiet fourth sister - <https://tobyhemeway.com/resources/the-three-sisters-or-is-it-four/>.

Our drying racks are loaded and the dehydrator has been running near non-stop during the day (Solar powered!) with herbs for dried herb blends and teas.

The list of blooms on the farm is now over 150 species, we've recently been adding about twenty new flowering plant species a week. Our kitchen table is covered in small bouquets and bowls of flowers drying... well... and it also has a sewing machine, art supplies, a kite, unread newspapers, about a dozen reference books, a pile of scraps of paper with important notes, and a clear corner where we sit to eat delicious meals together. And most routinely these days, with all the firework hullabaloo, Radish is cowering beneath the table.

Right now one of the ingredients that is finding its way into almost every meal is garlic scapes. For those of you unfamiliar with this wily vegetable, the scape is the immature flower stalk from a hardneck garlic plant. It comes up curly and wily and wonderful, and as the plant matures, the scape will unwind and stand tall and form flowering bulbils. We harvest the scapes before they mature, while they are tender - they are slightly sweet, and more mild than clove garlic. For cooking ideas for these seasonal treats check our farm recipe page [here](#). Jeremy delivered a bunch of scapes to our friends up at Dough Trader Pizza, so keep your eyes out for something special.

The animals are handling the heat well but are certainly more comfortable on the cool days, just like the peas and lettuce. The May and June flocks (the youngest birds) are ready for a bit more space which means building another chicken tractor. Which will happen as soon as we finish the new coop for the laying hens - the coop is still under construction in our driveway. Hopefully this weekend we will have it all put together and in use, though we may need to call in some neighboring assistance in hauling the thing out to the field from the driveway (it's heaaavvvvy).

And! we were invited to help with a food celebration project with Sicangu Community Development Corporation's Food Sovereignty Initiative and Dakota Rural Action. It's an exciting, socially distanced idea bringing people together in thoughtful conversation and wild-eyed enthusiasm around local foods and cultivating a South Dakota regional food system and we are looking forward to seeing how it develops.

At the farm stand this week we plan on having: lettuce, kale, the first Swiss Chard, some Stir-fry mix, garlic scapes, snow peas, snap peas, the first beets, rhubarb, tarragon, mint, basil, oregano, thyme, and sage - we've got garlic powder too. Let us know if you would like a grab and go bag put together and we will try to accommodate. And we realize that there are a lot of events happening in the area this upcoming Saturday morning, if you're unable to make it to the stand between 9 and noon, let us know and we can try to find a time that works to get you vegetables.

Happy Interdependence Day, stay safe and hydrated!
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

July 9

Hello Farm Friends,

Hooray for long days and shade trees!

We have something very super-special for you all - the very first (maybe very only) filmed tour montage of the farm, made especially for YOU this very evening. We most sincerely hope it doesn't cause too much motion sickness, but, rather, gratitude that we are not trying to make it in the public speaking or entertainment fields. Here is a link to our evening field walk, <https://youtu.be/-9CLr4QeFul>, At the very least, please just skip ahead to the end for some awfully adorable lamb footage. In assembling this, I realized just how much we missed - the flowers! the little baby chickens! the kale and parsley!!! (; So, if there is interest, maybe we'll put together part two.

On the farm this week:

With help from our friend Tom and some burlier-than-they-appear cart wheels, we were able to roll/lug the new (and finally finished!) chicken coop out to the back run area. The chickens are needing a little coercion, but we have confidence they will take to it in short order. The chickens will still be day ranging in their run, but the mobile coop will allow us to focus the impact of the birds in different areas around the farm, better harnessing their beneficial scratching and eating and pooping efforts.

Trellising is up on the tomatoes and they've started setting fruit. The eggplant and peppers will surely take notice and follow suit. In reality, it may be a while, these poor plants suffered transplant shock something fierce.

We have carrots! Well, that is to say it looks like we WILL HAVE carrots. After several unsuccessful plantings this spring, we finally have a bed of carrots that's germinated and is looking strong. (whew!)

Over these last couple weeks we've shifted into 3 times/week pea harvest. They are coming on en masse and oh-so-sweet. If you are swinging by the farm stand be sure to load up on snap peas and snow peas.

Oh! and most fantastically: this morning, mid-pea harvest, Jeremy found a row of tiny glowing orbs suspended between earth and sky by the most slender threads, lacewing eggs!

At the farm stand this Saturday we plan to have: lettuce, kale, swiss chard, parsley, basil, snap peas and snow peas, garlic scapes, rhubarb, a few bunches of scallions, kohlrabi, beets, and lots of other fresh herbs. If you are in need of a grab and go bag, please just let us know by Friday evening and we will try to accommodate.

Our plan is to start our Thursday evening markets this next week, on July 16th from 4-7pm. Saturday markets will continue as usual. We plan to start sending these emails out on Tuesday evenings instead.

Looking forward to seeing you at the farm stand and wishing you peas and happiness,

your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

July 14

Hello Farm Stand Friends,

It's been an abbreviated week since our last email. We are starting our Thursday evening farm stand hours this week. We plan to have the stand open from 4-6PM. In the past we have been open until seven, with overwhelmingly (underwhelmingly?) very few people swinging by between 6 and 7. If staying open until 7 on Thursdays would be more convenient for you, let us know and we can adjust.

The last few days, we have been steadily busy, mostly: weeding. Crop canopies are starting to close in, so this is a great time to get in there, weed around the crops, and hopefully the shade under our crops along with heavy straw mulch will limit regrowth for the rest of the season. While weeding onions, we found a little baby praying mantis - we had only seen adults before. Also while weeding, though significantly less darling than a wee baby mantis, Trish learned about 'parsnip blisters', an unpleasant reaction some people have to brushing up against their leaves. This week was the first week this year that we didn't do any seeding or transplanting - not to worry, we'll be back at it next week. We have another succession of beets, lettuce, and scallions in the greenhouse that are almost ready to transplant, and some more seeding of fall crops to do as well. AND! we're getting ready to harvest garlic - this means finding /making room to hang it for curing.

The young layer flock is adjusting to their new home, tonight neither of us had to reach into the spruce trees to extract chickens that didn't want to spend the night in the coop. This weekend we finished building a third chicken tractor and have moved the fifty birds from the brooder out to the orchard with the other meat birds. We have scheduled a few butcher days for the chickens and will send out a separate email about them soon. The lambs are doing great, mowing and pruning. They have taken out all but just a few of the struggling back grape vines. If Oliver has a bit more practice at her circus dancing bear routine, and access to our stilts, she'd take down the rest. Easy. During the hot days, they tend to stick to the shade, as though afraid of their own shadows - full bellied, woolly land clouds. However, the cool weather today had them running circuits through their field, on fully ridiculous bouncy pogo lamb legs.

