

## Report from the Field

We'll stop complaining about the weather for now. We received an inch of rain last week, and 2 inches a week and a half before that, so things are much better than they were in May and June. This saves us countless hours of watering, which, if the regular weekly rains continue, is vital for our sanity since we are entering what are the busiest weeks of the year for us. We are still planting fall crops, and the weeds are in their full glory, basking in the sun and looking forward to spreading seed all over our fields before we get to them. And we shall be harvesting and prepping the bounty at this time of year.

The variety we have will be at its peak for the next month and half, with tomatoes coming into their peak production, cucumbers and squashes – early and late planting both being harvested for a few weeks (starting next week), eggplants and red peppers coming soon, and oh, the beans, the countless hours of bean picking.



We are harvesting the garlic now, prepping it for storage, and hanging it in the barn to cure. Later this week or next will be the onions, which will be pulled, cleaned and cured in the greenhouse.



When you pull into the CSA and look out across the field you can see the winter squash and melons in their full glory. So far insect pressure has been moderate and the lack of excessive rain has resulted in beautiful looking plants. Hopefully that will continue until harvest in September.



The same cannot be said for the eggplants that are next to them to the North (toward the house). For the first few years of the farm we had good success with eggplant; now a tiny insect, a flea beetle (thousands of them), does irrevocable damage to the plants. The population of these buggers is thriving and well established, in spite of our attempts to control the problem through rotation and row covers, which we use while the plants are small and not flowering. We'll still have eggplant, but nothing close to the harvest that should be possible for the number of plants we have. We are already scheming for next year how we may be able to outwit the buggers.



In past years rodents took their toll, devastating root crops, such as beets and carrots, and the tubers – potatoes and sweet potatoes. Thanks to our trusty feline friends, this is no longer the case. This is our 2<sup>nd</sup> best hunter, L.T.



## Cow Happenings

Mental picture of the month: Aiyana running at top speed, trying not to let go of the calf's lead rope, arms outstretched, with the fear of the Lord and her parents' damnation in her eyes.

The cows get a slice of ground with fresh grass every day, but every week or so we need to lead the cows to another section of the property. Sometimes this goes smoothly, sometimes ... not so much. The first sign of trouble came not from the bovine species, but from Homo sapiens: a child walking with shoulders fully drooping, arms not swaying, and full pout face.



Sena has 8 or so inches on Aiyana and this height advantage has a huge impact on how the cows treat them. Sena can, to a degree, get the 400 lb. heifer, Jasmine, to lead and respect her, while Aiyana has a harder time. For this reason, when we move the cows from one pasture to another, Sena often leads the Jasmine (the black heifer), while Raluca and Ed take the momma and calf. This week Aiyana asked if she could lead Jasmine and we said no.

Aiyana pouted for a long time, but eventually she bounced back and was very helpful with an hour of farm chores. She then asked if she could lead the calf, and we reluctantly said yes.

Sena and Aiyana got the calf on a lead rope. Sena put Jasmine's lead rope on and starting leading her, Ed took mama Opal, and Aiyana took the calf. Raluca was going to lend assistance if needed. We started on our way to the new pasture, with Jasmine and Opal behaving nicely. Aiyana lead the calf at first, but soon enough that changed as the calf bolted and now Aiyana was following her, and following at lightning speed, with huge leaps and bounds. Raluca yelled to Aiyana to hold on to the lead rope, so she did. Eventually, after skipping through the air a while and then crashing to the ground, she let go. Opal was upset about all this going on with her calf, Ed struggled to control her, and Sena couldn't keep a hold of Jasmine. The calf, now free, did the 100m dash towards the orchard, and then returned doing another 100m dash towards Ed and Opal. Ed scooped up her lead rope as she passed, spinning the calf around with a jolt. Sena got a hold of Jasmine again (after Jasmine did a loop through the eggplant and peppers), Raluca got the calf, and with some degree of control barely re-established we proceeded to walk to the new pasture.

The cows were almost instantly content eating the new grass. But where was Aiyana? Hiding in the tool shed. She decided animals ten times her size running around was not safe, and being in the shed offered a protected vantage point. She agrees we should wait a while before she tries to lead again.



## **Bucolic?**

This last photo shows the bucolic side of farming, for the passerby. The children thought helping with the hay was fun for about 5 minutes, but after an hour a mutiny was being planned.