

Schreiber & Sons CSA

It's a Culinary Adventure
www.schreiberandsons.com

January 30, 2009

Hello CSAers,

Welcome to the 2009 season of the Schreiber and Sons CSA. Some of you are members from last year and some of you are new members, so some of the information may be familiar to you-but I encourage you to read through it all as some things have changed.

We will send you periodic updates advising you of the plans for 2009. This first notice of 2009 is more of a background piece.

Schreiber and Sons CSA – It's a culinary adventure.

Things to keep in mind

- The first delivery of the year should be May 5th (Tuesday) and 7th (Thursday). If the weather is a little on the warm side, it is very possible we could start a week early-but have to wait and see what Mother Nature has up her sleeve.
- We have not set up our pick up sites, but we plan to locate them in Pasco, Kennewick, North Richland, South Richland and West Richland, and of course, at the farm.
- Small, medium and large shares will be in three different kinds of boxes.
- You will have two hours to pick up your produce.
- We are sold out of small shares-the only small shares available are for those who were enrolled in 2008 and still want to keep their small shares from last year.
- Expect more fruit this year than last year.
- Based on your feedback we working on a plan where you can purchase other locally grown products including locally produced organic beef and sustainably grown wheat flour.

What's going on at the farm

- One of the big tasks is that we are fixing equipment-today we are putting a transmission in a truck, later we will be working on a spray boom and getting the cooler working correctly in a refrigerated truck.
- We are just about ready to finish ordering seed.
- We are trying to figure out where everything is going to go.
- Fruit trees are being pruned.
- Our large tractor is at the end of its life and we are shopping around for a new-to-us used tractor. That is a really big expense that we did not plan on.
- Application of manure to the organic land has been completed.
- Planting starts in six weeks or less (particularly if the weather warms up).

Changes from 2008

- We plan to offer our members the opportunity to purchase other locally produced items. We are finalizing plans to make organic beef from Benton County available. We also are inquiring about teaming up with a local fromagerie (artisan cheese maker) out of Dayton, an organic egg farm in Benton City, and a sustainable wheat flour producer from the Palouse.
- We will separate deliveries for organic and conventional shares on different days. Organic shares will be picked up on Tuesdays and conventional shares will be picked up on Thursdays. By separating organic and conventional deliveries we will not have to put names on the boxes. We will have different sized and different looking boxes to differentiate each of the share sizes; small, medium and large. The combination of separating the two share types and having different boxes means members can pick up their box without any searching. If you have something specific, such as extra produce, we will set up a Will Call area for you to find your box, which will be labeled. For example: if you are a small organic share member, you will show up at your pickup site on Tuesday and pick up a small sized box and walk away. No more searching.
- We are reducing the amount of certain produce items, such as kale, collards and radishes and increasing the amount of fruit in the boxes.

What is so special about December 21st

December 21st is one of the most important days for the CSA. What about this day is significant? If one pauses and thinks, isn't that the first day of winter, but what could be the significance of this to a farm? After thinking for a bit longer one might realize that this is the winter solstice, which means it is the shortest day and the longest night of the year. The

importance comes from what happens after this day, rather than the specific 24 hour period. I am no Druid, pagan or other kind of astrological driven religious type, but rather this means the days will start getting longer. For me, this is the trigger that the seasonal cycle is changing to favoring agriculture. Yes, there most of the winter and the cold early days of spring are still left and planting time is still months away, but there are so many things that have to be done before planting.

One of the biggest steps is that we have to come up with what we call our planting plan. This is a huge Excel spreadsheet that has 10 worksheets and the biggest of which is 345 rows long and 78 columns wide with information in most of them—that is almost 27,000 cells. After that we have nine more worksheets.

By now we have figured out most of the crops that we are going to grow, we have figured out what varieties we want to grow, who to buy them from, how many seeds we need, how many are to be conventional, how many organic seeds and so on.

Another important day is today (actually January 31, Saturday when you read this) because I just emailed our seed orders in. Ordering the seed is a big step.... talk about commitment. I am not sure how much all of this seed will cost but we have budgeted \$15,000 just for seed. It seems like a crazy amount of money for seeds, especially when you consider that we are buying most of it in bulk. What is even crazier is that buying the seed is one of the cheaper expenses.