Jeremy is getting better at setting the live trap in just the right place. Last night, while weeding in the corn, beans, and squash, Jeremy spotted a rabbit in one of the adjacent rows. Within twenty seconds of placing the trap, he'd caught another BunBun. Grandbaby Bunbun. This is number nine for the season. Doing the math, this means that the four and a half mile roundtrip to release the bunnies will show up as a measurable portion of our farm carbon footprint budget. This leads to the question, do we start raising BunBuns for local meat and soil building, carbon sequestering compost?

The sunflowers have started blooming and this morning we saw a goldfinch perched on one as though it were gazing fondly into a mirror.

And, perhaps most exciting for the week, we learned a new word to add to our list of different names for potato bugs. Monkey peas! Have you ever heard anything so delightful? Much more so than pill bug, sow bug, and wood louse. And certainly beyond roly-poly, doodle bug, and land shrimp. It belongs way up there with billy buttons and crunchy bats. Juliet's got it all wrong, there is so much in a name. (Thank you, Camille, for sharing this with us!)

This week we plan to have; lettuce, kale, chard, kohlrabi, scapes, scallions, snow peas, snap peas, beets, rhubarb, [parsley](#), basil, thyme, tarragon, mint, pea shoots, and a few delicious and entirely edible weeds - purslane and lamb's quarters (these were a hit last week!). If you would like a grab and go bag let us know (and if you want Thursday or Saturday pick-up) and we will try to accommodate.

Lastly, thank you for your kind notes regarding our foray into film production. Building connections between people and their food through youtube farm tours is clearly not our calling, all the more reason we're looking forward to potlucks, tours, and get-togethers on the farm. Thank you for humoring us.

We hope you are enjoying the season so far.

All the best from the farm and your farmers,

Trish and Jeremy

July 21

Hello Farm Friends,

So much to celebrate this week - comets and garlic and chickens, oh my! Last Wednesday we started harvesting our garlic, one quarter of the Music is out of the ground and we will have this up at the farm stand this week - super fresh. We also have harvested all three of our softneck garlic varieties, and the back porch has become a braiding salon. Judging from the harvest so far, the hail at the beginning of June had a significant impact on the sizing up of our heads, the heads are all still lovely, but generally smaller than we were expecting. Just as soon as the garlic were out, Trish had transplanted out another succession of beets into one of the newly vacated beds.

Tom has been over and helped immensely with herb and produce harvest, moving fence, clearing thistles amid zinnias and dahlias, garlic harvest, and patiently putting up with our antics, and asking good questions that help us improve our ramshackle methods.

The lambs have been moved out of the run with our laying hens (no more chicken talon back massages) to graze down an area mid-field, an area full of brome, thistles, bindweed, clover and parsnips, all good grazing for hungry lambs. They've made the transition away from their feathered friends without much ado.

We have set dates for butchering our first two batches of chickens. We sent out an email this afternoon with more information, if you are interested in some fresh pastured chicken just let us know. As a reminder, farm share credit is not usable for purchasing chickens.

In an effort to further improve our response to the situation imposed by COVID, the poetry dispenser at the farm stand has been moved out to the door. Next time you are by, feel free to take a poem.

We have been enjoying lamb's quarters and purslane daily in salads, burritos, pasta sauce, etc. and love hearing about how you are fixing these into your menus. If you haven't already checked out the nutritional value of some of these local edible "weeds", you should. And eat up.

At this time last year we were in Norway exploring mountains, street art, and train travel. And celebrating family and love. This past week, we have been enjoying reading entries from last year's farm journal written by our amazing farm sitters Regina and Marci. And we are extra-specially enjoying being here this year, fully absorbed in the work and routine of the season.

OF MOST EXCITEMENT: We are celebrating the arrival of a brand new, sparkly and exceptionally large-footed baby, our new Norwegian nephew Gabriel. Our hearts are full to brimming with delight.

At the farm stand this week we plan on having; lettuce, kale, chard, cabbage, lamb's quarters, purslane, snow and snap peas, shelling peas, kohlrabi, garlic scapes, fresh garlic(!), rhubarb, pea shoots, basil, parsley, and other herbs. As per usual, let us know if you'd like a grab and go bag put together and, if so, for which day.

Lastly, Happy International Moth Week! (<http://nationalmothweek.org/> and <https://www.poeticous.com/mary-oliver/luna-4>) Keep your eyes open, and let us know if you see anyone interesting at your porch lights.

With joy,
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

July 21

Hello Farm Friends,

This is a special note going out to our Farm Share Members and folks who've expressed interest in our pastured poultry.

We have two butcher dates scheduled over the next couple of weeks; Sundays, July 26th and August 2nd. The first butcher date will be for the young roosters in our new laying flock, they are Easter Eggers and Blue Plymouth Rocks. The second butcher date will be for our first batch of Freedom Ranger meat birds. All of these birds came to the farm as day-old chicks in the mail from a hatchery that specializes in pasture-raised poultry. The Easter Eggers and Blue Plymouth Rocks have been free ranging in our spruce trees and grape vines, grazing down weeds and eating bugs. The Freedom Rangers are on pasture, in tractors, moving through our young orchard. Along with natural forage (grass, bugs, etc), we have been supplementing their diet with a Certified Organic chicken feed mix blended in eastern South Dakota to ensure they are getting the proper protein and minerals they need. Check out our website for more information on our pastured poultry, <http://cyclefarm.net/pastured-poultry/>

The birds are doing well, they are doing good work on the land and we're feeling pretty grateful for their time here. The Easter Egger/Blue Plymouth Rocks will be 16 weeks old, the Freedom Rangers will be 13, and we're hoping they will come in at around 3.5 - 4 lbs each, dressed weight.

On our butcher dates, we will slaughter and clean the birds in the morning, and cool them in an ice bath. If you are interested in purchasing some chicken, please let us know. Please specify which butcher/pickup date you prefer (Sunday, July 26th or Sunday, August 2nd). We will have the birds available for pickup that same Sunday afternoon/evening from the farm. This way, if you want to cook it up fresh you can do that, or take it home to freeze whole or parted.

