Summer has finally arrived; its lush array of colours, wonderful scents, and the business of all nature's creatures providing for us in so many beautiful ways...

FARM NEWS

The cows have started calving and we currently have four calves with two still to come. The sheep have all lambed so we now have eleven lambs. And Ezmie, the sow, has had 13 piglets! The farm is a really beautiful place to visit at the moment and I would encourage more people to come and visit, especially at the Brookthorpe farm where all the baby animals are. You are welcome to walk around the farm any time but please refrain from letting your children go unattended into fields with livestock.
in. The cows are friendly and like a scratch, but they are big and can move unexpectedly. Also the ram always wants to come over and say hello, but sometimes he comes to say something less friendly! So, please don't stroke him as he is not a pet!

The piglets will be in the big barn at Brookthorpe and well worth a visit.

The hay fields are behind in their growth, compared to last year, but will be cut in the beginning of July, weather permitting. Any help with hay making would be much appreciated. I will send an email out nearer the time to let you know when and where exactly.

We have a couple of young students working on the farm at the moment. They are here as part of their work experience from Waldorf schools in Germany, where they are required to work for at least two weeks on an organic farm. They live with host families connected to the farm and are young, enthusiastic and add a new young energy to the farm. As well as the students from Germany, we have Vassilis from Emerson College where he is studying Biodynamic farming, and Tim, who has come to us from South Wales to work for the summer ... they live on the farm in Brookthorpe.

At the moment the farm team can be up to 8 people. It is great, and means that we can get lots of weeding done... which the students especially love!

Farmer Sam Hardiman
BARN DANCE REPORT
The Barn Dance went really well, and by all accounts was enjoyed by everyone had the pleasure of leading some of the childrens dancing. I really enjoyed it and so did they. Claire Sheriden did the calling for the main dancing which was excellent as usual, thank you Claire. I would also like to thank Misha Law and Alun Hart for organising the band, well done guys.

The big difference this year was the amount of help in setting up and charging for tickets. The set up went well with several people helping for a couple of days a week before hand. And with charging for entrance, we raised around £850 after cost to go towards our new polytunnel.

Thanks to everyone who came to the barn dance and thanks to everyone who helped make it possible.

VEGGIE REPORT
One thing you can say about the start to this season, that despite the protracted cold spring, it’s a hundred times better than last year’s relentless rain. It has been a relatively cold five months now and everything that grows in the soil has been delayed by about three to four weeks. We have planted out all of the spring crops and they generally are growing well. This year we are growing the same types of crops as in previous years, but we are growing more of them at Hawkwood rather than Brookthorpe. The potatoes have been planted in the plot below the polytunnels, and cabbages, calabrese and broad beans are growing in the plots across the drive. We are doing this to try to take advantage of the lighter soil conditions at Hawkwood, soil that can be cultivated earlier and will warm up earlier in the spring. The down side is that all of these crops like plenty of moisture and they will struggle if the conditions turn very dry.

One advantage of the late spring is that some of our winter crops were held back and did not go so readily to flower. Hence we were able to continue with the salad bags, kale, chard and leeks for longer than usual. They have all finished now of course and the new season lettuce and greens have begun.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

| Farm Days: |
| 27th July – Brookthorpe |
| 24th August – Hawkwood |
| 28th September - Brookthorpe |
| 1.30 – 4.30pm with shared tea & cake |

| Earn Camp: |
| date to come... |
Even the pests are late this year. The carrot root fly is a very prolific pest of the carrots and is very difficult to control. The adult is a fly that lays its eggs around the top of the carrot roots where the developing grub can then mine into the root to feed. The adult fly has two main generations; one in May, and the other in July. We aim to cover the carrots at these times, and to sow the main crop carrots at the beginning of June, after the first generation have completed their lifecycle. The pest population is monitored at Wellesbourne research station and they calculate estimated dates of emergence and maximum egg laying periods of the adult flies. They detected the first fly on the 10th May this year, last year it was on the 10th April, so the whole of the lifecycle of the flies has been delayed, and this means that we have had to delay sowing our maincrop carrots as well.

We have begun erecting the new polytunnel at Hawkwood. We have concreted in the foundation tubes and begun to erect the framework. Hopefully by the time you read this the whole thing will be completed. I hope so because we have 60 rather tall tomato plants that desperately need to be planted out. We were successful in our bid to the Co-op and they granted us £2000 towards the tunnel. The financial situation of the farm for the first quarter of the year was much better than expected as well, so it should not be such a strain to purchase the tunnel.

I would like to welcome two students who will be working with us over the summer; Vassilis and Tim. They are both living on the farm at Brookthorpe and have been doing fantastic work with us all. Ute also continues to work with us despite the constant struggle she has to get around and do the things that she wants to do. She works with the packing and share preparations on Tuesday and Friday afternoons (and can still crack the whip when needed). So, along with some Waldorf pupils from Germany, and our hard working work sharers we have a great team working on the farm at the moment.

