

Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 12 · Thursday, August 22th

You don't need to be a farmer to be impacted by the upcoming changes to the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill originated as part of the New Deal in the 1930s to keep food prices fair, ensure adequate supply, and protect natural resources. The Farm Bill has since expanded, and now also includes funding for research, education, and food security.

The bill sets national agriculture and food policy for a five-year period, with a new one passed every 5 years. The last Farm Bill was passed in 2018, with a 2023 expiration date. But as negotiations stalled in Congress last year, lawmakers agreed to a one-year extension that will end September 30, 2024. An additional one-year extension seems likely; the drafts of a new Farm Bill are not even close to approval.

The delays are causing problems for farms, food banks, and SNAP recipients, because everyone is still operating under budget allocations based on the 2018 pre-pandemic agricultural market, which has changed drastically.

So what's in the Farm Bill? By far, the biggest portion of the Farm Bill (around 75%) is for Nutrition programs such as SNAP (food stamps). While these programs provide vital assistance, they are often still not enough to fully address food insecurity. The second largest portion of the farm bill, around 15%, goes towards crop insurance and subsidies. Ideally a form of social and environmental support for farmers, this has turned into a corporate cash grab by Big Ag. The top 10% of farms receive 78% of the subsidies. Corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, and rice are the only crops that receive subsidies, which has encouraged farmers to grow feed for livestock or export over domestic food. Even with the need to diversify crops to cope with climate change, farmers are unable to invest in new crops and techniques due to debt from keeping up with meager subsidies. There is also a small but significant portion of the Farm Bill for conservation, around 7%. There has been a huge gap between farmers' desire to participate and funding, with more than 75% of applications to the Conservation Stewardship Program denied. The recent Inflation Reduction Act included more funds for agricultural conservation programs, but including these items in the the Farm Bill would have more lasting agricultural policy impacts.

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 Onandaga, Michigan. Not long after they met, the two knew that they were destined to be together as life partners and land stewards. 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 *Garlic*

Garlic is native to Asia, and is in the same family as onion, leeks and chives - they're all Alliums! Garlic is known for its pungent aroma, iconic flavor, and traditional health benefits. Garlic grows well in a northern climate, and many farms in our area specialize in different varieties. If you don't like the garlic smell on your fingers, run your hands under cold water, and then rub them on a stainless steel object! Garlic is wonderful raw, roasted, or sauteed and is used globally to add a spicy or umami flavor. Use raw garlic for a sharper, more pungent flavor, or cooking to deepen the flavor and reduces the bite.



What's in the Box?

Organic Spring Mix, Green Wagon Farms, *Ada*

Organic 'Carmen' Sweet Pepper, Green Wagon Farms, *Ada*

Organic Beets, Green Wagon Farms, *Ada*

Cherry Tomatoes, Magnolia Avenue Farms, *Lansing's Eastside* and Peckham Farms, *Lansing*

'Music' Garlic, Green Eagle Farm, *Onondaga*

Organic Red Potatoes, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

'Paula Red' Apples, Phillips Orchards, *St. Johns*

Add-ons

Bread: Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*

Coffee (Bi-Weekly): Flora Coffee Bean Co, *Lansing*

Meat Variety: Beef Stew Meat, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Recipes and Tips!

Pasta in Blender Beet Sauce

- 1 lb pasta
- 1 lb (full share) Veggie Box beets
- 7 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 cloves Veggie Box garlic
- 1 last week's Veggie Box hot pepper (de-seeded if you prefer less spice)
- 7 oz feta cheese
- 1 c fresh dill, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

Sauce: This recipe makes two meals worth of sauce. Wash beets and cut into large chunks. Add to blender, food processor or smoothie maker with olive oil, salt, and chile. Blend to a smooth paste. Put half of the sauce into dated & labeled ziploc bag and freeze (up to 6 months).

Pasta: Cook pasta per directions on box. Drain and return to pan. Pour in beet sauce and stir gently until pasta is coated. Divide between bowls (approx 4 servings) and crumble feta generously over top. Sprinkle with dill and drizzle with extra olive oil.

Recipe adapted from: **Time To Eat** by Nadiya Hussain



Lemony Roasted Potatoes

- 1.5 lb (full share) Veggie Box red potatoes
- 1/4 c olive oil
- 6 cloves Veggie Box garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 c lemon juice
- 3/4 c vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp salt
- (optional) 1 pint (full share) Veggie Box cherry tomatoes
- Additional salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375F°. Wash potatoes (may peel or leave skin on), slice lengthwise, and cut into wedges around 3/4-inch. Place in casserole dish.

In large bowl, combine olive oil, garlic, lemon juice, broth, oregano, and salt. Whisk briskly. Pour over potatoes, and toss to cover.

Season with salt and pepper. Cover tightly with lid or aluminum foil. Bake in oven 30 to 35 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Remove cover, add optional cherry tomatoes, and give one last stir. Return to oven, uncovered this time, for final 15 to 20 minutes. Sauce should be mostly evaporated and potato edges should have just started to brown.

Recipe adapted from: **Veganomicon: The Ultimate Vegan Cookbook** by Isa Chandra Moskowitz & Terry Hope Romero

The Story of Paula Red Apples

There are wild apples, there are apples that are carefully bred by horticulturalists, and then... there are Paula Reds! This apple, neither truly wild nor developed, is a "discovered" variety. In Michigan's fruit belt, apple grower Lewis Arends had a compost pile where he dumped excess apples. In 1957, he discovered a seedling growing nearby that produced early, excellent fruit! He named the variety after his wife. Later testing revealed it is an early-ripening offspring of the famous McIntosh apple. Paula Reds are a delicious sweet-tart eating apple, but they do not store well, so enjoy them as an early-season promise of fall days to come!