We'll be charging \$5.00/lb for the birds. This price reflects the cost of the chicks, their feed, and, in part, their tractor, equipment and hints at paying for our labor. Please contact us if you would like to reserve a bird(s) or

have any questions.

And lastly, here is a link to a couple of our most favorite, very simple chicken recipes. The bbq spice rub is aaahmazing. <https://cyclefarmkitchen.wordpress.com/2015/04/08/chicken/>

All the best and thanks for your support!
Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

July 29

Hello Farm Friends,

We have had heaps of gratitude for all sorts of happenings around the farm this week. Our chicken butchering on Sunday went so very smoothly: calm birds, very merry and helpful hands, appreciative customers, and quiet time to clean up afterwards, made for as easy of a day as the difficult task of slaughter can be.

The lambs are doing great, we are not moving them daily using a lamb tractor as we have in previous years. This season, we are constructing larger fenced paddock areas and moving them through, giving them several days in a larger space. We are interested to see the results of this different grazing and management style. We have only had a breach of the fence two times, which has given us an opportunity to learn some new, improved fencing techniques, and given the lambs an opportunity to enjoy some lettuce. We are especially grateful that their Houdini heyday was on Saturday when we had time to attend to them, and not Sunday while we were so busy with the chickens and those three would have surely made a massive mess.

All our garlic is harvested (!), the last pulled out yesterday afternoon right before the rain. With so much thanks to our friend Tom, who replaced his typical (for. reals. everyday - even when it's snowing) Berkenstock/barefoot attire with shoe-shoes (!!) to help us with forking these out of such dry soil. It is mostly graded and hanging to dry, we just have two varieties left to get through sorting and bunching. We grew three soft neck varieties and seven hard neck varieties this year. We'll be bringing hardneck garlic up to the farm stand and we are interested to hear about your favorite varieties. The braids look lovely and after a few weeks curing we will have them at the farm stand, probably early to mid September.

Flowers have continued to erupt in bursts of color all around the farm; extra special delights: monarda behind the farmstand, black-eyed susans along the driveway, zinnias mid-field, snapdragons at the greenhouse, and cleome in the three sisters planting.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: lettuce, kale, chard, cabbage, kohlrabi, wild spinach, purslane, scallions, garlic scapes, garlic, beets, basil, parsley, other herbs, snow and snap peas, and the first of the zucchini. Please let us know if you need a grab and go bag. And yet another gratitude in our heap of thanks this week - thank you all for your smiling eyes and mask wearing, we appreciate it, we appreciate you.

All the very best from the farm and your farmers,
Good health and happy feasting,
Trish and Jeremy

August 4

Happy Ripe Chokecherry Moon, Čhaṅphásapa Wí, friends,

We hope this note finds you doing well and enjoying lots of delicious local flavors! On the farm this week, we've been enjoying the gradually and noticeably decreasing daylight hours, tucking in chickens a little bit earlier in the evening and having a bit more time in the morning to rally energy for the day. And, naturally, we have just as much or more we need to fit in during the waning time between. We have transplanted out another round of lettuces and fall brassicas. Usually we get pulses of flea beetles over the course of the summer with good windows for transplanting in between, but those little darlings haven't seemed to let up one bit this summer, so we have our fingers crossed that they and, now, the grasshoppers leave these tender young ones alone until the plants get established. We have one more batch of seeding to get done this upcoming week, more fall greens including spinach and arugula, radishes, and perhaps another succession of carrots and beets.

Trish has spent a number of evenings weeding - mostly freeing crops from the tenacious embrace of bindweed - cherry tomatoes, eggplants and a row of peppers are now getting some more sunshine. Next up for libration are the carrots, then leeks.

It took a number of short sessions over four days, but this morning we finished harvesting a purple hullless barley that Jeremy had planted as an experiment in small-scale grain raising. Tom helped out while recounting a parable (biblical?) about a fellow who devotedly, tirelessly, unquestioningly watered a clearly-dead stick planted in the desert. Sometimes he's not at all indirect at critiquing how we spend our time.

Corn ears are beginning to swell in their tight green wrappers, and the broccolini is starting to send up their florets.

A few buggy notes from this week: the tassels in the corn rows are humming with a buzzillion pollinators of all shapes and sizes (side note: Trish is currently reading a Diana Kennedy cookbook and *la milpa está bandereando ahora*), this morning Jeremy discovered the painful truth that lacewing larvae can bite people, and some praying mantis are beautifully coppery orange(!) or at least *one* praying mantis is beautifully coppery orange and she lives in our orchard.

Our second butcher day went smoothly and yet was still just as hard and heavy as slaughtering fifty beautiful animals ever is. Events of the day were made celebratory with a flock of calm, happy birds, a cheerful, experienced, and much appreciated eviscerating crew (thank you, Randi and David!), and the support of our community, valuing *all* that goes into raising good meat - both the work and the love.

And Oh! Ova! The lady birds have just begun laying. That is to say we have found a handful of diminutive eggs. Unquestionably eggs. And they are even putting them in the nesting boxes rather than on the floor of the coop, under the spruce trees, or in some obscure corner of their run, as we had feared - such smarties.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having; lettuce, kale, chard, cabbage, kohlrabi, the first broccolini, scapes, scallions, garlic, zucchini, parsley, basil, dill, peas shoots, [chokecherries](#), and just a few snow and snap peas. The basil situation right now is TOPS. *So delicious, and so much basil.* If you would like to [put up pesto for winter](#), let us know ahead of time, and we'll happily set aside bulk basil for you. Please let us know if you would like a grab and go bag and for which day. We are considering fine tuning how we set up our grab-and-go bags to facilitate more fluid contactless pick-up. We would appreciate hearing from you if you have thoughts or concerns regarding farm stand set-up or anything else farm-share related, we value your input.

All the best from the farm,
Jeremy and Trish

August 11

Greetings farm friends!

Amidst the roar and commotion of motors we are also hearing the bright buzz of bumblebees in squash blossoms and blur of a hummingbird over a stand of blooming echinacea. The cicadas around our house, it

seems, are working double-time to out-decibel the motorcycles zooming down the interstate in the evenings. We hope you all are staying safe and sane during all of this.

Updates from the farm this week – the new planting of kale and fall cabbages has been all but annihilated by (insert your most colorful expletive here, if you need some ideas, Trish has plenty to share) grasshoppers. This is the second season we've experienced grasshoppers in such magnitude and it may be time to explore insect netting. We've been weeding (onions!, carrots!!) and seeding in more fall greens (spinach! and arugula!!).

