

Updates from

PLEASANT VALLEY FARM



AUGUST, 2011

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Hello Friends!

One of the wettest springs has been followed by a very dry summer, making for a challenging growing season so far. But we're happy to say we've had some rain fall on the fields in the past week, and the garden is producing lots of quality organic produce each week. August is recognized as PA Produce month, and it's easy to see why. August is the month for locally produced sweet corn and tomatoes, favorite tastes of summer. Our garden has those, plus lots of bell and hot peppers, green beans, beets, eggplant, summer squash and more! Check our "*Now On Sale*" page on the website for a full list of what's available each week, complete with pricing. You'll also notice a new section on this page, called *Fun Stuff*. It lists farm-produced things for sale that aren't necessarily food. Right now you'll find peacock feathers listed there, and we have some new and different items we hope to be able to offer in the near future.

As the garden kicks into high gear, so does Emily's canner. We hate to waste anything, so look for all sorts of exciting pickled vegetables— we have a description of some of them in this issue on page 2! Your favorites from last year are back now, and we've added some exciting new tastes as well.

We are continuing to take orders for fresh chicken. If you're looking for one of our naturally raised birds, it's a good idea to pre-order them— we have sold out each week we've offered them! We're also offering a sale on our lean ground beef during the month of August— buy ten pounds for only \$30.00, a savings of \$5 for you! It is still conveniently packaged in one pound packages, so no need to worry about using it all up at once!

See you at the stand!

-Emily

Critter Spotlight— Puff the Cat

While our critter spotlights usually focus on a breed of birds or animals we raise here at the farm, this month's spotlight is a bit different. We're focusing on one single creature, our cat Puff.

If you've visited our farm stand, chances are you've seen this fluffy face. Puff has taken it upon himself to be the official animal ambassador of the farm, and can be found greeting customers pretty much every Saturday. He is a boy, despite his long locks and gentle personality.

Puff was born a barn cat on July 4, 2001. (I'm pretty sure he's 10, anyways!) However, he was not born here. This

was long before Emily & Dan met, in Emily's horse barn, on her parents' property. Puff had a rough start



to life, as his mother was hit by a car when he was only 3 weeks old. He and his kitten siblings were raised by Emily and her sisters, and when most were given away, Puff

stayed as a special pet of one of Emily's younger sisters. Being handled so much as a youngster, it's hard to tell if Puff thinks he's a cat or a human!

As life changed for the Shea family, he was given back to Emily, the only one with a home with a yard that wasn't on the main road. Puff likes to spend his summers outside, and his winters indoors! When Emily moved to the farm, she brought Puff too. He got used to the new animals and poultry and loves to roam in the garden. But he does love people (even kids!) so be sure to say hi to him the next time you visit!

AUGUST HAPPENINGS:

- ◆ Farm Stand open every Saturday from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
- ◆ Tomatoes are in! Look for slicers, romas and cherry tomatoes!
- ◆ More fresh chicken will be available later in the month, contact us to reserve yours.
- ◆ More vegetables and canned vegetable products are coming into season each week!
- ◆ 10 Pounds of Ground sale— get 10 1-lb packages of ground beef for \$30! You save \$5.00!



PLEASANT VALLEY FARM

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YOU DON'T NEED
TO BE A CHEMIST
TO READ THE
INGREDIENT
LABELS OF OUR
HOME-CANNED
PRODUCTS.

When you think of pickles, you probably think of cucumbers. But did you know a pickle can be lots of other vegetables (and even fruits!) as well? It's true! The term "pickle" really refers to the process of preserving food in a brine solution. In the old days, this was usually made with large amounts of salt to keep the food from spoiling over the winter months. Pickling can also involve a brine that is made with vinegar.

We offer lots of pickled vegetables here at the farm because we hate to see any of the garden's bounty go to waste! We have sliced dill cucumber pickles. They are one of our most popular canned products. These tasty dills are made with a secret recipe Emily created herself, so we call them **Emily's Own Dill Pickles**. You can pick them up for \$3.50/pint or \$6/quart.

Another popular pickled veggie are our **Pickled Beets**. These are a sweeter pickle, using fully

cooked beets, sugar and vinegar for the brine, and flavored with spices including cinnamon and clove. It's another family recipe, this one created by Dan's mother, Betty, who sold these for years as well. **Dilly Beans** are made with garden fresh green beans. As the name suggests, they have the tangy flavor of dill. Both the pickled beets and the dilly beans are refreshing additions to your summertime menu— just pop open a jar for a fully cooked, easy side that is great served cold! Both are \$3.50/pint.

