



Autumn News

Newsletter No. 37 October 2010

www.StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Vegetable Heaven

I'm writing this following our September farm day at Brookthorpe when a band of volunteers spent the morning picking potatoes.

We have a very old machine that lifts the potatoes, and then deposits them on the ground. We then go along and collect them into buckets, sorting out the potatoes suitable for the humans into one bucket, and ones suitable for the pigs in another.

I am very pleased to report that pigs haven't got so many this year and that, despite the drought, we have an excellent crop. For the last two years, because of slug damage we probably fed 50% of the crop to the pigs, and then still had a poor quality crop for the humans. This year we have virtually no slug damage and have only about 15% out-grades. I estimate that we have enough potatoes for the shares until March, barring any large losses whilst in storage.

Harvesting crops such as potatoes is such a classic autumn job and marks the change from summer to winter. We still have some summer crops left such as tomatoes, peppers and beans but these crops will soon give way to our autumn and then winter crops. Many of our crops have been delayed or are reduced

in yield due to the prolonged dry spell in the summer, but as ever, some do well and some not so well.



Unfortunately, one crop that was doing very well despite the drought, the leeks, has now been severely damaged by a pest, the leek moth. This moth lays its eggs on the leek and the larva hatches and burrows down into the stem feeding on the crop. I had never heard of this pest

until 3 years ago, when we first encountered it. Leeks were a very reliable winter crop, fairly bullet proof in fact. This is no longer the case. The larva hatch in late August and feed

throughout Sept. We have lost about a quarter of our crop so far, and the three quarters left are in a pretty poor state. It seems that covering them with fleece to keep the moths off the plants is the only way to control it, but covering a half-acre plot is not really feasible.



So it's a good news story from the veggie patches and a bad news story. I could tell more but that would be a bit too much

tedious gardeners talk. The farms are basically looking great and it is a beautiful time of the year.

I wish you all a fruitful autumn. *Mark*

Talk to the Animals

Reading over my last farm report there was talk of haymaking and very dry weather and very little grass growth. I am glad to report that the grass is now growing again albeit a bit slower than usual, but nevertheless growing. The animals ideally need to stay outside eating fresh grass for at least another six weeks to two months. If they have to come in too soon we would risk running out of winter fodder. There is now the feel of autumn in the air and thoughts naturally start turning toward the approaching cold weather.

The new class three from Wynstones School has started coming to the farm as part of their farming main lesson. They are a great bunch and have already helped us harvest lots of potatoes. Next week they will be learning about composting and even getting to build their own.

The cows are well. I took a cow (Cauliflower) and her calf to the Frampton Fair for people to enjoy as part of their Living Working Countryside exhibition. It was great to hear all the comments on them ranging from "Wow look at those bulls" to "Isn't it nice to



see cows with horns". Taking our animals to fairs like this helps to educate people about how it's possible to keep traditional breeds and how they can be beneficial both environmentally and economically. The calves are well and already have their warm fluffy winter coats, which keep them warm and makes them look very cute.

The lambs have all been weaned and are at Hawkwood, sometimes in the car park as some of you have kindly let me know. This means the ewes will be having a visit from the ram soon. There is a Wiltshire horn ram staying in an adjacent field

to the Brookthorpe farm that the farmer is willing to loan us. The lamb will start to be available hopefully towards the beginning of November. I will let you know when it's there.

The piglets born in July are healthy and growing fast. There is currently plenty of pork available. We have not had any bacon made yet as the pigs up till now have not been big enough. However as of next week we will have some in the freezers. Enjoy! *Sam*

Apple Juicing

Westley Farm is hosting their annual apple juicing day again on 24th October: www.westleyfarm.co.uk/apples.htm

The aim is to encourage people to juice their apples and pears rather than letting them rot. The day was a great success last year with small orchard owners coming along. They made over 200 litres of juice.

This year, they anticipate an even better turn out and will ask people to book a time slot in advance to save waiting around too long. They also want to set up a sort of dating



agency between people who have trees but are unable to harvest fruit, and people who are able to harvest but have no trees. Contact Julian & Hege Osborne, Westley Farm, Chalford, Stroud, GLOS GL6 8HP

01285 760262

www.facebook.com/westleyfarm

Dates for your Autumn Diary

Farm Days: Fourth Saturday of each month, 10am to 1pm: 23 October at Hawkwood, 27 November at Brookthorpe, none in December, 22 Jan 2011 at Brookthorpe. Come if you can. Bring a hot drink or children's activity to share.

Harvest Supper: Sunday 24 October, 3pm onwards in Brookthorpe Village Hall.

Bonfire Night: Friday 5 November, 5.30 at Hawkwood with soup and buns. Get a good view of the fireworks from there!

Singing to the Cows: Friday 24 December, 5pm Brookthorpe and 6pm Hawkwood.

Spare Room for Lovely Guests

The Soil Association is organising an exchange between the UK and Japanese CSA communities. A Japanese group is visiting Stroud CSA and needs accommodation for the night on 28 October.

