

Dear Farm Friends,

A collection of letters to Cycle Farm Share Members  
and a record of a season on the farm  
from May to November, 2022



April 27

Greetings 2022 Farm Share Friends,

Happy Spring and happy nearly-end-of April. We want to send along an update on the farm and let you all know our plans for getting the farm stand open for the season.

This spring has been challenging thus far for us in growing our earliest spring crops and we are feeling a bit anxious. This is the first time since 2016 that we haven't had the farm stand open in April. We haven't been able to put our finger on what all is different, weather has certainly been variable, but that isn't that unusual for spring. We planted the greenhouse in early March, a week later than we do most years (waiting for the -19 degree mid-February to warm up just a bit) but we have planted as late as mid-March. Many typically reliable crops seem to be slow this spring, lettuce and spinach are finally starting to look like they have an interest in growing. The garlic in the field is only just now starting to poke through it's straw blanket, the peas we planted at the beginning of April *might* actually decide to emerge before the end of the week, and a beautiful bed of carrots is getting devoured by roly-polys. All this is to say that the earliest spring markets are not going to be as full as we had planned.

There are also many crops joyfully behaving as expected - arugula is looking good (and tasting good, we picked a few leaves for lunch yesterday), radishes are starting to size up, and the four beds in the field tunnel we planted as a greens succession in early-April are looking like they may catch up to the greenhouse crops in a few weeks. The tables in the greenhouse are full of little seedlings getting ready to go outside and we are looking forward to the whole mess of summer crops yet to be planted as well.

We have put together a Spring update on our website [here](#) for more information about what we have been up to. Not included in the blog update is that in March Jeremy was selected to be one of 100 farmers from around the country to be part of the National Young Farmers Coalition's Land Advocacy Fellowship. He will spend the next two years with this group learning and advocating for programs and policies in the 2023 Farm Bill to improve access to farm land for new and aspiring agrarians. And hopefully helping work at a local level to preserve agricultural lands as well.

We are planning on opening up the farm stand next weekend, Saturday May 7th from 9-noon. We plan on being open every Saturday after that until the end of October. As soon as we start harvesting crops from the field we will open on Thursday evenings as well. Our first tulip looks like it will open up tomorrow and the daffodils were protected from the snow, so we should have good early season bouquets.

And, as relates to the Spearfish Creek watershed, we have recently learned about a new proposed gold mine called the Golden Crest project (the company with the mining claims is called Solitario Zinc) on the west side of Spearfish Canyon encompassing the area around Big Hill, Eagle Cliff, Old Baldy, and above Roughlock Falls. There will likely be an informational community meeting about this some time in early or mid May. We have been keeping our eyes on this and wanted to share, if you are interested in maps or more information, [Black Hills Clean Water Alliance](#) is a great resource on this proposed mine as well as other risks to the waters of the Black Hills.

As always please reach out to us with any questions.

We are looking forward to seeing you all soon.

With muddy hands, big smiles and a long to-do list,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

May 6

Greetings Farm Friends,

We hope this note finds you well, enjoying the sunshine and all the early blooming dandelions!

We've had a good, productive week on the farm and while it will still be a thin couple of weeks in terms of harvest, as the soil temperatures increase, we are feeling less anxious about the season. In no particular order, here is a list of some of the especially fun things that have happened since we sent our last email - -

Earlier this week, Jeremy scooted down to Nebraska (to an area near Scottsbluff) to pick up a couple tons of chicken feed for this summer's meat birds and layers. We really like this blend of feed and going in on an order with another neighbor farmer friend to share the shipping expense, the stunning western Nebraska bluffs scenery, and the great tailed grackles makes the 10+ hour driving day almost kinda worth it.

Our supremely bouncy young dog has just discovered garter snakes, she's delighted, the fascination is compounded by the fact that it's currently garter snake mating season and the cuddle puddles of snake knots are hidden in the tall grass and brush all over. All over. Thankfully she's not interested in attacking our sweet serpents & slug eaters, I think maybe she just likes the way their tongues tickle her nose.

Spring bird migration is picking up, up, UP: seven types of sparrows so far this week and two warblers, and a robin is building her nest by our living room window - with tassels and fringe, it's half "Met Gala gown" and half "dirty mop." AND we saw our first ladybug, grasshopper and butterfly for the year - all showed up on Jeremy's birthday. Yesterday we saw our second and third butterflies, a pair of Cabbage Whites that somehow were perfectly timed to the Brassicas we moved outside to harden-off. Goodness! a Mourning Cloak just flew by the window as I'm typing this. Jeremy just said they are the true harbinger *lepidopteras* of spring.

The peppers, eggplants, and tomatoes that had been hanging out under lights inside waiting for evening temperatures to get a bit warmer have *finally* moved out to the greenhouse. They are a bit leggier than we would like, some a lot leggier than we would like, but should transplant out just fine in a few weeks.

Last weekend we hosted a farm tour for the SD Farm Beginnings program and helped clean out our irrigation ditch, spring cleaning before the water gates are opened for the season. Spearfish Valley has a wonderful network of irrigation ditches, if you're interested in learning more about the history of these, we have copies of a little booklet put together by the Spearfish Historic Preservation Commission available at the farm stand - pick one up when you swing by.

For anyone interested in learning more about the mining activities in the northern hills, there will be an informational meeting hosted by Black Hills Clean Water Alliance on Friday, May 13th from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM at Guadalajara's Mexican Restaurant, here in Spearfish.

Friends! At the farm stand tomorrow morning we'll have scallions, a few bags of spinach and lettuce, LOTS of arugula, microgreens & peashoots, both chicken *and* duck eggs, herbal teas and garlic powders, and flower bouquets.

We are looking forward to getting back into the rhythm of harvesting and washing, today felt like a brilliant beginning for a good season. Oh and YES, we are looking forward to seeing all of you so soon.

With sprouting peas and blooming tulips,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

May 13

Greetings farm friends,

This is a well watered and windswept note from the farm – here are some highlights from this past week: Yesterday's bout of alternating drizzle and downpour, in combination with spring migration caused what is called *a fallout* of birds. All the little birds that were headed north just spent the day hanging around and foraging, waiting for better flying weather. Jeremy realized what was happening when he let the dogs out first thing in the morning - yellow warblers and

flycatchers everywhere. Between chores, watering starts in the greenhouse and weeding beds in the tunnel, he wandered about with the binos and saw at least 22 species on the farm (this was just in 1 hour before breakfast!). By the end of the day the count was up to 31 species. The most unexpected (and colorful) visitors were a pair of male Western Tanagers that were joined by a male Scarlet Tanager.

Despite the abundant avian distractions, Jeremy did manage to get some weeding done under the protection of our plastic tunnel. The greens in there are growing nicely and should make it up to the farm stand by the end of the month. Our ultra-fancy empty bucket rain gauge suggests we got about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of rain yesterday – does this sound right to you all? Maybe someday we will try to replace our broken rain gauge with something more accurate than a finger stuck into the bottom of a bucket.

Earlier this week we transplanted out more cabbages and bok choy, and prepped beds for planting potatoes and onions. We have the first of this year's trellis up on a bed of peas – there are several more beds that need trellising, but the first trellis up is always a celebration as it represents the addition of a z-axis to our field. We also put in a short section of fencing to protect some beds from our neighbor's beautiful, curious, abundant & a bit destructive chickens. We have continued seeding and potting up starts in the greenhouse, including replanting tomatillos and a few tomato varieties that did not like their time spent indoors a few weeks ago waiting for this warmer weather.

Our farmer friend Jared from Budding Moon Farm brought over his walking tractor with a rotary plow and tilled up two small sections of field that had returned to grass. This is a type of soil disturbance we have never had before in our no-till system, however we've seen the way a few friends' (including Jared's) fields have recovered from this type of one-time-disturbance, so we decided that it would be worthwhile to trial in comparison to other methods of grass removal we usually use. We are hopeful that the soil in these beds will reestablish its wonderful structure and ecology by the end of the summer and are excited to make good use of the extra bed space. One of the advantages to this method is that Jared was able to accomplish in about 2.5 hours and with 2 gallons of gas what ordinarily takes us just over 100 hours by hand – as you might imagine we are profoundly grateful for Jared's help. We do still have a fair amount of work in getting these beds into planting shape, but that is quite a difference in labor cost and lifted spirits.

Yesterday we set up a table at the Women in Science event at BHSU. 700 7th and 8th grade girls from around the hills spent the day learning about opportunities for women in science fields. Our table focused on carbon farming and climate change as well as many of the other sciences that we get to interact with everyday as farmers. And we made sure to point out that farming as a career is not something likely to pop up on an aptitude test but is a much needed and viable vocation option, especially if you are excited about pretty much everything.

Silly, but worth sharing: in a moment of uncharacteristic strength/fortitude Jeremy denied my most earnest *"Please?"* at the farmy-ranch store as we stood in the aisle by the baby duck bins. It was only later, as we were walking towards the exit doors sans ducklings (I may have been sulking), did I recognize Meatloaf on the store radio, crooning out "[I would do anything for love--but I won't do that.](#)"

This week at the farm stand we'll have arugula, lettuce, spinach, pea shoots, scallions, green garlic, chives, garlic powder, tea blends, chicken and duck eggs, and more of those gigantic but oh-so-sweet overwintered parsnips. And bouquets. Green garlic, also called spring garlic, is tender, young garlic that is edible top to bottom. Use this in any recipe as you would garlic cloves or scallions, it tends to be a bit more mild than typical clove garlic. Some ideas for green garlic in your kitchen include omelettes or savory pancakes, stir fry or miso soup, pasta sauce, roasted or grilled green garlic, puréed with herbs or greens into a pesto or chimichurri, or dried into green garlic powder and put up for later use.

Thank you all for your patience last week at the farmstand, we are reacquainting ourselves with how the market setup goes and missed a few things last week (our chalkboard and produce labels! Eeps!). It was good to have a dress rehearsal with you all. And just because of the timing of our recent exposure to so many middle schoolers we'll be taking additional precautions and are planning to wear masks this week at the farm stand. We encourage you all to come however is most comfortable for you.

And lastly, next week is National Bike to Work Week. We have attached a flier of events happening around town during the week, hopefully we will see you at some or all of them. And related to biking, we have reinstated our bike/walk/skateboard to the farm stand raffle. If you show up to the farm stand by human power make sure to enter

your name in the jar. At the end of the season, we will draw a name and bake a pie for the winner. You can enter every time you show up at the farm stand so, if you are able, ride often.

With much joy,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

May 19

Hello Farm Friends,

The big excitement on the farm this week happened just this morning: bright and early, while we still had pillow-wrinkles and crusties in our eyes, the phone rang. It was a call from the post office. A little voice on the phone said, "your chicks are here", but mostly it was an enthusiastic choir of peeping in the background. We scooted on over to pick them up, brought them home to the brooder set up in the sunroom, and made sure everyone had a good drink of water as we took them out of the shipping box. This batch of birds, which will be additions/replacements for our laying flock, are a group of 13 varieties of heritage breeds of chickens, ordered from the amazing, inspiring, dizzying Sandhill Preservation Center in Iowa. This farm is doing invaluable work in heritage genetics conservation - with plants *and* animals (they steward 780 different varieties of tomatoes - can you imagine?!). Our very first flocks of chickens were similar "mixed heavy breeds" assortments from this organization and we were delighted to get to know the personalities and temperaments of so many different breeds, we're really looking forward to getting to see what this new flock is like.

