SUMMER FARM REPORT

We have had a warm and wet start to summer with some really warm days recently. The grass is growing away nicely and now the hay is ready to cut the next time we have a prolonged spell of hot weather.

Lambing went well with 19 lambs from our 11 ewes. Some of them lambed outside in the sunny spring weather, others lambed in the shed. They are now growing well and enjoying the warm weather. The warmth and rain makes the grass grow well but also throws up some problems too. For example, we have had several sheep have flies lay eggs around their horns and the maggots hatch and eat their way into the skin. It’s a horrible job to treat, so essential to catch it early.

The fencing we undertook through the winter has gone well with some much needed repairs taking place and some new fencing going up with stock staying where they are meant to be (more than previously anyway!).

Ivy, the new cow we bought, has calved sooner than expected, last week. I knew she was in calf but the lady who sold us her thought she was due in August! The rest of our cows are due to calve in August and September.

We have had some trouble with getting pigs 'in pig' (pregnant). A Pietrain boar, we bought last year, turned out to be infertile. This has meant a long gap between litters of piglets. Due to this...
gap I recently bought four weaners from Severn View Farm. They are a cross between Gloucester Old and a Tamworth and will be ready for Christmas to provide gammon and sausages.

The barn dance went very well with a great turn out and lots of people enjoying dancing, music, horse and cart rides and playing.

Farmer Sam Hardiman

VEGGIE NEWS

The weather has continued to be mild and quite wet through the spring. This has given us good growing conditions, but it has been too wet at times. The soil at Brookthorpe is quite heavy and cannot be worked when wet. We have not been able to get on with some important jobs at crucial times and as a result some plantings and sowings of crops have been delayed. In contrast, at Hawkwood, where the soil is very light, everything has been planted up and is growing well.

We have been buying in many vegetables for the share over the past few weeks, having hit the “hungry gap”, that time of the year when all of the winter crops have finished but few of the spring crops are ready. Some of the bought-in vegetables are grown in the south of Europe and some are grown in heated glasshouses locally. This will change now as the early plantings of cabbage, broccoli, and spinach etc at Hawkwood begin to mature. We have already been picking our own lettuces, radish, spinach, and spring onions from the polytunnels and walled garden. We also have beans in the polytunnel and courgettes in the walled garden beginning to flower and should be fruiting soon.

We finally managed to repair and recover the polytunnel nearest the hedge with new plastic. This is first time it has needed renewing since it was erected in 2005, the plastic does last a long time. The doors aren’t finished yet but the tunnel is completely planted out with tomatoes and peppers. On the subject of polytunnels, we were notified just this week that our grant application to the SDC Food Fund has been successful and we have
been offered £4171 towards the other new polytunnel that we had planned at Hawkwood. We plan to erect this in the autumn.

Finally I would like to welcome Clare and Lucy to the farm. They are both living on the farm at Brookthorpe and working with us for the season. We have also had six school students from Germany, all on work experience placements, working with us at different times over the past few weeks. This all makes for a colourful and productive farm team.

Farmer Mark Harrison

BARN DANCE

On the morning of the Barn Dance I awoke to rain lashing against my window and no sign of blue sky anywhere. After so much anticipation I could not help feeling it might be a wash out and people might not come. We had put a lot of work into getting everything ready but we had also made contingency plans for bad weather but hoped they wouldn't be needed. By eleven o'clock the sun was trying to break through and it was warming up. As the start time approached the sun had broken through and it looked promising. Phew!!

I needn't have worried, soon the crowds were pouring in. The first item on the program was the children's dances. This has become quite a popular item with lots of children joining in, at one point Ute counted 45 children dancing around doing the “snaky snaky” dance as it's come to be called. I have to admit i really enjoy leading these dances, the enthusiasm the kids bring, it's infectious, and many adults join in too. Paul and Richard played some wonderful music that went with the dances perfectly.

Next came the food! I would like to extend a huge thank you to all those who helped out with the BBQ, serving the food and of course Clare and Jade and others for cooking the delicious curry and making the salads.

During the break Otti Bohlen gave an eager gaggle of children cart rides behind his shire horse, Aaron. They travelled around the fields and back to the barn yard. It was a beautiful sight to behold and very much enjoyed by the children. Thank you, Otti. Then it was time for more dancing. With Clare Sheriden calling and a great band, the dancing continued with everyone enjoying themselves, both big and small.
After the dancing was over there was some beautiful live Brazilian music to enjoy, as people slowed down to take a rest.

The whole day went very well despite an incredibly heavy down pour part way through. There was also a great turn out with nearly 175 adults and 120 children throughout the day.

This amazing turnout raised £1,275. The money will go towards the community building that is being planned to go up at our Hawkwood farm. The planned building will be for the benefit of the whole farm community.

