

HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

2016

EIGHTH DAY FARM

Fall Newsletter



EARTH ~ FOOD ~ NEIGHBORS

2017 CSA MEMBERSHIP

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

Shares for the 2017 season will go on sale January 1st. Look for information to come on the website: www.eighthdayfarm.org

MISSION STATEMENT (FROM PSALM 146:7)

*Executing justice
for the oppressed
and giving food
to the hungry.*



 EIGHTH DAY FARM

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- Under Construction -



More than any other year, the plans that the staff and Board of Directors laid out in the Fall of 2015 for the 2016 year were reached with great success. The CSA was designed a little smaller, but run efficiently and yielded bountifully, the program work was piloted and found to be effective, and a host of new collaborators were established.

A clear vision for the organization has emerged. Eighth Day Farm will go forward with two arms, one, the Urban CSA based out of the Holland Town Center, and the other the program work housed at the Growth Center. The program work aligns with the new mission statement taken from Psalm 146:7 –

*Executing justice
for the oppressed
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to the hungry.*

We've created the New Fast Food bags as part of our strategy to address hunger locally. We grow all the produce necessary for a particular meal and pack it along with any other necessary ingredients in a brown paper bag. We insert a recipe and include a link and QR Code to an instruction video on how to prepare the dish. We then deliver these bags within 24 hours of harvesting (making it truly fast food) to local agencies who have a long history of serving the hungry. The thing that gets us most geeked about this is that these tasty dishes are chock-full of health.

We've had recipients come back to us saying, "I had no idea what a bok choy was, where can I get these?" To watch a video on the New Fast Food bags that Kent Esmeier graciously crafted for us, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKOWp0nxfFQ>

Now we are looking for 500 (that is a lot) people eager to fight hunger with health by becoming sustaining members of Eighth Day Farm and



the New Fast Food bags at just \$5/month. If you haven't already (thanks to those who have!), please join today by following this link:

<http://www.eighthdayfarm.org/sustaining-member/>

And share this with friends and family!

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- Under Construction -

But we are committed to doing more than charity work. We believe the roots of hunger and our health crises are complex, and complex problems demand complex solutions. So alongside charity work we are growing and diversifying educational opportunities and creating an invitation into justice work.

We are soliciting funds for a major renovation of the Growth Center building at 709 Pine Avenue that will include a commercial kitchen. We want this building to serve as the hub for anything food and farm related, for field trips, workshops, for the Urban Youth Growers, neighborhood parties, and community gatherings. Pray our requests are blessed and the funds become available to make this a reality.



THE GROWTH CENTER

Last, but not least, we will be unveiling The Jubilee Response Foundation in early 2017 when our new website is up and running.

For three years we've been discussing the Jubilee Response Foundation as a way to "execute justice." Now it is ready to be birthed. Hooray!



- Season Review & Future Vision -

November is a month of questioning and dreaming in the life of a farmer. The crispness that has returned to the air is reminiscent of the early April mornings planting lettuce – somehow only seven months, but also an entire lifetime ago. “He enters into death yearly, and comes back rejoicing. He has seen the light lie down in the dung heap, and rise again in the corn.” While reflecting on these rhythms and cycles of life and death two main constants stand out - Land and people. It occurs to me as fitting that these be the primary pillars in the life of a farm. Healthy soil is essential for growing good crops for the nourishment of the community, and the community likewise nourishes the farmer and empowers him be a proper caretaker of the soil. Our health is interconnected with one another and is directly tied to the earth. This is the guiding principle behind our CSA and is the reason that our weekly emails begin with “loving the earth – loving our food – loving our neighbors.” It is with this foundation of love that we proceed in faith into the bounty of the earth and care for one another.

It is for this reason that I must begin with gratitude. Thank you to each and every one of you that played some role in the life of the farm this season. Whether it was being willing to try Chinese cabbage,



MESSAGE FROM KYLE

and then try it again, and then again - or perhaps taking your first stab at canning or freezing produce, the economy of your household in some way intersected with the rhythm of the farm, and I feel honored by that. I'm especially grateful that you all were willing to battle the wretched construction traffic of this summer each week to come and pick up

your produce, and am glad to know that next year should be much easier on all of us in this regard! As exhausting as harvest days sometimes are for us, the rhythm of your presence on the farm on Tuesdays and Saturdays is really the lifeblood of everything we do.

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- Season Review & Future Vision -

Moving forward into next season we are hoping that you will continue explore with us what it looks like to be a healthy community. One shift that we are planning on making is to offer a smaller “simple share” in order that the farm might be a more accessible option for those of you that don’t necessarily have the time to preserve excess veggies yet still desire to be able to cook a few meals each week with the best fresh produce you can find. We’re still going to offer a “standard” share very comparable to this year as well, and are also playing around with the idea of a sort of “homesteader’s share” with a heavy emphasis on preservation and bulk produce (email kyle@eighthdayfarm.org if this is something that interests you!).

