



Spring has Sprung!

“Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from the corn field.”

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

And we're off..

After WEEKS and WEEKS of rain, when Denny thought we would never be able to get into the garden much less get anything planted, we finally had some ideal days to work the land. We've been planting and the onions, potatoes, broccoli, cabbages and carrots are coming along. Denny had managed to get some early crops in, and surprisingly, they didn't seem to be too adversely affected by the continuous wetting they received. This week the guys spent laying mulch in the new section, planting beets and rows of beans and working on several new projects.

Our “hoop houses” that housed our laying hens last year were not as portable as we had hoped and moving them was a challenge. So Denny

acquired a mobile home frame, cut it down, and fashioned a base for the hoop houses to sit on—with wheels! The new “Egg Mobile” has already proven to be much more easily moved, so our laying hens are out on pasture and loving it. Preparing for the season, we've increased our flocks, but there is still plenty of room.

The guys also re-designed our chicken tractors and with their non-metal tops, they too promise to be much more portable than last year. The first batch is scheduled to go out on pasture by May 20.

Read on to discover all the other exciting activities going on here at Hickory Ridge Natural Harvest—*YOUR CSA!*



Why a High Tunnel?

- High Tunnels extend the growing season.
- High Tunnels provide protection from pests.
- High Tunnels increase production with more control of the environment—without resorting to chemical use.

High Tunnel... High Hopes

We're so excited by our newest project—we're in the process of erecting a high tunnel! Though again the rain set us back on our schedule, we've finally got the ground leveled and the beginnings of the braces in. Thanks to some help from our “friends with the

right equipment”, construction progresses with the guys finishing up the necessary excavation for drainage work this week. By next week we should be able to erect the actual high hoops and finish. Then the drip irrigation system goes in and the plants are set. If you've

never heard of a high tunnel, it is basically a plastic covered, non-heated greenhouse. The purpose, and our hopes here at the farm, are to better provide for our customers over a longer growing season. We are located in Climate Zone 6—*(Continued on next page)*

Some Egg-citement!

“Oh, my Lets!” (Omelets)

Omelets are a delicious and nutritious way to start your day. Some eggs, some veggies, some meats—whatever your sense of “breakfast” decides it’s hungering for. The ingredients not only please your taste buds, but should benefit the rest of you, too. We think about these things while working here on the farm, so we work hard to make sure our eggs are good for you—in

every way they can be. Our eggs are collected twice daily from structured nest boxes. They are visually and structurally tested, washed, packaged fresh and refrigerated promptly. The date of collection is written on the carton, and no carton is kept past the accepted “freshness” date. We do not reuse cartons, and if an egg is cracked, pecked or soft—it gets composted. We believe that the better the product handling, the more

quality and safety is preserved.

Eggs are such a versatile food. You can scramble them, fry them, poach them, boil them, bake them, whip them—and the list goes on. We’ve been experimenting with a variety of methods and recipes for using eggs, including fratas, stratas, quiches, and even homemade mayonnaise. If you have any favorites you’d like to share, please send them to us! We’ll add them to the website and the newsletter!

Egg Prices and delivery—we know there has been some confusion on the egg prices, so hopefully this will help clear this up.

Our regular price for fresh brown eggs from pastured chickens is \$2.50/dozen if delivered. This past winter, because we allow our birds to molt naturally, the production was less consistent so we reduced the price to \$2.00/dozen. In May, we returned to our regular price (This won’t happen every year.)

By purchasing an egg share through the CSA (\$40), you can get the reduced price during the CSA season. The CSA season is the 20 week period from June through October.

Eggs purchased on site remain at \$2/dozen, since there is no cost to us for delivery.

Farmers? Or Scientists?

Because our objective here at Hickory Ridge is to grow food products without the use of chemical fertilizers or soil amenities, we’ve been doing considerable research on soil structure. Did you know that in each teaspoon of fertile soil there are more microbes (bacteria and fungi) than there are people on the earth? Don’t

panic—many of these microbes are very helpful to the life cycle of the plants being grown. Some attach to the plant roots and help the plant absorb nutrients from available organic matter. Others help the plant absorb oxygen, and still others provide the plant with defense against pests and disease. The use of Effective Mi-

croorganisms (EM) technology increases the natural resistance of soil, plants, water, humans and animals and more importantly, considerably improves the quality and fertility of soil as well as the growth and quality of crops. And these microorganisms exist freely in nature! How like God to provide all that is needed!

EM is one of the most popular microbial technologies being used world-wide and is now used in over 120 countries.

High Tunnel—Continued

With the use of the high tunnel, we should be able to grow vegetables up to 2 growing seasons further South. (Similar to the growing season of North Carolina.) Our research shows that it is not the cool of spring or autumn that stops from growing, but the force of the wind and direct exposure

to the elements. As long as there is sunlight, plants will grow. They may be slower to grow, but they will grow. High tunnel growers in New York and Maine claim that on days that are sunny, but only 20 degrees (F), it can be 60 degrees (F) inside the tunnel. The use of the high tunnel could

allow us to start our season up to two months earlier, and potentially extend it further in the fall. High tunnels also help to control pests without the use of chemicals, and enable more direct control of water which provides better protection from funguses and molds.