There are too many people to thank individually but I would like to thank all those involved in organizing it and helping out, both in advance and on the day. Without you it wouldn’t have been possible.

...Barn Dance from a Wheelchair Perspective

We had the fourth barn dance last Saturday (07/06/14). In first few barn dances I was actively involved in preparation such as mucking out, cleaning, putting greenery up and most important – baking cakes. At the barn dance 2011 I danced the last time in my life. Last year already on the buggy I took the photos. This year I came with my carer in my wheelchair almost fully paralysed and unable to talk but I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a pleasure watching all families with their kids streaming into the barn and enjoying themselves. Sam probably one of the biggest of all kids called for the children’s dances and so many joined in that the dance floor was packed. At one point I counted 45 children dancing. Outside the barn Otti got his horse Aaron geared up for children’s cart driving. The queue was long and the cart was packed with kids. Some enthusiastically followed the cart on foot.

This is what I love about our farm: kids and adults can enjoy themselves together as part of one farm community. Being part of such a community keeps me alive. Thank you to all who helped to set it up and helped on the day. The biggest thank you goes to Sam, who had the vision and the perseverance to let it happen. Sam, with the same vision and perseverance we will manifest our community building. I try to stay around until that is built.

Ute Schlossmacher
Do you know about fire safety?
The volunteer members who are on the core group to look after managing the farm are reviewing our policies. Can anyone help by offering a couple of hours to advise us as we write a fire safety policy?
Many thanks, Jade
jadebashford@hotmail.com

'Community Food Fermentation Group' ...
With the increasing awareness of the natural wholesomeness and nutritional integrity of fermented foods, such as sauerkraut or kimchi, would members of the SCA be interested in coming together to learn (hands on) from each other about this way of conserving vegetables and other foods?
To register your interest please telephone Simon Hanks on 01452 812608

Farmer Sam recently gathered a team of farm members to get work going on our own straw-bale building. The aim is to provide indoor and outdoor space for farm-related social and learning events and shelter for the farm team. To find out more see www.stroudcommunityagriculture.org.uk

REAL Bread for SCA Members
'ChickPeas' Organic REAL breads are hand made to order from Ruscombe, and delivered to the Veg Sheds of the SCA members for collection. With a passion for making REAL breads, all ingredients used are organic, good & nutritious, to give you true taste every time, without any unnecessary artificial additives or preservatives. A list of tempting varieties of REAL breads are available for ordering. Simply register your interest to: Claire on 01453 757348 or chickpeas.bread@gmail.com
Through popular demand, REAL Bread-making Workshops are now offered to you in the comfort of your own kitchen! Contact Claire for more information.
SEASONAL RECIPES..

Some quick and delicious recipes to feed the soul!

Roasted Summer Vegetables & Chickpeas

3 courgettes, thickly sliced
1 aubergine, cut into thick fingers
3 garlic cloves, chopped
2 red peppers, de-seeded and chopped into chunks
2 large baking potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-size chunks
1 onion, chopped
1 tbsp coriander seeds
4 tbsp olive oil
400g/14oz can chopped tomatoes
400g/14oz can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
small bunch coriander, roughly chopped

Heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7.

Tip all the vegetables into a large roasting tin and toss with the coriander seeds, most of the olive oil and salt and pepper. Spread everything out to a single layer, then roast for 45 mins, tossing once or twice until the vegetables are roasted and brown round the edges *

Place the tin on a low heat, then add the tomatoes and chickpeas. Bring to a simmer and gently stir. Season to taste, drizzle with olive oil, then scatter over the coriander. Serve from the tin or pile into a serving dish.

Eat with hunks of REAL bread

* Alternatively, at this stage you can leave the roasted vegetables to cool and add your own dressing for a cold roasted salad with couscous!

(SPICY) BROAD BEAN/PEA, CORN & OLIVE SALAD

2 x Corn on the Cob
1 round Lettuce
500g Peas/Broad Beans (or 150g depodded)
100g Green Olives
200g Feta cheese, cut into wedges
1 jar of Artichoke hearts
3 tbsp Olive oil
1 Red chilli, finely chopped / 1 clove of Garlic crushed
Zest and juice of ½ Lemon

Griddle/roast the corn on the cob, until tender. Slice off kernels and leave to cool.
Depod the broad beans/peas, and cook in boiling water for a few minutes.
Add broad beans/peas to the corn, plus the artichoke hearts and olives.
Mix the olive oil, red chilli/garlic and lemon juice and zest together for the dressing.
Wash the lettuce leaves and place onto your platter or into your salad bowl.
Add the vegetables, then the dressing
Lastly cut the feta cheese into long wedges, then place on top.

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 jadbashford@hotmail.com
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