



The Farm at Miller's Crossing
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Week of September 29th 2008 farmatmillerscrossing.com



From the farmers...

One sure sign of fall for me is a slight feeling of unease as the end of the growing season approaches, and we start to let ourselves think about the "off-season."

Now we are by no means at the end. We have lots of work to do. There are thousands of pounds of root crops still in the fields. There are days worth of clean-up and lots more harvesting of fresh greens to be done. However, what is done, is done. There is no more time to plant (except garlic), no more seeding to do, the weeding is done—our daily work is all follow through at this point in the season.

Working dawn to dusk in the fall is different than in the summer. The days are getting shorter, and it is a transition from the flat out busy 15 hour days to the shorter hours and steadier pace of the fall harvest. This transition happens every year, and this year is no exception.

This restlessness that we feel probably comes with having time to think. While the current year is still fresh in our minds, we have time to begin the planning process for next year. We take into account all of the mistakes we made, and vow never to make them again. Notes are made in computer logs, old obsolete equipment is sold and new and more effective machines are purchased.

The improvements to our production systems are always on-going, as is our marketing. Last year in a similar letter to the CSA we posed a question about our marketing—stay a

mid-sized farm with diverse marketing or expand more into the larger wholesale world. We received a very strong reaction from many of you, and the vote was overwhelmingly to focus on the CSA and direct marketing.

We thought long and hard on that advice and went into the winter of 2007-08 and expanded our CSA into Long Island City, and contracted with Hunger Action Network to provide fresh organic food to urban shelters and soup kitchens. Both of these initiatives have been very satisfying, and we hope to continue to expand on them 2009.

We planned to do slightly less wholesale and keep the retail markets the same for 2008. While the Farmer's Markets have improved over last year, we have struggled to maintain our sales in our wholesale business. Causes we have considered are the tough economic times, the fickle nature of retail, increased competition from other farms, and cheaper products being shipped in from the west and south.

Raising high quality organic produce is very expensive. Prices for fuel, packaging, seeds and labor continue to rise. More and more we have to be sure that the things we grow have a reliable market. We are finding the wholesale business of fresh produce to be very volatile and unpredictable. It is hard to get assurances from buyers about what they will purchase and how much--which brings us to the CSA model and the retail markets.

Many individuals are directly supporting our farm through CSA memberships and the Farmer's Markets. We aim to continue to better serve all of you. We never know what the season will be like, but we do know that the end of the season always brings time for reflection. We are thankful for this time and the perspective it gives us on our business; its evolution continues.

Sincerely, Chris & Katie

BULK SALE

Saturday November 1st

10am-2 pm

Come and stock up for the winter, store your
veggies here in our cooler, and eat local all season