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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Montpelier) Busy this fall and trying to stay focused. Repairing and re-

I think the local food movement needs to focus on the cleaning up the watershed systems in our state so we have a chance at achieving a level of food security in our state. Best of luck to all the farmers out there who have suffered from the floods, and I hope that those of you who slipped through unscathed have a strong finish to the season.

(Warren) Not much left to harvest, half acre of roots and some cabbage, a little spinach too. I plan to sow high tunnels to spinach on Oct 29th for an early crop next spring. I'm happy to have been able to sow lots of cover crops this fall since we plowed under most of the roots after the flood. Soil test indicated half a percent higher organic matter than fields had last fall where there was an overwintered cover crop. The ones with no cover remained the same. We are securing more land on higher ground to grow long season crops like potatoes, winter squash and cabbage. I'm concerned about the logistics of moving equipment around but it's something we have to do not only to protect against losses from future floods but also to take more land out of production and into soil improving crops. We need more than just bagged fertilizer on our sandy fields and compost is way too expensive to buy and too time consuming to make in the kind of quantities that we are making this fall. Wholesale markets are steady despite everything and I get the sense that folks are trying to do as much as they can to support us. I love just pulling bags out of the walk-in and loading them on the truck verses running around for 10 bunches of this and 20 pounds of that like we do all summer long.

(Monkton) Great crops of fall raspberries and sweet potatoes are welcome gifts during this difficult year. Although we were spared the worst of the flooding our clay soil has been soggy since May with a brief transformation into cement during July. We're grateful for a string of sunny days to finish our

(Middlebury) Just tore the tomatoes out of the high tunnel; left them in 3 weeks longer than planned; they were looking pretty worked. We lost a bunch of our crops to flooding, so the greenhouses have been carrying our CSA (we have stopped going to market until CSA ends in 2 weeks; there is not enough for both). We have been able to squeak by and provide an adequate share. I'm glad to have the tomatoes out and to start seeding spinach for the winter. The high tunnel eggplants are still going strong, despite a tortoise beetle population, so I will leave them in as long as possible.

(Little Compton RI) We are starting a deep winter CSA, after doing farmers markets through the winter the last two years the time is right. But what a year to make that commitment! Lost acres of squash to Phytophthora and hurricane funk. The winter CSA makes this time of year even more hectic than May because the deadlines for planting/transplanting are more punishing if you miss one. Five days late in planting spinach translates

(Westfield) Finishing digging roots crop, much easier with this dry and warm weather; soon as the soil is dry enough prepare for planting garlic. Finally a hard frost to take care of the weeds and put all our attention to the greenhouses. Spinach, kale, Swiss chard and mache are looking great. I feel like a pro with my greenhouse tomatoes this year: huge crop and no disease. It was a good season at our farm stand and we were lucky we avoided the spring and fall flooding.

(Argyle, NY) Finally dried enough to start harvesting winter storage crops. Sweet potatoes (Covington) are best we've ever had; nice size, uniform, and high yield and the an undercutter bar from Roeters Equip is doing a perfect job of lifting the crop which was planted with double rows on biotello and hay/straw mulch in-between. Other fall storage crops look OK but some rot in carrots; potato quality is unknown but we're digging this week before more rain. Diseases and challenges with lettuce, winter squash, cabbages, beets, corn (northern corn leaf blight), and spinach have been frustrating, but both the high tunnels are mostly planted and we look forward to nice crops for winter. Markets are still very strong with much product (thanks to diversity) to be grateful for.

FARM TOUR AT PLEASANT VALLEY FARM SATURDAY OCT. 15

On Oct. 15th Paul and Sandy Arnold will host a farm tour/open house at their farm located at 118 South Valley Road in Argyle, NY one hour from Rutland VT. The tour is 3:30 to 4:30; then walk around till 5:30. They have 6 acres of intensive vegetables, 1 acre of fruits, 4 acres cover crops grown with organic methods on the 60 acre farm. They sell year-round at farmers' markets. Fields are filled with many fall/winter crops; annual bed strawberries and garlic were recently planted. Other items to see: 2 large high tunnels with automatic venting (recently planted with winter greens), radiant-heated polycarbonate greenhouse with rolling benches, 10kW solar, domestic evacuated tube hot water solar system, washing station nearing GAP approval, 24 ton capacity root cellar, winter storage facilities, post-harvest systems, a masonry wood heat system, and more! Children welcome, handicapped folks can be accommodated, but no dogs please. More info: arnold.pvf@gmail.com or 518-638-6501.

TWILIGHT MEETING ROCKVILLE MARKET FARM MONDAY OCT. 17

"Using Chickens to Grow Winter Squash and Ending Up with Pigs" is the title of this meeting on Oct. 17 from 4:30-7:00 pm hosted by Eric and Keenann Rozendaal at Rockville Market Farm, 205 Cemetery Rd, Starksboro VT. They use chickens to build fertility in the soil before growing butternut squash. They peel the butternut at the farm and use the seeds to finish pigs. Tour their facilities and learn about their innovative production techniques. BYOB and BBQ to follow (food provided). The Rockville Market Farm includes 25 acres of vegetables, 2000 laying hens, 2000 meat birds, 50 pigs,