Also of note, though understandably less so than a brooder full of alternately zippy & napping fluffydumplings - - we transplanted out rows of onions and shallots, worked on tunnel weed management (so many weeds), loaded and unloaded wheelbarrows of woodchips (so many woodchips), fretting about flea beetles on the field planting of mustard greens & arugula (so many flea beetles), gave a farm tour to some farmers from Hot Springs, and participated in a number of the Bike to Work Week events. We also had a chance to spend some time in the field with a pretty rad 8th grader learning about programming on the Home and Garden channel and discussing the importance of different minor character roles in Shakespeare plays (thanks Alex!).

This week the baby squirrels are out and about with extreme unbridled play. The way they move is so quick, fluid, and effortless in the branches, it's like watching fish swim about in a coral reef. Ok, maybe that's a stretch. But give those squirrels iridescent blue body suits, and I tell ya what.

We have been finding ticks on ourselves and the dogs this spring and are curious to learn more about tick ecology. It has been six years since we have seen one on the farm and this year we've already found six. So gross. I get all squirmy-itchy just typing this.

The apple trees and wild plums are in full bloom. Fragrant and filled with buzzing, they are a delight for many senses. Today, set against the gray sky, the bright white clouds of plum blossoms in the back field were full of bright rainbowy fluttering birds drinking nectar. Dozens of goldfinches, three (maybe four) types of warbler, and half a dozen orioles (Baltimore and Orchard) were causing a work-stopping joyous commotion. On the other hand, dandelions all around the farm are blooming with abandon, but this spring we rarely see pollinators on the flowers.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: lettuce, arugula, spinach, radishes, green garlic, scallions, a few bok choy, bouquets, pea shoots & microgreens, eggs (both chicken and duck eggs!), and dried herbs and teas. You'll see that some (many) of our radishes are a bit ..mottled, they have been blemished with roly poly nibbles, but they're just fine to eat. We've been enjoying these spring scallions with pretty much everything these days (soba noodles, beans & rice, bone broth, eggs, salads, pizza...), hope you are too - cheers!

With sunscreen *and* sweaters,  
Your farmers,

Jeremy and Trish

May 27

Greeting farm friends,

It's been a week of long days, sunshine, and heavy hearts. That is to say news from around the country, around the world, has us feeling ...a lot. Part of what we're feeling is profound gratitude for community and the helpers (remember Mr Rogers?), for humankind's capacity for hope and care, and cooperation and change, and gratitude for teachers, including this planet as always a good teacher - we still have so much to learn. And the plants are growing, the solar panels are cranking and we have time on our side with day length generously stretching to accommodate the length of our to-do list. The farm has entered its critical hurry hurry scurry phase of the year, this narrow window in which we need to get many things seeded and transplanted out into the field beds. We still have quite a bit of bed prep to do, but hopefully this next week sees a bunch of rows planted with summer and fall crops. Go go GO.

This sudden switch from covering beds last weekend to protect from frost (we were down to 25 degrees last Saturday night) to rolling out the shade cloth on the greenhouse in anticipation of mid-80's has us delighting in the variability of South Dakota spring. The hard frosts have set back a few of our pea varieties and our cabbage, but fortunately we are behind schedule on a great many things so many crops that would have been vulnerable were still under the protection of the greenhouse. A benefit of inefficiency - it seems you can find those all over, if you look for them.

The early beds of arugula in the greenhouse have been pulled up and replaced by a blanket of compost and neat rows of peppers. The tunnel planting of arugula has been lost to flea beetles and heat-induced bolting, so it will be a bit until we have those greens back up at the farm stand.

With the help of two very good friends, we just moved the field tunnel off the spring greens beds and over to where we'll plant peppers and tomatoes. Our tunnel is built in three 24' long sections that we can disconnect from each other to pick up and move along with our crop rotation (this makes it sound like a clean and easy thing to do. it's not that slick. it's awkward and cumbersome and really really heavy). This year we did a double move in order to hop over a patch of self-seeded parsnips that we want to let go to flower. Parsnip flowers are a favorite for many of our pollinator and predatory insect friends and we really like having these available smackdab in the middle of our field.

And as relates to friends on the farm, last week we (well, more accurately: Jeremy) saw at least 47 species of birds on the farm: two types of orioles, flycatchers, warblers, lark sparrows and a new species for the farm bird list - a fleeting glimpse of an indigo bunting. There has been less bird activity so far this week, which may explain why we are doing a better job at getting things crossed off of the to-do list.

The new chicks are doing well, still very cute, much peeping and darting around the brooder like pingpong balls, and starting to grow wing and tail feathers. We moved the ducks to a new section of pasture. They seem a bit irritated with us for disrupting their well established routines and comfortable patterns, but hopefully within a few days they'll settle into their new situation and appreciate us for the green grass and all those slugs. The laying hens are looking forward to their move soon.

And a couple items of great joy this week: our friend Tom is done with classes for the year and is back to help out on the farm in the mornings. We're not only wild-eyed with appreciation for his help in the field, but also for his perspective and insights; conversations with Tom are especially fun as they easily drift between ancient Greek literature, red winged blackbirds, folk punk music, gift economies, invertebrate identification, etc. AND *the lilacs are blooming*, which has me(Trish) thinking about my grandmother, Nan, who would have certainly had a whole lot of questions - maybe just quietly raised eyebrows - about all these farm hooplahs & shenanigans we've gotten ourselves into, and heaps of experience and wisdom, stories to help sort us out. But she wouldn't have questioned the lilacs - she would have *loved* the lilacs.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: lettuce, spinach, bok choy, a few bags of arugula, scallions, green garlic, radishes, chicken and duck eggs, garlic and garlic scape powders, and pea shoots.

With warmth and gratitude,  
tending and tenderness,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

June 3

Greetings farm friends,

As we're writing this, thick clouds of pollen are drifting off the ponderosa tree and Jeremy's trying to identify something that is not a white crowned sparrow, but masquerades as one remarkably well.

This week we can offer a quick report from the farm: prepping beds and transplanting. And then more bed prep (this means weeding out bindweed, dandelions, thistles and brome, composting, mulching), and more transplanting (mostly greens, flowers too).

And/or, for those interested in the extended version of farm goings on this week, here's the director's cut:

Our super sophisticated bucket-in-the-yard rain gauge suggests we got about 1.25 inches of rain earlier this week. Soil moisture is great and transplants are looking good. And taking advantage of these dewy mornings, Jeremy's pulled out the scythe to start mowing, hopefully before the grass pollen starts. Potatoes are all planted. The chokecherry trees around the farm are all in full razzledazzle blooming glory and are loudly bzzzzzzing with bees. There is an especially busy chokecherry tree on the walk out to the back field, it's an attention getter and, on the narrow path, a proven traffic jam inducer. Bats are back swooping over the house in the evening(!). Also about 400 billion earthworms, and a few skipper butterflies including a duskywing (probably Sleepy Duskywing?). (P.S. If you are not already aware, moths all have super hero names.) We finessed the tunnel sections into place and anchored the frame down into the soil. Our intention was to get it all set and secured before a forecasted windstorm on Saturday evening. Our intentions are crap. We ended up frantically screwing in 3' anchors into the ground and tightening turnbuckles as the plastic sheeting on the tunnel was whipping and snapping and the frame was lifting and shifting, and we're having to shout at each other to hear - right smack dab in the middle of a 45 minute wind gust - that, just as soon as it came, left, and the rest of the evening was calm as can be. And fencing around the duck run has been reinforced with a finer gauge chicken wire fence. Not for protection of the ducks, but to protect the bed of newly planted zinnias adjacent to their field. Have you ever seen a duck stretch her neck through a wire fence? The fence becomes some sort of magical transformer device. On one side of the fence: a duck, the body of a duck, unchanged. Then she sticks her head through the gridded wires. On the other side of the fence: an absurdly long, super extended neck of a crane, a heron, that can reach out 2 or 3 feet at least. It's amazing.

This week at the farmstand we plan on having: lettuce, spinach, an amazing stir fry mix, beautiful bok choy, radishes, spring turnips, scallions, green garlic, rhubarb (a big harvest of which we just took to Leones', so keep your eye out on the flavor board for one of our favorite flavors they churn up), pea shoots, tarragon & chives, eggs, and garlic and scape powders.

Dirty knees, aching hands & happy hearts,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

Oh and the bird id verdict - not a white crowned sparrow after all, it's a white striped adult, white throated sparrow.

June 10

Dear farm friends,

Before Jeremy and I started farming, we lived in Santa Fe, NM. The public library system in Santa Fe is great (Spearfish is too!) and we spent a good amount of time there. By the door was always a rack of old, dogeared, wildly eclectic magazines, free to a good home. You can imagine in Santa Fe – this meant everything from Massage Therapist Monthly to SuperdooperFancy Cooking Magazine, Forbes to Woo-woo-Magic-crystals-and-Ley-lines, etc.. All this is to say, if there was a copy of Harper's I would always excitedly scoop it up. Harper's (maybe they still do this?) publishes a list of things, The Harper's Index, at the end of the magazine. Always a weird list, interesting, but full of non sequiturs and odd sorts of current events – a wiggly, disjointed narration in numbers.

Being tired and finding full sentences to be a bit more of a struggle than usual, here's a farm update a la Harper's Index.

~800 lettuce plants transplanted into the field

1200 additional lettuces seeded & newly germinated, to be transplanted next

4 miles walked by Jeremy in hauling compost to prep our furthest, newest beds

2 of these miles were with a fully loaded wheelbarrow (super saturated, it rained for 3 days straight, super heavy compost), and yes, 2 were with an empty wheelbarrow

3 of 4, the number of sisters planted so far – we still need to get the beans in (*FOUR sisters?*, you say. YES! Flowers – we interplanted cleome, aka Rocky Mountain Bee plant or spider flower <https://www.nativeseeds.org/blogs/blog-news/how-to-grow-a-three-sisters-garden>, <https://rodaleinstitute.org/blog/the-three-sistersand-that-fourth-sister-no-one-really-talks-about/>)

9:15 PM, the time we finished seeding Cascade Ruby Gold corn

47 3-week old chicks in varying states of transition between adorable fluffball and chicken. They are amazing. A perfect blend of Jem and the Holograms and Sid Vicious

1 week until they head out to the orchard

8, the lowest egg count this week - the ladies, it seems, are on holiday even though we just moved their fence giving them access to all sorts of greenery & buggy delights (!?!? grumble grumble)

100% of the beds in the greenhouse (12) are now flipped to summer crops

12 7-gallon grow bags filled & seeded with broom corn for production of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungus inoculum (<https://rodaleinstitute.org/science/articles/quick-and-easy-guide-on-farm-production-of-arbuscular-mycorrhizal-fungus-inoculum/>)

4,000,000,000 onion thrips currently enjoying themselves in our onion beds

1 lacewing seen so far this season (lacewing larvae : thrips :: Trish : sweet potato chips)

\$500 pert near amount we spent on insect netting a few weeks ago

May 20<sup>th</sup> expected delivery date of said insect netting

17 different crop varieties transplanted into the tunnel, 2 of which (a tomato, *Cosmonaut Volkov*, and an eggplant, *Diamond*) were originally bred in Ukraine

7 tiger stripey ladybugs (TIGER STRIPES!) found by Tom and Jeremy – as they were weeding prickly lettuce

2 common yellow throats who may be building a nest on the farm

3 robin fledglings have newly left the nest under the gutter spout at the corner of the house

>70 species of plants on the farm that have bloomed already this year, including, this week, the first pea flower and bindweed

infinite, the amount of gratitude we have for all of Tom's help this week. Early mornings, long mornings. And so much mud.

