



Maple Wind Farm

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NEWSLETTER 2008

7th Edition

100% Grass Fed Beef & Lamb/ Pasture Raised Pork/ Organic Poultry/ Maple/ CSA Vegetables

Dear Maple Wind Farm Friends, Welcome to the Seventh Edition of the MWF newsletter, and thanks for your interest in and support for our healthful, pasture-raised, sustainable foods! Read on for news from the farm....

A little background...

The snow is finally gone, and the grass is green! This year will mark our 9th season as a grass-based operation, one that started with the simple goal of keeping our meadows open without the use of a tractor and fossil fuels. Since then we've steadily grown into our current goal of producing the healthiest, most ecologically sustainable foods available anywhere.

We are dedicated to selling locally and developing direct relationships with those who consume our food. While we've been working on partnerships with specialty restaurants, markets and stores in the local area, we'd much rather sell our products directly to you – people who want to know where their food comes from! Toward that end, **we'd like to invite all of you** to visit the farm at your leisure – give us a call ahead so we can be there to show you around.

Happenings...on the farm and out and about with MWF...

Celebrate spring with us at our **2nd Annual "The Grass is Up!" Festival and Open House**, on **Sunday, May 25, from 10am- 2pm**. Come see all the animals cavorting on the new spring grass with lots of opportunities to see spring lambs, calves, chicks and piglets. Enjoy a horse drawn tour of the farm, delicious tastings of our many products, or an invigorating walk up to one of our Mongolian-style Yurts. Kids can search for clues through the farm-wide scavenger hunt or play with some of our creative games and toys in the horse barn. While you're here, stock up on meats, or sign up for our vegetable and meat shares through our Community Supported Agriculture programs.

Maple Wind Farm will host a **Pasture Walk: Season Extension, Planting Winter Annuals and Stockpiling Perennials for Grazing**, NOFA sponsored event. Call 434-4122. Tuesday, October 7, 10AM to 2PM at our Andrews Farm location. Learn about the best time to finish cattle on pasture, and the benefits of finishing cattle when other producers are not.

Vermont Fresh Network is bringing Hen of the Wood executive chef and co-owner, Eric Warnstedt, to our farm in late August or early September for an on farm dinner. Don't miss out on a delicious dinner and farm tour. Call us for the date and contact www.vermontfreshnetwork.org to reserve a seat!

We'll be cooking up our hamburgers and sausages at the following events...Don't miss these fun venues!
3rd Annual Valley Stage Music Festival in Huntington Vermont, August 16th, 2008. Check out www.valleystage.net for the great all day music line-up! Get ready to dance!

Huntington Valley Arts Festival, Sunday September 7, 2008 at Jubilee Farm Huntington Center. Come enjoy a day of LOCAL music, art, activities and food! www.huntingtonvalleyarts.net

Shelburne Orchards Small Farms Food Festival. Sunday September 14, 2008.
www.shelburneorchards.com 11:00-5:00. Wonderful local food and music and of course apple picking.

Where to find our products....

You can now find us in MORE restaurants and Co-ops! The past year we have spread our wings and our meats are or have been served at the following restaurants: Kitchen Table Bistro, Richmond; Hen of the Woods, Waterbury; Mary's at Baldwin Creek, Bristol; Chez Claudine, Stowe; Auriel's Restaurant and Restaurant Phoebe in Montpelier; Bistro Sauce, Shelburne. A big thank you to the Vermont Fresh Network, and the work of Meghan Sheridan for making farm-chef partnerships a priority. Thanks also to City Market and the Vermont Green Grocer for carrying our frozen meats. Spread the word to your favorite local dining or grocery establishment.

Busy Farmers Market Season for 2008:

Richmond at Volunteers Green Fridays 3:00-6:30 June 6 – Oct 17
Middlebury at Marble Works, Saturdays 9-12:30 May 10 – Oct 25
Shelburne at the Town Green, Saturdays 9 – 1, May 31 – Oct 11

Give us a call if you plan to visit one of these markets and you'd like us to set something aside for you.

News from the Field...

Following last years CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) success, we're expanding our vegetable program by 10%, offering the program to more families this year. **We still have CSA memberships available**, so send in your registrations! NEW for 2008- Blog type newsletters each week with news from the garden and great recipes to compliment the week's harvest.



Beth is excited for some new varieties of vegetables this summer to add to the selection. At the Andrews Farm, there will be some pick your own peas, cherry tomatoes, beans and herbs right next to the barn/parking lot this summer thanks to Jenny Gilligan and her generosity and openness to the idea of PYO for our members. This summer, we've consolidated both pick ups (Richmond and Huntington) to be on Thursdays- this will be more efficient with harvesting and make planning much simpler than

two separate days. Get ready for some wonderful veggies, herbs and flowers!

We continue to experiment with a program to extend our grazing season, working towards minimizing **hay production** for our cows and sheep in future seasons. In addition to our winter cereal rye planting for high-quality, late-season grazing, we are going to change our grazing program to High-Density grazing management. Instead of grazing when the grass is just 8" tall, we'll be allowing our grasses to grow much thicker and taller and then put our cows into very small areas for shorter periods of time. In previous years, our animals have made as many as six rotations around the farm. With high-density grazing, we're hoping to cut the number of rotations in half, allowing each paddock much greater time to recover and radically increase organic matter in our soils. Additionally, we should be able to stockpile more pasture allowing all our animals to graze well into December.

Wind Power - With the new turbine on line we hope to exceed our current production of about 30% of our electricity needs.

