



Stone Soup

July 21, 2003 Stearns Farm CSA □ Community Supported Agriculture
881 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701 508-877-0059 Vol 4, No 6

The 2004 Farm Bill

The EQIP program was enacted as part of the 1996 farm bill as a major, positive reform of previous conservation cost-share programs. Payments were limited to \$10,000 a year, with a cap of not more than \$50,000 over five years. Animal waste storage structures for large-scale confined animal feeding operations were ineligible for EQIP funding. The program worked reasonably well in support of farm conservation efforts, with a special emphasis on cost-effective land management practices.

In the 2002 farm bill, however, Congress reversed course in response to a massive lobbying campaign by corporate livestock interests and their allies. Large-scale confinement operations were made eligible for EQIP funding, the yearly payment limit was eliminated, and the overall payment limitation mushroomed nine-fold to \$450,000 over the six-year span of the farm bill. Proponents of these changes spoke openly about converting EQIP from a conservation program to a commodity program for livestock groups.

Despite a five-fold increase in annual overall funding for EQIP provided in the 2002 farm bill, the total number of farms and ranches benefiting from EQIP has not increased because the payments per farm have become so much larger. The primary beneficiaries of these changes have been large livestock confinement operations and other large farms and ranches investing in capital-intensive structures and equipment with public cost-share dollars. These taxpayer expenditures probably do far more to increase production than to achieve any benefits for natural resources and the environment.

The full Senate will take up the agricultural appropriations bill the week of July 21, quite possibly as early as Monday. Senator Grassley of Iowa will introduce an amendment to scale back the per farm payment limitation for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) from \$450,000 to \$300,000, and apply the limit to all the farming sites that are part of a single operation, regardless of the number of partners investing in the operation. The Grassley amendment would be a very big step in the right direction of restoring some sanity to this program. The amendment would allow more farmers to participate in EQIP by reducing the high-end payments to the largest operations. The amendment will redirect funding to help family farms and improve the environmental outcomes of the EQIP program.

You can help the sustainable agriculture movement take back a program that was designed to reward small farmers for protecting the environment. Call Senators Kennedy 202-224-4543 and Kerry 202-224-2742, tell them you are a constituent, and urge them to support the Grassley EQIP Amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations bill. Reinforce your phone call by sending an email to senator@kennedy.senate.gov and senator@kerry.senate.gov. You can make a difference for family farms and the environment by calling immediately.

BREAD AT PICKUP

Calling All Bread Bakers: Please contact Kristin Harkness (508-877-8564 or kristin@harkness.net) if you are a baker who would like to make a contribution to our newest fund raising endeavor - 'Bread at Pickup'. All proceeds go to the barn building fund.

WEED IT AND REAP

Kathy needs lots of help over the next two weeks to rescue the crops from weeds. If you have hours left to put in, or if you can donate some extra hours, your help right now would be greatly appreciated! Just drop by any day except Sunday and Monday.

CHILDREN'S GARDEN NEWS

Potato Patch!!! Have you ever been on a Potato Beetle Hunt? The beetles eat the leaves and then the potatoes underground stop growing. A good time to rally troops for a hunt is Tea Time on Tuesday at 4 or Friday at 4:30. Grab a plastic container, fill it with water and a couple drops of soap, and start hunting those beetles. You can squash the eggs too - YUCK - eggs are bright orange and can be found on the bottom of the leaves. Kids, do your part for your friend the potato!

ON THE STAND: July 21 and 25

Swiss chard, summer Squash, beets, turnips, radishes, lettuce, mesclun mix

Pick-your-own: beans, field herbs, flowers

Kitchen Colors

SWISS CHARD ~ RED & WHITE

Recipes are culled from cookbooks and food magazines. Nutritional breakdowns are included when available. You are invited to e-mail questions or requests to lp32@tokay.com. - *Lora McCoy*

Chard Leaves

Sauteed Chard With Lemon and Hot Pepper

- Stem the chard, wash and drain the leaves, and cut them into a rough chiffonade (roll them like a cigar and slice thinly – ¼” slices)
- Saute in olive oil, covered, for 5 minutes or so, until the leaves are wilted and tender
- Remove the cover and cook away the excess moisture
- Season at the last minute with a pinch of red pepper flakes, sea or kosher salt and fresh pepper – squeeze lemon juice over just before serving

Braised Chard

- Separate the leaves and the ribs – wash, drain, and cut leaves into a rough chiffonade (see above)
- Slice a large sweet onion and start it stewing in some olive oil in a pot large enough to hold the chard leaves (low heat with the cover on)
- After the onion softens add the chard chiffonade, season with salt and pepper, cover and stew for 20-30 minutes, stirring every so often
- Additions of chopped garlic, pancetta, or lemon can be made but the chief virtue of chard cooked this way are its own sweet flavor and a meltingly tender texture
- Note: Chard cooked this way, makes a lovely filling for a dinner or luncheon omelet.

Chard, Spinach, and Escarole Pasta Sauce

1 lb. chard	1 Tb. chopped fresh thyme
2 lb. spinach	1 cup red wine
1 large head escarole	1 lb. linguine
2 large red or sweet white onions	½ c stock or water
3 –4 cloves garlic	2 Tb. capers (for salt packed – rinse and chop)
¼ cup olive oil	salt and pepper
1 bay leaf	

- Stem the chard and the spinach – remove the core from the escarole and separate the leaves
- Wash all greens and cut into chiffonade – peel and coarsely chop the onions – peel and chop the garlic very fine
- Put on a large pot of boiling water for the pasta (1 lb. pasta should be cooked in 8 quarts water or more)
- Heat a heavy casserole over medium to high heat; add ½ the olive oil and the onions, bay leaf, and thyme; cook, covered until tender (about 5 minutes) – uncover and cook 5 more minutes until onions are very brown (just short of burnt)
- Add the red wine and deglaze the pan, cover, turn the heat to low and simmer 3-4 minutes
- Put the pasta on to cook (salt the water generously, do not add oil and do not cover)
- Uncover the onions and add the garlic (cook 1 minute)
- Add the greens and the stock – cook for 5 minutes
- Add the capers and season to taste with salt and pepper
- Drain the pasta and add to the casserole with the greens
- Pour the rest of the olive oil over all and toss and serve

On the side: *Chard is popular in Europe. In this country, is less well known and it is called Swiss Chard. Both the leaves and the stems can be eaten, each cooked in different ways. The leaves can be steamed, parboiled, or sauteed, and added to soup, etc. The crisp-textured stems are delicious steamed, stewed, or gratined. The Chard with the largest leaves are often the most tender.*

All recipes were Adapted from *Chez Panisse: Vegetables* by Alice Waters