



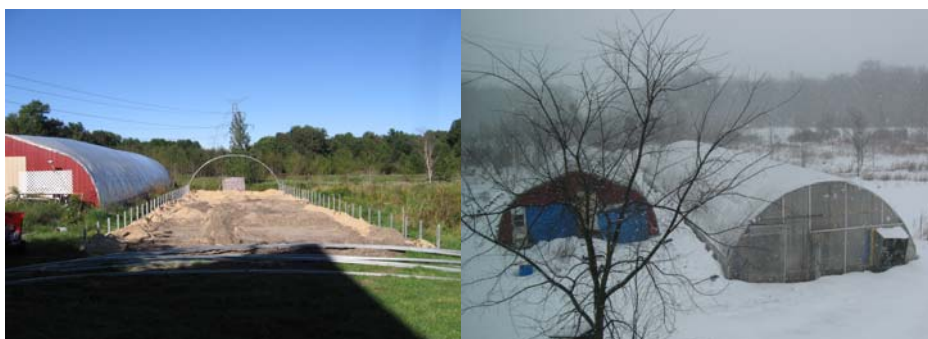
*Mud Lake Farm CSA Newsletter - Volume 1, Number 1 - Winter 2008*



Dear CSA Members -

As I'm sure many of you are aware, it's been a tough winter for us. We finished our new greenhouse about 3 months behind schedule, and struggled to meet demand. We took a couple of weeks off in December and tried to maintain every-other-week deliveries in December and January. In February we've been unable to deliver much at all!

The biggest challenge for us this year has been heating the greenhouses. We wanted to continue heating with biomass furnaces, and found a new source of locally produced furnaces that would produce enough heat. We were very excited to try them out, but only purchased one in an effort to make sure it would work before we invested in two more.



Unfortunately, we had some problems with the first unit that arrived, and spent several weeks over the holidays playing phone tag with the manufacturer working out the bugs. Finally in January the manufacturer discovered the problem and replaced the furnace. We purchased two more and they were delivered mid-January.

Now that they are all working fairly consistently we are happy with them, but it's taken much longer than we anticipated to work out all the bugs. I'm sure you can imagine that the lettuce wasn't growing much, especially with the very cold weather we had in January and early February.

The last week has been great, though. We've actually had some sunshine! You know you've missed the sun when you have to take a picture of the blue sky... I had forgotten what it looked like! And when there's sunshine the greenhouses get very warm - 80 degrees and up even on a partly sunny day when it's 20 degrees outside.

The new greenhouse is now half-full of lettuce. Between the two greenhouses we have about 10,000 plants in various stages of growth. Most are seedlings, but some are getting close to harvest-size. Our plan is to resume regular deliveries



starting March 1<sup>st</sup>. We apologize for not having the lettuce for you consistently over the winter, but we're glad that so many of you have encouraged us and been so understanding.

In other news... we have a new barn! No, it's not quite done yet - but it will get a floor



and a couple of overhead doors once spring arrives. We're very excited to have a place to store the tractor and tools, as well as a place for the egg-laying chickens that is much warmer and drier than their current home. We also plan to install a small walk-in cooler in the barn to help us keep our lettuce in great condition after picking during the summer months.

Also, as spring approaches, we're making plans for our first batch of pastured broiler

chickens. Each year we raise two batches of chickens - and not the tasteless bird you'll find in the grocery store! These are chickens bred in France for their extensive pastured poultry industry, and they are very hardy, beautiful birds. All the birds have wonderful flavor due to their genetics and the slower



grow-out time on pasture. We'll have three different kinds - Red Rangers (red with white tail feathers), Bronze Rangers (red with black tail feathers), and Golden Rangers (speckled yellow and white with black/white striped tail feathers). We will have a limited number of the Golden Rangers - these will have a stronger gourmet flavor - if you'd like to try one, be sure to tell us!



The birds are raised on pasture starting at about 4 weeks of age (once they have all their feathers). We also feed them a whole grain feed of mixed grains, alfalfa, and a complete mix of vitamins and minerals. All the grain is locally grown.



We'll be butchering near the end of June, just in time for your Fourth of July celebrations. A second batch will be ready in late fall, in time for Thanksgiving. Contact us to reserve your birds - cost this year will be \$3.00/lb, with an average weight of 4 - 5 lbs each. You can order your birds whole, or cut up in 2, 4 or 8 pieces (small extra charge for cutups). We'll include roasting instructions too! Last year we sold out, so plan ahead!

Kris & Steve Van Haitsma  
Mud Lake Farm, LLC