We also offer **Pepper Rings**. These are preserved in a brine simply made of water and vinegar, and will add no sodium to your diet, unlike most commercial varieties. The flavor comes from the varieties of peppers we grow in the garden, and we will be offering both mild and hot rings. Great on sandwiches or salads, they are only \$3.50/pint or \$6/quart.

New this year is **Sweet Garden Relish**. It's made with zucchini, pattypan squash, onion and bell pepper. This is a sweet relish flavored with turmeric and celery seed. It's wonderful on burgers or sausage sandwiches!

All our pickled products, like all of our home-canned products, are free from artificial colors and preservatives. You don't have to be a chemist to read the ingredient list, because we use fresh products from our organic garden, supplemented with tasty herbs and fresh spices.

As summer moves along, we are likely to be expanding our lineup of pickled products. Emily is busy testing recipes and looking to begin offering other new products in the near future as well as bringing back favorites from last year, such as salsas and Bruchetta in a Jar. Watch the website for new product announcements, or just stop and see us in person on Saturdays!



Now Available— Peacock feathers!

Did you know that birds shed their feathers, just like animals shed their fur? Much like a dog sheds much of its fur all at once in the spring, birds get a new set of feathers, usually once per year. Birds, however, usually shed their feathers, called molting, in the summer months. This makes sense because not only do they need those feathers to keep warm during the colder times of the year, but also because the colorful feathers of male birds are used to impress the females

Molting Time

during the spring months of breeding season. This is especially true for some of our more impressive male birds, our Bourbon Red gobbler and our peacocks. (*Peacock* refers only to a male of the species— these birds are properly called peafowl, and the ladies are peahens.)

You'll notice that the boys are not their beautiful selves right now. Gobblers has lost most of his tail at this time, and the peacocks are sporting only short feathers instead of the

long train of feathers which they usually sport. While Gobblers' feathers became pretty tattered while strutting around all spring, most of the peacock feathers are still gorgeous. Emily hand collected them daily, and we will be offering them for sale at the stand. Many are beautiful decorative items, and can be bought for \$3 each or 4/\$10. The ones that don't live up to decorative standards make great cat toys or magic wands for your little Harry Potter fans, and are also available, for only \$1 each!

Enjoy some fun summer cooking with these recipes!

All items listed in bold in the ingredient lists are available here at the farm.

Cheeseburger Salad



- 2 lbs **lean ground beef**
- 1/2 cup finely chopped **onion**
- 2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 rounded Tbsp grill seasoning
(like Montreal Steak Seasoning or coarse salt & freshly ground black pepper)
- 12-oz brick **cheddar cheese**, any variety
(try with **smoked**, **jalapeno**, **italian** or **dill & bacon** cheddars for a tasty twist!)
- Bagged Salad Mix**
- 1 c **Emily's Own Dill Pickles**
- 1 c **cherry or grape tomatoes**

Preheat grill or cast iron skillet. Combine meat, onion, Worcestershire and steak seasoning. Form 12 large meatballs. Flatten into small patties. Drizzle patties with extra virgin olive oil to prevent sticking.

Slice the cheese into 1/4" pieces. Grill or panfry burgers for 3 minutes on each side, then melt cheese over burgers (close the lid of grill or cover pan with lid or foil).

Wash salad mix and combine with pickles & tomatoes. Divide into 4 bowls. Arrange the mini cheeseburgers on top (3 per salad) and drizzle with mustard vinaigrette.

Mustard Vinaigrette:

- 3 Tbsp mustard
(try **ginger garlic** or **honey!**)
- 2Tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1/2c Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2-3 Tbsp **fresh chives**,
chopped

Whisk together mustard & vinegar, then stream in the

Adapted from
*30-Minute Get
Real Meals* by
Rachael Ray

Summer Garden Goulash

- 1 medium **zucchini** or **summer squash**, julienned
- 1 bunch **Swiss Chard**, stems removed & coarsely chopped
- 2 lbs bulk **Mild Italian Sausage**
- 1 medium **onion**, diced
- 1 bunch fresh **oregano** and/or **basil**, finely chopped
- 1 quart your favorite spaghetti sauce
- 8 oz uncooked whole wheat elbow macaroni



Brown sausage in a skillet(preferably cast iron). Add meat, sauce and vegetables into crock pot. Cook on low for 5-6 hours. Add noodles, herbs, and water if sauce is thick, and cook for another hour or until noodles are soft. Top with your favorite shredded cheese when serving.
(Try Whispering Brook's raw milk **Italian**, **baby Swiss** or **goat cheddar!**)

***For a vegetarian option, omit sausage and add julienned eggplant and more zucchini! ***

Brought to you from Emily's kitchen