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food for thought

The newsletter of J.L. Hawkins Family Farm/ 260-982-4961

Planting begins

The garden beds are tilled and ready for seeds and plants!

Judging from the weather report, seeding may begin Wednesday, May 7. **If you can lend a hand, please give us a call or e-mail.** Depending on how much we get accomplished, seeding is likely to continue on **Thursday** as well.

The plan is to plant about one-third of the total amount of Provider Green beans, All Star Gourmet lettuce mix, Waldmann's leaf lettuce, Romaine lettuce, arugula, a few radishes, a few Dakota peas (unfortunately, most of the seed peas are on back order so we will wait and seed Fall peas this year), Sugar snap peas, and two kinds of cucumbers. In a few

days we will seed another third, and a few days after that the final third, so that we can extend the harvest rather than receive it all at once.

Next week we also expect to begin to plant onions, sweet corn, potatoes, and soup beans. The week after that our broccoli, tomato, and peppers plants arrive for planting. Along the way we'll also throw in the squash, pumpkins, gourds, and ornamental corn, as well as basil, flowers, chives, and more.

Let us know if you can lend a hand!

Benefits

Iowa State University Extension horticulture specialist Cindy Haynes reports: "[A] study proved that women age 50 and older who gardened once a week had higher bone density than those who jogged, walked, swam, or did aerobics. Reduced risk of heart disease, better flexibility, more endurance and strength, and weight control are just a few other physical benefits linked to gardening activities." Aren't you glad you belong to a CSA which encourages weekly gardening?

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Needs

We use an unconventional (yet very clever!) method to raise tomatoes. The plants are set in the ground, the ground around the plant is covered in newspaper for mulch, and wooden pallets are placed on top of the newspapers. The newspaper mulch keeps weeds out and holds moisture in. The

pallets allow the tomatoes to grow and branch out but not plop the fruit in the mud. It works very well! Since we will be planting hundreds of tomatoes, we need many bundles of **newspapers**. Can you recycle some of your papers our way?

In addition we need **clean gallon plastic milk jugs** and **five gallon buckets with handles**. Thanks.

Chickens ready for pasture

Weather permitting, we hope to get the chickens on the pasture this week. They are now three weeks old, feathered-out, and ready to eat clover and grass, which contain nature's cleanser, chlorophyll, which helps them to stay healthy. We have a large surplus of chickens available for sale, so don't hesitate to tell others. And a thousand more arrive as day-olds on May 13!

DATES TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Orientation meetings: during the first week (June 9-11-13) when you come for vegetable and chicken pick-up, every half-hour from 4pm-8pm.
- ✓ Fresh chicken will be available for pick-up on the farm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: June 9, 11, & 13; July 7, 9, & 11; July 28, 30 & August 1; September 15, 17 & 19.
- ✓ Beef pick-up dates include June 25, 27; November 5, 7.
- ✓ Thanksgiving pick-up date is Friday, November 21.
- ✓ Soup bean pick-up and sign-up for 2004 is Saturday, Jan. 17, 2004.