While we are waiting for the seed to arrive we figure out the planting dates for everything. Before we plant a single seed, we have a schedule for every planting of every crop. For example, we will have about 10 different plantings for each of three radish varieties, three plantings for a fourth variety and two plantings for a fifth radish variety. Now think about doing that for 350 more crops and varieties. If you stop and think through all of the steps we have to get done it can drive you crazy. Actually, this is an extremely fun thing to do if you take it one step at a time and do not think too much about the big picture. Ever since I was a kid one of my favorite things to do was to look through seed catalogs in January and pick out things to grow. It is great to have grown up and landed in a position to be able to do exactly what you dreamed of doing as a kid. I collect seed catalogs and in January I pour over them and dog ear page corners picking out interesting new varieties to try and if they are successful we expand the planting to include them in the CSA the following year.

After figuring out what kind of seed we need, how much, where to order it from and actually getting it ordered, we switch to the next steps. We figure out on which date we plant each planting, if you count each planting time for each variety, we will have about 2,500 plantings over the season. Next, you figure out where each planting is going, how it is to be irrigated, what to do about insect and weed control and on and on and on. Tick, tick, tick, time is flying by and depending on the weather we plan to start planting in less than six weeks—can you believe it!

Schreiber & Sons CSA

Beef

Grown Locally and from Certified Organic Cattle

One of the clear results from the survey of 2008 members was an interest in sourcing other locally produced food items. One of the top choices was meat from local animals.

Schreiber & Sons has teamed up with a local source to provide us with organic beef. The cattle are raised in Benton County and slaughtered in Franklin County. The cows are organic but since there are no certified organic butchers in the area, the final product cannot be stamped organic. We hope to work with our local butcher and see if we can get him organically certified. Bear in mind that the meat is inspected and approved by a USDA inspector.

I have been doing some research into this and found that organic beef is not readily available in the Tri-Cities and if even if you can find it, it is very expensive. We have found a reliable supply from a source that I know well and trust. We have eaten this meat and it is very, very good. The meat is relatively lean, very red in color and has a fine texture. Both Tanya (who is not much of a meat eater) and I agreed that the meat had a better flavor than meat that we buy from a store.

The cattle are fed on hay, silage and corn in the winter and as soon as it is warm enough for grass to grow (March) they switch over to pasture and supplement with corn. The primary breed is Jersey-the same breed that we raised and milked when I was growing up.

We are still researching the price and what cuts will be available, but we plan to offer a number of cuts as well as the option of buying a processed quarter or half of beef.

The meat will be delivered frozen. Anyone wishing to purchase beef will have to contact our office in advance. We will deliver the meat you specify with your box, but you must pick it up from us directly so we can hand it to you-we cannot leave the meat like we normally do the boxes. This means to get the meat you must pick up during the 30 minute time frame in which we drop off the boxes, ie. The first 30 minutes. Produce boxes would also be available for pick-up during that time. You can pay for the meat when it is picked up.

You can pick up your meat order with your box on your assigned date and pickup site. You can also pick up a meat order on a different day (if you have an organic membership you could also pick up on a Thursday, if you have a conventional membership you could also pick up on a Tuesday.) You can also pick up meet from the farm.

There will be a minimum amount to purchase, which we are guessing will be 5 to 6 pounds.

What makes livestock organic? According to the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Organic Division:

- Mandatory access to outside
- Access to pasture for ruminants (e.g. cattle)
- They cannot be fed or treated with any antibiotics, growth hormones, synthetic pesticides, slaughter byproducts or GMOs.
- 100% organic feed and approved feed supplements
- Cattle have to be organic from birth

Tentative Cuts and Prices

Cut	Price	Size
Prime Rib Roast	\$10 per pound.	6 to 8 lbs
Hamburger	\$5 per pound	5 lbs
Rib Eye Steak	\$10 per pound	2 lbs (2 steaks per package (1 ¼ inch)
T –Bone Steak	\$10 per pound	2 lbs. (2 steaks per package (1 ¼ inch)
Sirloin steak	\$10 per pound	