The process of moving the lamb fencing has us also working on a few of our rustier skills, such as coherent communication (Jeremy) and patience (Trish). For some reason when we need to move fencing it is always at least 94 degrees, this undoubtedly adds to the challenge.

Much to the perturbation of our food safety action plan, a hen has decided that her spot of choice for egg laying is in a harvest tote on our pack shed spray table. We thoroughly clean all totes and disinfect all food contact surfaces in the pack shed before each harvest, so any potential mess will not be a problem come Thursday, but it's an unfortunate site selection all the same, and so far she has been unwelcoming of alternative options (i.e. the nesting boxes in the coop).

As relates to chickens, (though with the pastured Freedom Rangers/our meat flock, not the laying hens) we discovered a couple of great horned owls have been nicking off our chickens. We've adjusted our management practices – more deliberate tractor placement on the uneven terrain - to help prevent chickens from being able to get out of the protection of the tractors, and so far, so good.

Late last week, Radish, the number one best farm dog (that is to say that she occupies space on a farm, but primarily occupies space on the couch of said farm), got two baby rabbits. And this evening we caught yet another rabbit in the live trap out in the field – that's number 11 in our relocation program. For perspective, over the course of eight years farming here, we've caught and removed 2 rabbits from the farm. This season, since the end of May, we've hauled out 11 rabbits. ELEVEN. And there are more out there. And the owls are eating our chickens!?

This week at the farm stand we plan on having; lettuce, kale, chard, kohlrabi, cabbage, broccolini, the last of the peas, the last of the garlic scapes, garlic, scallions, beets, zucchini, chokecherries, TOMATILLOS!, pea shoots, basil, dill, mint, parsley and flower bouquets. Let us know if you would like a grab and go bag and we will try to accommodate.

Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

August 19

Greetings Farm Friends,

We hope this note finds you all doing well, and staying cool and hydrated. This week's warm afternoons have found us in our kitchen a fair bit, dehydrating herbs and garlic scapes, and cooking with some of the fun leftovers from the farm stand as well as a few random and special farm-finds. A highlight was a squash blossom casserole from a Diana Kennedy cookbook. This involved sauteed onions, garlic, roasted peppers, and a A WHOLE POUND! of squash blossoms layered and baked with corn tortillas, creme fraiche and cheese. An incredibly decadent fancy floral lasagna. While we were collecting a pound (did we mention one whole pound?!) of flowers, we came across some corn truffles appearing in the back field - those got sauteed up with garlic and added to quesadillas. And Jeremy turned a few junky looking beets into a delicious chocolate beet birthday cake. Ah yes! and speaking of beets, we delivered a heap of bright red beets to Leones' Creamery last week. Keep your eyes [on their flavor board](#) for their incredibly tasty (and beautiful!) Ginger Beet with chocolate ice cream. And when you swing by, please let them know how sweet they are for supporting local farms.

The new plantings of arugula, spinach, and radishes have germinated and are under row cover. Hopefully the row cover material serves to protect them from flea beetles and grasshoppers without frying them on these hot days. If all goes well, we will have these greens at the farm stand in mid-September. A hiccup in our lettuce successions means that we won't be harvesting lettuce for the next couple of weeks. The next planting is out in the field and growing happily, it is just not up to harvest-size yet.

The lack of lettuce means we can fully embrace the heavier crops of summer, especially zucchini. One of our recently discovered (thanks to our friends at Budding Moon Farm) and now favorite ways to cook up this vegetable is as Zucchini Butter. Here is a link to a recipe <https://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-jennie-cooks-zucchini-b-121770>. We usually make big batches and freeze it in ziplock bags for use in the winter as a veggie/cracker dip or pasta/pizza sauce.

We've been seeing soooo many butterflies around the farm over the last week. An array of aerial dancers and delightful flower visitors - Painted and American Ladies, a California Tortoiseshell, Sulphurs, Whites, Fritillaries, Skippers and at least a few Monarchs flying each day (no monarch eggs or caterpillars spotted yet). Blister beetles are also out in abundance - specifically hitting the potato greens, but so are our friends the Ladybug larvae and Praying Mantises!

This is our friend Tom's last week helping out on the farm before he takes off for college. We'll spare you all our assorted melancholy woes regarding this, you all can well imagine. For as much as we'll miss sharing our mornings with Tom, we are even more excited for and proud of and grateful to him as he ventures off onto his next chapter. Yesterday we spent the morning in the shade of the Black Walnuts trimming and grading our garlic harvest. Despite being a smaller harvest than we had hoped for, we still have over 300 pounds of hardneck garlic this year. Much of this is set aside as seed to plant this fall and some destined for garlic powder. The rest will be headed to the farm stand over the next few weeks. The varieties to look for at the farm stand are: Chesnok Red, Spanish Roja, Purple Glazer, Music, California Early, Czech Broadleaf, Inchillium, Xemo, and Killarney. We have a tenth variety, one we've been calling Wolverine Farm, but we're still working on building up our seed stock for this, so it won't make it up to the farm stand this year. We'd love to hear what your favorite varieties are.

Also with Tom's help, we scraped and repainted the farm stand. The hail scars and general weathering over these past few years have been tended to - it's positively sparkly. We were surprised how faded the green was after five years. Our chipper scallion green had faded more towards the scuba shop teal of the original paint job. Now, prepare yourselves, you may need your sunglasses for vegetable pick up.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: kale, chard, cabbage, kohlrabi, broccolini, garlic, scallions, beets, zucchini, the last of the pea shoots, tomatillos, the first of the potatoes (dark red Norlands), basil (let us know if you want bulk for pesto!), parsley, mint, perhaps some other herbs too, and flower bouquets. The snap peas surprised us this week with yet another harvestable amount, so THIS is the last week for peas. As always, please let us know if you'd like a grab and go bag and we will try to accommodate.

With abundant joy, and abundant zucchini,
Your farmers, Jeremy and Trish.

August 25

Hello Farm Friends,

With these dry, hot days it feels like we're moving especially slowly this week. The smoke in the air seems to add an ambient thickness that's contributing to our sense of sluggishness, with low-light mornings and evenings. The smoky skies are certainly making us keenly aware of how dry things are, not just for us here, but throughout the West.

