

Double Deluge and the Salvage Plan

Early Tuesday morning Ryan and I walked through the greenhouse watering cucumber seedlings, rearranging hundreds of pepper plants, and exclaiming excitedly over the heirloom tomatoes starting to bear fruit. The nearly immodest greens of squash, watermelon, eggplant and lettuce seedlings were striking to the eye. Unfortunately, these lively, lush beauties of the greenhouse stand in stark contrast to the muddy waters of the Fouche la Favre river which currently cover nearly every inch of our garden. The CSA cropland has been submerged twice



in less than a week. We watched with sinking hearts as the water rose slowly, for a second time, over potatoes, corn, beans, cauliflower and the other crops we had planted this spring. Almost all the currently planted crops are underwater. The Heifer Ranch was also hit by a severe tornado last Monday, causing a good deal of damage and flinging debris across parts of our fields.

Though these facts are sobering, Ryan and I waded through the flooded fields this morning with a growing sense of optimism. The river crested Tuesday and we are anticipating

During the evacuation of the bottom land this past week, we helped the livestock department move all the cows and sheep from low-lying areas. One hilarious and harrowing part of this endeavor was using Ryan's canoe to herd cows to safety!

5 days of non-stop sunshine to aid in the drying out process. We have a greenhouse full of seedlings waiting impatiently to be planted-out and we, too, are eager to stop helplessly watching and actively begin salvaging and rebuilding our garden.

We spent a good deal of time crafting a master plan of ground maintenance, re-planting, and rearranging in order to return the garden to full capacity production as soon as possible. With the fields expected to dry out this week, we plan to plant almost 3 acres of ground by next Friday. We will be adding two new volunteers to our gardening staff by the end of the month, another welcome asset to the recovery process. All these positive factors are lending us (and hopefully you as well) optimism and a sense of resolve in the midst of the frustrating reality of our situation.

For me personally this has been a time of near exasperation as the futility of fighting the rising water became clear. I wanted to do anything possible to save this garden into which we've poured months of time and a great deal of labor. But, as the days have passed, the irritation has turned to a focused sense of gratefulness and determination. My job exists because you, the shareholders, have dedicated yourselves to a process of farming where we share risk and reward. You knew the possibility of such setbacks going into the season and were still willing to take the plunge (no pun intended). I am extremely thankful for the CSA system at present and the ways in which farmers like Ryan and I are supported by a strong community of like-minded individuals willing to work for a



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food system that serves both of our interests. It would be pointless and unappreciative for us to focus on anything but rebuilding. We sincerely thank you for the support that makes this "re-growing" a possibility!

As Ryan let you know at last Friday's delivery, due to the significant damage and lack of produce, we will not be delivering to Little Rock this Friday, May 6th.

Because of the second flooding of the field, we are also currently unable to give you exact details on when and what will be delivered in the coming month, but by next week we hope to have concrete answers to all of your queries regarding harvesting, season extension, and any other pertinent questions you may have. In the meantime, we will be clearing, cleaning, prepping, and planting. Hoping to see you very soon,

Your farmers,

Ryan and Rachael

Rachael traveled to Nashville this weekend to run the County Music Marathon and brought along a bushel basket of vegetables for her hosts. They stir-fried broccoli, kohlrabi, onions, and spinach with some pasta for a delicious pre-race feast!