Here's to a great summer,

Farmer Mark Harrison

VEGGIE SURVEY

We had terrific response to the veg survey with more than half of the farm members completing the survey (more than 100 people), so thank you to all of you for such a great response. And thanks to Ute, Bruno, Nicky (Ferguson) and me for putting it together. I wanted to give you a brief overview of the main results.

It seems that overall we are getting the quantities of vegetables about right. For every one of the vegetables listed in the table at least 40% of you thought that the quantities were just right. So even for the least popular vegetable, Jerusalem artichoke (32% said please can we not have it at all) 43% said it was just the right amount. There were similar results to this for kohlrabi, beetroot, celeriac, turnips, and kale, with significant numbers saying that they would like it less often or not at all, but with equally significant numbers saying that the amounts were just right. However, when I looked at some of the individual surveys, no one person didn’t want any of them (I expect that those people have left the farm by now anyway), individually the results were very varied and reflected individual tastes.
There were a few vegetables that were obviously more popular. 51% of you wanted more potatoes in the share (40% thought it was just right) and many people said that they wanted broccoli, cauliflower, beans, broad beans, tomato, cucumber and sweetcorn more often in the share. Broccoli was the standout veg from that list, with 40% wanting it more often and 35% wanting more per share. Many people wanted more fruit.

Of the fruit and vegetables people suggested we could include in the share the most common were mushrooms and peas, with asparagus, garlic, sweet potatoes and soft fruit also mentioned by a few people.

On the subject of quality 93% thought that it was good or very good most of the time and about 50% thought that it was poor occasionally or for certain items. The most commonly cited problem seems to be with carrots. 50% of the 38 comments made were about poor quality carrots.

94% agreed with our current policy of buying in produce when needed to provide a year-round weekly veg share and 83% agreed that we could continue to source these bought in vegetables from Europe if necessary.

We have only just collated these results so I don’t want to comment on them yet. We won’t be able to make any changes yet anyway, so we can continue with this discussion over the coming months. We will include all of you who wished to be part of these discussions. Thanks again to everyone who responded, it’s really helpful to have an overall picture of what people think and hopefully you appreciated the chance to have your say. I have copies of the summarised results, if you would like to see them please let me know.

Mark Harrison

SCA MEAL

Thank you for all your enthusiasm for this event. This will be a great opportunity for everyone to put faces to names, make new friends, learn a bit more about the SCA and biodynamics, etc., and eat good food!

We will be cooking and eating the first meal on Tuesday, 2nd July at Springhill cohousing community, by kind permission of the residents association. If you would like to help with the cooking then come as soon as you can after 4.00pm, if you just want to eat then come @ 6.30pm. There is no parking on site but on road parking can be found on Slad Rd and Folly Lane.

Booking is essential. There are a limited number of places so you will need to book online at: http://tinyurl.com/jwjcz3p

Cancellations must be made at least 48hrs beforehand, or you will be charged for the meal regardless.

If you do not have access to the internet then you can contact Claire on 01453 757348. All details are online at the above address. The meal is open for all SCA members and potential newcomers and to all interested residents of Springhill. Looking forward to enjoying your company.
The story of how SCA was extended into a Stroud-wide network of local food producers

Five years ago 2 of SCA’s founder members started to explore the idea of extending the principle of Community Supported Agriculture to a wider circle of local food and drink producers. The result was a new not-for-profit co-operative which we now call Stroudco Food Hub.

Stroudco is made up of producer members and consumer members who collectively own and manage the organisation. The consumers order online at www.stroudco.org.uk, the producers deliver produce to Stroud Valley Community school where consumers either collect it or pay for home delivery. Five years on Stroudco has 42 local food and drink producer members and 354 consumer household members (many of them also SCA members!)

SCA is one of Stroudco’s main producers with much of the farm’s surplus produce being sold through the food hub. This provides a valuable income to SCA because the farmers can sell to Stroudco at a higher price than they would sell those surpluses to a wholesaler. Stroudco is also able to accept small quantities of produce which would not be of interest to a wholesaler.

Many SCA members use Stroudco to extend the range of produce they can buy from local, small-scale producers - many of whom have no other retail outlet for their produce. This includes dairy products, drinks (alcoholic and not), breads, cakes, poultry, samosas, soups (made from SCA veg!), fruit leathers, jams …..the list goes on! For a full catalogue, go to http://www.stroudco.org.uk/images/stories/Stroudco-catalogue_Sept_2012.pdf

The Stroudco soup producer is the Weston O’Neill family who are SCA members. They buy extra veg from SCA to make soup to sell through Stroudco. Claudia Weston says “what I love - is making soup from organic vegetables that are grown within a mile of where I live. They are fresh with all their nutrients intact - as they haven't travelled a long way. Stroudco members order our soups online then we receive a purchase order each Thursday morning. We make the soups fresh for delivery (still warm!) to Stroudco at Stroud Valleys school on Saturday morning. We can then pick up our box of Stroudco local produce at the same time.”