The heat has worked its magic and prompted tomatoes to ripen along with a few peppers and eggplants as well. We've also seen a more abundant than usual buzzing and fluttering bounty of invertebrates. Last Friday, we saw four monarch butterflies all at the same time, and a monarch caterpillar too. Today, while moving the sheep fence, we saw at least three different praying mantises, and then at least three more different ones later in the day. We haven't yet seen one with his/her mouth full, but we sure hope they are feasting heartily on grasshoppers. The flower rows are hard to walk by without becoming enthralled for at least fifteen minutes, bumblebees and butterflies causing most of the distraction, though this afternoon an ambush bug catching a skipper butterfly was the headliner.

In other invertebrate news, we have spider mites that have taken up residency in our greenhouse eggplant. Trish has a special brew of hot peppers, garlic, and apple cider vinegar fermenting in preparation to spray on the leaves. We've never had to deal with spider mites before so this is a grand experiment. Hopefully the strong concoction will create an environment unpleasant enough for the mites, foster a healthy microbiome on the leaf surfaces, and not just burn the leaves making the situation worse.

This Saturday, after the farm stand, we had the opportunity to host the Food Sovereignty Initiative from Sicangu Community Development Corporation and Dakota Rural Action for a farm walk and afternoon together. It was a good day that somehow morphed from lunch into dinner into late night moth watching with good conversation in between. We feel so grateful to have had this time together - even at distance and with masks. It feels so good to geek out with others about challenges and successes in small scale farming, soil and crop planning, market models and food access. We are so inspired by the work FSI is doing on the Rosebud Reservation and are excited to be collaborating with them.

And lastly, our good farm friend Tom's last day helping out on the farm before heading off to college was last Friday, we have been trying to maintain productivity without his presence. It would seem that Tom has been just as effective at policing work ethic accountability as he has been in offering healthy distraction with questions such as, "hey Jeremy, what bird is that?", that routinely prelude 20 minutes of birdwatching. We will be splitting our usual Thursday harvest over two days (Wed & Thurs) in anticipation of being without our third Musketeer in the harvest/wash/and pack crew.

This week at the farm stand we plan to have: kale, chard, kohlrabi, broccolini, beets, scallions, garlic, garlic sampler 6-packs, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatillos, tomatoes, hot peppers, potatoes, sweet onions, basil, parsley, and flower bouquets. If you would like a grab and go bag please let us know as well as which day you'd like to pick up. Also, in light of the recent increase in local COVID-19 cases, please remember to wear a mask to the farm stand and be mindful of other customers.

With warm gratitude,
and ice water,
your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

September 1

Dear farm friends,

Where did this week go? And, on a related note, where did August run off to? We seemed to have misplaced our days. Perhaps they are all together, hidden under a half ton of zucchini in the walk-in cooler.

We've been enjoying the cooler temperatures, the brisk mornings, and amazing soil moisture, weeding our next succession of lettuces and beets, peppers, and managing previously untrellised tomatoes.

With the forecasted low temperatures for next week, this may be your last chance to stock up on basil for putting up pesto. Let us know if you would like a pound (or more) bag and we'll gladly pull this together for you.

After a lot of thought and deliberation, reading and reflecting, and with some much appreciated constructive criticism from good farm friends, we've put together a land acknowledgement for the farm <https://cyclefarm.net/about-us/land-acknowledgement/> Let us know if you have questions, feedback or just want to talk about this.

As we check in on the daily news, we are struck and grieving for the rise in local Covid cases. If you are likewise feeling overwhelmed by this, we'd like to offer you a select list of decreasing numerical trends we've been noticing, not as a solution, but maybe just a diversion.

-Decreasing day length and, likewise, lowering early morning temperatures.

-The prolonged decreasing yield on the snap pea and snow pea plants. Now, alas, at zero.

-Significantly fewer aphids on our kale, after a severe clearing out of old, raggedy leaves (the chickens really enjoyed these)

-Decreasing count of hens who opt to roost in the spruce trees each night – maybe it's warmer in the coop? or maybe they are hearing the same Great-horned Owl hooting at 3 am that we do?

-Decreasing creative options for preparing zucchini and subsequent decreasing interest in eating zucchini.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: zucchini, sweet onions, scallions, garlic, rainbow chard, kale, broccolini, some baby cabbages, tomatoes, hot peppers, potatoes (for real this time), ground cherries, zucchini, cucumbers, basil, sage, thyme, chives, parsley and flower bouquets. And eggs. Please let us know if you'd like a grab and go bag and, if so, for which day.

Happy September and another full moon,
Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

September 9

Greetings farm friends,

Warm and happy tidings on this frosty morning! Last night's hard frost was about two weeks earlier than we usually plan for it. Luckily, we had plenty of warning that it was going to be cold – thank you farm stand visitors for the heads-up. We spent Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday harvesting in preparation. It was definitely strange to be picking green tomatoes while it was 85 degrees. Typically, it's 38 and drizzly when we are doing our annual pre-frost field gleaning. We also pulled in most all of the peppers, zucchini, onions, shallots, winter squash, and tomatillos. We moved garlic inside to finish curing at a more stable temperature and we gathered seed from a number of wildflowers and vegetables. Several smaller plants were covered with five gallon buckets. After the wind calmed down Monday morning, we spread out row cover on the especially cold-sensitive of important crops. Lettuce got a double layer – it looks lovely. There were a number of things we left uncovered with good intentions and good wishes that they would fare the cold temperatures alright (maybe? Possibly?): potatoes, celery, parsnips and carrots, beets, corn, broccolini, dry beans, and rainbow chard (for future reference: the chard did not fare well). And, later on Monday night, inside and after dark, Trish tied up several ristras to dry chile peppers for future chile powder.

With the heavy harvests, long days, and high adrenaline over these last few days, we are feeling mighty grateful, especially so for woolly sweaters and socks, strong bodies that work well, those of you that had the foresight to get flowers last week (they were covered, but the zinnias are mostly toast now), the seemingly magical powers of divination in the hands and radar technology of midwestern meteorologists, and for fall bird migration (32 species so far this morning (including a Red-eyed Vireo and a Mourning Warbler!)).

A new challenge this week, unrelated to the frost, has been the sudden appearance of praying mantis egg cases on items that we are trying to use. If you've never seen an egg case of a praying mantis, imagine a 1.5-2" long Styrofoam packaging peanut filled with tiny precious pest-eating potential and stubbornly glued on to something you wish it wasn't glued to. We now have a pile of four T-posts (now pulled out of rotation for lamb paddock fencing because they have recently become little baby beneficial invertebrate nurseries) and a small stack of bricks that we use to weigh down the row covers that are also sporting brand new praying mantis egg cases. We even found an egg case gluing together several of the wire hoops we use to hold up row cover. Amazing. Next year's grasshoppers don't even stand a chance.