2 of the world's most patient farm dogs who are looking forward to when we'll have more time to play with them

Alright. That's enough of that. With flipping beds in the greenhouse, we are harvesting from the field now, and want to run through with y'all our harvest and pack procedure. At this point in the season we harvest most things on Friday mornings (some on Saturday mornings), & get things rinsed and bunched or bagged (carefully, but quickly), and stored in the walk-in cooler until the farmstand the following day. All greens and roots go through two rinses, we take care to locate and keep any dirt and wee critters we find, but it never hurts to give things another look over and another rinse in your kitchen. Please let us know if you have any questions - it's important to us that our community feels a connection to where their food comes from and how it's grown (thus these verbose weekly newsletter updates).

Also! If we haven't mentioned this yet, a thousand apologies. There is a great community-sourced resource for farm produce recipes and ideas here, <https://cyclefarmkitchen.wordpress.com/>. If you would like to share any favorite, go-to recipes or tips&tricks in the kitchen, send us a note, we'd love to add them!

This week at the farm stand we will have: lettuce, spinach, stir fry mix, bok choy, radishes, spring turnips, green garlic, rhubarb, fresh herbs, garlic powder and eggs. With the cool May temperatures and unforeseen pest pressure, this year our field successions are not well timed to match the flipping of the greenhouse beds: be patient, the farm stand will be pretty sparse for a few weeks while field crops establish and grow.

So much thanks,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

June 17

Hello farm friends,

We hope you are reading this in a cool, shady spot with a brimming glass of ice water sweating a ring on the table next to you. Then it's as if we are sitting here together. Would you like some fresh mint for your glass? Oh no - don't get up, I'll get it.

The field looks great – rows of squash are popping up, additional rows have been seeded. The peas appear to be finally recovered from the cold-cold snap earlier this spring and the mob-grazing sparrows, and are climbing their trellising – except for those snow peas that we haven't run the fence out for yet (eeps!). A round of beets are transplanted out alongside a row of green beans. More tomatoes, peppers and basil have made their way out into the field. Onions have been kinda-sorta halfway weeded. Garlic beds are fully weeded and in doing so many slugs were re-homed from the cozy, heavy straw mulch in the garlic to very happy duck bellies. Another round of brassicas (kales and cabbage, mustard greens) seeded into soil blocks and a newest round of lettuces germinated. Both the greenhouse and tunnel are sporting freshly weeded beds after the mid-day rains earlier this week. We are accumulating a substantial pile of thistles, pulled from beds (thank you, Tom) and deposited in the chicken yard. The chickens are seemingly disinterested. Here shortly it will be in the running as an additional jewel in the crown of Spearfish - Lookout, Spearfish, Crow Peak and the Thistle Pile of Cycle Farm. Daring people with specially engineered mountain bike tires will try to summit.

Roly-polys are still causing trouble in the greenhouse, specifically in the two western/newest beds that we are trying new crops in. All of an early planting of luffa gourds have been consumed and most of our okra has been entirely munched away. We applied diatomaceous earth around the ashwagandha which seems to be slowing the predation, but DE didn't help the luffas in the end, so don't anyone hold your breath. Some cultures eat roly polys, maybe you've seen them on a fancy farm to table menu? Tastes like shrimp. Maybe it's time for a farm community potluck. Also – Jeremy and I are having a debate, is it a roly poly or a roly polly?

Our young egg layer replacement flock moved from the brooder out to the orchard where they are learning all about grass and bugs and wind. They are currently tucked into the safety of a chicken tractor, but as they get a bit less chicken-nugget-for-a-red-tailed-hawk-sized we will let them roam in a fenced area during the day to hopefully have more of an impact around the bases of our young fruit trees. After moving the young layers out of the brooder, we had nearly 24hrs to clean and prep the brooder for a new batch of day-old chickens, these ones are Freedom Rangers, meat chickens. This breed is originally from France and are great for pasture systems, we've raised these previously and like

them a lot – in our experience they are strong, healthy, and great foragers. They are also delicious. After their first day on the farm, it seems like these chicks are settling in well. Shipping was hard on these little darlings. We usually receive the package of 50 chicks from the post office with maybe one little one that didn't make it – they are tiny and tender, surprisingly mighty, and percentage-wise we generally have a 2% chick mortality rate. Opening the box yesterday, there were 15 dead birds inside.

Also on the farm – LOTS of little baby garter snakes. We read that they have a 2-3 month gestation, so those cuddle puddles of snakes we were finding in early April appear to have been successful. In scything near the house Jeremy accidentally found the nest of the Common Yellowthroat pair that we had suspected were nesting on the farm. We just didn't suspect it where he found it. We tucked grass back around the disturbed area and have seen both the male and female nearby since. Hopefully they won't abandon the farm. And another fluttering yellow delight – Swallowtail Butterflies. We have been seeing quite a few flying around the farm over the last couple of weeks, probably a few different species. This is encouraging because the last few years we have only seen one or two all summer. At some point we will have to sit down and learn how cyclical/irruptive their life cycle is.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: lettuce, spinach, stir fry mix, bok choy, green garlic, spring turnips, pea shoots, rhubarb, fresh herbs, garlic and scape powders, teas, and chicken and duck eggs. And some peony bouquets.

And lastly, OH MY GOODNESS YOU GUYS, there are some exciting events happening on the farm this Saturday (tomorrow!). During the farm stand market, from 10-11 am, the Black Hills Balinese Gamelan will be celebrating summer with their music in the shade of the crab apple tree. We feel honored, delighted, overjoyed to have the Gamelan musicians play on the farm and hope that you'll swing by to enjoy the music too. Later in the afternoon, at 1 PM there will be family yoga – yoga for everyone - on the farm with Tristyn Jackson of Sunspots Yoga. Oh boy, it will be warm, but hot yoga is a thing, right? There are big shade trees and we'll brew up a mega batch of iced mint & milk oat tea to help cool you down. As appealing as it might be on a 95deg afternoon, we'd recommend against any duckpond dunking.

Cheers,  
Your farmers, Trish and Jeremy

June 24

Greetings Farm Friends,

Wishing you all such happy summer tidings,

News from the field: We had a good, strong push to get a few more beds ready and transplanted out the last of our hot peppers, tomatillos, and eggplants. The beds of onions have been fully detangled from bindweed - \*chef's kiss\* those beds look so dang fine now. Peas are coming! The rows are all sporting a z-axis now with trellising and there are loads of flowers setting and, now, *fruit!* The garlic scapes are starting to peek out of the folds of the garlic leaves and peppers are fruiting too. We discovered and promptly squished a bunch of baby three-lined beetle larvae in the tomatillos. Yuck. These are the creepy, slimy, totally so super gross critters that defoliate tomatillos (and ashwagandha fyi) while wearing a pile of their own poo on their back. Again: yuck.

News from the greenhouse: the outbreak of roly polys are still treating the place like their 24-hr all-you-can-eat buffet. I have nothing nice to say, so... Well, wait. Once nice thing: it seems, at this point at least, that they are leaving the peppers alone. Also! Another nice thing: this has us considering what it would look like to overwinter (or at least part-time winter) the ducks in the greenhouse. We would have to figure out timing to make sure we're not violating any food-safety rules. The ducks may be just the right helpers for this pest issue.

Also from the greenhouse: In the mornings, when Jeremy pops in to open the windows, turn on the fans, irrigate, etc. there are routinely four to eight snakes sunning themselves near the inside west wall, by the fan. Earlier this week, two of these long lovelies were behaving strangely. Then we realized that they both happened to be caught mid-mouthful, eating nearly full-sized fledgling house sparrows. The tail feathers were visible sticking out of the mouth of one of the snakes, and the other had only made it just past the wings. We are trying to determine whether a garter snake with tiny sparrow feet sticking out from her mouth is more "walrus whiskers" or "deep sea filter feeder tube worm."

From miscellaneous spots around the farm: we are still floating after last weekend's Gamelan performance at the farmstand (thank you!). We had a chance to spend the afternoon with a group of 10 year olds (almost 11 year olds) learning about all sorts of native pollinators and constructing native pollinator nesting boxes. And we have spotted lots of different butterflies (including a female Black Swallowtail & a Monarch!), and caterpillars, and a Lark Bunting, and, oh goodness!, flocks of swallows over the field in the morning. And a big mid-summer cleanup project: over these past several years and many canopy-damaging snow storms, we've accumulated quite a number of branch piles all around the property. Earlier this week, a crew of arborists from Tree Wise Men, came and helped us trim out the dead and dangling branches from the tallest black walnuts and chip all the piles. Woodchips are a great resource we use all around the farm, from mulching vegetable beds & fruit trees, to protecting muddy walkways, to deep litter in the chicken coop and composting chicken guts. A small disaster associated with this is that in the helpful frenzy of branch pile tidying, a nearby pile of weed-seeds-brush (about 4 years worth of accumulated oh-shoot-we-missed-this-and-now-it's-gone-to-seed-and-we-need-to-get-this-off-the-farm weeds) that was intended for a burn pile got tossed into the wood chipper and mixed in with the wood chips. Insert your own most colorful expletive here.

And from off-farm: Citizen science! We're participating in the pilot of an aquatic macroinvertebrate survey, a state-wide project being launched by the SD Discovery Center. Jeremy spent a few years in Bozeman collecting and IDing aquatic invertebrates and is delighted to be back in a stream finding familiar friends under the rocks. Also water related, but less joyful, we attended a few meetings this week about the proposed gold mining on the west side of Spearfish Canyon and have been learning about action steps to oppose this project. If you are interested, concerned, or would like to get involved, just let us know, we are happy to share what information we have. Lastly! The most exciting thing is happening: the Spearfish Bicycle Collective's new shop space is up and pedals are turning! This is a volunteer run, donation-based community bike workshop. Folks can come by to fix up their own bike, learn how to fix their bike, find a bike to fix up & ride, wrench and tinker. Such a fabulous resource for our community! Check out [bikespearfish.org](http://bikespearfish.org) for more information about the workshop.

Produce at the farm stand on Saturday will be purple. And green. A fun stir fry mix (crunchy, bitter and spicey AND featuring a couple varieties of purple Asian greens), purple Jagger mustard greens (spicy, and yes, named after Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones), a *dark* red (pertainer purple) lettuce mix, green garlic (Music and Purple Glazer), so many spring turnips(yeh, ok, these aren't purple), pea shoots & fresh herbs, and rhubarb. Not many eggs this week.

