

Box Contents:

1 lb Mixed Heirloom &
Early Girl Tomatoes
1 lb Mixed Sweet Peppers
1 ½ lb German Butterball
Potatoes
1 pc Globe Eggplant
1 bu Chard
1 bu Basil
1 Orange Honeydew

Field Notes: You may remember that at this time last year, we were all told not to eat spinach as a result of an E. coli 0:157 outbreak traced back to a huge packing facility in the Salinas area. Since then the industry has created “food safety” growing and handling standards for the production of some leafy greens, including lettuce, spinach, salad greens and bunched greens. For now, this is a voluntary standard, though with the hundred biggest packers and distributors (handlers) signed on to the agreement, only farms that comply can sell to those handlers. This program is known as the Leafy Greens Handlers Marketing Agreement (LGHMA). There is a movement afoot to make this a marketing “order” which would make these standards mandatory for all growers of leafy greens.

We support and practice most of these standards, such as good field sanitation, well regulated composting protocols and procedures, worker training and sanitation, and appropriate water testing. However, the industry has taken this opportunity to strike against the heart of biological agriculture, calling for sterile zones on farms, fences to keep all wildlife out, cancellation of conservation projects and removal of grassed waterways that protect the our soils and rivers. This attack on conservation measures that our society has been pushing for decades is unconscionable. There is no scientific evidence that any of these outbreaks have been caused by wildlife. We need to attack this problem at the root, the source of 0:157, which are cattle feed lots.

An analysis by the Community Alliance of Family Farmers (CAFF.org) of US FDA data since 1999 reveals that 98.5% of reported 0:157 illnesses from leafy greens have been traced to processed bagged greens. Centralized washing and packaging of mixed produce from different farms increases risks of cross-contamination. Pre-cut salads are then placed into sealed plastic bags and shipped, creating an ideal environment for bacterial growth. We think the new rules should be limited to these high-risk handlers and the high-risk products and not extended to growers of traditional greens and growers who do not commingle product from many farms.

If you are concerned about the potential impacts of the new rules, please sign the letter that is included in your box this week and send it to the following address: Riverdog Farm, P.O. Box 42, Guinda, CA 95637. The letters are part of a CAFF Family Farmers Food Safety Campaign to show that there are consumers who are not afraid of their food. The farmers alone can't stop these rules. We need your help!

The 20th Annual Hoes Down is on Saturday, October 6. The all-day celebration of the harvest season features farm tours, an amazing kids' area, hayrides, crafts, and great food and music. For more information and directions to the event, visit <http://www.hoesdown.org> It's a fun and exciting event for the whole family, and all net-proceeds from admission benefit non-profit organizations working on sustainable food and farming.

Riverdog Farm's Pumpkin Patch Party is on Sunday, October 28 from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Join us for a low-key, potluck picnic and explore our farm. We'll provide pumpkin themed foods such as pumpkin ice cream, pumpkin bread, and of course, pumpkin pies. We'll also have a pumpkin carving station and hayrides for the youngsters. So bring your favorite dish to the feast and enjoy a Sunday afternoon with us! This is a free event.

Box Notes: The weather has shortened the tomato season in our valley. The tomatoes in this week's box are at discounted value for its cosmetic challenges and smaller size. It seems that last week's announcement of the end of melons was premature... We still have tasty orange honeydew for you in this week's box (no word on next week). More chard this week! By the way, the stems are delicious. German Butterball potatoes are yellow creamers very similar to the Yellow Finns. The Butterballs have russeted skin and roast very well. Check out the omelet recipe below! Good eats everyone!

Roasted Eggplant with Peppers and Cucumber from *The Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* by Marcella Hazan

For 6 servings.

1 ½ lbs eggplant

½ teaspoon garlic chopped very fine

¾ cup mixed sweet peppers, diced

½ cup cucumber, diced finely

Salt

1 tablespoon chopped parsley

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Black pepper, ground fresh from the mill

1. Wash the eggplant and roast it over a charcoal grill or a gas burner or in the broiler of an oven. When the skin on the side next to the flame is blackened and the eggplant has become soft, turn it with a pair of tongs.
2. When all the skin is charred and the entire eggplant is soft and looks as though it had deflated in the heat, remove from the fire and set aside to cool off.
3. When you can handle the eggplant comfortably, pick off as much of the skin as you can. If a few very small bits remain attached to the flesh it doesn't matter.
4. Cut the flesh into strips less than 1-inch wide. If there are many blackish seeds, remove them. Put the strips in a colander or a large strainer set over a deep dish to allow excess liquid to drain away for at least 30 minutes.
5. When you see no more liquid being shed, transfer the chopped eggplant to a mixing bowl and toss with all the remaining ingredients, except for the salt. Add salt just when you are ready to serve.

Chevre and Sweet Peppers Omelet from *Moosewood Restaurant Cooks at Home* by the Moosewood Collective

1-1 ½ tablespoons butter

4 large eggs

2-3 ounces chevre

Serves 2.

1 sweet pepper, sliced

1 tablespoon water

salt and ground black pepper to taste

"This gorgeous omelet is enhanced by chevre, a creamy goat's milk cheese. Many brands of chevre are prepared with herbs such as chives, thyme, or dill, or with combinations like herbes de Provence. Any kind would work here."

MC

Heat 1 tablespoon of the butter in a large skillet and sauté the sliced pepper for 3-4 minutes, until tender and warm. Remove from the skillet and set aside.

If the skillet is dry, add another ½ tablespoon of butter. In a small bowl, beat together the eggs and water with a fork and pour the mixture into the skillet. When the eggs begin to set, spread the sautéed peppers over half the omelet and drop the chevre by teaspoonfuls on top of the peppers. With a spatula, fold the plain half of the omelet over the peppers and chevre, and cook for about 2 more minutes, while the cheese melts.

Cut the omelet into two pieces and serve immediately.