Two years ago the Stroudco core group (elected from the producer and consumer membership) decided to supplement the local produce with a range of store cupboard items sourced from Essential – a workers co-op in Bristol providing a wholefood wholesale service. So members can now start to replace their supermarket shop with a full basket of produce entirely from a not-for-profit co-operative grocer!
So not only is SCA one of the most successful Community Supported Agriculture projects in the UK, it is also the inspiration for other ventures which are helping to build a more resilient local food system and make the world a better place! For more detail on Stroudco email info@stroudco.org.uk or phone 01453 840037 or call in at Stroud Valleys school on Castle Street any Saturday between 11am and 1pm.

Nick Weir

REAL Bread for SCA

'Chickpeas' Organic REAL bread has arrived! These breads are hand made to order in Ruscombe with a passion for good, nutritious, REAL bread. Using organic ingredients and a long fermentation process, these breads contain no improvers, preservatives, or artificial additives. REAL bread is now available for you to order and collect at the Hawkwood Veg Shed on Friday @ 9.30am & Brookthorpe Veg Shed on Mondays @ 7.30pm. Two different varieties of REAL bread are offered each week in either Large or Small sizes. Once you have registered your interest, simply order by return email, and your bread will be delivered to the Veg Shed for your collection. To register your interest and to find out about payment methods; contact CLAIRE at chickpeas.bread@gmail.com. For those who are not internet friendly you can telephone 01453 757348 for more information. Thank-you!
SEASONAL RECIPES..

Veggies coming into season over the next 3 months are:
beans, broad beans, calabrese, cabbage, courgettes, and tomatoes eventually!

Here are a few recipe suggestions to whet your appetite...

Courgette, Feta & Rosemary Quiche

2 x courgettes, sliced and quartered
2 x medium onions, chopped
2 x cloves of garlic, crushed
200g Feta, crumbled
1 sprig of fresh rosemary, leaves chopped
300ml single crème/milk
4 eggs
300g shortcrust pastry
splash of olive oil
seasoning to taste

Preheat the oven to 200 C
Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface. Line your flan case with the pastry.
Sauté the onions gently in oil until transparent, then add the courgettes and garlic, stirring into the onions and continue to sauté for a few minutes more. Turn the heat off, add the rosemary and cover for 5 minutes.
Whisk the eggs and crème/milk together adding black pepper and sea salt to taste.
Pour off any excess juices from the onion and courgettes mixture, then spoon into your flan case, spreading to fill it.
Scatter the crumbled feta cheese over this mixture, then pour on the egg mixture.
Place in the top of the oven for 30 minutes or until nicely browned on top.
Remove and leave for 10 minutes before slicing portions. Enjoy!
Pea & Broadbean Houmous with goats cheese & sourdough

300g fresh (or frozen) peas
300g fresh broad beans, podded (no need to remove their pale green jackets)
4 tbsp olive or sunflower oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled
zest 2 lemons, juice of 1
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

TO SERVE

8 slices sourdough bread, halved
125g/4.5oz log soft, spreadable goat's cheese
50g watercress

1. Tip the peas and beans into a large pan of salted boiling water, then cook for 3 mins. Drain, cool under cold water, then drain again thoroughly.
2. Put the 4 tbsp oil in a pan, heat gently, then add the garlic. Cook for 3 mins, very very gently, until the oil is infused and the garlic has softened but is not coloured. Tip the oil and garlic into a jug and cool.
3. Whizz the peas, beans and almost all the zest in a food processor, then trickle in the garlicky oil. Add the garlic cloves, almost all the lemon juice and 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil. The houmous should be swirling around the bowl nicely by this point, but not be too fine in texture. Scrape the sides down if you need to. Season well - you'll need about 1 tsp sea salt and lots of black pepper. Add the rest of the lemon juice to taste. Spoon into a dish, swirl the top, then drizzle over the remaining extra virgin olive oil.
4. To serve, toast the bread, then spread with the goat's cheese. Dollop a good spoonful of houmous onto each piece, drizzle with a little more olive oil, scatter with the remaining zest, then grind over a little black pepper. Top with watercress and serve.

BROAD BEANS

It's tricky to pick the best as the outer skin gives no indication as to the quality of the bean. Don't worry about discolouring; even a black pod could have quality beans inside. When selecting, go for slender ones - big, fat bumps in the pod tend to hold big, fat dried beans inside. If you are shelling broad beans, don't lick your fingers - it's a very nasty bitter taste.

* Let us know your recipe ideas... chickpeas@hotmail.co.uk *
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. For dates, venues & times, contact Mark Harrison

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

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