Another seasonal challenge that *is* frost related and that happens every year is the disappearance of flat surfaces in our home as buckets (and bowls, and lids, and totes, and cardboard boxes, and plates, and...) of seed come in, so many seeds, and racks and plates of herbs drying and hanging (though this pressure has been reduced somewhat by a new space for herbs in a corner of the pack shed), and baskets of fresh eggs and jars of tomato mush fermenting on the counter in the kitchen (this is an intentional part of tomato seed saving, and not at all like the assorted forgotten veg ferments in the fridge). The empty space on the table now has three big bouquets of flowers that leave just enough room on the very corner for our meals. Hello there, All-of-a-sudden Autumn.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: tomatoes, green tomatoes, tomatillos, eggplant, hot peppers, scallions, sweet onions, garlic, zucchini (probably the last), kale, baby cabbage, beets, cucumbers, lettuce, basil, parsley, and eggs. If you are trying to minimize contact and be especially careful right now, please let us know if you would like a grab and go bag, which day you would like to pick it up, and we will try to accommodate.

Wishing you good health and happy meals.
With joy and hot coffee,
Jeremy and Trish

September 16

Hello Farm Friends,

After last Tuesday's hard frost we have been spending a lot of time cleaning up, mostly trimming out frozen plants from the back field and hauling wheelbarrow loads up to the compost pile. Tomatillos, zinnias, basil, rainbow chard, and a good amount of tomato plant material has all been heaped high on the compost pile, a diverse feast for some of the farm's most beloved microbiology.

Remember in last week's email, how Jeremy had seen so many birds - just during morning chores? Well, the final count, at the end of the day, for bird species on the farm last Wednesday was 37 (!!), which is a single day record for our counting (!!!). And, if you're keeping track of these things: last week, from Sunday to Saturday, tied our previous most abundant week at 52 species. That's what happens during fall migration, it's like the circus coming to town.

The sheep and chickens are doing well, the hens are consistently laying just over two dozen eggs a day and we are planning to butcher our last batch of meat birds this upcoming Sunday. We are spending more time moving the lambs recently, the quality of forage in the orchard is waning as the grasses are senescing. And, in a moment of unbridled enthusiasm (Jeremy was walking out to the lambs with an arm-load of chicory and bindweed and Emily saw him approaching), Emily effortlessly demonstrated that the lambs can now jump a three foot fence.

After the farmstand market this past Saturday, we had a chance to catch up on some food processing/preservation. We haven't had time to do any canning yet this year, but we've managed to get some

things set aside via the dehydrator and freezer. It's been inspiring hearing from many of you at the farmstand as to what you are putting up these days.

Yesterday we were off-farm all day (ALL DAY!), leaving well before sunrise (what a beautiful sliver of an almost new moon) and driving to Mission, SD to help with a seed saving workshop as part of Sicangu CDC's Food Sovereignty Initiative at the Keya Wakpala Gardens. We were able to talk (with masks) about the basics of seed saving and then spend a good amount of time just playing with/exploring/admiring/cleaning seeds. Together, we had a chance to learn about the seed and how to process and save from tomatoes, chard, beans, kale, and flowers. We also talked about the importance of the stories seeds carry with them, and stewarding not just the genetics, but also the culture and traditions associated with seeds. If you are interested in learning more about and following along with what the FSI team is up to, you can check them out on Facebook, or their website, <https://sicangucdc.org/food-sovereignty>. Last night, we made it back to Spearfish just in time to pick up our good farm dog (thanks, Randi and David) and to tuck in chickens before they started hopping up into the spruce trees for the night (yes, a few of them are STILL roosting in the trees, I've taken to calling them all Julia (as in Butterfly-Hill)).

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: lettuce, kale, a few baby cabbage, scallions, yellow onions, garlic, potatoes (Yukon Gold), tomatoes, [green tomatoes](#), hot peppers, cucumbers, beets, small celery heads, parsley, and eggs. If you are trying to minimize contact and be especially careful right now, please let us know if you would like a grab and go bag and which day you would like to pick it up, and we will try to accommodate.

Thank you, friends,
Wishing you all the best.

Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

PS. An UPDATE! regarding the eggplant and spider-mite situation in the greenhouse and my attempt with a fermented vinegar and garlic-chile spray. So... I did a test spray on a few leaves of two different plants. That afternoon, the spider mites on those leaves were no more - but the leaves themselves were also no more - they had turned yellow-brown and crispy. (eep!). There are still spider mites on the eggplant. And everybody is just fine with this. - t

September 23

Hello Farm Friends,

Happy Autumn Equinox! How cool to live on this incredible, beautiful, and delightfully tilted planet?! With all that feels wonky and off, we are feeling extra-especially appreciative of having something in balance right now.

On Sunday, Jeremy's parents came over and helped us with the season's final batch of chicken butchering. Not everyone (mostly no-one) will give up most of the day to spend deep in chicken intestines, while wasps buzz around, and the sun shines hot, and masks get sweaty – all with light spirits and a box full of fresh brownies. Saying we appreciate their help is a considerable understatement. For those of you eating chickens from the farm right now, or with chickens in the freezer to enjoy later, we hope you can taste all this love, and care, and gratitude.

This week we have been cleaning up from the butchering, cleaning up more frost-finished rows in the field, and continuing seed cleaning work with beans drying and barley de-stemmed and ready for threshing. We've also taken time to do some cooking, mainly addressing tomatoes that have started to turn – with big pots of tomato soup and ratatouille, which now means there is cleaning to do in the kitchen too.

The wire fencing around our chicken coop was ripped into and one of our good hens had been hauled out/partially eaten on Saturday night (certainly not an owl, a racoon?). So Sunday night, after butchering and clean-up, we did some repair and reinforcement on the coop and set a live trap. We haven't had any more break-ins and haven't caught anyone in the trap. Most of the hens are sleeping way up high on top of the nesting boxes (not on the roosting bars, which are lower to the ground), they are puppy piled on top of one another. Their egg count has also decreased these last couple days. Trish brought them a wheelbarrow of buggy kale. Hopefully things calm down for them here soon.

