

FARM NEWS for NOVEMBER

As this year's growing season comes to an end, we have much for which to be grateful. Our gardens have produced enough vegetables and fruit to have two sessions of CSA. We were concerned early in April that we would have problems growing enough because of the heavy spring rains. Because of that, we started our spring/summer CSA two weeks later than usual. That decision proved to be beneficial to us because the gardens soon picked up growing speed and produced all summer long.

At the end of the summer CSA we knew we had plenty of fall plants growing so we decided to try for a fall CSA. Again that proved to be a good decision because the fall crops have been good and plentiful. We are thinking that the farm store will probably be able to stay open for several weeks after the last CSA pick up.

In August of this year we hired a new lead gardener. Victor Sarringhaus has proved to be a blessing to us. He has a good eye for marketing, arranging products to be sold and thinking of ways to make our products look even more appealing than usual. He has a unique way of displaying products that go together and packaging the products so that people coming in would want to buy them. Just the simple tilting of the display racks in the vegetable cooler has improved the look of the store. Store sales have picked up because of his talents. These gifts along with his abilities in growing plants have proved a great gift to us. We are so glad to have him with us.

A new flock of chickens is due in just a few days. In late July the little chicks were hatched and they have been growing in the hatchery ever since. We get them when they are about 16 weeks old and within days they usually start laying eggs. In past years we have actually had a few eggs laid in the delivery crates. The new chickens will lay for about 18-24 months before needing to be replaced.

We are grateful for our volunteers who have come throughout the year. Many groups have arrived with many helping hands and a lot of energy. S. Carolyn will tell you all about them in December. We are grateful to Tom and Kathy Wolf who come and share their time and energy. We are grateful to Dawn Merkel who has come every Tuesday to help during the work day and stays on for the Tuesday pick-up of the CSA.

We are also grateful to all of our workers who have come throughout the year. Olivia Fledderman has been our faithful seasonal worker for several years. She worked all summer and still comes several days a week. Larry Merkel has cut and trimmed grass throughout the summer. Josh Hannebaum still continues to come after his day job to help with the cattle and do odd jobs that need attention. S. Carolyn Hoff comes often to coordinate the volunteers, lead tours and when needed, cut the grass.

Sisters Evelyn and Rachel Lindenmaier are our faithful egg washers, graders and packers. Their daily work saves us hours of time each week. Victor Sarringhaus, our lead gardener, is busy harvesting, cleaning and packing the vegetables and fruits. S. Marie works untiringly in the gardens and greenhouse and is busy planning for next year's growing season. Chris Merkel, our farm manager, is here working cattle, caring for pastures and hay fields, cleaning chicken houses and doing just about anything that needs to be done. (The problem with naming people is always hoping you did not forget someone. Hopefully I got them all.) These are the people who make Michaela Farm run day in and day out. For them, we are grateful.

Included in our gratitude list are all of you who have supported us through this year. We are grateful for all who have prayed for our success, who have helped us throughout the year and who have donated to us. Without everyone's support and interest we could not keep the farm going.