Rolling stones and spring turnips,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

July 1

Greetings Farm Friends,

Wishing you a very happy July from the land of 'wait, what happened to May?!' This week, all around the farm, beautiful white carpets have been unrolled – bindweed vines are suddenly all a bloom, in full floral display, running the full length of several vegetable beds. For as much as this rearranges and inflates the immediacy of certain bind-weed themed items on our to-do list, those flowers sure are lovely, and the bees delight in them too. This was also the first week of serious irrigation on the farm, with how dry the winter had been we certainly expected to be doing much more of this already. We still have a few varieties of winter squash that haven't germinated, Jeremy's fished around in the beds and found good seeds that are just beginning to initiate sprouting. There are several varieties that germinated just fine and look great, so we are puzzled: que pasa calabaza? what's the delay Delicata? Why so pokey PattyPan? (oop. jk we don't grow patty pan). There are flowers on the eggplant! The field tomatoes and greenhouse peppers are eager to be trellised. The grass seed heads around the farm are just hitting their peak of pollenizing – generously gifting us runny noses, scratchy eyes, and sudden bursts of sneezes.

The chicks in the brooder are looking great, keeping the temperature comfortable for them in the sunroom brooder space has us checking in, adjusting windows, refilling water, setting up a box fan, unplugging, then replugging the block

heater more than usual. The young layers on pasture in the orchard are awesome. This is the flock of mixed heritage breeds, their diversity is showing itself – they are all gorgeous feathered, different patterns and colors, and wildly different sizes, some are 6x larger than others (yeeeps!). We've been working with the world's two most wonderful farm dogs, training them to leave the birds be, to ignore them. Miga is picking up on this quicker than Radish, but both, with a bit of reminding, are doing really well with this. A downside is that while Miga is a-ok with leaving the birds alone, she wants nothing more than to roll – I mean *really, really* roll – in chicken shit. We may need to invest in more dog shampoo.

This has also been a great week for sharing time with and giving attention to the myriad invertebrates and itty bitty & amazing creatures we share this space with. Some highlights: dozens of types of spiders, a Milbert's Tortoiseshell Butterfly that may have spent her caterpillar days feasting in our stinging nettle patch(!) was resting near the greenhouse, a pearl necklace string of lacewing eggs running along the length of a garlic leaf, we had our first sighting of a Northern Crescent butterfly while we were taking our quarterly photo monitoring pictures (the farm *is* getting messier, we have proof), and today we rescued a brown lacewing out of the lettuce wash water that we also had never seen before.

Tangential to the farm: we had the opportunity to visit with a group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders from around the state about entrepreneurship and finding a job you love. As it turns out, we have much to learn in the arts of communicating with 13-14 year-olds. The little we've learned so far: circus stories are WAY more entertaining than farm stories (sorry folks, we're sticking to the farm in these newsletters). Jeremy has been working with his land advocacy fellowship and had a few inspiring meetings with the rest of the fellowship cohort and staff of the National Young Farmers Coalition. Related to this, he tuned into a live stream of our Congressman Johnson and the minority chair of the House Agriculture Committee holding a roundtable at a farm East River about needs for the upcoming Farm Bill. There was definitely a different scale of agriculture represented at this discussion, with quite a bit of conversation about small changes to crop insurance programs and expansion of some of the conservation programs. And happily, nearly every presenter talked about the need for more support for young and beginning farmers/ranchers. Hopefully, the 2023 Farm Bill will be well used to change the trajectory of agriculture from mechanization and consolidation to one that fosters more small and mid-sized operations that are feeding their local communities.

This week at the farm stand we will have: lettuce, mustard greens, the first of the garlic scapes, the first of the peas, pea shoots, herbs, and eggs. For those of you that are waiting for us to open up on Thursday evenings, we are still planning on doing that as per usual as soon as harvest picks up from the field, but it looks like we are at least a few more weeks away from bigger/more diverse harvests.

Looking forward to seeing you at the farmstand,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

July 8

Greetings farm friends,

With early mornings and late evenings in the field and much assistance from several very helpful hands (thank you Tom, Alex, and Katie), we've ebbed the tide of bindweed in the peas & potatoes, the tunnel rows, peppers, tomatoes and basil. In clearing out one of the early beds of Asian greens to make room for beets, we discovered 100's of lady beetles, most in the act of making more lady beetles. There were also heaps of aphids on the bolting greens, which has me thinking about remarkable animal moms and how elephants and kangaroos and emperor penguins get all the credit, but as regards selecting a nursery location for the next generation, these ladybugs all seem to be sporting bright red Mom-of-the-Year super hero capes.

The youngest flock of birds are now 3 (and a half ish?) weeks old and, while not fully feathered out yet, are large enough that we've moved them out of the brooder and into a small tractor near the house. They are clearly more comfortable out on grass, under the big shade trees, scurrying around after bugs and chicory than they were in the warm boxy brooder. And here, near the house, we can keep an eye on them while they get their feathers on and before they head

back to the orchard. It's fun to watch how quickly they figure out the whole eat-grass, chase-bugs, scratch-and-peck chicken business (seconds) – even without a mama hen to show them the ropes. Jeremy's a good substitute teacher. (;

Other 'of notes' around the farm this week – clusters of green chokecherries are swelling, elder flowers are blooming, fruit are setting on the pepper plants, Jeremy got the tomato trellis posts up (I still need to run the basket weave). Potatoes are mulched and look awesome, not too much sign (yet) of potato beetles. Scapes are all harvested – about two or three weeks later than usual and all at once rather than spaced out over several days or weeks. Baby bunnies are out and about, extremely adorable, and in all the wrong places (the early cabbage beds, and between the beets and bean rows). OH! AND! The parsnip flowers are in bloom right now. You know the parsnip: a ho-hum in appearance sort of pale looking carrot? Have you seen a parsnip flower? When a parsnip plant goes to flower, the green bits (above ground) grow to be 4' tall, and just about 4' wide, and at the top and all around these bright yellow umbels open up and very quickly the whole plant is swarming with bees and flies and wasps and ants and spiders and beetles and lacewings and EVERYONE. Makes you want to lay down your spine and join in on this, the VERY BEST PARTY EVER, mid-field invertebrate merriment.

Two very important things! 1. Leones' Creamery is scooping their fabulously flavorful tarragon and olive oil ice cream right now. This very weekend. People often ask us what to do with tarragon. There's lots of things. You can make tarragon vinegar or cook fish with it. But possibly the very best thing? Ice cream. (; And 2. Friends, the Black Hills Balinese Gamelan ensemble is planning to set up again THIS SATURDAY, under the crabapple tree at the farmstand. Come! Bring your sweetie/neighbors/kiddos! This music is wholly enchanting and we feel so lucky to host these incredibly talented musicians here. We hope you can make it – they will be set up and playing between 10-11am.

At the farmstand we'll have lettuce, mustard greens, garlic scapes, snap peas and snow peas – AND shelling peas. Basil and other fresh herbs, purslane (bright lemony and crunchy – also a weed!), rainbow chard, chicken and duck eggs, and pea shoots. And we are planning to open up the farm stand on Thursday evenings from 4-6 PM starting next week, July 14<sup>th</sup>.

With sun hats and sunscreen and sunshine yellow parsnip flowers,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

P.S. If you haven't tried garlic scapes yet, we'd whole-heartedly recommend them. They are a crisp, tender, mildly garlicky while also irresistibly sweet, seasonal delight. Here are some ideas for how to enjoy scapes: add them to scrambled eggs, & quiche, whip them up into pesto or hummus, enjoy as a pizza topping, garlic scape butter, added to a pasta sauce, roasted with mixed vegetables, pickled!, in a stir fry, grilled whole & served on a burger, as a garnish on soups and salads, or with bacon.

July 13

Greetings Farm Friends,

This week's email will be pretty short as we figure out how to rearrange our schedule for our first Thursday harvest of the year. We have been pretty busy keeping up on the weeding, clearing out some beds that had spring greens and stir fry mix, and getting them replanted to a fall succession of kale, cabbage, bok choy, and kohlrabi. Fruits are forming on the eggplant and tomatoes.

We are trying to stay on top of the watering during these hot, dry days and so far are managing to keep the chicks, hens, and ducks somewhat comfortable. Excitement with wild birds this week has been seeing a fledgling Common Yellowthroat hanging out in the front field. Jeremy accidentally disturbed a nest while mowing so we are glad to see that the mating pair was able to rebuild and rear a successful brood. Other young birds around the farm are House Wrens, Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers, Robins, and House Sparrows. The young Starlings, Grackles, Chipping Sparrows, and House Finches seem to have already moved on.

We have been seeing praying mantises on the farm pretty much everyday -- still little they are ranging from about 1/2" to 1 1/4" long in both green and brown. Also, lacewing eggs are a near daily find and voracious little ladybug larvae.

This weekend we had a much cherished opportunity to spend time with Jeremy's brother, his wife Veronika and their son (our nephew!) Gabriel. A highlight was getting to head up the canyon to Roughlock Falls for a picnic: wildflowers, different butterflies, American Dippers, and a leisurely walk to Savoy with a little Norwegian that loves sticks and rocks.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: lettuce, rainbow chard, snow peas, snap peas, shelling peas, the last of the mustard greens, garlic scapes, basil, purslane, pea shoots, eggs, and on Saturday fresh herbs and bouquets.

With Chaco tans and plenty of water breaks,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

PS If you need green black walnuts for making up some Nocino let us know and we can try to have some picked for you.

July 20

Hello farm friends,

This week has us seriously considering the merits of a siesta-based schedule. We haven't yet dialed it into our daily to-do list, but it's been awfully sweet to consider while tending to hot crops and hot chickens during these hot afternoons.

Highlights of the week, aside from day dreaming about day dreaming – with early mornings (thanks Tom) and long, late evenings in the field, we've transplanted flats and flats of fall greens out to the field, flats and flats of lettuces and beets seeded, and got beds of carrots and fall radishes seeded. I know some of you have been taking bets on when (if) the insect netting we ordered back in early May would arrive. Well, friends, two massive boxes were delivered to the doorstep this weekend, which means we may have fall kale and cabbages this year. We knocked out the west wall of our straw bale and cob greenhouse (yeh ok. Jeremy did the work. Tom and I watched. Supportively.), partly in preparation for reconstruction, partly as heat mitigation - one of the pepper varieties we have growing in there is aborting flowers because it is too, too hot. In the pepper's defense it's a hot pepper variety bred in Wales. We should have been kinder than to plant them in the hottest / least like high(er) latitude, maritime Wales part of the farm. All at once all the chicory all around the farm is blooming, and with this wind, the back field and walkways, all those tall and wily chicory-thick edges are rippling like pretty blue waters. And much tending irrigation on crops, moving hoses, making sure animals are comfortable and have water. The Freedom Rangers are still grazing in the yard by the house, an area with big shade trees and the very best diversity of forage. They are doing great, and in so doing, are requiring more room. You'll see, mid-driveway, mid-construction, is a second tractor that needs some love before being ready to help give the birds more space. AND! with much encouragement from Jeremy (thanks Jerm), I scooted away this past weekend for an overnight wool fiber and natural dye workshop at a friend's ranch near Bison. Last year we grew and collected a number of different dye flowers – dyer's chamomile, bright orange cosmos, marigolds, and coreopsis. They have all been dried and set aside in jars and bags since I haven't really known what to do with any of it. But now I do. Brace yourselves. This winter I will be turning everything in the closet yellow.