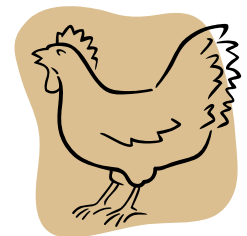


Animal Updates...

We welcome **ELIZA JANE**, our new family cow to the farm. Eliza Jane is a 3 year old Brown Swiss we purchased from Shelburne Farms May 19th. She's settling in nicely and getting used to being hand milked. She used to be a 4H cow and is gentle and inquisitive. We look forward to enjoying her creamy milk, and using the excess to feed our pigs!

BEEF: We're off to a good start with calving with 24 on the ground and 11 more to go! The heifers we retained last year will be ready to go to market, so we will see a doubling of beef product for the coming season. We're excited to see how our experiment with High-Density grazing will affect the cows!

POULTRY: Our Turkeys were large last year! Boy o boy did they flourish on pasture. The average size was 24 lbs., up by 6 lbs over previous years. This year we will raise organic turkeys again on pasture.



We'll also be doing pastured organic broiler chickens again this year, but a little differently. We're going to try a program called "day ranging". Day ranging is different from our old chicken tractor method in a couple of ways. Day ranged chickens are allowed to roam free in an acre paddock for about a week or so. Range feeders with supplemental grain are moved daily to promote even manure distribution and pasture utilization, and shelters are moved forward twice during the week that the birds are in the paddock. The idea is that, except for inclement weather, birds spend very little time in their shelter, focusing their efforts on eating grass and other pasture delights.

Those of you who were with us last year will remember that we have struggled with whether to keep our organic certification for our broilers, turkeys and eggs as organic feed costs have skyrocketed. Though we decided to drop our pork certification, we've elected to continue our poultry program as organic. Though the price will be higher than most, we feel strongly that our organic pastured poultry is the healthiest you can buy anywhere.

LAMB: Our lambing season came to a close with a beautiful crop of rambunctious, energetic lambs, out onto pasture. Though we had a few challenges, (late February we had 22 lambs born in ONE day, the season came off with very little trouble.

PORK: Raising pigs is an acquired skill, and we're starting to get a feel for it. This season we'll be taking our idea of "pasture-raised" to a new level. Instead of moving pigs after they've finished off a bin of feed, we'll be

PORK (cont.) moving them almost daily, following our sheep rotation to utilize the same kind of net fencing sheep use. This means there will constantly be new forage for the pigs, better manure distribution, and the satisfaction of having the pigs clean up what the sheep leave behind. Of course, we'll still feed some grain, but we're counting on pasture to provide an increased portion of their daily needs. In addition to better pasture rotation, we will provide some of the pigs needs with farm fresh milk. We now have a family cow for the farm, and will be feeding the milk we don't use to pigs.



Thanks to those of you who responded to our survey about whether or not to stay with our organic program, many of you responded that a reasonable price and a local product were more important than feeding organic grain. Largely because of the nearly continual rise in cost of both organic and conventional feed (and nearly everything else), we've opted to drop our organic certification so that we can offer you local pasture-raised pork at an affordable (though not cheap) price. Dropping our organic certification will allow us to feed left over veggies, and day old breads along with the extra milk from the family cow. We do have a considerable amount of organic pork in our freezers, but once that's sold, we'll be featuring pasture-raised pork. As always, there are no antibiotics or hormones added to our pork.

Last year, we had great luck farrowing pigs outside. We've never raised a healthier bunch. So we'll be doing that again this year and expect to have our four sows farrow on grass from late May to early July.



Did you know...

The average meal travels 1500 miles to get to your plate. Yikes! Think of all that gas...all the better reason to buy from a local farmer!

Have you read...

Michael Pollan's new book, In Defense of Food Did you know he is coming to UVM for a lecture June 10, 2008! We hope to see all of you there!

HORSES: We were saddened with the loss of our Suffolk Punch mare Hannah, who broke her leg on pasture in January. Her mother and teammate Abby is still with us and we're looking into options for breeding her. Until then, we'll work with her as a single horse, as we break in our new team of dappled-grey Percherons, Herbie and Henry. "The Boys" are large (18 hands!) and young geldings, full of energy and a willingness to work. This year, we'll be expanding their use with garden cultivation and bed preparation, compost spreading, logging, harrowing, seeding and sap collection. When possible, we'll also use them to deliver grain and hay to different animals on the farm, and move pig and poultry shelters. We'll continue to board horses both in our 10' x 12' box stalls and in our run-in area. Some of our own horses are heading off to camp for the summer, so we'll have extra room for those of you who need a low-key facility with access to many miles of trails.

SUGARING: We did it! After many years of preparation and false starts, we finally made syrup this year thanks to a relatively mellow late winter, and Nate's energy and focus on sugar making. From what we know about what to expect in a good year, our sap flow was low and we consequently made less syrup than we hoped. From 309 taps we made about 40 gallons of syrup. But the season has not dampened our enthusiasm for making improvements and increasing our taps for next year. Plans for this fall include adding another 300 taps and installing a vacuum system to help us out on those low flow days.

For the first time this year, CSA members will receive maple syrup as part of their share. You can also buy syrup from the farm and will find us selling syrup at some of our farmers markets.

Of course, we're always interested in feedback, positive or negative, so let us know what you think. We're committed to improving!

Here's hoping this finds you happy, healthy and eating well. Please give us a call or email with any questions.

Best wishes,
Bruce, Beth, David and Bryn Hennessey
Family farmers, Owners
And Nate Holmes, Farm Manager