

## Survey Results

This year, we thought to share some statistics about box contents. First, we've listed the top five items you reported wanting more of, and then the top five you felt you received too many of. The overlap is always interesting.

What you want more of:

- 1) Tomatoes, of course, topped the list this year. We hope that if it weren't for the blight that hit us all, they wouldn't have ranked so high. All we can do is our best to prevent the spread of that disease—and of course keep the hoophouse heirloom tomatoes going. We will be extra vigilant next year, especially if the weather is again cool and damp. We missed our romas and cherries and beefsteaks too!
- 2) Garlic—our new row spacing and mechanical control should dramatically increase our production next year. We've got 6000 some cloves in the ground already. We made a decision this year to save a lot of what we were able to salvage from our spring water problems to plant this fall rather than order in garlic from somewhere else. It seemed more sustainable all the way around, but it did mean less garlic even than we thought for your boxes.
- 3) Carrots—we increase production on these every year and they still make the list. They grow well for us, so expect more!
- 4) Broccoli—this is a staple that underperformed this year, largely due to the erratic weather. We plan to control it more next year, with low tunnels early in the year and adjusted planting schedules. We wholeheartedly agree that there should be more of this in your boxes.
- 5) Lettuce/Greens—I love this group as it always tops the next list too. But, for those of you who want more first, we are going to try for more mid-season lettuces, such as iceberg and romaine, to even out the glut in spring and fall. This year, much of our fall lettuce was lost to the early super frosts, so if you felt shortchanged at the end of the season, that's why.

What you received too much of:

- 1) Greens—We're guessing, and we'll need to clarify our question a bit next year, that these are the hardier greens, like kale, swiss chard, spinach, and collards. And these really are a love/hate category for everyone. We can separate surveys by who wants more (by variety name even!) and who just won't eat them and we get pretty even piles. Greens are something that our household really enjoys, and it shows up in our boxes. However, we are listening and will review all our greens plans.
- 2) Lettuce—The most common reason given for this making the list is that you couldn't get through it all before it wilted and spoiled. That was interesting to us, because this year we did not bag every head of lettuce as we have before. We harvested it Wednesday morning for Thursday delivery, but without getting it into a plastic bag in your crisper drawer, it probably doesn't make it past Saturday. We try to make sure to say to do such storage things in the newsletter, but we know not everyone is reading that. We'll reconsider that bagging.
- 2) Summer Squash—It's always abundant, and always on this list. It's hard to resist delivering all the squash we pick. And when we bring extras to a drop off, they usually disappear. We think we need to do a better job with our swap boxes at drop offs so that those of you getting overwhelmed can leave your squash behind, and those of you still gobbling it up can take it along.
- 4) Radishes—We realize some people don't like spicy food, and some do. Radishes are a classic with lettuce, and so will always be in our spring and fall boxes with lettuce mix and greens. Again, we hope the swap box can help you avoid them as needed.
- 5) Hot peppers—like radishes, these fall into the category of something we definitely feel we should continue to grow and provide for you, but we know not everyone enjoys. Again, we'll work on those swap boxes and getting them more visible and useful.

Other produce: I'd like to finish up the individual veggie part of this by talking about a couple items that weren't even listed. Sweet potatoes, sweet corn, and watermelon completely tanked this year as a few of you noticed. Sweet potatoes: We set out more sweet potato slips this spring than ever before. Our shipper delivered them earlier than ever, and we planted them when frost danger was low. But a late cold snap, which never really broke, killed the sprouting tops of the newly planted slips. The beds never really recovered.

Sweet Corn: We seeded a huge field of early, mid, and late season sweet corn on a rented acre up the road from us. The seeds germinated well, and the plants grew beautifully. But no ears formed. We have a few ideas why, but mainly we plan to get this back on our own soil next year.

Watermelon: Two things happened here. We decided to grow only seedless watermelon and then July was record cold. Seedless watermelon is much more sensitive than regular, and it did not grow much at all in July. By the time the fruit set, it was too late in the year to sweeten up fully. Sadly, we watched it freeze.

Quantity: About 85% of you feel you're getting just the right quantity of food in your your share box. The remainder are split between too much and too little. It's so dependent on how many vegetables your family enjoys eating, we think we're doing about as well as we can at those numbers. If anything, we always aim for a bit more each year.

Communication: All of you let us know that email is working well for communicating with you. We miss the paper newsletters too, but this is much more cost and time effective. But we do seem to have a few issues every year with just a few email addresses. Please don't ever hesitate to call us if you're not hearing from us as you think you should. It's the only way we'll know.

Rebates: Many of you mentioned the health insurance company rebates in your surveys and credited them with your decision and ability to join a CSA. Good news—we do already know that the rebates will be available again for 2010.

Egg and Beef Shares: From all reports you love these options. We plan to keep them coming and possibly add some more options.

Suggestions: We received several interesting suggestions so far, and we'll likely be endlessly discussing them, from a fourth larger share size to new drop site locations. We will update you on any decisions as June 2010 gets closer. As with last year, if we do start a new drop site, you can always switch to it if you've already signed up at another. Same with our share sizes—you will always be able to up- or downgrade, whatever we decide to do.

Thanks for taking the time to share all your thoughts. We are dedicated to making your CSA experience something you help shape. We truly are in this together, sharing the harvest and sharing the risk.