At the farmstand this week we'll have lettuce, rainbow chard, garden flower bouquets, garlic scapes, fresh herbs, garlic powder, snap peas, snow peas, shelling peas, broccolini and a few eggs. Things to look forward to in the next few weeks: zucchini, eggplant, peppers, and beets.

With lacto-fermenting garlic scapes and buckets of worm castings,  
your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

July 27

Late July & new moon greetings, Farm Friends, and Happy International Moth Week!

We hope this note finds you happy and well and admiring the beauties visiting your late night front porch light. Weeding adventures on the farm this week have involved asparagus, tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers - and \*deep sigh\* onions. The notable dearth of pollinator numbers so far this season has us feeling pretty low (we seem to have a good amount of diversity, but not very many of most invertebrates we are seeing), but while weeding in the asparagus, the clump of Queen Anne's lace that we want to get out of there before it sets seeds was covered - *covered* - with a buzz of activity: diverse wasps, flies, and bees. We left the clump for now and will hopefully (definitely, certainly, must) get it all out of there after the flowers are mostly done and before the earliest seed starts to ripen. While admiring the buzzing, we saw a new type of bumble bee(!), one we've never seen on the farm before, one we are still trying to ID, one with bright white stripes.

Other invertebrates of note this week are a bee assassin bug which we briefly misidentified as a kissing bug, aka bloodsucking conenose, that bites people and sucks their blood during the night (I'm not going to link to a more detailed description here. And heavens no, no YouTube video. You're welcome). In fact, it's only super scary if you're a bee. Also, many more praying mantises, (and more ladybugs (one of which is a parenthetical lady bug (actually called a Parentheses Ladybird Beetle (we just like the name parenthetical better))))).

The youngest birds moved out to the grape vines earlier this week. This involved an epic, harrowing, heart-racing cross-country and down-driveway journey in the chicken tractor. Jeremy was the tractor engine (pulling the box), Tom helped catch rogue, run-away chickens, and I watched the caboose end to make sure no birds were steamrolled under and out the backside. Everyone made the journey just fine and now the birds are day-ranging on grass and bugs, with room to roam and feast and fertilize.

Construction work has continued on the greenhouse west wall. Jeremy's father, David, has been over to help frame a big sliding window and new fan into the hole we busted in the strawbales a couple weeks ago. The finished wall now has a big, wide shelf space that will either be great for flats of seedlings or an extremely cozy reading nook. Maybe both.

Somehow, over the course of these last couple of weeks, the onions have been lost in a rising tide of bindweed, long beds and tiny tips of onion spears just poking up above the flowering flotsam and jetsam. Untangling the little dears is maybe one of the most delicate, time-consuming, least fun of all unfun activities (Tom described the task as kin to trying to defuse a bomb). You know how when you spend a day driving cross-country, and you close your eyes and still see the stripes of the road in front of you? Tonight I'm seeing tangled mats of bindweed.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: lettuce, the rainbowiest of rainbow chard, a few peas (the heat last week put the brakes on peas. hopefully just for a bit), garlic scapes, beets!, zucchini, eggplant, the first harvest of shishito peppers, basil, pea shoots, bouquets, and eggs.

With gratitude and bindweed, and, yes, Jeremy would say, 'and gratitude *for* bindweed,' but I'm not gonna,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

August 3

Dearest farm friends,

Good news: We're harvesting garlic! This is absolutely, hands down, one of our favorite tasks over the rhythm of the year. During these past few mornings, and with Tom's help, we brought in half the garlic from the field. We had a tough time irrigating the north end of these rows and, despite all the moisture earlier this summer, the dry weather and soil during bulb-beefing is evident in harvest from these varieties planted at the north ends. However, other varieties are looking *great*. We haven't yet dug any Music (our most popular variety), we are expecting a mix of head sizes, but hopefully mostly tending towards big, easy-in-the-kitchen & delicious heads.

The bee balm and anise mint are in full purple flower and haloed in bzzzzing. Chokecherries are ripening and the trees & bushes are full of some very joyful, pink-beaked robins and fledgling catbirds. The grapes also started turning color early this week. The fancy French viticulture word for this is veraison.

We picked up a few more rolls of fencing (which have definitely jumped in both price and scarcity since the last time we bought rolls of welded wire) and have put up a fenced area around the chicken tractor that is holding the new layers back in the orchard. With the fence, the birds can day-range in the fruit trees (grass hoppers, yay), and still be tucked back into the protection of the tractor at night (owls, not yay). The roosters from this flock have just started crowing and it's looking like we have a very good ratio of hens to roosters: out of 47 chickens probably 10-15 are roosters, which should leave us with a nice sized laying flock this fall.

And a bit of bad news: It seems that now all the wee beastie, wildly hungry crop pests are out and feasting en masse – especially so the cucumber beetles, squash bugs, and bean beetles. There are even caterpillars eating the snapdragon flowers!!? (have you ever heard of this?! Seriously. *ugh!*). The ecosystem of the farm has us always working to grow crops alongside all sorts of crop-hungry critters, most often we rely on our beneficial insect population, garter snakes, neighborhood feral cats, etc. to assist us in keeping a healthy balance. However, sometimes, and only ever suddenly, it seems we need to take matters into our own hands. And go squishing. So, add walking the rows, searching for and squishing pest bugs, larvae, and egg clusters to the to-do list.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having lettuce mix, rainbow chard, beets, snow peas, only a few zucchini (squash bugs), eggplant, shishitos, the very first of the hot peppers, fresh garlic(!), mint, basil, eggs, and flower bouquets.

Also, friends! please mark your calendars for a few SUPER SPECIAL upcoming events that we are helping to organize: Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup> a Spearfish Creek Clean-Up (1-2:30pm) and the very FIRST ANNUAL Spearfish Creek Watershed Festival (2:30-4pm) at the South Picnic Shelter in City Park. And the week of August 28<sup>th</sup>-September 4<sup>th</sup> is Spearfish Bike Week, a week of events celebrating bicycles in the community (think Sturgis Bike Week, only INFINITELY MORE FUN). Pencil this in and we will share fliers for both of these as soon as they are finalized.

Squish squish,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

August 10

Dear farm friends,

OooOo – wouldya look at that moon?! The headlamps are out for evening chores all of a sudden. And the chickens and ducks are heading in to their coop/tractors and hameau, respectively, noticeably earlier and earlier these days (ducky trivia: the Hameau de les Canards is so called by Trish's imaginative & wildly generous father, who, when she was boasting over her duck-hut carpentry skills, kindly offered that it was far too fine an edifice to be called a "duck hut", but needed a title more fit for a queen, renaming it after Marie Antoinette's little get-away cottages at Versailles).

The beautiful, much appreciated rain Sunday morning allowed for easy breezy transplanting – our final succession of lettuce for the season is out, along with another full bed of beets that should get sweetened up by a little frost right before they are ready to harvest this fall. With the mid 90 degree temperatures over the last few weeks these lettuce and beet seedlings were considerably more pampered with attention than most of our young crops, many daily waterings and shuffling flats in and out of the shade to avoid the extreme heat, but not grow light-starved and leggy.

And while on the topic of lettuce, last week during harvest we picked and pulled the whole bed of lettuce before we lost it to the heat. We had hoped to get a couple more weeks of harvest off these plants. The good news is that this is where the beets are now, but sadly it means that we will have a few weeks without lettuce while the next succession (planted 4 or 5 weeks ago) gets big enough to harvest.

With the warm temperatures predicted for tomorrow's harvest, we decided to split the harvest over two days, picking a little bit this (Wednesday) morning while it was still cool, hopefully this will help the vegetables (and farmers) from being wilted at the farm stand.

The rain (almost 1") and thunderstorm early-early Sunday morning must have caused a bunch of the earliest migrating birds to hunker down for a day. On Sunday morning we saw a few different types of warblers, a Lark Bunting and other sparrows, flycatchers, a young meadowlark and even a Rufous Hummingbird.

We know you all have probably been super nervous about a shortage of summer squash, well friends, we are happy to report that after some diligent squishing, the pest pressure on the zucchini has abated and it looks like there will be more fruit in upcoming weeks. Also, there are tomatoes that are starting to blush, tomatillos swelling in their husks, and flowers in the okra. Summer fruits! Ratatouille, get ready!

This week at the farm stand we'll have: rainbowy and amazing Swiss chard, beets, peas, zucchini, eggplant, shishitos, other peppers, basil, scallions, scapes, fresh garlic, chokecherries, and eggs.

With love and dirt,  
With love for dirt,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

PS, attached is a flier for this Sunday's Watershed Festival and Creek Clean-up. In a previous life Jeremy worked in an aquatic invertebrate lab and Trish studied fluvial geomorphology – you might imagine our excitement. Maybe we'll see you there?

PPS, in our house, Deborah Madison is a well-trusted go-to for all things vegetables & cooking. Whenever she mentions shishitos in her cookbooks, she *always* suggests pairing them along with cocktails. Just throwing that out there.

August 17

Farm friends! Well, hello!

Here we are with the week in numbers:

15 lbs of shishitos harvested this morning

½ of an eggplant left in the front field, the other half having been eaten by a deer

34 Freedom Rangers enthusiastically grazing weeds and fertilizing in the front perennial bulb beds – Jeremy moved their fence, allowing them to day range in the grapes for an afternoon. It's clear they would have preferred the ripening grapes, but they are making do with the prickly lettuce, wild spinach, and sunflowers

2 dozen, at least - the count of bumble bees spotted snoozing under the monarda button blossoms at dusk earlier this week

multiple/a whole stack – what's important here is: more than one – of sourdough pancakes for a birthday celebration, because at some point it seems one traditional cake-cake is just not enough.

14 Colorado potato beetles squished and 6 egg clusters (nests? clutches?) squished. Squish, squish, squish.

1 farm tour for the Northern Hills Master Gardeners group

7 happy robins in one chokecherry tree at one time. Now that, together, we've cleaned the branches, they are undoubtedly headed to the grapes. I just looked this up: there are many collective nouns for a group of robins. When it comes to robins that are feasting wholeheartedly on chokecherries, they are called a "blush" of robins.

1 Watershed Festival, this one goes hand-in-hand with some number of lbs of garbage removed from the stream channel & flood plain and infinite amounts of gratitude

2.75 rows of onions & shallots that need some serious TLC ASAP OE. WTF. (0.25 row of scallions looks A-Ok)

100% of the garlic has been harvested and is now set aside to cure. YAY! Imagonna say that again: YAY!

2 monarch butterflies – 1 freshly emerged and dazzling and 1 more tattered and worn than any other monarch we have seen on the farm, looks like she flew here all the way from Michoacan.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: rainbow chard, beets, snow and snap peas, zucchini, cucumbers, eggplant, shishitos, bell peppers, hot peppers, the first tomatoes, a few tomatillos, scallions, garlic, chokecherries, basil, dill, eggs, and bouquets.

And lastly, we spent some time earlier this week with someone who has tested positive for Covid. We are testing ourselves and so far have multiple negative tests. We will be wearing masks at the farm stand this week.

