

**Riverdog Farm Veggie Box News**  
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**Box Contents:**

1 bu Carrots  
1 bu Beets  
1 bu Spinach  
1 bu Dino Kale  
½ lb Broccoli Shoots  
2 Mei Qing Choi  
1-2 Celeriac (Celery Root)  
1 Winter Squash

**Field Notes:** The farm commemorated Inauguration Day on January 20, 2009 with the arrival of 500 day-old chicks. The yellow fuzz balls marked a new beginning in many ways: a new administration whose first family hired a chef who will cook organic and whole foods meals at the White House, hope for a healthier nation environmentally, and new work opportunities for those who've lost their jobs. The chicks have doubled in size in just one week - kept warm in their brooder coop (90 degrees for the first week!), they are mesmerizing to watch, chirping away, pecking at their crumble feed, and dozing off to sleep.

On a much less upbeat note, we have very sad news about a growing scandal in the organic fertilizers world. Port Organics, the makers of the liquid fish fertilizer, Agrolizer, which we have been using for several years, have been raided and found to be spiking their product with aqueous ammonia, a prohibited nitrogen fertilizer ([sacbee.com/topstories/story/1569698.html](http://sacbee.com/topstories/story/1569698.html)). Agrolizer is probably the most widely used organic fish fertilizer on the market. Whether or not all of us have been defrauded is as of yet unknown, but seems likely. We stopped using Agrolizer after becoming aware of the investigation in mid-December of 2008. Although Agrolizer was certified by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI), it appears that Ken Nelson of Port Organics chose to cheat; something that can happen almost no matter the level of regulation. We need enforcement of existing regulations. Port Organics closed their doors almost ten days ago now, a week ahead of the multi-agency raid of their facility last Thursday. We are baffled by reports that Kern County Environmental Health may have known for several years and that they did not go to the CA Dept of Food and Ag (CDFA) or the USDA. A year ago another company, California Liquid Fertilizers, was cited for a similar violation and barely reprimanded by CDFa; setting the stage to make this a real scandal. CDFa is the agency charged with enforcing the National Organic Program within California. We need CDFa to react strongly and swiftly to protect the integrity of this market. Although farmers reluctantly relinquished the safekeeping of organic to the Feds in 2001 via the National Organic Program, it is clearly still up to us to assess the integrity of everyone with whom we do business. Our sincere apologies to all of you for trusting the wrong company with our fertility choices. All of us here at Riverdog want to assure you that while we were duped by Port Organics, our intentions are and always have been to seek to grow the greatest tasting and most ecologically sound food we can. Expect to hear more on this from us and the media in the next few weeks – Trini & Tim.

**Box notes:** The mandarins are done for the season. They will be replaced with sweet navel oranges. The oranges from Blue Heron Farm (certified organic by CCOF) in the hamlet of Rumsey. We've been including the oranges from this farm in the CSA box since 1996. John and Gretchen Ceteras are the growers. Their Washington Navel oranges are juicy, sweet and a beautiful deep orange color. The orange grove is between 15-30 years old and produces delicious fruit that we enjoy providing to you every year. Di Cicco broccoli, also known as broccoli shoots, have slender stalks and small florets. Di Cicco stir-fry exceptionally well and are meant to be cooked whole; leaves and stem. Dino kale is also known as Italian Black Cabbage, Lacinato, and Cavolo Nero. Like Rapini, it is a favorite winter green in Italy where, combined with polenta and sausage, makes a delicious dinner meal. It is less bitter and more mild and sweet than Rapini. The carrots are best eaten raw. They continue to be sweet and crisp. Celery root or Celeriac is a celery-flavored root that is eaten peeled, cubed in soups, boiled and pureed with mash potatoes, or tossed with olive oil and roasted with a combination of colorful roots.

