

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 3, June 15

Climate change is on our minds after a month of drought, high temperatures, and poor air quality due to wildfires from beyond our borders. Agriculture is directly affected by climate change due to droughts, flooding, groundwater salinization, more frequent and extreme weather events, increasing species extinction, and the spread of old and new diseases. This season in particular, farmers have been suffering from the drought and facing high water bills. Farm labor is more difficult and dangerous in high temperatures and poor air quality. Despite these difficulties, small farms are essential to combatting climate change, as their diverse crops reduce vulnerability to extreme conditions and increase the resilience of our food systems as a whole. Monoculture regions, or the cultivation of a single crop in an area, are more prone to disease and suffering from extreme weather events. In Michigan, many large farms grow subsidy crops, aka crops that have

a government incentive attached to them, such as corn and soybeans. In the long-term, it is more sustainable to grow a wide array of crops through techniques such as food forests and permaculture. The small-scale farms who provide to Veggie Box grow a large variety of produce in structures like hoopouses and greenhouses, which ensures stability within the food system. To cope with a changing climate, we must transition to a slower and more local food system. Supporting local, diverse agriculture is an important first step towards this transition. Of course, the food grown in these smaller-scale, more sustainable ways are not grown in the volume we need to support a planet of people, but what could a solution look like? How do we combine what's practical and what's sustainable?

Farmer Profile

Felzke Farms

Felzke Farms is a family farm located in Dewitt, Michigan that was founded in 1960. They are the largest producer of strawberries in mid-Michigan, offering both U-Pick opportunities as well as prepicked options at their indoor farm market that has been in operation since 1978. Felzke Farms also grows a variety of vegetables such as asparagus, summer squash, cucumbers, peppers, and more!

Crop Profile

Strawberries

Strawberries are one of the first fruits to emerge in the spring. Strawberries are a perennial member of the rose family that are cultivated worldwide. Despite their name, strawberries are not actually berries—unlike berries that have seeds on the inside, strawberries are considered an accessory fruit. While the popular garden strawberry started being cultivated in 18th century Europe, wild strawberries have been enjoyed since ancient times. Unwashed strawberries can be refrigerated for 3-5 days or can be frozen for up to two months to save for making smoothies, baked goods, and more.



What's in the Box?

Radishes, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*
Sweet Potatoes, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*
Organic Dill, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Zesty Spring Mix, *Hunter Park Garden House, Lansing*
Strawberries, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*
Meat Variety, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Chicken, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Beef, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Pork, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Coffee, *517 Coffee Company, Lansing*
Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Recipes and Tips!

Sweet Potato and Black Bean Tacos

8-10 tortillas
2 14 oz cans black beans, drained
2 Veggie Box sweet potatoes (skin on or peeled)
Veggie Box Cilantro, from last week
1 Tbsp oil
1/2 tsp each of cumin, paprika, chili powder, and garlic powder
Salt to taste

Preheat oven to 375F. Dice sweet potatoes. Toss diced sweet potatoes with oil, salt, cumin, paprika, and chili powder. Roast for 25 minutes - flip halfway through bake time.

Heat black beans in a pan with salt and garlic powder - stir occasionally and cook for 5-8 minutes. Assemble the tacos with tortillas, roasted sweet potatoes, black beans, cilantro over top. Serve and enjoy!

Dill Pickled Radishes

Veggie Box radishes, scrubbed and ends trimmed
2 cups water
2 cups white vinegar
4 teaspoons kosher salt
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teaspoons whole peppercorns
4 garlic cloves (peeled)
4-5 sprigs of Veggie Box fresh dill

Pack the radishes and dill into pint jars. Add the garlic and peppercorns. In a large saucepan, combine the water, vinegar, salt, and sugar and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar and salt are completely dissolved. Pour the hot brine into the jars, leaving a little bit of space at the top. Seal and let them cool to room temperature, then refrigerate. Radishes will be pickled and ready to eat in one day but will get even more pickled as they sit.



Strawberry Muffins

2 cups all-purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled off with a knife, plus 2 teaspoons more for tossing with strawberries
2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 stick or 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
1/2 cup milk

2 1/4 cups diced strawberries, from 1 pint, divided
2 tablespoons turbinado sugar, for topping

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners or grease. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. In a separate bowl, beat the butter and granulated sugar for about 2 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, scraping down the sides of the bowl and beating well after each addition. Beat in the vanilla extract and almond extract. With the mixer on low, add the flour mixture in three separate additions, alternating with the milk and ending with the flour. Toss the strawberries with 2 teaspoons of flour and fold them into the batter. Scoop the batter into the prepared muffin tin. Bake for about 30 minutes or until golden brown.



Dill Pickle Dip

8-ounce cream cheese softened
1/2 cup sour cream
1 cup finely chopped dill pickles
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 Tablespoon Veggie Box dill, chopped (add more if desired)
2 Tablespoons dill pickle juice

In a medium-sized bowl combine the cream cheese, sour cream, chopped dill pickles, garlic powder, dill, and pickle juice until incorporated. Sever with potato chips, sliced veggies, or on a sandwich!