And -hooRAY!- our absentee ballots have arrived! If you need help registering to vote just let us know, we would love to help -the deadline for registering is October 19th- which means: don't procrastinate, hop on this. <https://sdsos.gov/elections-voting/voting/register-to-vote/default.aspx>

Lastly, I'm not sure how many of you regularly tune in to Good Morning America; if you do, you just might see a couple familiar faces on Friday's show. (;

This week at the farm stand we plan to have: kale, chard, lettuce, basil, parsley, scallions, onions, garlic, beets, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, green tomatoes, hot peppers, potatoes (Dark Red Norland and Yukon Gold) and Eggs. If you are trying to minimize contact and be especially careful right now, please let us know if you would like a grab and go bag and which day you would like to pick it up, and we will try to accommodate.

We hope this note finds you doing well and taking time to enjoy the changing colors.

With love and smiles from the farm,
Jeremy and Trish

September 29

Hello Farm Friends,

Happy Michaelmas, we hope you all are finding something to strengthen your souls during these early fall days. September felt a whole lot like October, it makes us wonder what will October bring?

Last weekend, a good friend shared with us some apples from one of their trees. This was a special treat as, aside from our crab apple, none of our trees set fruit this year. We ate a few fresh and then baked an apple pie. The pie was a salted caramel apple pie from a beautiful cookbook put together by a farm to table restaurant in Utah, "This Immeasurable Place". Make a caramel sauce to add to the inside of the pie?! What joy. If you are interested, we'd be happy to pass along the recipe. Or just add caramel sauce to your favorite apple pie recipe. ta dah!

We have also been finding joy around the farm as we've been harvesting this week. Jeremy picked another 150 pounds of tomatoes from plants that we had thought we had lost to the early frost a few weeks ago. And right next to the tomatoes, we harvested a stunningly colorful dry flint corn from a three-sisters planting. The variety is called [Cascade Ruby-Gold](#) and is a new variety for us, though one Jeremy has been wanting to grow for 8 years. His patience and the (until recently) lack of space in our crop plan was worth the wait.

We have finished with our potato harvest, with two varieties of fingerlings dug this week. Jeremy just did the math and this year we harvested just under 400 pounds of potatoes total. This is about half of our typical harvest. We aren't sure what the cause of this is yet, most likely multiple factors all working together. We are super disappointed by these low yields, mostly because: not many potatoes, and partly because of the energy math. One of the calculations we do each year is to look at the calorie balance of our potatoes. Potatoes are a pretty high calorie crop per pound, however, due to us having to drive to Bozeman, MT to pick up seed, potatoes are also our crop with the highest caloric (gasoline) inputs. Although it varies from year to year, we need to harvest about 7.5 pounds of potatoes for each pound of seed planted to have the caloric value of the potatoes grown be equal to the calories burned. This year we are at 5 pounds harvested per pound planted.

This is our first year below that 7.5 pound threshold. This calculation was in large part inspired by some trivia we learned from a Fred Kirschenmann talk we heard several years ago: America's current food system requires 10 calories of inputs for each calorie of food produced (in other words 10x more (fossil fuel) energy goes into growing/transporting/etc our food than we get from eating the food itself (calorie energy)). The ratio for hunter-gatherer societies was more like 20 calories of food procured for each calorie of input. The farm as a whole is certainly on the positive side of this equation, but we have never tried to do the big math problem (and record-keeping) to figure out how far positive we might be.

Alright, enough math. With much thanks to the generosity and exquisite sewing skills of a farm friend we have some more masks available at the farm stand. An assortment of sizes, kid sizes too, all cotton and washable.

At the farm stand this week we plan to have: lettuce, kale, chard, broccoli, radishes, beets, tomatoes, green tomatoes, jalapenos, cucumbers, scallions, garlic, garlic braids, leeks, celery pie pumpkins and some winter squash, basil, parsley, sage, thyme, and eggs. If you would like a grab and go bag please let us know what you would like and for which day. And, if all goes as planned we will send out farm stand credit updates tomorrow evening,

Lastly, we have friends who are in quarantine after being exposed to the Coronavirus, friends with kids who have been exposed through school, friends who are sick and friends who are alone and missing family, or having to say goodbye to loved ones. Alongside the joys of this past week, our hearts and thoughts have been heavy. If you need assistance right now, help with anything, or just a conversation or friendly ear, please give us a call or email.

With bright yellow ash leaves and falling walnuts,
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

October 1

Hello Farm Friends,

We just wanted to let you all know that the frost last night was more severe on a lot of our crops than we had anticipated. We had covered some things, the wind uncovered some things and it was colder for longer than some of the uncovered crops like.

All this is to say that the selection at the farm stand this weekend won't be quite as robust as we had planned and had listed in Tuesday's email. There is still quite a bit headed up there but not everything we'd hoped for.

We will still fill grab and go bags, but there will certainly be some items missing.

Thank you for your understanding.

Your frost-nipped farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

October 7

Greetings farm friends,

Hopefully you all enjoyed a delightfully confounding Mad Hatter Day, we've whole-heartedly adopted the day both as a most fitting holiday for this wonky season and as a tribute to Trish's niece who is a budding Alice and Wonderland aficionado. And, I suppose, it's a good excuse to sit for a minute and enjoy a cup of tea.

The bright yellows in the trees are beginning to shade towards rust, Trish's tub of walnuts on the back porch is growing ever fuller (a collection started for winter dye projects), the working compost pile is brimming with remains of frosted crops, the finished compost pile is ready to be hauled out and spread out on beds for garlic, Jeremy has finished pulling in the last of the dry beans, the Sandhill cranes have been flying over and chortling, and the lamb fencing is getting moved every 2-4 days now at the insistence of three still endearing, but increasingly hungry lambs.

As the hens are laying more routinely now, we are having a hard time keeping up with our egg carton supply. If you have any clean cardboard or clear plastic 12ct egg cartons that you are collecting for recycling, we would love to put them to use.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: the last cutting of lettuce for the year, kale, baby cabbage, celery, radishes, beets, potatoes and tomatoes, jalapenos, leeks, scallions, garlic, garlic braids, cucumbers, jalapenos, parsley and basil, [winter squash](#) and pie pumpkins (the pie pumpkins are a variety called Winter Luxury), sage and eggs. If you are trying to minimize contact and be especially careful right now, please let us know if you would like a grab and go bag, which day you would like to pick it up, and we will try to accommodate.

We hope you all are enjoying this [October bright blue weather](#),
With thanks, your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy

October 13

Greetings Farm Friends,

The arboreal colors are still rioting, the finished compost pile we've been counting on to dress our garlic beds - it turns out - is less finished than we had thought, the occultation tarps have been folded up and put away and new bed areas are ready to be prepped for winter, the lambs are now getting more routine dietary supplements in the form of bitter and bolted lettuce and home-grown hay, and the hens are getting buckets of first frosted, now rotten tomato gleanings from the field. We are still covering crops in the field for low night time temperatures and the wind is still rearranging our work.

