

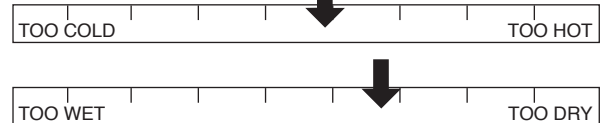


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red w/tops
Celery	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Dill	Yes	Plastic	
Eggplant	Yes	Plastic	-or- Green Pepper
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red Norland
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	!
Tomatoes	No	No	
Yellow Squash	Yes	Plastic	
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 7/31/14

Rainfall0.32"
 High Temperature 82°
 Low Temperature 56°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



on our farm. We had to re-plant several times. The beet sizes are all over the map, so my apologies if you get a softball or two.

That's all I'm going to say about the box this week. I wanted to take some time to share my thoughts about a discussion I had last week:

I was running some errands and stopped at a large grocery store in Hudson to get some tonic water, one of the few things that I buy at a large grocery store. While waiting in line the woman in front of me was having a conversation with the cashier about food, when I heard her announce, "Well, if everyone ate organic we'd all starve."

Now, I'm not generally a very confrontational person, but some things you just can't let go unanswered. Thankfully, my gin and tonic was still in it's embryonic form in my shopping bag. We had a brief respectful exchange in which I informed her that was not true, and ultimately we found common ground on supporting local growers. But as I drove back to the farm it gave me more time to reflect on several things about that exchange.

The first thing it made me think is that we've become a nation of sound bites. We mimic these carefully crafted lines about all the different issues and then abandon any sort of reasoned discussion. Clinging to these snippets allows us to jettison any responsibility for learning about complex issues. The gray area of conversation and discussion is the abandoned courtyard between the black and white buildings of the ideologues. We need to start coming out of these buildings and meeting in the middle.

Summer!

With corn, new potatoes and a couple tomatoes, things are really starting to feel like summer in the box and on the farm. But, since August 1st is tomorrow, it's about time.

Dan Sam called up on Tuesday to say that he had the first round of sweet corn ready. That makes this a full and busy box. As you may know, we do not grow sweet corn on the farm, but purchase it from Dan, who runs a farm a few miles away from us. Unlike our produce, his corn is not organic, but we've been very happy with it over the years.

New potatoes in the box! We hand dug these little red jewels on Tuesday. When they're this fresh they don't keep long, so use them up before the weekend is done.

The celery has finally started to size up in the field. Enjoy it as you would celery from the store, although ours has a more intense flavor.

Petit green beans in the box this week. Not a huge bag, but they make up for it in their gourmet tastiness.

The first and only bunch of spring beets is in the box. It's been a heck of a year to get a decent stand of beets

Refuting a sound bite is a noble cause, but unless you're prepared with your own sound bite, it takes time. The notion that we'd all starve if we ate nothing but organic is a silly one. I grow food for people to eat. Most of my neighbors grow grains that go to make ethanol or feed animals. In a very good year my neighbors can harvest 200 bushels of corn per acre, which is about 11,000 pounds of corn. If I were to plant nothing but carrots, we could easily harvest 20,000 pounds of carrots per acre, and those are harvested at ideal size, not left to get huge in the field. So, which would you rather have? I think my neighbors would starve under their pile of corn long before we would with our pile of carrots. Of course, everything is more complex than a sound bite. We can't eat nothing but carrots, nor can anyone survive on a diet of high-fructose corn syrup and ethanol.

The next layer to peel off of the argument onion is to reference studies where organic agriculture is shown to be less productive than conventional. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these studies have a major flaw. They take a piece of land out of conventional production and run a trial where they don't give the soil the sprays and chemicals inputs it has come to rely on, and then, when the inevitable poor results are tallied up, announce that organic can't feed the world. Again, this is an oversimplification of organic production. Organic production is a system, not just the absence of chemical inputs. The best study of comparison between the two methods of agriculture is one began by The Rodale Institute in 1981. For 33 years they have shown that not only do the organic plots yield the same as conventional over time, but they do so while improving soil health and using 45% less energy. Google Rodale Farm Systems Trial to find and read the 30-year report. Closer to home Iowa State has been conducting a similar side-by-side trial for the last 13 years, with similar results. Here is a quote directly from Iowa State:

Organic cropping systems can provide similar or greater yields, higher soil quality and greater economic returns than a conventional corn-soybean rotation, according to research conducted by Kathleen Delate, professor of Agronomy and Horticulture at Iowa State University.

Lastly, is the argument that organic is too expensive, and that we would starve because we wouldn't be able to afford the calories to sustain ourselves. I agree that organic is expensive, but so is healthcare. If persistent chemicals in our bodies are causing complex problems that we cannot even recognize as the cause, perhaps it

is worth the investment in our bodies to try and limit that chemical exposure as much as possible. When I look in someone's shopping cart who is complaining that organic is too expensive only to see a cart full of highly processed conventional foods, I know that the argument is falling on deaf ears. I agree that organic is expensive, and has risen in price drastically in the last five years, some of this is the result of consolidation in the organic industry. And even in our household we grumble about the price of organic food. But one doesn't have to be a fundamentalist, we can make choices about the foods that have the highest concentration of chemicals and make sure to purchase those organic. And, above all, we can avoid highly processed foods, which are always outrageously expensive, whether conventional or organic.

Coming next week: Carrots, fresh onions, tomatoes, garlic, cukes, zucchini, yellow squash, celery, fennel, beans, corn.

German Potato Salad with Dill *Bon Appétit* | June 2014

2 pounds halved small waxy potatoes
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1/2 chopped onion
 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
 4 sliced scallions
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
 1 teaspoon toasted caraway seeds and toss
 Salt
 Pepper

Cover 2 pounds halved small waxy potatoes with cold salted water, bring to a boil, and cook until tender; drain and transfer to a large bowl. Meanwhile, heat 1/4 cup olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1/2 chopped onion; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until soft, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and mix in 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar. Add to potatoes along with 4 sliced scallions, 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, and 1 teaspoon toasted caraway seeds and toss, crushing potatoes slightly; season with salt and pepper.

Dilled Cucumber Salad

1/4 cup sour cream
 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
 2 tablespoons minced fresh dill
 two 1-pound cucumbers

In a bowl whisk together the sour cream, the mayonnaise, the lime juice, the dill, and salt and pepper to taste. Score the cucumbers lengthwise with the tines of a fork, cut them crosswise into 1/8-inch-thick slices, and stir them into the dressing.