

Meanwhile Back at the Farm...May 10, 2001

Howdy Folks,

Now we start the warm season. It actually finally started to get warm this week too. Normally the weather would have been warm for many weeks already but this Spring was very cold. We will finally begin transplanting tomatoes in about a week as the soil warms up during these nice days. A lot of growers try to get their tomatoes into the ground back around March 15th or so. Those who did that this year were rudely shocked when late FROSTS wiped out their early plantings. This is California for crying out loud. Frosts in March, virtually unheard of! A number of our "safely" planted spring crops like some of our mustards and daikon radishes are trying to bolt (go to seed early) right about now so we have no choice but to harvest them now. This was due to the cold then warm weather making them think they've gone through a whole season already.

Well we've turned in a proposal on the Half Moon Bay land that we hope to move to this summer. If we get it we will be expanding our production quite substantially since it is such a nice big piece of land. Keep your fingers and toes crossed that our negotiations over that piece go well.

Our spinach is looking great at the main farm. We should be ready for a first harvest to thin out the rows next week. Fresh spinach is always such a treat. We grow our rows of spinach alternating with rows of scallions. The Scallions grow tall and straight and the spinach fans out and covers the ground smothering most weeds. They are good companions for each other.

We decided to give the salad mix another week to size up and are cutting New Red Fire lettuce this week instead. Its one of the most intensely colored red lettuces I've ever seen.

I've included a letter this week with the newsletter. It's a copy of a letter Monsanto sent to the neighbors around a farm where they had sold their Genetically Engineered Canola. Since they can't tell the difference between stolen seed and seed that their plants pollinated in a farmer's adjacent field, they simply assume that all the farmers have stolen their seed. They

then send out this letter demanding money or risk getting into a lawsuit with Monsanto, which of course would cost a fortune even if Monsanto has no basis for their suit. The minimum costs for defending yourself against them would be very likely double the amount they are demanding in their extortion letter. That's right, I said extortion. If you or I mass mailed this letter threatening a lawsuit unless money was paid to us we'd be brought up on criminal charges. But when Monsanto does it, they somehow get away with it. Since canola farmer Percy Schmeiser lost his lawsuit last month against Monsanto, letters like this are likely to become quite a little profit center for Monsanto.

Farm Tour May 12th

This is the next to last tour we will have at the main farm before we move. If you haven't seen the farm or if you are a new member you owe it to yourself to go on a tour. They start at 10 a.m. and go until 3 p.m. with a break for a picnic lunch. Bring a lunch, sunhat, water, and comfortable walking shoes. Beware-there might be ripe strawberries to pick!

The Food

This week we are a bit light since some of the crops like Daikon that I was going to harvest bolted and weren't good enough to pack.

Broccoli: From another farm

Fava Beans: When they get to this stage they are better cooked than eaten raw. See my mom's recipe

Lettuce: New Red Fire- First cutting this year.

Onions: Spring Onions- They are just starting their bulbing and are chock full of sugar. Over the next few weeks you'll watch them progress. You might consider grilling these for a real treat.

Turnips: Our favorite little Hakurei Turnips- Use the tops as well as roots.

Kobu Takana: Green mustard that is pretty sweet without a lot of bite. The stalks are still sweet and tender.

Red Mustard: Spicy and stronger tasting.