Several share members have asked us about getting garlic seed. Due to the hail set-back on our garlic this year, we have less seed-grade garlic available than we usually do. We will have very limited seed garlic available for sale, once we've finished our garlic planting here. If you are looking for seed garlic and haven't been able to source it elsewhere, let us know and we'll keep you posted on what we have available.

And finally, thank you friends, from the very bottom of our hearts, thank you for wearing masks at the farm stand. We don't quite have the right assembly of words to express just how thoughtful, caring and tender, generous and kind you all have been and continue to be and how much this means to us.

Harvest from the field is quickly winding down. At the farm stand we plan on having kale, leeks, scallions, garlic, garlic braids (in a good spot, the garlic should keep well into - and often past - February), winter squash, fingerling potatoes, pie pumpkins, celery, radishes, beets, jalapenos, Thai chiles, parsley, baby cabbage, parsnips, and eggs. If you are trying to minimize contact and be especially careful right now, please let us know if you would like a grab and go bag, which day you would like to pick it up, and we will try to accommodate.

Wind gusts and gratitude,
Trish and Jeremy

October 28

Greetings farm friends,

These are our last couple farm stand markets for the season – and what a season. Thank you all for joining us for a wild, wonderful, upsidedown and challenging season. Thank you all for your kindness this year, for your encouraging and cheery emails, for sharing great recipes, and for helping to keep each other safe and healthy. We so appreciate your support and enthusiasm.

Last Wednesday, after sending out our weekly email and washing and packaging parsnips, carrots, and beets, we headed out to the back field and with the help of a wonderful group of farm friends planted six beds of garlic. We finished as the temperatures dropped and snow flurries just started. This was an indescribably HUGE relief, the power of many hands (even cold, muddy hands) working together will never ever-ever cease to amaze. We are hoping to get those last two rows planted this weekend after the snow blanket ablates and then it's seeing to those 2000 flower bulbs...

Pick-up last week went mostly smoothly, thank you all for your patience and flexibility as we try to match weather conditions that the farm stand isn't quite set up for. The Schuttler family, the previous owners/builders of the farm stand, had a wood stove set up in there, something we decided that we didn't need in exchange for more counter space. However, there are two or three times a year when it sure does seem like some additional heat would be a good idea.

The sudden cold temperatures have had us on high alert for the wellbeing of our animals. This is the first winter for our new chicken coop and we aren't quite sure how it will handle sub-zero. It was fine on Monday morning, no frostbite on chicken combs and it was almost ten degrees warmer in the coop than outside. Saturday, after vegetable pick-ups, we went out to the orchard/pasture/sheep to move fence and build a strawbale shelter with a piece of greenhouse polycarbonate for the roof. The sheep quickly figured out that it was a good cozy place to be. We are feeling pretty pleased with ourselves because for the last two years we have been wanting to build a casita, a comfortable place for friends and visitors that isn't on the couch in our living room, and we finally put it together when needed – la casita oveja. We aren't sure if Trish's folks will want to stay in this one when they visit, so we will likely still have to follow through on our original plans, but it's certainly good inspiration.

The sudden cold temperatures also allowed Jeremy some time to sit on the couch and get an early start on his winter reading list. With the orientation of the house and big south-east facing windows, the low winter sun bathes our couch in warm light for a few hours each morning. We are just at the start of this lovely seasonal phenomenon and it was a treat to take advantage of the situation, rather than look longingly at our sun bathing dog as we head out the door to try and get something useful done outside.

Last night was the makeSPACE community conversation and we were grateful to the hosts and presenters and to have seen so many farm friends on the zoom call – thanks for joining in! If you weren't able to make the event, it was an informative and challenging conversation about treaties, Indigenous dispossession and dislocation, and settler colonialism in the Black Hills area *and* the Zoom call was recorded. We will send out the link as soon as we get it. There is also a great list of suggested related reading in the comments of the call. Thank you to all of you that were able to listen in.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: big carrots, smaller carrots with greens, beets, parsnips, shallots, garlic, garlic braids, celery, sweet peppers, jalapenos, Thai chiles, a few winter squash, sunchokes, baby ginger, [lemongrass](#), garlic and scape powders, dried herbs and teas, and eggs. As before, if you would like a grab and go bag put together please let us know what you'd like and a pick-up date.

And as a reminder, any remaining farm stand credit left after this weekend will be deposited into our fund to help improve access to local food for low income and otherwise food insecure households in our community. We will have updated balances in our notebook at the farm stand and will try to let you know where you are when you arrive, if we forget, just ask. And if you would like to know your balance in advance just send us an email and we will let you know.

Once again thank you for your support and regular presence in our lives this summer. We're wishing you a very happy All Hallows Eve and a healthy and restful winter. We are going to miss seeing your smiling eyes at the farm stand each week.

With heaps of gratitude,
your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish

PS. we do still have just a handful of masks available at the farm stand – these are all cotton cloth, re-usable, beautifully handmade, an assortment of sizes (thank you, Emilee!). If you need a mask, or know someone who does, please come pick one out.

November 3

Hello Farm Friends,

With such beautiful weather so far this week we have already finished planting out the last two rows of garlic, spread a bunch of straw mulch, cleaned out the greenhouse and planted it with a cover crop, and planted about 700 of the 2000 flower bulbs in the front field. The rest should be in the ground here shortly. We have a pretty long list of other to-do's we are hoping to get done this week while it is so lovely. However, it feels strange to not also have harvest and washing for the farmstand on our list.

Thank you all for sharing this past season with us. We hope that you all enjoyed eating from the farm and that you were able to try out some new vegetables or recipes. We are just starting the process of reflecting on the season - what worked well and what didn't. As committed farm supporters we greatly value your feedback, if you have any input or suggestions for us on how we could improve the farm stand, produce, communication, etcetera for next year please let us know.

If you had a negative balance at the farm stand and have not already settled up we will be sending out emails this week to let you know your end balances.

And lastly, [here is a link to the recording](#) of the Community Conversation from last week about Indigenous dispossession in the Black Hills Area.

Once again thank you for all of your support and enthusiasm throughout this strange year, we sure have appreciated seeing all of your smiling eyes.

With gratitude and delight,
Your farmers,
Jeremy and Trish