AUTUMN ISSUE

Dates for your Diary

● 1st October, Sunday; 12-3pm

SCA Farm Open Day at Brookthorpe

We are holding an Open Day at our Brookthorpe farm. This is part of the national CSA Network open day in which community farms such as ours, are opening their farms to the public. There will be a Treasure Hunt, free refreshments and two Farm Tours (1pm and 2pm). Bring your friends, all welcome!

● 22nd October, Sunday, from 1pm

SCA Harvest Meal at Hawkwood

Our annual bring-and-share harvest meal and apple pressing event will be held in the Community Building at Hawkwood. We will have a lunch at 1:30pm, apple juicing will follow. All welcome!

● 4th November, Saturday, evening

Bonfire Night at Hawkwood

We will be lighting the fire at 6pm. There will be tea and a nice veggie soup to keep you warm throughout the evening. We hope to see you there!
Autumn is fast approaching, it's in the air. There is something so special about having a job that allows you to be so aware of the changing seasons. It is hard to describe exactly how, but you can tell almost one day to the next that the season has changed. Working outside everyday with animals and plants and it's all around you.

There are of course signs: the calves have all grown there winter coats, the leaves of the hedge row have lost there vibrant green and the dew that sparkles on the grass every morning is so heavy. It has been a good summer. In my last Farm Report I wrote about how hot it was, but since then we have had a lot of rain showers. This has led to an abundance of grass, veg, and fruit, both in the garden and on the hedge rows. The cows have enjoyed ample grass and there is plenty of hay for them when winter comes.

We are trying something new this year. As you know, we have two farms – Hawkwood and Brookthorpe, we keep livestock at each of the farms year round and in the winter they stay in a barn at the farm where they live. This year however, we will be lending our Hawkwood barn to Kees's cows from Stroud Micro Dairy. There is no barn on Oakbrook yet were they live and they need shelter during the winter. This will mean we will bring our cows from Hawkwood down to our Brookthorpe farm and house them there as the barn is bigger.

We will also be in a position to sell some hay in the barn at Hawkwood to the Micro Dairy as they didn’t make enough this year and we have extra in the barn were they will be.

So if you are visiting the barn this winter you will see black and white cows instead of our brown and white ones.

We bought a few more breeding sheep this summer, they joined our flock of ewes to maintain the numbers as we had to retire some older ewes earlier this year. When looking for live stock to buy in I search several farms trying to find good healthy stock. I was delighted to find a farm in Malvern that was both organic and fairly local. I am very happy with them and look forward to spring and lambing time.

We are expecting our next litter of piglets in November, ill let you know when they arrive so you can visit them!

Farmer Sam
In my last Veg Report I wrote about the hot dry weather, and how it was making it quite difficult preparing and cultivating the soil and the newly planted vegetables. Well I don’t think I had pressed the Save button before all of that changed and the summer took a turn into very changeable and rather dull conditions. I think that all of our crops have grown very well, plenty of moisture and enough warmth and sun to keep growing well. The difficulty for us has been catching those times when it has been dry enough to get on with hoeing the weeds and cultivating the soil. I’m not complaining too much as we have had disastrously wet summers in the past and this has been nothing like those.

Every September I write about the importance of growing what we call green manures. These are the clovers and grasses that we grow on plots of the vegetable land to feed and improve the soil. This is one of the reasons why organic vegetables are that bit more expensive to buy, as land is taken out of vegetable production in order to grow these green manures. In our system we grow them for two or three consecutive years, either cutting or grazing them throughout the season to return organic matter to the soil. Conventional growers use chemical fertilizers to maintain fertility (and profit) but this can be at a cost to the health and vitality of the soil. The soil is the most important asset of the farm (and of humanity) and we do our best to nurture it. In some cases we sow the green manures in between a standing crop, and they continue to grow after the crop is harvested. In other cases we sow them into bare ground after the crop has been harvested in the autumn.

We are making plans to restart the starter farm next year. Clare (who has now changed her name to Kit) is going to come back and farm it next year. The details are still to be finalised but we are going to erect a polytunnel on the starter farm this autumn in readiness for next season. We will farm some of the land for SCA as we have done this year. If you take a walk down there now you will see many squashes and pumpkins ripening in the field, and a mixture of leeks, cabbages and carrots growing there (and some of those green manures).

Our wonderful staff team have agreed to stay on for the winter. The farm finances are looking healthy and we felt that we could use the extra help with harvesting and other off-season jobs. Thank you for all of your hard work so far this year.

Farmer Mark
Meat Update

There is some good news and some bad news regarding the meat on the farm.

The good news is that we tried selling fresh ham for the first time a few weeks ago. This seemed to go very well with it all selling out quite quickly. On the back of this success we will be offering, smoked back and streaky bacon and gammon steaks fresh as well and they will be stocked in a fridge next to the freezer at the Hawkwood packing shed. I will send an email out as soon as it is available.

The bad news is our Brookthorpe packing shed got broken into and the freezer of meat got emptied. I estimate we lost around £300+ worth of meat. This means we can no longer stock meat in there as we have done before. The shed is too vulnerable to break ins. We will however try a system of pre-ordering as we had at Hawkwood till a longer term solution is found.

Please send any feedback and questions about the Meat Box scheme to Sam at:

samueljhardiman@hotmail.com

Meat Box scheme

One idea that I have been thinking about is doing a meat box scheme.