Every Wednesday while the interns were here this summer we set aside an hour to discuss a chapter from *The Unsettling of America* by Wendell Berry (Big shout out to John, Randi, Jenni, and Maddie). Throughout our conversations we explored together what it means to do life together as Berry’s words helped us to reevaluate that which matters the most to a flourishing human life. For that reason, I want to leave you with some words from one of my favorite Wendell Berry poems, *The Mad Farmer, Flying the Flag of Rough Branch, Secedes from the Union*. These particular lines are an invitation that I hope is extend to you, even as many of you have already brought these words to life for me:

Calling his neighbors together into the sanctity

Of their lives separate and together

In the one life of their commonwealth and home,

In their own nation small enough for a story

Or song to travel across in an hour, he cries:

Come all ye conservatives and liberals

Who want to conserve the good things and be free,

Come away from the merchants of big answers,

Whose hands are metalled with power;

From the union of anywhere and everywhere

By the purchase of everything from everybody at the lowest price

And the sale of anything to anybody at the highest price;

From the union of work and debt, work and despair;

From the wage-slavery of the helplessly well-employed.

From the union of self-gratification and self-annihilation,

Secede into care for one another

And for the good gifts of Heaven and Earth.

Come into the life of the body, the one body

Granted to you in all the history of time.

Come into the body’s economy, its daily work,

And its replenishment at mealtimes and at night.

Come into the body’s thanksgiving when it knows

And acknowledges itself a living soul.

Come into the dance of the community, joined

In a circle, hand in hand, the dance of the eternal

Love of women and men for one another

And of neighbors and friends for one another.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege for Brooke and I to be your farmers this season, and we hope to see you again next year.

Peace,

Kyle



- Update from Gary -

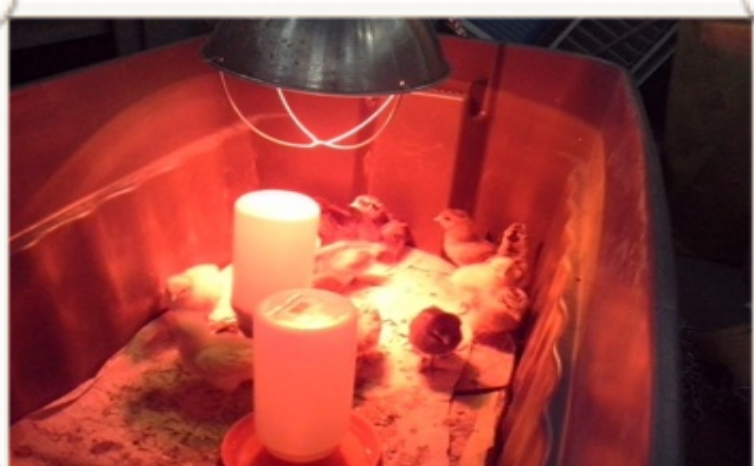
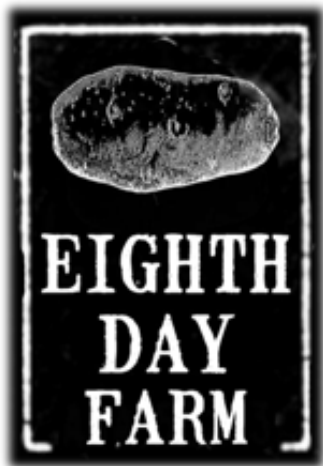
This spring Kyle and I bought twelve baby chicks—spritely Americaunos and robust Buff Orpingtons—for Eighth Day's Holland Town Center site. As we watched them grow indoors under the mothering love of a heat lamp we built an A-frame chicken coop from all recycled materials, including the iconic orange steel roofing panels leftover from some of the outlet mall's renovations. Now our adult chickens provide us daily with fresh brown and blue-green eggs, not to mention some good exercise as we try in vain to keep them within the confines of their fence. They enjoy feasting on our chicken-grade (AKA sub-par) vegetables as well as weeds, insects, and



UPDATE FROM GARY

organic chicken feed. Our girls' diverse, plant-rich diets give their eggs deep orange yolks and incredible flavor. Going into winter we pray they stay warm and that our

rooster can protect them from the neighborhood hawks, foxes, and stray cats.



- Urban Youth Growers -

Four teenagers joined Jeff every Tuesday and Thursday this summer at the Growth Center for some summer employment. While no one left saying “I want to become a farmer,” there were many food conversion stories. The youth taste tested the New Fast Food bag recipes. We tweaked and compared a few recipes before finalizing. The

youth enjoyed preparing the meals and closed the summer preparing food for youth at the Boys and Girls Club. We picked peppers, watched food films, discussed where our food comes from, what makes for good food, and what is available at the school cafeteria. A special thanks to these four youth for a good summer.