With juicy summer fruits,  
your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

August 25

Greetings Farm Friends,

Peppers and eggplant, the beginning of tomatoes, we hope you all have been enjoying these fruits of summer. We cooked up our first ratatouille of the year, a few different eggplant/okra/sweet pepper curries, and have started some batches of lacto-ferments (garlic scapes & dill, eggplant & fresh garlic, and a farm favorite: sriracha-style hot sauce), and, of course, we've been enjoying many and frequent skillet-fulls of shishitos. A good friend came by for a truly nourishing visit over the weekend. He was traveling with his sweetheart who is visiting the US from Russia and we got an impromptu lesson in making and eating traditional Russian dumplings called Pelmene. Stuffed with a bison and pork blend, they paired perfectly with a big pan of shishitos, snow peas and a glass of icy cold premium Russian vodka (not our typical go-to, but when in Rome...).

We've had a couple of special requests for updates on the farm flocks. Thank you for asking. The chickens are all doing well. Our old layers are still not laying much, not much at all, however Jeremy just found a hidden nest with almost a dozen eggs from a couple of birds. The area where they are ranging is somewhat of a jungle, thick understory, many opportunities for hidden nests – maybe they are laying better than we thought? Egg hunt anyone? BYO machete. The Freedom Rangers that we moved last week are settled into their new location, fertilizing the flower field, de-bugging the bulbs. If you walk down the driveway a little bit you can see them giving you their best sad puppy dog eyes and moaning about how they haven't been fed in weeks. Don't believe a word they say. The new layers, the flock in the way back corner of the orchard, are raucous crows, shade lovers and the littlest hens in this group seem to like finding perches up in the young apple trees. In the evenings, we've been hearing a pair of juvenile Great-horned Owls and last night when Jeremy tucked in the back birds the two owls were sitting on fence posts just above the chickens watching for an opportune moment. (add build additional/new coop? bird netting? move birds? to the to-do list). And lastly, the ducks. Ah, the ducks. As silly and darling and endearing and splashy as ever. During the heat of this summer the white layers developed a habit of tucking their head & long necks under the Hameau. And then they appear to fall asleep. Is it shady and cool? Wet and buggy? Are they rooting around for slugs? Who knows. This has them looking a whole lot like ostriches. And adds to the already long list of endearments.

In other bird news – we finally feel confident enough to ID a bird that we have heard late at night every few years or so. A Common Poorwill flying around catching dinner in the dark.

The back field is sporting a bit of a bald spot now: we've pulled off one of the two occultation tarps. The tarps are used to help set-back and kill off the smooth brome, our most challenging weed, and prepare an area for us to plant next year. After pulling back the tarp, Jeremy immediately seeded a mixed cover crop of buckwheat, winter rye, and hairy vetch into the empty bed. Hopefully yesterday's rain will encourage rapid germination. Most of this mix will over winter, growing quickly as it warms next spring. If things work according to plan, the stand of cover crop greenery will be thick enough that we can mow it in late May and plant winter squash directly into the residue.

There are some important happenings this week, things to add to your calendar. First, the Northern Hills district of the USFS is accepting comments on the proposed exploratory drilling for gold west of Spearfish Canyon. Documents about this project are available here <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=62590> and the comment form is available

here <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=62590> Comments are requested by September 2. (fyi, the way it works is, if you do not submit a comment in this initial period before the 2nd, you will be unable to comment during future opportunities about the exploratory permit).

Second, and a whole lot more fun than a big gold mine: Spearfish Bike Week is coming up, starting this Sunday. We have attached the flier for this year's activities. There's a whole lot going on - something for everyone. Join in on a super sporty mountain bike group ride, or come to the shop and learn how to fix a flat tire. A scavenger hunt by bicycle, a pie fundraiser. (ha! who's idea was that? ;) AND we would like to take this opportunity to extend a very special, warm invitation to you all to join us at the Spearfish Bicycle Collective's Grand Opening on Sunday afternoon. Come see what we're up to when we're not doting on ducks and bindweed. Take a peek at [bikespearfish.org](http://bikespearfish.org). We love this workshop space, the people involved, and what it contributes to the community - and we'd love to share it with you. And yes, of course, we hope you'll bring along your bike to join in on the Community Ride following the grand opening get-together - this is possibly my(Trish) most favorite event in the whole encyclopedia of Spearfish's most wonderful community events.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes (cherry and slicers), eggplant, tomatillos, shishitos, bell peppers, hot peppers, peas (still?), garlic, scallions, beets, chard, basil, a few green beans and okra, and a few dozen eggs.

With bird-netted grape vines and yellowing leaves hiding in the trees,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

August 31

Hello Farm Friends,

We're in the midst of Spearfish Bike Week festivities and feeling mostly stoked, a bit windswept, certainly cheery. We just wrapped up the week's Scavenger Hunt ride and have been so warmly delighted to see so many farm share members out at events this week!

A short little update from the farm this week: we gave a tour to a group of South Dakota Natural Resource Conservation Service staff members from offices around the state, the focus of the tour and conversation was on soil health practices. The crab apples and grapes are both now sweet enough for harvest. Buckwheat and clover are both germinating in the recently untarped/newly exposed beds in the back field. American Redstarts and Yellow Warblers are up in the tree branches and the Nighthawks have been forming large groups (100+) in the evening, they are probably just about to fly on south.

This is the last couple of days (until 9/2) to make comments to the forest service regarding the proposed exploratory drilling for gold on the west side of Spearfish Canyon, documents about this project are available here <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=62590> and the comment form is available here [https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=62590&fbclid=IwAR0tnm0iQ155bxGQlGAOS4-W91lvr10iPs-ij\\_9lOeCMQLU3bbq3r-RQEps](https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=62590&fbclid=IwAR0tnm0iQ155bxGQlGAOS4-W91lvr10iPs-ij_9lOeCMQLU3bbq3r-RQEps)

This week we are planning to have: cherry and slicer tomatoes, eggplant, tomatillos, shishitos, hot peppers, sweet peppers, garlic, scallions, red and yellow onions, shallots, zucchini, cucumbers, green beans, basil, rainbow chard, beets, lettuce (if it stays cool long enough), okra, a few dozen chicken eggs, duck eggs, and if we have enough time to pick them tomorrow, Grapes!

With wheels spinning and bells ringing,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

September 8

Dear Farm Friends,

Uffda, 103 degrees on the farm Wednesday afternoon has the most Norwegian of us feeling extraespecially Norwegian, so much so he's breaking out the Norwegian exclamations (or is "uffda" an expletive?).

Some highlights from this week: Monarch butterflies! A water color studio arts class from BHSU came to the farm, 15 students and their professor spread out across the farm, mostly in the patches of shade, painting grape vines, chickens, zinnias, outbuildings and more. The class is planning to return in a few weeks, after learning more techniques in-classroom – looking ahead, the farm will likely look wildly different, as we tend to have a good hard frost well before October. Spearfish Bike Week is now all wrapped up. We butchered the meat chickens earlier this week, it was a warm but peaceful morning with the help of Jeremy's parents and a few good friends. With this crew, what could be an otherwise hard, emotionally ooey-goey day, instead becomes a warm and gracious gathering, full of gratitude, good conversation and cheer.

Ohmy and it's fall feathery mayhem: fall migration is *really really* going now. After a whole week of distraction by bicycles, now the little birds are the reason that we haven't managed to harvest the ripe and ready crab apples that are littering the driveway up by the farm stand. Most birdwatching is happening during the early morning while Jeremy is tending to the chickens and ducks, but at this time of year the binoculars are almost always within arm's reach. For those of you that are also excited about migrants passing through, here are a few from the list so far this week: a hummingbird (species?), Baltimore Orioles, Brown Thrashers, Western Tanager, Loggerhead Shrike, Mountain Bluebird, a female bunting (probably Lazuli), sparrows - including a few good mystery birds, and at least five different types of warblers – with extra excitement for a newly-seen-on-the-farm Canada Warbler.

The peppers are growing like we've never seen before. I hope you all have some great recipes for pickled peppers, or they are easy to chop up and freeze for wintertime stews. The ground cherries are ripening. The heat has been hard on the lettuce, at least one variety that we have been hoping to harvest quickly bolted and is far too bitter to include in a lettuce mix, we will see how the other varieties that look ready to harvest taste, but it may be that this entire planting of lettuce will end up going to the chickens rather than the farm stand. You are not nearly as disappointed about this as we are, believe me. There is another succession of lettuce in the field yet, so greens should make a return to the farm stand in the near future.

The harvest list for this week includes shishitos, sweet and hot peppers, tomatoes, tomatillos, eggplant, zucchini (we missed Monday's harvest, so if you want a thigh-sized zucchini for ??? this week is your best bet), cucumbers, red onions, shallots, scallions, green beans, rainbow chard, a few bunches of beets, basil (probably close to the last of it, so if you've been meaning to put up pesto...), okra, a few dozen eggs, and bouquets. And yesyes, we'll also have garlic.

Switching this weekend from sweat rags to frost covers,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

September 14

Grateful, rain-kissed greetings Farm Friends,

These ever-shorter days are flying by – where did the week go? Let's see... A most abbreviated summary of the week would be: mostly, and most frequently, we are trying to stay on top of the harvest of the 'every other day crops', zucchini, green beans, and cucumbers. And then it's harvesting everything else.

A longer report would include a bit of food processing and putting up – three more jars of ferments are on the counter in the kitchen as well as a batch of waterbath canned tomatoes and salsa (this may not sound surprising, but it's a pretty big deal). The hum of the dehydrator is a near constant background noise in the house these days, although for our eyes and lungs it will have to head to the back porch soon as we prepare for making more garlic powder. We are hosting a third dog in the house while family are out of town. This has us officially out numbered. Other than Miga's newly developed interest in chasing deer all over kindomcome, Oscar's don't-chew-on-that-hotspot-on-my-leg/watch-me-bump-into-all-the-walls-and-feel-sorry-for-me cone, Radish having yet one more in her flock to mother/manage/shepherd/generally fret over and keep in line and occasionally yip at, and the copious accumulations of

dog hair in the living room, we're all pretty much in puppy heaven. With the sudden drop in temperatures last Friday and Saturday evenings, we covered up rows of tomatoes, basil, peppers, and green beans; there was ice on one of our hoses in the very back orchard (*eeps!* and *brrrr!*), but it didn't get cold enough to cause harm to any of the crops in the field (in other words, you still have time to put up some pesto).

On two successive mornings this week, Jeremy hosted groups of young students from the Learning Tree School for farm visits. Highlights from these farm walks included talking about seeds, black walnuts, and favorite vegetables – *and* crowing (loudly, exuberantly, full of soul and from the heart, like really only pre-schoolers are wont to do) with the young roosters.

Jeremy has also been reading up on farm policy in preparation for a farm visit and meeting with Senator Thune's office next week about programs to support new and aspiring farmers in the 2023 Farm Bill. There are a few other farmers and ranchers from the area joining in on the conversation, hopefully we can help have a meaningful impact.

Praying mantises! So many! The marigolds are a popular spot – it seems moths like the marigolds, mantises like the moths. Jeremy even came across a few mating mantises(!). This is a thing that happens for sure a lot around here considering the number of egg cases we find all over (ALL OVER), but we've never ever seen this before... ah, those [discrete mantis sweethearts](#). And yeh, I know, you want to know: everyone had their heads. We'll keep our eyes out tomorrow as we're harvesting to see if we find any headless mantis males in the marigolds.

