



Summer News

Newsletter No. 36 July 2010

www.StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Farm report

We have emerged from a late cold spring into a very prolonged period of dry hot weather.

This has meant the grass has virtually stopped growing. There are cracks in the ground 8" deep! We had a sprinkling of rain today, but we could use some more.

With the weather out of the way I would like to thank the volunteers who helped to bring in the hay. You were much appreciated. I would also like to apologise to those that wanted to help and missed out.

We only make hay once a year and are at the mercy of the weather and the contractor as to when we actually bale the hay. Hopefully next year it will all come together as planned. We have made some good quality hay this year. With luck, it will be enough.

We have also planted some fodder beet to feed the animals this winter. They are a kind of big swede that's full of energy and very delicious for the animals.

We have had piglets born on the farm. They were born on the first of July and are at the Brookthorpe farm. Please come and visit

them, they are very sweet and full of exited enthusiasm (if they are not asleep).

This year's calves are all doing well and growing quickly. We have a Hereford bull here at the moment from a small organic farm in Herefordshire. Even though he is quiet and gentle please be aware if walking around the Brookthorpe farm.

The lambs are all well and also growing well. The ewes are losing their fleeces at the

moment. This is normal for the Wiltshire horn breed as they are a "hair" breed and naturally shed their wool. However it does make them look a little scruffy at the moment.

Jason Wilson, a friend of Mark and mine is staying on the farm for a few weeks and

helping out. He went to Emerson College with me as well as apprenticing at Kolisko farm with Mark in 1998. He is a great help and a pleasure to have around.

I would like to encourage you all to visit the farms, not just to collect your share but to walk around and visit the animals and the land. Remember, these are your farms.

Sam

Dates for your Summer Diary

Farm Days: Fourth Saturday of each month, 10.00 to 13.00: 24 July at Brookthorpe; 28 August at Hawkwood; 25 September at Brookthorpe; 23 October at Hawkwood. Come if you can. Bring a picnic or cool drink or children's activity to share.

News From The Veggies

This has really been a year of contrasts so far. I have just reread my article from the spring newsletter. It was all talk of the intense cold during the winter and the effects on the crops. Well, now it'll be all talk of the intense



heat and dry. Although, as I write this, the weather seems to be turning, we haven't had any significant rain since early May. Our capacity to irrigate is limited to one mains water tap at each site, so watering takes a long time, and we have to be selective as to what can be watered. Crops susceptible to drought, such as lettuce and courgettes, are watered regularly and others, such as the potatoes have to do without. So, as happens every year, some crops will do well in the conditions that prevail that year, and others not so well.

It has been particularly difficult getting the root crops established at Hawkwood, where the soil is light and drains very freely. We have watered them by running drip (trickle) irrigation pipes directly along the rows. The drip pipes are a very efficient way to irrigate because the water is applied directly to the ground near the plants. We can only use a maximum of 6 pipes at a time, so every half hour the pipes are moved onto the next rows. It takes 5 hours to water the whole plot, and this is only enough water to get them established. In a fully established crop

we would need to water each row for 2 hours each week. Let's hope it rains properly, soon!

We are now cropping all of the land that we planned to use when we first took on the farm at Brookthorpe in 2007. All of the walled garden and the 4-acre field are planted. The crops are less vulnerable to drought at Brookthorpe as the soil there is very heavy and holds moisture well. Many plants have needed some watering to get them established and they would benefit from the rain, but at the moment but they are doing well. When we have planted out the broccoli at Hawkwood at the end of July all of the main plantings will have been completed. We'll then only have to look after them.



We are at a very productive time of the year now. Most of the vegetables in the share are from our own farms and when we begin lifting the potatoes (which should be later in July) all of the vegetables in the share should be from our own farms. The tomatoes, cucumbers and onions are beginning to ripen and there are plenty of beans and courgettes for the rest of the summer. Harvesting is taking up much of our time now; it is a very busy time in the garden. Fortunately, we have a very dedicated farm team. This year we have been joined by Siggie who is working with us 3 days a week.

So along with Tim, Ute, Sam, and Siggie, I wish you all a happy summer. *Mark*

We Need More Members

If you enjoy being a member of SCA and getting some of your food from our beautiful farms then please tell your friends. We really need more people to join. So please, spread the word. There are also joining forms in the packing sheds for anyone to take. They can phone 0845 458 0814 for more information or look at the website www.StroudCommunityAgriculture.org.

Bursaries

SCA does have a fund from which to offer bursaries. Should you need a reduced cost share - or, conversely, be able to contribute to the bursary fund - then please email Carol on membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org.



Holidays

I have left a sheet up in each of the two packing sheds for you to notify me if you will be away and not collecting your veg. Of course you are welcome to pass on your share to friends, but if you do, please give them specific instructions as to how to open the lock and exactly when they can collect the share. It saves them any frustrations and us any embarrassment at turning people away if they come too early.

If you collect your veg from the Painswick Inn or Nailsworth, please let me know if you won't be collecting at any time (preferably by email). Thanks, Mark mark@plumtucker.co.uk

Children at Play

We have had a positive response from Sara Keene to a request for someone to lead children's activities on farm workdays. She says it's right up her street, and has experience in environmental education and playwork – as well as being a full time gardener. Sara would much prefer to be working with two or three other adults - at least to share the fun and ideas. A team could also cover for each other if one of them is not available. Anyone else join her? Meet to talk about it? Please ring Sara on 01452 303784 or 0777 5617418 sara30bubbles@yahoo.com

Stroud Community Agriculture

Everyone is welcome to join in and enjoy the farm, including non-members.

We are looking for new members for the farm. Please tell everyone you know about us. If you know of an event or somewhere that you think would be good for us to promote the farm, please let the core group know. We work to the following principles:

- *To support organic and biodynamic agriculture.*
- *To pioneer a new economic model based on mutual benefit and shared risk and ensure that the farmers have a decent livelihood.*
- *To be fully inclusive. Low income shall not exclude anyone.*
- *To be transparent in all our affairs. To make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible. To strive towards social justice.*
- *To encourage practical involvement on all levels.*
- *To offer opportunities for learning, therapy and re-connecting with the life of the earth.*
- *To network with others to promote community supported agriculture to other communities and farms and share our learning (both economic and farming).*
- *To encourage Stroud Community Agriculture members, in co-operation with the farmers, to use the farm for their individual and social activities and celebrations.*
- *To develop a non-exclusive sense of community around the farm.*

Core Group

The core group meets one evening a month. At each meeting we get a report about the farm and then discuss all those issues that support the smooth running of SCA.

Sam Hardiman	01452 814 440	samueljhardiman@hotmail.com
Simon Ryder	01452 504607	s.ryder@artnucleus.org

Andy Jones	01453 840351	metamorph@onetel.com
Justin Tait	01453 762990	justintait@hotmail.com
Richard Swann	01453 765588	rswann@tiscali.co.uk
Sue Dance	01453 752068	susandance@googlemail.com
Simon Hanks	01452 812608	
Mark Harrison	01453 752484	mark@plumtucker.co.uk
Tamsyn Widdon		
Kevin Ashby	01452 814620	kevinashby@phonecoop.coop

For more information please contact Jade on jadebashford@hotmail.com

General Enquiries & Information

Claire and Paul Sheridan: 0845 4580814
info@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org
www.StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Membership Admin: Carol Mathews

membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Newsletter: Francis Gobey

francis.gobey@phonecoop.coop