URBAN YOUTH PROGRAM



- My time at Eighth Day Farm as an intern -

In anything that has vocational or spiritual significance, there is a temptation to paint a Caravaggio of a depiction, but to do so would feed into that hyperbole vernacular that we so often misuse. There were indeed times throughout the summer in which I worked at Eighth Day Farm that I hold in rosy little memory clouds: the pleasant conversation and vibrant foods at potlucks, witnessing the work that farmers all around western-Michigan are doing, the newly formed/strengthened relationships, learning about the wonders and goodness of soil. But I consider my time at Eighth Day to be more than the sum of the memories I've accumulated.

I get the sense that there was a deceleration involved in the whole ordeal. Though I know I didn't do very much slowing down: I would wake up quite early every morning, work hard at farming for eight hours (which is not easy labor, mind you), spend time with my fiance if she wasn't working, plan our wedding, and if there was a potluck that day I would try to cook something original. The truth is that I was busy. So why did I feel a sense of slowing down?

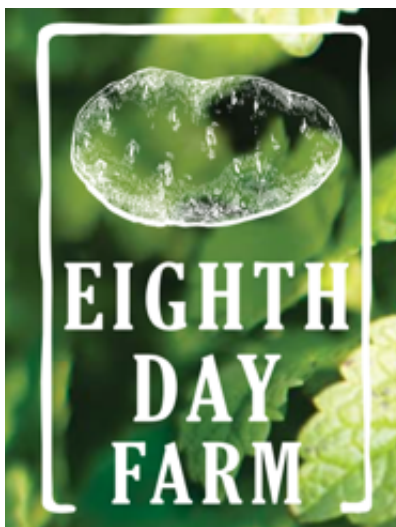


REFLECTIONS FROM JOHN

I think the answer lies in the fact that many of us live at a breakneck pace. If you look around, people are running around with their heads chopped off. We hold ourselves to such high expectations, sometimes unreasonable expectations that we make great sacrifices to meet. There isn't a whole lot of time to register

one's feelings (those haven't entirely stopped mattering yet). So some people cover up those impeding feelings that tell us to slow down in one form or another and think about what we're doing. As the now-popular British WWII saying goes, "keep calm and carry on", right?

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My time at Eighth Day Farm as an intern

In one way, my time at Eighth Day allowed me to think about what I'm doing (an ever so prevalent question in the life of a student) through action instead of feeding into that desire to dissociate oneself from the normal on-goings of life in the name of contemplation. I was up to my neck in life, getting messy and making mistakes and sometimes making an ass out of myself. But how else are we to truly learn how to live if not by practicing?

When I plopped back into the bodacious seas of academia, I found myself with new things to say about the life of the individual and how our society views agriculture and how that affects certain disenfranchised groups of people - it's all very interesting stuff and it makes the ears of my peers perk up. With all due respect to academia, I'm thirsty to act again. The talk of a (not so) new way of approaching agriculture is significant and it's vital that we keep conversations about it going. When the day ends, however, I want to look back at what I've done and think that I did more than shake off my own boredom and the boredom a few undergraduate students.



REFLECTIONS FROM JOHN

My time at 8th day was a wonderful time and it feels good to reminisce about green things and good friends, but it was ultimately a time of doing and a time of becoming. Throughout the summer, in twining up the hoop-house, crawling around and weeding the pepper plants, chasing escaped chickens back into their

fence, improvising watering techniques for winter squash, (the list is pages long), I found the thought "*this* is significant" popping out from the static of my thoughts.



Roll your stones our way

Prayer labyrinth 2.0 is in the works. We had to move the old prayer labyrinth and we realized we could really use a ton (literally) of field stones. We're on the look out for stones that are softball size or larger. If you happen to have any sitting around or know of family member out in the country who has been accumulating them over the years and would be willing to donate them-let us know! We'll put them to good use! Shoot me a text 616-335-0797 or an email jeff@eighthdayfarm.org and I'll come pick them up.

- A semi-sabbatical year comes to a close -

I'd like to broadcast a thank you to all who've sowed into Eighth Day Farm over this past year. I hope you are savoring what you have reaped. It was beautiful for me to see the CSA flourish even as I stepped away. And while I missed seeing people's smiling faces at the pick-ups, I had no worries with Kyle and Brooke at the helm. Separating myself from the CSA generated the necessary space to further our mission and develop more effective programs. Even more important -on a personal note- it allowed me to devote more

time to my 3 children. I took every Monday off this summer and the kids and I went on "nature hikes," usually in pursuit of some body of water (even if a 4 inch deep stream) to splash around in. Ending my work days at 5pm instead of 8pm also lent more time for leisurely interactions with Tsepo, Naomi and McKenna. Parenting is way harder than farming. But the rewards are greater too. Thank you to fellow staff, board members and the farm community at large for your love and support during this time.