A Typical High Tunnel



A Thousand Words..



A new flock of layers to start soon... Buckeyes, Americanas and NH Reds. They sure are a friendly bunch. I feel like a coat rack when I go in, as they fly to my shoulders, my back and ride on my boots.



High Tunnel beginnings. The land had to be leveled, and then the remaining slope planted to control erosion. Posts are in, and if it would ever stop raining we could get the rest up.



Chicken Nuggets—the seasons first meat chickens will be on pasture in just two weeks.



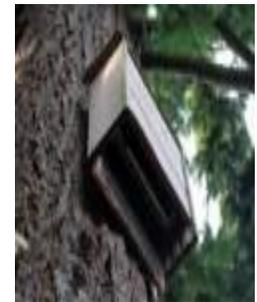
Farm Oversight

Batting 300

Leathery wings and sharp ears serve a greater purpose than many might realize. While some farmers use pesticides to fend off crop-damaging bugs, others have decided to go the natural route and use the insects “natural” enemies—like bats! Unlike chemicals, however, bats don’t come bottled,

so getting enough bats to control the bugs takes a plan. Perhaps building a “house” just for bats will make them realize they are welcome. Bats like to be pretty close to a water source, like a pond, lake or stream. They like to roost about 20 feet off the ground in a tight space where they can

climb. Oh, and they like their front door facing southwest. This doesn’t sound too difficult to Josh, so he’s in the process of building bat houses down by the pond on an old telephone pole—he says he just can’t figure out where to get 300 little welcome mats. Go Josh!



A Bat House

Payments and Customer Service..

For those of you who are participating in a payment plan, we will be providing monthly statements for your convenience. We apologize for the delay in getting them out—we’ve held off for the past couple of months while awaiting some final contracts to come in. But you can now expect the statements each month on or around the 15th, along with the Newsletter and other items of interest. These statements will reflect any payments that were received and will show your current balance. If you have any questions regarding the balance due, please give us a call.

Contacting us—when you call the 814-672-3009 number, you may get either one of the staff members at *Mari Nelson Integrity Services* or an answering machine. Please just mention that you are calling regarding the CSA and the message will be forwarded. You can try calling Denny’s cell phone at 814-505-5274, but as cell reception is spotty here you may get voice mail there as well, but your call will be returned either way. We apologize for these inconveniences, but have no alternative solutions at this time. Emailing may be a better option—you can email hnmhcsa@gmail.com.

Statements will be sent on or around the 15th of each month.

June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Schedule of Events

- **June 10**—Target start date for vegetable share deliveries. **** Remember—it's the target.**
- **June 17**—Canning Workshop. This workshop will focus on methods of canning safety and techniques and will include hands on activities. 2pm.
- **June 24**—Monthly "Walk-about". These "Walk-about's" will be offered each month and are an open invitation for anyone interested in seeing the different sustainable agriculture techniques we're putting into practice here on the farm. This month's focus will be on the high tunnel. Begins at 2pm, refreshments will be provided.

This Month's Tasty Recipes—Stoplight Salad and Garbage Plate

Stoplight Salad

A tasty side dish when leafy greens aren't yet available! The colors are bright and cheerful, and it's packed with nutrition.

1 can of red kidney beans, drained.

1 head of broccoli, cut small.

1 can of corn, drained.

1 sm. Red onion, chopped.

1/2 c. red wine vinegar

3/4 c. sugar

1/2 c. canola oil

1/4 tsp. basil

1/4 tsp. oregano

Mix all together and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Serve cold.

Garbage Plate

I know the name sounds awful, but it's what we call this dish. It doesn't look "pretty", but boy can it fill a hungry man's belly.

1 large can pork n beans

1 sm. can kidney beans

1 # kielbasa

1 c. sliced mushrooms

1 sm. Green pepper chopped

1 med. Onion, sliced

2 or 3 potatoes, either sliced or diced. (I use my canned pota-

toes, which are cut in chunks, but if using raw cut smaller for faster cooking.)

Sauté the mushrooms, pepper and onions in whatever you sauté with. (We use real lard.) Slice the Kielbasa in thick slices and add it and the potatoes to the pan. Cover and cook until the potatoes are softened but not mushy and the Kielbasa is slightly browned. Reduce heat and add the beans. Simmer approximately 20 mins.

Super great with cornbread!

****Note, these dishes are not served together!**

Some further notes -

Drop locations and days of delivery are not yet set in stone, but here's what we're contemplating:

Tuesdays—Houtzdale at the Wreck Center, Clearfield (location not yet identified).

Fridays—DuBois, Dr. Peters office; Altoona at J&P Auto Mart.

If you have any thoughts on these days and locations, please let us know right away. With 4 separate directions, we have to figure a way to coordinate our trips.