

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 8, July 19

Welcome to week 8 of the Summer Veggie Box! We all know that the problems facing the world's food systems are far from simple and straightforward. Each Veggie Box is imbued with a concern for the environment, farmers, the community, and personal health. The origins of our current industrial food system can be found within more than just the pursuit of food security but also in the consolidation and inequitable distribution of economic and political power, land, and resources. Going back centuries we can see a legacy that includes stolen land, lives, and labor. Michigan ranks fifth in the nation for registered migrant and seasonal farm workers. Michigan farmers are increasingly relying on the H-2A visa program, which brings foreign workers into the country temporarily, to meet seasonal labor demands. Beginning with the production side of the food system, approximately 75% of farmworkers in the U.S. are immigrants, both documented and undocumented, or migrant laborers.

These farmworkers receive some of the lowest wages in our country and are very prone to work-related injuries due to the physically demanding labor of farming. Furthermore, within the production and processing of the food system, a majority of managers are white, whereas approximately 88% of the laborers are people of color. In order to have a more sustainable food system, we must also ensure that we are creating a more equitable food system. What might this more equitable food system look like? How do we make changes in our food system? Who should help decide these answers? Thank you for supporting local food!

## Producer Spotlight

### *MSU Student Organic Farm*

The MSU Student Organic Farm is a 15 acre year-round educational, organic farm located in Holt, MI about 3 miles south of the Michigan State University campus. Started in 1999 by students who desired a more hands-on learning experience, the farm now offers a nearly year-long intensive program for those interested in learning everything they can about organic farming. Not only do the students tend to the fields, but the program also involves caring for the farm's livestock. MSU's multiple cafeterias source as much produce as they can from the MSUSOF and they also offer a weekly farm stand in the middle of campus for students and public alike.

## Crop Profile

### *Jalapeño*

Capsicum is derived from the Greek word, kapos, "to bite." The heat of the pepper comes from a group of alkaloid chemicals called capsaicinoids - mostly capsaicin and dihydrocapsaicin. These oily compounds are very soluble in fat and alcohol, but insoluble in water; meaning that when cooked in water, the spiciness can become muted, and when cooked in fat and alcohol, the spiciness can be retained. The heat intensity can also be lowered in preparation by cutting open jalapeños, removing veins and seeds. Because the eyes, nose, and mouth are prone to irritation from capsaicin content, it is advised to wear gloves when handling hot peppers. A mature jalapeño is the length of 2-3 inches and is typically picked and consumed while still green. Occasionally they are allowed to fully ripen and turn red in color. The next time you're whipping up a fresh salsa or guacamole, you can also take solace in the health benefits of this spicy pepper! They are rich in vitamins A and C, contain the antioxidant carotene, have been shown to reduce cholesterol and triglycerides, and even contain some protein.

ALLEN

Veggie Box

## What's in the Box?

**Organic Spring Mix**, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

**Organic Basil**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

**Blueberries**, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

**Organic Kale**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

**Organic Cucumber**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

**Jalapeños**, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

**Organic Tomatoes**, *Green Wagon Farms, Ada*

## Add-Ons

**Bread**, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*

**Meat**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Jalapeño Popper Dip

Veggie Box jalapeños, roasted and diced  
4 ounces cream cheese, softened  
1/2 cup sour cream  
1-2 cloves of garlic (from last week's box)  
1 cup cheddar cheese shredded  
1/3 cup parmesan cheese shredded

### For topping:

1/2 cup Panko bread crumbs  
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted  
a sprinkle of parmesan cheese  
1/2 tablespoon fresh parsley

**Preheat oven to 375°F. With a mixer on medium, combine cream cheese, garlic and sour cream until fluffy. Add cheddar cheese, 1/3 cup parmesan cheese, and diced jalapenos, mix well. Spread into an small baking dish. Combine bread crumbs, melted butter, the remaining shredded parmesan cheese, and parsley. Sprinkle the crumb topping over the cream cheese mixture. Bake 15-20 minutes, or until hot and breadcrumbs are golden brown. Serve with tortilla or pita chips!**

## Refried Beans

1 lb pinto beans, dried  
2 cloves garlic, smashed (from last week's box)  
½ onion, quartered  
6 cups water  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 tsp chili powder  
1 tsp paprika  
1/2 tsp ground cumin  
2 tablespoons lard, or oil  
Veggie Box jalapeños, diced

**Soak dry beans overnight. Strain the beans the next day after soaking, and boil in vegetable broth until cooked. Add oil/lard to a pan and sauté garlic, onions, and jalapeno, seasoned with salt. Add the beans and remaining seasonings, along with a little of the bean broth. Allow the beans to "fry" in the oil while mashing with a potato masher or fork. Add more bean broth as needed to get desired consistency to the beans.**



## Pico De Gallo

Veggie Box tomatoes (about 1 lb), diced  
1/2 medium onion, (1 cup chopped)  
1 Veggie Box jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely minced  
1/2 cup cilantro, chopped  
2 Tbsp lime juice, from 1 lime  
1/2 tsp salt, or to taste  
1/8 tsp black pepper

**In a medium bowl, diced tomatoes, onion, jalapeno pepper and chopped cilantro. Stir in 2 Tbsp lime juice and lightly season with 1/2 tsp salt and 1/8 tsp black pepper, or season to taste. Enjoy right away or cover and refrigerate overnight.**

## Blueberry Dutch Baby

3/4 cup whole milk, room temperature  
3 large eggs, room temperature  
2 tbsp maple syrup, or light brown sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
3/4 cup all-purpose flour  
1/4 tsp table salt  
4 tbsp unsalted butter, sliced  
3/4 cup Veggie Box blueberries  
confectioners' sugar

**In a bowl whisk together the whole milk, eggs, maple syrup, and vanilla extract. Add the flour and salt and whisk in until there is no dry flour. Set aside. Heat the oven to 425F. Place a 12 inch cast iron skillet in the oven as it heats. Add the butter and blueberries to the skillet and put it back in the oven for 1-2 minutes, or until the butter is fully melted. Swirl the skillet to make sure the whole bottom is coated with butter. Pour the batter into the skillet and give it a stir to distribute the berries. Bake the Dutch baby for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and dust with confectioners' sugar. Other toppings can include blueberry (or other) jam, whipped cream, lemon juice, vanilla Greek yogurt, and ice cream.**