The pile of this year's saved seed is growing, a few more tomato varieties and two types of peppers are now spread out and drying. The peppers are exciting – one is a new to us variety called Sugar Rush Peach, a habanero-type pepper bred in Wales (a hot pepper from Wales!? Crazy. And hold on to your rarebit, it's HOT). Another is La Mesilla, a beloved variety originally grown by our farmer mentors in northern New Mexico, a pepper that we've been growing on the farm for several years. This is a sweet-hot red chile pepper we will pick to dry and power - look for it at the farmstand in a couple weeks. The seed eggplant selection are maturing, hopefully the season stays warm enough that we can get a viable seed crop from these as well. The eggplant are called Diamond, a short season variety originally bred in the Ukraine – these are the pretty, delicious, dark purple eggplant we've had in heaps at the farmstand of late.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having cherry tomatoes, slicer tomatoes, ground cherries, shishito peppers, hot and sweet peppers, eggplant, scallions, onions, garlic, shallots, zucchini, cucumbers, green beans, beets, rainbow chard, lettuce, okra, basil, and flower bouquets.

Rain!  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

P.S. This season we have typically run with a crew of three on harvest days, however tomorrow it will be just the two of us, so apologies in advance if not all of the items listed here manage to make it up to the farm stand, we appreciate your patience and understanding, we'll hurry scurry, it's a pretty girthy harvest list, and this is yet another unwieldy run-on sentence.

September 21

Greetings Farm Friends,

Happy Autumn! We have black walnuts falling but not much for leaves yet. Our earliest ash trees are mostly yellow already and the walnuts are starting to turn. This (mostly) cooler weather has been conducive to getting some more food processing done in our kitchen. After our farm stand on Saturday we usually sell some of what remains to the Bee's Knees and a restaurant or two, but mostly we try to either eat it up ourselves over the course of the week or try to get it preserved in some form. It has been a few years since we have done much serious canning but this year, and this last Saturday afternoon in particular, we cut up and water bath canned salsa and pasta sauce, dilly beans, and pickled okra (a first for us), cucumbers and sweet peppers. It is nice to have a little bit of this summer abundance tucked away for winter.

The recent rains on our occultation tarps have made enough little puddles that we are attracting a few shorebirds, some sort of large sandpipers a few days ago and then this morning a snipe flushing out startled me as I walked by. There still seem to be quite a few moths and butterflies, including a monarch one afternoon, an underwing disturbed when moving a garbage can by the driveway, and a swallowtail captured in mid flight over the grape vines during our quarterly photo monitoring today.

On Monday Trish headed to Colorado for the week to meet with her coworkers at the Trust for Public Land, a crew that she mostly only ever sees online. Tomorrow's harvest will be a little bit tricky without her but my very helpful mother will be here to make the morning go more smoothly.

Also on Monday we hosted the West River director for Senator John Thune's office and a group of six farmers and ranchers to talk about the upcoming (2023) Farm Bill and programs to support young and beginning farmers in finding secure access to land. Topics ranged over community food security, land trusts, conservation programs, land succession/transfer, development pressure, and others. We followed this up with a quick tour of the farm where the conversation was back to the more typical topics of tomatoes, deer, seeds and recipes.

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: cabbage, chard, lettuce, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, shishitos, eggplant (a few, the summer fruits are definitely slowing down with the cooler nights), sweet and hot peppers, ground cherries, okra, shallots, red and yellow onions, garlic, scallions, and bouquets on Saturday after Trish is back (unless of course I am feeling extra inspired in the morning). We haven't dug up any potatoes yet, but if tomorrow goes well there may be one or two varieties available tomorrow.

On the to-do list for the week has been to get the notebook caught up and send out farm share remaining balance emails. I am sorry that I haven't managed to get those sent out yet. Hopefully before Saturday's market you will all have another email from us.

And lastly, this upcoming Sunday, September 25th from 1-3pm we will be hosting a seed saving workshop. If you are interested in learning how to save seeds from tomatoes, peppers, flowers, etc. come by and celebrate seeds with us.

With long sleeves and rustling leaves,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

September 29

Hello Farm Friends,

Crash bang. This is the sound lately of the big green black walnuts falling, \*smack\*, on the roof of the house, garage, packshed (as you might imagine, the little dog, Miga, is on high alert). This is also the general sentiment around here as I've (Trish) just tested positive for Covid. I found out I had possibly-maybe-coulda been exposed earlier this week and although I was testing negative, Jeremy and I have been isolating from each other as best as we can. Jeremy is still testing negative and feeling well (he'll test again before the market, just to be safe), so you'll see him this evening at the farmstand - masked up and slathered in disinfectant. Randi is here to help with harvest this morning and, to be extra especially safe, I'm taking on only non-fresh food handling responsibilities.

Ok, here's the good news of the week: we took soil samples and set them off to a lab in Nebraska. OoOoo! Remember waiting for your SAT results?? We are on the very edgy edge of our seats. Fall bird migration! Jupiter! (did you know she has 80 moons?! Eighty!! Has me thinking about this Billy Collins poem, "The Four Moon Planet" <https://thesquattingsasquatch.wordpress.com/2014/06/22/the-four-moon-planet/>) The sweet old lady layers have (once again) taken to roosting in the spruce boughs at night as there has been some sort of furry villain excavating in the mulch around the base of the chicken coop. Jeremy has set and is monitoring a live trap. Nothing yet. And the back birds, the younger flock, have decided their fence really is only just a suggestion(decoration?) and are parading around the whole of the orchard like they own the place. Who are we to argue? With help from friends, we were able to

get a number of seeds cleaned (or mostly cleaned) this weekend – scallions, tomatoes, ground cherries, peppers. And we had a chance to spend time with our farmer friend Jared, at Budding Moon Farm, in thoughtful conversation about challenges and successes, frustrations and delights of the season – it was an afternoon that has us feeling mighty grateful for our community of local growers and eaters (*psst.. that's you*).

Alright, here's the list for the week: shishitos, sweet and hot peppers, tomatoes, tomatillos, ground cherries, eggplant, zucchini, cucumbers, red & yellow onions (ohmy sweet happy heavens, you guys, these onions. You'll swoon before you cry, I promise), shallots, scallions, sparkly rainbowy Swiss chard, basil (can you believe it, nearly October and we still have basil?), garlic and garlic braids, potatoes (Jeremy dug the first of them - Yukon Gold - all by his lonesome. And I can't even hug him), and flower bouquets too.

Stay healthy,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

October 7

Greetings Farm Friends,

Well, here we are, Friday night and we're scurrying to get a note out. Good thing there's only a handful of folks (hi Mom!) that actually read these funny weekly farm newsletters, and you are nothing if not wildly kind and patient – especially when it comes to creative punctuation... and punctuality.

Highlights from the farm this week: Yellowing trees, first golden- now snowy - milkweed, elecampane setting seed well above our heads, chickadees going after sunflower seed heads, honey bees loading up on the last of any and all nectar they can find – we're seeing them frequently on the zinnias and basil flowers. Of the 11 varieties of winter squash we seeded, we have a good harvest from just three (I'm crediting this loss to slugs) – Styrian, Hidatsa, and Potimarron. Curiously, the Hidatsa and Potimarron were varieties that were planted at the far west end of the field in with the 3-sisters beds. The others we planted in thick straw mulch between garlic rows towards the east, near the ducks. We'll start digging carrots next week. The last of the onion beds are harvested, out of the field, spread out in the greenhouse to cure down – Dakota Tears, Ed's Red shallots, Bennie's Red and Valencia – oh boy, oh boy, the onions this year, what a dream. We dug another row of potatoes, which means we'll have Yukon Gold, Huckleberry Gold, AND Purple Viking at the farmstand this weekend. Purple Viking potatoes are the potato that Lisa Frank would illustrate, if she ever did a magical rainbow fresh farm vegetable sticker series. Neon pink and bright purple skin with pandabearbelly white flesh. If you didn't have the privilege of growing up in the 80's and toting a Lisa Frank trapper keeper to school every day, I might suggest a quick google image search, but it's only going to give you an 80's pop-art rainbow explosion stomachache, so don't do that, just come by the farmstand to pick up the most stunning potatoes you ever did see. The irrigation ditch is still open (usually flow to the ditch shuts off October First), so we've been taking advantage of this and getting the hose out and moving it around to the fruit trees in the back orchard area to soak the trees before winter. This water has also meant a grace period from hauling buckets – in the fall/early winter, we move animals in closer to the house to make sure we can get an extension cord out to heat their waterers. Right now, the young flock is still out at the far end of the property, nearly ¼ of a mile away. No one wants to carry buckets of water (and feed) that far every day, nobody.

The highlight of highlights: Jeremy's parents pulled out their well-worn superhero capes this week with harvest help, dog walking, and running the farm stand market for us while we entertained our roommate for the week, Miss 'Rona. Thank you all for your kind notes and messages. We're both feeling better, vastly grateful for vaccines, chicken broth, brandy-lime&sodas, and our willing, capable, & ever generous parents. *Thank you.*

At the farmstand this week we'll have rainbow chard, potatoes, tomatoes, tomatillos, ground cherries, sweet and hot peppers, shishitos, eggplant(!), zucchini, cucumbers, garlic braids and heads, shallots, red and yellow onions, cabbage, and flower bouquets.

Heaps of gratitude, oceans of eggplant,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

October 12

Hello Farm Friends,

We hope this finds you well, with rosy, wind-kissed cheeks and an appetite for soup (Squash.. Creamy potato. French onion. Roasted garlic with garlic...). Of note this week: we harvested Russian Banana potatoes (many, but small, tubers, these will be great for roasting whole, or ohmygoodness [those amazing salt crusted potatoes](#)...mmmm), several nights of hard frost on the field & row covers adrift in the wind, Sandhill cranes chortling (is that the word?) overhead, and the results of our soil samples are back. It's going to take us a bit of time and a refresher in organic chemistry to figure out what it means, but at first review, it appears as though the soil in our greenhouse, after being irrigated with well water for the last ten years, is approaching the salinity of the Salar de Uyuni of Bolivia, or at least pertnear as salty as the rim of a margarita. ok ok. Jeremy says it's not that bad, but we have some work to do. If you happen across a good deal on rain barrels, do let us know.

Some things for your calendar: a party! We're planning our annual end of the season farm community harvest party, Sunday October 23<sup>rd</sup>, from 2-5pm. We'll have an assortment of farm feastings to enjoy, join us for a farm walk, [coocheecoo some ducks](#), tango, two-step, or chacha as we dance on dry beans, sample a flight of garlic. And if we get ahold of some apples, we'll have the press going for fresh-pressed cider. We'll also be drawing names for the Walk/Bike to the Farmstand Pie Raffle. Everyone is welcome, bring your family, friends, and neighbors If you can, ride your bike. We hope you'll join us.

Rot-tober Fest! A Compost and Fermented Foods Celebration! Hmm, still working out the details. Stay tuned. More to come on this one.

