



BEASTS OF BURDEN

Calves, pigs and chickens, oh my! Everywhere you turn there are animals around here. None in large quantities, but enough to do their job on our farm. Livestock can play an integral role on small farms and the underlying health effects of animal interaction shouldn't be overlooked.

Here at We Grow, pigs are pastured in areas that we need the vegetation knocked down and turned over. Their rooting behavior is a result of their search for insects, roots, seeds, minerals and even small mammals. In their path, they leave fertile manure behind which is the fastest way to convert plant matter into soil. The role the calves play is very similar. They convert forage into muscle and manure. Both are extremely valuable products. But did you know that simply having animals and/or being exposed to their germs can make you a healthier person?

Scientists have long speculated that the "dirtier" the environment we grow up in, with a wide array of germs from different people and animals, the better our immune system and physical health ultimately will be. Recent studies are suggesting that a "dirty world" might be better for our mental health, too.

The hygiene hypothesis, as it's called, says that our immune system needs to spar with relatively harmless germs and foreign substances in its earliest years so it can calibrate itself. Without this training, it can become too sensitive and overreact to things it shouldn't, like house dust and pollen, leading to allergies and asthma. Plenty of research has shown that growing up in a rural environment, or with pets, is associated with lower rates of autoimmune disorders, while rates of allergies and autoimmune disorders have steadily climbed in urban areas.

Rest assured that in your weekly share, you not only get fresh from the field vegetables. You get microbes from our farm. Tiny organisms that remind the immune system how to respond. And an actual visit to our farm is even better for you. Pet the rabbits, rub a cat and give the labrador some love. Germs or not, the adventure is sure to be good for your mental state.

Growing for you,

eric + rebecca

IN THE BAG

Cherry Tomatoes
 Snow Peas (*smalls only*)
 Green Oakleaf Lettuce
 Cucumber
 Cilantro
 Yellow Onion
 Celery
 Mixed Kale
 Garlic Bulb
 Zucchini
 Kohlrabi (*larges only*)
 Carrots (*larges only*)

THE SECRET OF
 HAPPINESS, YOU SEE,
 IS NOT FOUND IN
 SEEKING MORE, BUT
 IN DEVELOPING THE
 CAPACITY TO ENJOY
 LESS. *- Socrates*

U-PICK BEANS

There will be extra green and yellow wax beans, which are great for canning and pickling, in our field this August. If you are interested in harvesting, members get first chance at u-pick opportunities. We also offer discounted beans by the pound to our shareholders. Just let us know a week in advance and we can have beans or good picking ready for you.

SHARE BAGS

Aspirus and Phillips drop-sites:
 We are down bags at both of these sites. Please check your stash at home and return all We Grow bags as soon as possible. We have a limited supply. Just leave your bag at your drop-site location when you get your share. Our volunteers will pick them up.

CHERRY TOMATOES

At We Grow, we get pretty excited about the beginning of tomato season. Our apologies and sympathy if you are "not a tomato person." We are hoping that our tomatoes, filled with flavor that you can't get from store-bought tomatoes, may convert you. Just ask Mr. Farmer. He never liked tomatoes until we started growing our own.

There are a wide variety of cherry-type tomatoes in your share. They come in all different colors, shapes and sizes and each one has its own unique flavor. No matter what color they are, the best way to tell if they are ripe is the squeeze test. If the tomato is still hard with no give, let it sit at room temperature at least one day, maybe two. When it is soft like a ripe peach and has some give, it is ready to eat.

This season there is one green-red elongated type of small tomato that might confuse you. It is ready when it is still half-green. Please see our Facebook page for a photo description of each of our varieties.

SNOW PEAS

EDIBLE POD + FRESH + EASY TO FREEZE

Snow peas are typically flat with a tiny pea inside the pod. They are intended to be eaten in their entirety. Enjoy snow peas whole just trim the stem and string. Kids love these raw! We also enjoy snow peas in our favorite stir fry, chop 'em up and blanch for 30 seconds for cold pasta salads, or blanch and freeze for the off-season.

Store as is in your fridge; do not wash before storage as they can become slimy which is indicative of bacteria growth. Instead, rinse immediately before eating.



CILANTRO

You either love it or you hate it, but very few are in-between. Cilantro, also known as coriander, serves as the key ingredient in so many recipes. Just add it to your sauté or stir fry right before serving and you've got flavor! It also serves as the key ingredient in many relishes like Texas caviar which features black beans, onion, and corn.

If you aren't a fan, please request a different herb in exchange. And know that there is some real science behind the fairly common aversion to cilantro. Apparently the scent molecules in cilantro are very closely related to those in soap.



CELERY STALKS + LEAVES

Fresh, home-grown celery has incredibly strong flavor. You might want to take this into account and use it differently than store bought celery. If using as a flavoring, figure you will need about 1/4 the amount in your recipe.

Celery is very good for the stomach. It stimulates mucous secretions in the lining which can prevent tiny holes from forming and repair ulcers. Count on celery to prevent inflammatory reactions in the digestive tract and blood vessels. This means you won't feel as bloated or uncomfortable. It also means celery can help lower high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Store celery in the fridge with a bag over or just in a bag in the crisper. In our kitchen, we dry the leaves in a dehydrator to use in soups and casseroles all winter long.

the farm bounty begins mid-season

GARLIC BULBS

One of our favorite crops is garlic and we have a lot of it. This season it seems a bit behind schedule, but that may be due to the cold spring. Fortunately it is doing well - all in due time. We will begin officially harvesting in two weeks when the lower leaves start to turn yellow. In the meantime, enjoy some fresh early bulbs that are easy to peel. You can either allow to dry or keep fresh and moist in your fridge.

The garlic bulb this week is simply called Amish Rocambole. It is an heirloom variety that originates in Wisconsin and produces nice bulbs with rosy pink and brown stripes on the bulb wrapper. This variety has a pungently hot and lingering flavor.

We like Amish rocambole because there are more cloves per bulb than most of our other varieties. We like lots of smaller cloves for pickling things this time of year. Not so good for roasting, but don't let that stop you.



HAVE A VEGGIE QUESTION?

Odds are if you've got a question, someone else probably has to same one. Don't hesitate to call for help identifying new veggies.

HOME 715-427-1002 CELL/TEXT 715-905-0431

ONLINE [facebook.com/wegrowfoods](https://www.facebook.com/wegrowfoods)

