



# The Beanstalk

Easy Bean Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Easy Bean Farm

5075 100th Ave. NW Milan, MN 56262

easybean@fedtel.net

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

**Panisse Head Lettuce.:** *I am in the part of the year when I crave lettuce all of the time. Last Thursday, for lunch, I made Vietnamese style lettuce wraps filled with ground meat, scallions, cilantro, and lightly pickled, chopped peas, kohlrabi, napa and basil.*

**Napa Cabbages:** *The Napa are the heads of light green leaves with white ribs. Napa is a staple of Korean Cooking and is delicious both raw and lightly cooked. I have been making rice omelets with shredded Napa, cold rice, chopped scallion, ginger and a beaten egg. Mix it all together and fry with a little sesame oil. Serve with a little sweet and sour sauce.*

**Arcadia Broccoli:** *No one ever complains when we put broccoli in their boxes! This round of broccoli is perfect. The heads are large and tight and the taste is sublime. We are rushing to harvest this for Thursday's delivery so that it will not have to endure the 100 degree heat predicted for today. If you do not plan on using it right away, loosely wrap it in a plastic bag and place it in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator.*

**Amazing Cauliflower (Full Shares):** *This variety is aptly named! The heads are nice and tight and, though they are slightly yellowed from the heat, (one of the problems with growing summer cauliflower here in Minnesota) the taste is exceptional. Cauliflower is great raw in salads, fantastic roasted with olive oil and garlic, and delicious parboiled, seasoned and grilled.*

**Red Russian Kale:** *The Kale is back! Kale is a close relative of collards and cabbages and both the leaf and the stems are edible. Kale can be shredded and massaged and eaten raw in salads or it can be gently wilted and used as you would any*





other cooking green.

**Basil:** *WE should be giving out larger and larger bunches. Nothing says summer like fresh basil!*

**Evergreen Scallion:** *Is there anything more to be said about scallions? No. Next week we will start to harvest the first of the "true" onions and then should have onions every week for the remainder of the season.*

**Winner Kohlrabi:** *These are the vegetables from outer space. Here is what you should do: Peel them, slice them into matchsticks, sprinkle a little salt and vinegar over them and let them sit, covered, in your refrigerator for a least a few hours. Another delicious thing is tempura-battered Kohlrabi rounds.*



**Zukes, Straightneck of**

**Patty pan Summer Squash:** *This year we have four types of squash: Raven Zucchini, SlikPik Crookneck, Zephyr Straight Neck Squash, and Sunburst Patty pans. The patty pans are the flying saucers. Once we get into the season we pick these 3 days a week to keep them picked at the right size. Squash and Zukes are really interchangeable as far as cooking goes. I have been slicing them into strips, coating them in olive oil, salt and spices and grilling them over low/medium heat until soft. Yesterday night I sliced them thinly and used them like pasta.*

**Oregon Giant Snow Peas:** *The peas are starting to wind down just as the green beans are beginning to flower... so there will be no rest for our picking crew! This*





*will probably be the last week of peas until next year. I snack on these, raw, all day, every day!*

**Cippolini Onions:** *These are the bunches of small flat onions and they are the first of our bulbing onions. They are delicious grilled whole (with a little olive oil over low heat) or halved and put into your kabob.*

**Cucumber (Full):** *This week there were only enough cukes for the Full Shares. With a little luck there will be cukes for everyone next week.*



## **From the Fields**

Folks,

By golly it is hot out there! When I woke up in the middle of the night I could feel the heat already beginning to creep in. Temperatures today are predicted to reach nearly 100 degrees and so, both to keep the vegetables in as good a condition as possible AND to keep our crew from getting heat-stroke, we started early and need to take frequent water/shade breaks. While many of our crops like warm temps there are few things that seem to really enjoy anything over 93 degrees and, in order to keep the crops that are looking good and are nearly ready for Wednesday's harvest looking good (broccoli, in particular, HATES heat), we are shifting our usual work schedule around so that we can get it out of the fields and into the walk-in a few days early. In this case I have decided that the condition of the crop will be much higher after two days in the cooler at 35 degrees than it would be with 10 more hours above 90 in the fields!

Now that the end of July is fast approaching our crew is really starting to hit its stride. Each year we begin the season with at least some percentage of our crew completely "green", having never before worked on a farm. This year, for the first time in over a decade, our crew is entirely composed of people who have no experience with any of the work. Often we have people who have not only never grown several of our crops, but who have even never tasted some of the things we have grown! This year's crew is from all over the U.S. and, 5 weeks into our harvest season, they all have now learned how important it is to move quickly in the fields in order to get the crop up into the packing

shed, and into the icy cold hydro-cooling tanks as fast as possible. The crops begin to degrade as soon as they are cut from their root and any surface bacteria that is present immediately starts to work on breaking down the vegetables. Most of our crops leave the field less than 15 minutes after they are harvested and then are immersed in 45 degree water, washed, and then dipped in a clean water bath that has some peracetic acid and hydrogen peroxide in it. The product we use is certified by the Organic Materials Review Institute (Sanidate) and they will eliminate 98% of the meso-bacteria present. As soon as the crop drains a little it is placed in our walk-in cooler (at 35 degrees) until it is ready to be packed in your boxes. The boxes are then assembled at a roller table with each crew member responsible for place 2-3 items in each box and the boxes are then returned to the cooler to await delivery.

In our early years, I confess, though we did pay attention to basic sanitation practices, and certainly used clean wash water, we were not as careful about quickly lowering the temperature of the crops, dipping them (and our totes) in sanitizing solution, and holding things at a low enough temperature in our cooler. As we learned about better post-harvest handling practices we have changed the way we do things and it seems like the crops not have a longer “shelf-life”. There are still a few things that I would like to “tweak” in our harvest system... but overall I am happy with the workflow and our crew is getting really good at paying attention to the things that will ensure that our crops look as good as possible when they reach you.

I, for one, am hoping that the heat breaks tonight and that we get a good shot of rain again! The crops continue to look very good... though the tomatoes look like they will be a week or so later than is typical.... Though I cannot really say why!

My best guess for next week: Broccoli, Romanesco, Cippolini Onions, Cucumbers, Basil, Fennel, Summer Squash, Eggplant, Red Cabbage, Beets and Lettuce.

Farmer Mike