Dates for your diary!

**Harvest Meal**

*13 October (Sunday), from 3PM at Hawkwood*

Join us for the annual harvest festival with a bring-and-share meal in the Community building at Hawkwood. We traditionally have a veg display and an apple press so bring some apples with you and a container for the juice if you wish to take some home. It's a great opportunity to catch up with other members of the farm and a fun day for kids too!

**Bonfire Night**

*9 November (Saturday), from 6PM at Hawkwood farm*

Join us at Hawkwood farm for the SCA famous bonfire night. We will have some warm seasonal soup and hot drinks to keep you warm. And of course a big fire!

We hope to see you there!
I’m writing this article after a successful Farm Fest (see some pictures on page 4). Lots of people enjoyed playing games, trailer rides, relaxing, eating and drinking in glorious weather. In the evening we all sat round the fire, some sang songs, while a huge beautiful full moon climbed into the clear night sky.

Some people camped over night and enjoyed bacon and eggs and tea and coffee cooked on the BBQ for breakfast.

On the farm we have made lots of hay this summer and the barn is full of nice hay and straw from a farm down the road. It has been a good year for grass growth and there is still quite a lot of grass in the fields left for grazing.

Our new bull George is settling in well. He is a pedigree traditional Hereford with lovely horns and a ring in his nose.

Our new pedigree heifers are also settling well. They all have names now and my daughters and I have been halter training some of them. This will enable us to take them to shows or events.

We have had some cases of ‘New Forest eye’ in the cattle. This is the cow equivalent of pink eye in humans. It is spread by flies which we have had a lot of this year. It’s very uncomfortable for them but hopefully we’ve seen the last of it for this year.

The sheep are doing well, their lambs have been weaned and they are enjoying a bit of peace and quiet. The lambs however aren’t thriving quite as well. They are a bit behind in their growth. We should have had some fat by now but it will be a few more weeks yet before the first batch go to the butchers.

Our sow Jackie is due to farrow in mid October, fingers crossed for a big litter.

Our new tractor turned out to be too good to be true. Unfortunately on arrival it had a fault in the front diff that would be very expensive to fix so sadly it will be returned to the dealer and we will start looking again.

We will be having a hedge planting day this winter and will be looking for some people to volunteer to help. We don’t have a date yet but when we do I’ll email it out as soon as we know!
News from the Veggie Field

September, the month that is neither summer nor autumn, is the time when the workload begins to ease and we can relax a bit. It's too late to try and put right any disasters, we just have to accept them, and it is a good time to really appreciate the successes. Every season has a mix of problems and successes, but this year has been good, and the problems have been few (so far!) and the successes many. The weather has been very kind, a good mix of rain and warmth, and the growing has been strong. Also I go on holiday in Sept, another reason to relax.

All of the fields are now planted and are looking good. With a few exceptions, we have managed to keep on top of the weeding (though we will have to continue that job throughout the autumn). We haven’t grown any potatoes or onions this year (though we did grow a lot of spring onions which did very well), but apart from these two crops, we should have our own produce in the share from now through till March. We are now beginning to harvest some of those classic autumn crops such as sweetcorn and squash, and it won’t be long till the summer crops have finished. We will soon be planting up the polytunnels with our winter crops and salads.

We weed the crops using a variety of tools and methods. We have a steerable hoe, a machine mounted on the back of the tractor that is steered through the crops to hoe the weeds between the rows. We then have to hoe with hand hoes between the plants. Then some crops such as carrots need to be weeded by hand, crawling up each row on our knees pulling the weeds from within the seedlings, a job that takes hours and hours for all of the farm team. All of these jobs take longer if the weeds have grown too big, and are much quicker if we get our timing right and hoe them when they are small.