The South Dakota Local Foods Conference is coming up mid-November in Sturgis, here's a bit more about it - <https://extension.sdstate.edu/event/2022-south-dakota-local-foods-conference>

Our farmer friend, Jared, from Budding Moon Farm is offering Fall CSA Shares this year and he still has a few available – his fall season runs through the end of December and he's growing chicory. <https://buddingmoonfarm.wordpress.com/our-csa/>

At the farmstand this week we'll have winter squash, garlic (heads and braids), shallots, scallions, onions, ground cherries, tomatoes, shishitos, hot and sweet peppers, lettuce, rainbow chard, beets, and potatoes. And we'll try and get some carrots dug too.

Thanks all.

Crane chortles and cheers,

Trish and Jeremy

October 20

Good morning Farm Friends,

What a bright and generous fall – we hope you've been taking opportunities to peep the leaves and revel in these blue sky days. The bright yellows and oranges of the trees around the farm are only just beginning to tarnish, black walnuts are still falling, chickadees on the sunflower seed heads look like eager participants at a pie eating contest, there's a rim of ice on the chicken waterers first thing in the morning, and every day the sunrise is moving southwards along the ridge of Lookout Peak.

This week we moved the young layer flock to the front yard from the orchard where they had spent the summer, at the very west end of the farm. Impetus for this move was threefold, reduction of water bucket hauling distance, a courtesy to our west-end neighbors (the roosters are awake and crowing before 5 am), and for ease of butchering (we'll be setting up to butcher our old laying flock and these young roosters here in the next few weeks, having them close by/not having to haul them around on butcher day means less stress on the birds and the butchers). We rolled up and pulled

down the shade cloth from off the roof of the greenhouse. We harvested the eggplant seed crop - Diamond eggplant - those delicious dark purple one's you've been picking up at the farmstand all summer. The seed looks A++. Flow to our irrigation ditch has shut down for the season. And Monday night we had a low of 26 degrees which fully froze the last of the field tomatoes and zucchini. There are rows of sweet peppers and tomatoes under the protection of a plastic low-tunnel that were frost singed, but still have some good fruits. We will pick everything left today during our harvest, so that we don't have to worry as the temperatures get even cooler next week. And of course, inevitably, but still sorta sad, this drop in temperatures has brought an end to the rows of cut flowers – asters, cosmos, zinnias, snapdragons - what a wonderful season for flowers it's been.

We have been starting on bed prep and other tasks to prepare for next spring. This includes sieving compost and setting it aside in the greenhouse so that it's ready (not stuck in a frozen pile outside) for soil blocking and seeding alliums in February. Jeremy took a truck-load of weeds (remember his 450 lb burdock catch?) out to the rubble site brush/burn pile. We have been moving wood chips from the large pile that has been occupying our driveway most of the summer, and, just as we're making headway in making space to move, *another* load of chips was dropped off earlier this week. No complaints about gifts of carbon and mulch, but at some point it will be lovely not having a mountain of wood chips right outside our front door. A big task on our fall to-do list is planting garlic. No motion in that direction just yet, but we're thinking about it.

Perhaps most importantly: we have rescheduled the harvest party to better accommodate the weather. This Saturday, October 22 from 2-5pm we will be celebrating community and food and the growing season with cider pressing, bean stomping, farm feasting and a farm tour. We're so very grateful for your support this season and we're looking forward to sharing the afternoon with y'all!

This week at the farm stand we plan on having: ripe slicer tomatoes and green tomatoes, sweet peppers, shishitos, cucumbers, a few types of hot peppers, beets, potatoes, rainbow chard, scallions, shallots, red and yellow onions, winter squash, and if we have time during harvest (fingers crossed) parsnips too.

Blue skies, green tomatoes, yellow leaves,  
Your farmers,  
Trish and Jeremy

October 27

Hello Farm Friends, good morning,

Here we go! Short days, frosty mornings, our first snow fall(!), two more weekends of market, the autumn timer ticking its countdown – and we are go-go-go hurry scurry to prepare for winter.

Our crop rotation plan has garlic headed into beds that had been beans and peas this spring-summer(remember all those candiesweet snap peas months ago?), so we've been pulling out the plants and trellising to make way for planting cloves. We are changing the layout of our field to, hopefully, help improve irrigation and crop/weeding/flipping/manythings management. The thought process behind this change has been... involved. In the tattered and wonky, polkadot & plaid fabric of this farm, pull on one thread and -oh boy, hold on tight- every little bit of this place starts shifting. Change the bed layout and suddenly it's now we need new irrigation (and possibly trenching?), moving (replacing?) fencing, and gates, and how wide of an access do we need on the northside?, do we want living mulch walkways (trish) or woodchips(jeremy)?, and do we need an electric mower? And quick let's figure this out so we can get garlic in the ground before the whole place is frozen. ISO Magic 8 Ball.

Jeremy is just about ½ way through planting out an order of 1200 spring bulbs – hyacinths, crocuses, and squill. There's good news and bad news here. Good news: more early season forage for our native pollinator friends and obvs flowers(!). Bad news: we're running out of room, over the past few years Jeremy has planted out thousands of bulbs – what's he going to do when there's no room? How will this madness manifest? Hold up. One more Good news: bulbs propagate and will need spread, and we have neighbors, there's a whole town here, an empty canvas, guerrilla crocusing is a thing right?

We cleaned up the heaps of onions that have been curing on shelves in the greenhouse and tucked them in from the dropping temperatures. There was just a bit of snow/moisture, but nothing like last year's October snow, so we are feeling optimistic about soil temperatures and digging in the garlic. And YES! What a truly wonderful afternoon with y'all during the farm harvest party on Saturday! Apple-pear fresh pressed cider, stomping on soup beans, a flight of squash, fresh flavors from the field including salted caramel green tomato pies, feeding buggy apples to the chickens, and even an impromptu pop-up black walnut sale led by a crew of entrepreneurial youngins. (; It felt so special to have the time together. From the very bottom of our hearts, thank you, friends.

Almost forgot. The Bike/Walk to the Farm Stand Raffle! There were SO MANY names in the jar this year, we had to unload them into a giant box and with young helpers, we drew not one. Not two. But – since there were so many entries and since pie is wonderful - THREE NAMES. Although the raffle is open to anyone, it just so happens that all three selected winners are also Farm Share Members (warm fuzzies on top of warm fuzzies). The winners are: the Saturday morning bicycling bard, Ron Hoard, the farm's favorite artist, cartographer, skateboarder, and peashoot gourmand, Rosalee Masson, and biking to the farm for these past 11 years Zindie Meyers!

There is one more week of farm stand after this one – our last market for the season will be Saturday November 5<sup>th</sup>. With autumn's low temperatures and hard frosts, the diversity at the stand is decreasing, but we still have plenty of good food – including frost sweetened parsnips! This week at the farm stand we plan on having potatoes (French Fingerling, Purple Viking, Dark Red Norland, and Russian Banana Fingerlings), winter squash (Potimarron and Hidatsa), red and yellow onions, garlic heads and garlic braids, scallions, shallots, green tomatoes, some ripe tomatoes, a few ground cherries, sweet & hot peppers, *and* we ground, sifted, & packaged up La Mesilla and green chile powders which will be available alongside the garlic and scape powders.

Thanks all, we are looking forward to seeing you at the farm stand,  
Your farmers,  
Jeremy and Trish

November 5

Oh Dear! We are sorry that this is getting sent out so late in the week. it was mostly written up on schedule, but then...

Hello Farm Friends,

With leaves on the ground, snowflakes in the air, we're at the end of our season – what a long and luxurious fall it's been. And what a generous and flavorful year. There were certainly disappointments and frustrations, crop loss and challenges with irrigation – but gracious me – those shallots! And the bell peppers!?! And ground cherries, and rainbow chard, and eggplant, and beets, and, and, and... We hope you are feeling well nourished by the season and the soil.

This week we emptied out our finished compost bin, hauling it wheelbarrow by wheelbarrow out to the new garlic beds. The compost was 5 stars, the best compost we've cooked up yet. And now that bay is empty, we can get to flipping over the un- and undercooked pile that's been accumulating in the adjacent bay. Layer it up nice and pretty with a truckload of horse manure like an earthy tiramisu... yum.

Nearly all the garlic is in, Jeremy had a garlic head breaking/bed prepping few days and finished up the most recent planting by headlamp late in the evening. We are trying to be especially critical with the seed we're planting this year, as we started to see signs of aster yellows in the beds this spring. Aster yellows is a virus that spreads pretty quickly between plants by little sucking insects and can destroy a crop. We've been growing out these varieties, some for eleven years, it would be really hard (and expensive) to start over again. (You might remember from our note last week that finalizing the geometry of our new bed layout was key (but a bit of a sticky key) to getting the garlic in the ground – well, we did it folks, we have a new bed plan, and it feels good. So far. We haven't quite nailed down irrigation).

We took advantage of the weather earlier this week and dug more parsnips and pulled beets. The chickens have been enjoying pumpkin brains, the remains from jack-o-lantern carving parties. That being said, we would happily & appreciatively take any leftover pumpkins to feed the compost pile. The compost microbiome would be overjoyed, a fruity surprise in their tiramisu. Sounds like maybe more of a parfait. We now have two dehydrators running pert near non-stop. The current line-up is featuring peppers and garlic. And gratefully, with the blue skies and wind lately, the

dehydrator units have been running on renewable energy. The last of the herbs spread out on drying racks in the pack shed have been cleared off their racks and are ready to package up. The very last tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers have all been harvested from the greenhouse.

At the farm stand this week we'll have potatoes (French Fingerling and Purple Viking), winter squash (Potimarron and Hidatsa), red and yellow onions, shallots, garlic, garlic braids, baby beets, parsnips, carrots, red (a few) and green (many!) tomatoes, the very last cucumbers (in November!), hot peppers, sweet peppers, scape powder, extremely (literally - fine garlic dust is still hanging in the air from sifting) fresh garlic powder, chile powders – including the beloved Chile de la Chacra mix, and herbal tea blends.

With now over ten years of experience of what has worked well, how we work best, how pieces of the farm are interdependent and entangled along with reflections on a number of challenges we faced this season (weather, managerial, etc.), and the routine/regular/over and over again challenges that arise each year, we are considering and will be implementing several big changes around the farm (bed layout and irrigation are certain to change, and possibly crop plan, calendar, and market style). As farm share members and regular customers, we greatly value your thoughts and experience and would appreciate any feedback about what worked well for you this season, what could have worked better (farm stand hours, prices, communication, etc.), suggestions, ponderings, all of it. Our farm community is a critical part of the work we're doing, in stewarding this soil and cultivating this food, and we absolutely wouldn't be doing this without you. Your support, not only in the initial financial investment in a farm share, but also, and perhaps more so, in our weekly visits together at the farmstand, your encouragements and joy, grounding practicality and patience, hearing about new food and flavor discoveries and the veggies you just can't stand to eat, tantalizing recipe ideas, silly and delightful/delighted emails, this all is what makes the farm possible.

From the very bottom our hearts and the warm gooey center of our compost pile, we appreciate you – our companions in joy and wonder and our buoys through hard work and disappointments. Thank you for being a part of Cycle Farm.

We are wishing you all a restful, healthy, and delicious winter season.

With warmth and gratitude,

Your farmers,

Trish and Jeremy