Funded by the Daiwa and Sasakawa Foundations, which work to promote cultural understanding between the two countries, the exchange will involve CSA farmers, consumers and organisers. The Japanese group of seven people will have a 10 day tour of the UK's CSAs, food co-ops and other food enterprises. Whilst here they will share their experiences of running CSAs, or Teikei's as they are known in Japanese, with their hosts.

Teikei's have been thriving in Japan for over 30 years, and have been central to the growth of the organic food sector. Japan faces many of the same socio-economic and

agricultural issues we do here, and at the same time has quite a distinct social structure.

We have a lot to learn from each other, and this exchange is expected to mark the beginning of a long partnership between our two movements.

Is anyone able to offer accommodation on 28th October? We are told that "Japanese are likely to be lovely guests. Some may not speak wonderful English, particularly the farmers, so it could be loads of fun playing host and practising

international sign language.

Homestay is big in Japan - it is encouraged as a great way for cultural exchange. We need 9 beds - 7 delegates, the interpreter and the driver. If you are able to help out, please contact 07947 715 715

kglendinning@soilassociation.org



Children at Play: Farm days are much more fun when the children can play as well as dig potatoes. Sara would much prefer to be working with two or three other adults to share the fun and ideas. A team could also cover for each other. Anyone else join her? Meet to talk about it?

Please ring Sara on 01452 303784 or 0777 5617418 sara30bubbles@yahoo.com

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.

Bottle It!

Courgette Chutney

4 lb courgettes
2lb 8oz onions
2lb 8oz brown sugar
Large piece of fresh ginger
1/2 tspn pepper
2 pints malt vinegar
2 heads of garlic
2lb 8oz tomatoes
1 tspn cayenne pepper
2 tspn salt



Chop all the vegetables, add vinegar, sugar and spices and bring slowly to the boil, stirring now and again. If the courgettes have

a tough skin, you can peel them and compost the skins.

Simmer for about two hours (don't forget to stir as it will stick) until thick.

Pour into heated jars and seal.

Needs at least three months to mature.

Smells delicious!

Recipe taken from allotment website - adapted slightly by me when it wouldn't thicken by adding cornflour at the end. To save energy it could be completed in a microwave or pressure cooker.

Sue Dance

STROUDCO food hub



A better deal

Stroudco is a community-run co-op of local food producers and food consumers. It is not-for-profit. Stroudco aims to give a better deal to people who produce food and people who eat it than the supermarkets do.

Stroudco operates every other Saturday to provide high quality local meat, juice, fruit and veg, eggs, dairy, beer, preserves and baked goods. Have a look at the product list at www.stroudco.org.uk

Consumers order local food online and collect from Parliament School or can order a home delivery. Consumer members pay £2 per month per household to support the project but we are offering SCA members who join before the end of November 2010 3 months' free membership to try out the service.



You might also want to consider becoming a supplier to Stroudco - which can accept very small quantities. So if you have a bumper crop of apples in your garden and just have a few bags extra, then this new local project could be the answer. Stroudco also sells homemade chutneys, jam and preserves - so if you've already transformed your garden surplus into a year's supply of jam, you could still sell it on through Stroudco.

Consumers order local food online and collect from Parliament School every other Saturday. Home delivery is also available. For more information please phone 0845 330 6340 or download a joining form from www.stroudco.org.uk

Stop Press: SCA is now able to supply Stroudco with any vegetables surplus to the shares.

Motorway Services At Brookthorpe

As you are no doubt aware, planning permission has been granted to build a motorway service area (MSA) at Brookthorpe, not far from our farm there. This is a highly contentious and sensitive issue for a lot of people and I want to make clear any misconceptions that people may have about SCA's involvement in this matter.

One part of the business plan of the MSA is to donate a part of the profits of the services to local community groups. In October last year (2009) SCA was approached by Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, one of the partners in the development, asking if we would like to be one of the recipients of this donation. It was suggested that it could amount to some £20,000 a year for 5 years,

£100,000. At that time, not many members of the core group had heard about this proposed development and so we investigated it further. The core group then discussed it at one of the monthly meetings and decided to turn it down. The discussion at that meeting was wide ranging but it was felt that no matter what our own personal opinions on the matter were, it was unlikely that the wider membership of SCA would want to accept a donation from or be seen to support a new MSA.

We contacted Gateway in December and informed them of the decision, and that was the last involvement that SCA had with the developers. *Mark.*

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.*

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.

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
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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



Coming up in the next issue:

- Core group report, with news about the next AGM
- Special article by SCA's Biodynamic Apprentice, Tim Lawrence, justpeaceandjoy@yahoo.co.uk
- Winter recipe section – please send in your favourites.

And finally, don't forget:

Biodynamic Food Fortnight 2 – 17 October 2010

Demeter Quality - Food with Character - a perfect time for finding out about and enjoying all aspects of biodynamic and Demeter food with its distinct quality and character. There are lots of interesting and inspiring events taking place right across the country – including Stroud. See:

<http://www.biodynamic.org.uk/events/biodynamic-food-fortnight.html>