



Mud Lake Farm CSA Newsletter - Volume 1, Number 2 - Summer 2008



Dear CSA Members -

Well, it's been a few months since our last newsletter - and it's been a few very busy months for us! We've been busy with chicks, piglets, and expanding our lettuce production.

Each year we raise two batches of chickens - and not the tasteless bird you'll find in the grocery store! These chicken breeds were originally developed 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 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 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!



In late April we got a call from the post office letting us know there was a peeping package for us to pick up. It's always fun to get day-old chicks! They are so cute - little fluff-balls. As we unpack them, we have to dip each chick's beak in the water so they learn how to get a drink. They haven't had anything to eat or drink before that. After a few hours we give them some feed. They huddle together under heat lamps to get warm, and then scurry around - they're fun to watch. Of course as they grow they go through an "ugly" phase as they transition from cute fluff-balls to fully feathered chickens.



After they have all their feathers, we move them to a chicken tractor. What's a chicken tractor you ask? Well, basically it is a pen full of chickens that we move every day (and as they get bigger we move it twice a day) so that the chickens get plenty of fresh grass to eat. It also keeps them safe from predators and keeps them out of my garden - did you know that

chickens like most of the same vegetables we like? Especially tomatoes, and they don't care if they're still green...

We have set the butchering date for the chickens, and it's coming soon! We need to have all our orders in soon. Some of you have ordered already, but we still have lots of chickens available. Contact us to reserve your birds - cost this year is \$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! (see picture one happy customer sent us of the chicken they ordered...) We're including an order form for chickens. Please fill out and send back to us, or give us the requested info in an email.



Chickens will be butchered July 9. Pick up days are Thursday July 10 - Saturday July 12. We will be emailing everyone who has ordered chickens to choose a day/time to pick up. Available times are Thursday afternoon/evening, Friday evening, or Saturday morning. We would like all the chickens picked up by Saturday, July 12. If you are unable to pick up your chickens, please contact us to make other arrangements.

We also have 4 piglets. We tried to take their pictures for the newsletter, but they are



never still - in fact, we couldn't get them all in one picture! They love to eat lettuce scraps, strawberries, and to root around for buried treasure. They are very curious (that probably explains why I couldn't get them to be still for a picture!). They will also be in a moveable pen. Pigs enjoy being on pasture - they run around and play, and enjoy rooting up the soil. Right now they're in our barn with a small outside area, getting used to us and where their food

comes from - hopefully that will make the transition to the outside pen easier, and make them less likely to try to escape.

We're taking reservations for the pigs now also. You can order a whole or half pig. We'll have them butchered in the fall, after they've plowed up the garden. Cost is \$3/lb, which includes processing, and we'd appreciate a deposit of \$50/half-pig to hold your spot.

In other news, many of you have inquired about the possibility of another farm tour like we had last September as part of Marie Catrib's Daily Special Farm Tours. Well, we don't have a date yet, but we do plan to have at least one tour this fall - we'll keep you posted on the date.

Kris & Steve Van Haitsma
Mud Lake Farm, LLC

