

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 13, August 25

Consolidation exists in many forms in the food system starting all the way at seed companies and trickling down to every day brands. In the past farmers freely traded seeds, and a few seed companies existed but didn't control large portions of the market. Today four companies control 50% of the seed market which means they control the price of seeds and their diversity. This can have huge environmental effects like increased reliance on pesticides that harm bodies of water. Farms also suffer from consolidation, in the past several years there has been a decline in the amount of medium sized farms and an increase in the number of large farms. As medium and smaller farms stop farming larger farms buy the land to expand which can cause harm to the land. Larger farms tend to have landscape simplification in which large monocultures replace more natural vegetation. This loss of natural vegetation can lead to innumerable negative environmental effects. Brands are one of the largest areas where consolidation takes place. In each food area there are only a few large corporations that own tons of different brands. It can be hard to see what brands are owned by what companies since they often don't advertise on specific brands. Brand consolidation can lead to higher prices for consumers as companies can manipulate prices of their brands to compete with themselves.

Producer Spotlight

Green Eagle Farm

Steve and Chela of Green Eagle Farm are 30-year veteran farmers and stewards of the land operating out of Onondaga, Michigan. They take great joy in growing a wide variety of vegetables, flowers, and herbs, including heirloom and open-pollinated varieties, all while being earth friendly in their practices and care for the environment. They feel committed to passing on heirloom types by saving seed and supporting seed companies that offer heirlooms. You know they care about what they do when you see the mature lemon and fig trees carefully protected from the Michigan winters in one of their hoop houses. All their produce is ecologically grown, following organic standards.

Crop Profile

Banana Peppers

Banana peppers, sometimes called yellow wax peppers, are a mild, medium-sized chili pepper with a mild tangy flavor. This *Capsicum Annum* variety is not considered a hot pepper, usually measuring only 1-500 scoville units (for reference, jalapenos are 4,000 to 8,500). They are descended from Hungarian peppers that were introduced to the U.S. in 1932. The banana pepper was developed from a mutation of these original seeds in 1940. They are a great source of vitamin C and are most commonly pickled and eaten on sandwiches, pizza, and more!

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Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Tomatillos, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*
Organic Potatoes, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*
Banana Peppers, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*
Garlic, *Green Eagle Farm, Onondaga*
Salad Mix, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*
Organic Kale, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Cucumber, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Organic Jalapeños, *Owosso Organics, Owosso*
Organic Zucchini, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*
Cherry Tomatoes, *Peckham Farms, Lansing*
Microgreens, *Highwater Farms, Lansing*

Add-Ons

Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*
Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Kombucha, *Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing*
Organic Pinto Beans, *Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids*
Coffee, *The 517 Coffee Company, Lansing*
Meat, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Pork, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Beef, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Chicken, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Recipes and Tips!

Grilled Banana Pepper & Tomatillo Salsa Verde

Veggie Box banana peppers
Veggie Box organic tomatillos
1 bunch of green onions/scallions
1 sweet onion (1 cup quartered)
1 Veggie Box jalapeno (more if you want it spicier)
2 cloves of Veggie Box garlic
1/2 tablespoon of white vinegar
Sea salt
Cilantro

Preheat your grill (aiming for around 400F). Peel off tomatillo husks and rinse any sticky residue and de-stem and slice the jalapeno. Grill the green onions, tomatillos, and banana peppers for about 2-3 minutes until they start to blister. Continue to flip every 3-5 minutes. The green onions should be done in a few minutes- the peppers may take up to 20 minutes depending on size. Let cool for several minutes, then remove bulbs and roughly chop grilled green onions, de-stem and de-seed banana peppers, and halve tomatillos and peppers if needed. Add everything to food processor including quartered white onion, garlic cloves, jalapeno, vinegar, and a pinch of salt. Blend on high until desired consistency (add a tbsp. of water if needed). Add salt to taste.



Kale Chips

Veggie Box Kale
1 tbsp of olive oil
Salt and any seasonings to taste
Preheat the oven to 275°F. Tear the kale leaves into 1-2 inch pieces and discard the stems. Place in a bowl and drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and any seasonings (e.g. chili powder, nutritional yeast, paprika, etc.) to taste. Toss with your hands until evenly coated. Arrange the leaves in a single layer (with NO overlap) on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 20 minutes or until leaves are crispy - make sure to check them often to prevent burning!
Tip: You can also make these in a toaster oven or air fryer using smaller batches.

Sautéed Zucchini & Cherry Tomatoes

2 tbsp olive oil
1 small red onion, diced
Veggie Box zucchini, cut into ½-inch chunks
Veggie Box cherry tomatoes, halved
2 cloves Veggie Box garlic, minced
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon fresh chopped basil, plus more for garnish

Heat oil over medium heat in a large sauté pan. Add the red onions and cook until soft and translucent. Add zucchini, tomatoes, garlic, salt and pepper and cook for about 3-5 minutes or until zucchini are cooked and tomatoes have begun to collapse. Stir in the fresh basil and season to taste. Serve with extra basil as a garnish. (Tip: you can add tomato sauce and a pasta like rigatoni or penne to make this a pasta dish!)

Pickled Banana Peppers

2 Veggie Box banana peppers, seeded & sliced into rings
1 clove garlic, minced
2/3 cup white vinegar
1/2 cups water
1/2 tablespoon kosher salt
1/4 tablespoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon mustard seeds (optional)
1/4 teaspoon celery seed (optional)

Add the sliced banana peppers and minced garlic evenly into one 1-pint jar. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine the white vinegar, water, salt, sugar, mustard seeds, and celery seed. Stir until the mix is completely dissolved and nearing boil, then remove from heat and allow the brine to cool to room temperature. Add the brine to the mason jars, leaving 1/2 inch free at the top of the jar, then seal with a lid. For best flavor, allow the banana peppers to pickle for a minimum of 24 hours or - even better - up to a week prior to eating.

