

My MN Farmer

Our Family Blessed
To Feed Yours

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A wet, chilly fall, a busy harvest, and our winter plans

Well, BRRRRRR! At the time of this writing, we are wondering what happened to Minnesota's usually vibrant Indian Summer. It feels like we've gone straight from the steamy Minnesota summer right into a cold, wet winter, skipping Minnesota's beautiful, colorful fall.

While working a chilly Farmers Market with Farmer Jean last week, 8-year-old Joshua said, "Mom, I wish it would either be a normal fall with nice weather or that it would just freeze so that we can be done in the field."

Well, it seems Joshua will get his wish! The weather report said that it would be below freezing for more than six hours early Thursday morning, so we harvested virtually everything from the field and high tunnels Tuesday morning. Every beet, every potato, every tomato, and most of the peppers have been harvested, and the cooler and pack shed are full of beets, squash, potatoes, apples, gourds, onions and pumpkins.

But even as the produce season winds down, the farm work continues and the animals keep us busy. We will process the last batch of broiler chickens next week, and the 40 cows that have enjoyed summer pasture on neighboring farms will be brought home this week because their pasture grass is getting short. Farmer Dean has been very busy gathering round bales for them to eat over the winter.

Farmer Abby continues to collect about 225 chicken eggs and 8 duck eggs per day. Sometimes Farmer Ellie helps, too! (See photo at right.)



Farmers Sam and Andy harvest the last of the beans from the bean plants saved from frost.

We are raising 500 new Goldstar chicks to replace our laying hen stock. We rotate the stock regularly to help keep egg production at its peak. The new chicks will start laying eggs around April.

We are also raising another 500 chicks of other breeds to sell next spring as new laying chickens (pullets.) The hens we are "retiring" will be listed on Craigslist and will find new homes for their last years of egg production.

So, as you can see, we continue to be busy with farming, freezing and canning food for winter eating, and homeschooling several hours each day. Life on the farm is never boring, and we are thankful every day for your support of our family farm.



Farmer Dean and the six oldest Braatz kids smile for the camera as they celebrate the end of potato harvest.



Farmer Ellie snuggles a chicken while helping Farmer Abby collect eggs.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for buying locally-grown produce and supporting our family farm!

In your share box this week

❖ **Kale** - Kale, that powerhouse of nutrients, is great in salads, kale chips, or as a healthy addition to your fruit smoothie. Or saute it lightly in olive or coconut oil and, when finished, add a dash of apple cider vinegar for a tasty side dish.



❖ **Potatoes** - We've harvested the last of our potatoes, and it was cause for a celebration. Did you see our post on the My Minnesota Farmer facebook page?



❖ **Beets** - Yummy beets will be in your box this week. Boil them and eat with butter and salt, or try a yummy beet cake.



Recipe: mymnfarmer.com/recipes/beets

❖ **New England Pie Pumpkin** - Pie pumpkins are smaller in shape and size than jack-o-lantern pumpkins. These small, round pie pumpkins are packed full of flesh that is good for cooking. The pulp has a better texture (less stringy) and is sweeter. The size of this pumpkin makes it perfect for decorating, too.



❖ **Gourds** - We grew a number of gourds of different colors and shapes. Enjoy these for your fall decorating.



❖ **Red and/or Green Tomatoes** - We are sad to see the tomato season end, but it's time to say goodbye to this tropical fruit. With these last few late season tomatoes you can make fried green tomatoes, sneak them in a hotdish recipe, or freeze for future use.



❖ **Carrots** - Great boiled with butter, raw for the relish tray, or combined with fennel for a tasty side dish.



❖ **Peppers** - Slice these up for your relish dish, grill with potatoes and onions, or freeze for your winter casseroles and chili.



❖ **Hot Peppers** - Enjoy some late-season Jalapeno peppers to spice up your Mexican dishes, chili or salsa.



❖ **Bok Choy** - You received baby Bok Choy last week. This week, the heads are bigger, and you may receive half a head. The leaves work well for wraps and the base can be used like celery. The greens can also be used as a substitute for lettuce, chopped up and sautéed, or used in soups or stews.



❖ **Dill Fronds** - Use Dill Fronds like bay leaves to add flavor to soups and stews, or add them to the cooking water when you boil potatoes. They can also be used in homemade salad dressings.



❖ **Yellow Beans?** - We saved just a few bean plants from the frost so you may find beans in your box this week!



Kids' Corner

What does a clock do when it's hungry?
It goes back four seconds.

What do you use to fix a jack-o-lantern?
A pumpkin patch!

Who helps the little pumpkins on their way to school?
The crossing gourd.

Farmer Ellie hopes you enjoyed the colorful peppers this year as much as she did! Thank you for supporting our family farm!



P.S. If you'd like to purchase beef, pork, chicken, hamburger, lamb, squash, beets, pumpkins, a grill or slow cooker share, a mixed meat basket, Thanksgiving box or eggs, visit mymnfarmer.com or call 612-245-6271, and we will get you set up!