Currently the farm members support the farm by committing to buying vegetables through subscribing to the CSA model, but not the meat, this is instead sold retail as and when people choose to buy it.

How this might work is you would subscribe to a monthly meat share from the farm. It would be available in various sizes, small medium and large perhaps.

There could be some degree of choice, but the idea is you would get a varied selection of meat produced from the farm year round.

This would remove the need to have continually stocked freezers and instead have a selection of meat boxed and ready for collection once a month for you to use at home.

I would warmly invite feedback, please let me know what you think or if you have any ideas of how it could work.

Farmer Sam

SPAM! SPAM! SPAM! SPAM!

No, not a new SCA meat product, but how to avoid SCA mailings being treated as Junk!

For those of you who are not getting our emails and would like to, please make sure you’ve done the following:

1. Checked that we know you want to get our emails – send an email to 
   membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org telling us so!

2. Put our addresses into your address book, so our emails don’t get marked as SPAM. Most mailings come from 
   membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org and some come from samueljhardiman@hotmail.com

3. Checked your Junk and SPAM folders. If you find one of our emails there, please click the "Not Junk" button in your email client, so it learns that we are not SPAM for the future.

Carol
I was really looking forward to the SCA first Farm Fest, however the very windy and stormy weather made me wonder if my comfy sofa would have been a better place to spend the evening. Despite that I decided to come as I knew I would regret it otherwise. Also as I live in Stroud I didn't really have any excuse not to go but I didn't dare to bring a tent with me!

When I got to Hawkwood the weather cleared up and a pint of a nice Stroud Brewery ale (served from a horse wagon bar!) has brighten my mood even further. Then there was a raffle and I even won a little blue mug! Children enjoyed the trailer rides while the adults were trying their strenght in a Wellie Wang competition. After the exercise some tasty burgers and hot-dogs came in handy, washed down with another pint of ale.

It started to get dark when the fire was lit and everyone gathered around it. There were serious and less serious conversations, jokes and a lot of laughter. We were then taken by another game called Aunt Sally that involved knocking a 'dolly' off a metal spike using a wooden baton. The game was a lot of fun and it got quite competitive at the end and everyone enjoyed it.

The hours went by and there was still a few people sitting by the fire when the Farm Fest Disco began. Accompanied by some great 80's and 90's tunes, a disco ball borrowed from the wagon bar and underneath the billions of bright stars a group of shiny, happy people, myself including started a wild dance that carried on till late.

Thank you the Farm Team for organising such a great event! I really hope it will became an annual Festival and will definitelly come next year! 

Aleks
Recipes!!!

Liver pâté

Grazing cover crops, producing manure for the vegetables, maintaining permanent pastures; the sheep, pigs and cattle are part of making our farm a symbiotic whole of plants and animals. But how to use the whole animal afterwards – all the odd parts that aren’t sausages and steaks? Here is a recipe for liver pâté:

1. Boil the potatoes
2. Fry onion and garlic (and mushrooms) till soft and brown
3. Chop the liver into pieces small enough for your blender to blend
   (easiest done when the liver is still frozen – a hand blender will also do the job if the pieces are small)
4. Add the butter to the onions to melt
5. Blend all ingredients until smooth, add spices, salt and pepper
6. Put into ramekins or glass jars
7. Place in the oven in a bain-marie (water bath) and bake for an hour at 180° until baked through

In Denmark, where I come from, liver pâté with pickled beetroot is a lunchbox staple.
Even more Recipes!

Farm Fest beetroot soup (new and improved!)

Ingredients

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>500 g beetroot</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 g carrot</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 g potato</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>300 g onion</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 fat cloves garlic</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 tsp fresh ginger</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 tbs vinegar</td>
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<tr>
<td>stock or stock cube</td>
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<tr>
<td>cayenne pepper</td>
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<tr>
<td>thyme</td>
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<td>salt and pepper</td>
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1. Roughly chop onions and garlic and fry until soft and brown
2. Chop the root veg and bring to the boil in stock (or water with stock cube) – just enough to cover the veg
3. Add pepper, cayenne pepper, thyme and finely grated ginger and let simmer for 20 mins until the veg is soft
4. Blend together, add vinegar and more of the spices to taste

Serve warm with a topping or two:
- parsley
- roasted pumpkin seeds
- creme fraiche
- garlic croutons (cut fresh or stale bread into cubes and roast in oven with salt, olive oil and plenty of garlic)

Enjoy on a rainy day!

Simple roasted beetroot salad with feta cheese

Ingredients

<table>
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<tr>
<td>2 large beetroots</td>
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<tr>
<td>200g of feta cheese</td>
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<tr>
<td>handful of salad leaves</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 tbs of fresh chives (or parsley)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 tbs lemon juice</td>
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<tr>
<td>olive oil</td>
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<td>salt and pepper</td>
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1. Wash the beetroots but leave the skin on. Chop into 1-2 inch pieces and place in a ovenproof dish. Sprinkle some oil and bake in 180 C until soft. Leave to cool.
2. Prepare the dressing: mix lemon juice with a table spoon of olive oil, season with salt and pepper
3. Roughly cut the salad leaves and put in a bowl. Add in the beatroot pieces.
4. Add the feta cheese (crushed) and chives (choped) and sprinkle some dressing.

Take it with you in a lunch box or enjoy as a light supper!

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

We are looking for new members for the farm. This is especially so, now we have the starter farm up and running. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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For more information on CSAs please contact Jade Bashford at jadabashford@hotmail.com

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