It isn’t good practice to have the soil bare during the winter, as nutrients can be leached out, and the biological activity in the soil is reduced. So when the summer crops are finished, we will remove all of the bulky vegetation from the field, cultivate the soil, and sow rye. Rye is a strong growing cereal that will germinate and grow in cool weather and will survive through the winter. It will mop up any available nutrients and the root activity will improve the soil structure. Growth is slow during the winter but increases rapidly early in the spring. We can then either graze some of the livestock on it or plough it in to provide extra organic matter for the soil and the following crop. For that reason it is known as a “green manure” crop. We have other green manure crops growing on the farms. All of these are summer sown clover mixes grown to help improve the condition of the soil.

I hope everyone has had a good summer and I look forward to a productive autumn.

Farmer Mark
Farm Fest success

We had our second ever Farm Festival earlier on this month and it went extremely well. The weather as well as the turnout for the festival was great and it included a number of campers.

Kids (and their parents) enjoyed the famous trailer rides with farmer Sam, wellie throwing and other exciting games. We had also a straw-ball playground with slides and lots of sitting (or laying) places to chill out.

For our hungry (and thirsty) members we had a BBQ with our farm sausages and burgers (and some veggie options too), lemonade, Day's Cottage cider and Stroud Brewery's beer. Thank you to everyone who joined us and all the volunteers that helped to make it happen!

Stroud Community Agriculture on social media

If you want to keep up to date with farm happenings why not follow us on Facebook and Instagram accounts. We can promise you a lot of cute pictures of animals.

facebook.com/StroudCommunityAgriculture

instagram.com/stroudcommunityagriculture
Feta cheese stuffed pattypan with panfried courgette with tomatoes and bacon

Ingredients (serve 4 or very hungry 2):

• 4 pattypan or round courgettes
• 1 long courgette
• 3-4 rashers of bacon
• 1 pack of feta cheese (200-250g)
• 1 pepper
• 2 tomatoes• 1 onion
• 2 garlic cloves
• herbs & spices: parsley, ground nutmeg, ground allspice, salt and pepper
• frying oil (I use coconut and butter)

Method

Prepare the pattypan (or round courgettes) - slice off the lids (save them) and hollow the pattypan out with a spoon. Leave about 1cm of the flesh on the sides. Cut the spooned out flesh into small pieces.

Cut the onions and garlic into small pieces and fry with coconut oil and a bit of butter. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside half of the onions.

Add finely chopped pepper, pattypan/courgette flesh to the onions in the pan and fry for 5-10 minutes stirring frequently; add ground nutmeg, allspice and parsley and, at the end, crumbled feta cheese.

Stuff pattypans with the mixture, put a slice of tomato on top of each and cover with the lids and bake in 200C in an oven proof dish for 40 minutes or until soft.

In the meantime put the remaining onions back in the frying pan, add chopped bacon, sliced courgette and tomatoes and cook until soft. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve both hot with some fresh parsley.

Eat for the Climate!

Re-Imagining Land, Food and Farming as a solution to climate change. Talks by Molly Scott Cato MEP and Kees Fredericks of Stroud Micro Dairy

11 October 2019, 7.30pm at Lansdown Hall, Stroud

Tickets: £7.50, Concessions £5.00

Available from:
https://www.trybooking.co.uk/MAK

Friday Family Farm Days

Starting Friday 13th September 10am - 12noon plus optional picnic lunch at Stroud Community Agriculture Hawkwood Farm.

Based around volunteering on the farm (mostly horticulture) with some simple art/science/nature farm-inspired activities.

For children aged approx 4-9 and their parents/carers.

Cost is £3 per session per family to cover the cost of hiring the roundhouse.

Booking essential as space is limited. This is initially a 4-week trial, with the expectation of becoming a regular weekly event.

Please email Jessie for more info or to book a place - jessiemarcham@gmail.com
Everyone is welcome to join in and enjoy the farm, including non-members. We currently have a long waiting list to join our veg shares, which means that on average you will have to wait 5-6 months.

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 cooperation 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.

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

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