



December 2012 Newsletter

Greetings to you all! What a season this has been. I want to start by thanking each of you for helping us through our second year at Asbury Village Farm. This season has seen several changes and upgrades to the farm. After completion of our new deer fence in January we have not had one deer set hoof in our field. Alfie and Chief, the farm dogs we adopted in April, have become very proficient at hunting rodents. There are no more groundhogs living inside the fence, and every day the dogs are out there catching the field mice and voles that have been such an issue for us with direct-seeded and root crops. Even in the snow they are outstanding at their jobs. We opened and used the back fields of the farm which haven't been used for vegetable crops for who knows how many years, and quickly learned not to sow direct-seeded crops back there due to the perennial Mugwort which is prevalent in that area. We purchased a pump and irrigated out of our pond for the first time this year with much success. The new greenhouse we bought last year is finally completed and full of carrots and spinach for our winter market. This greenhouse will have early tomatoes and hot peppers in it in 2013. We were able to replace the tractor we bought last year (which broke down catastrophically) with a new Kubota in April. We expanded the workshare program by 5 shares and they came through beautifully. I can't express fully how grateful I am to the workshares for their hard work and the inspiration they gave me to push myself. And we began an organic fertility program this year in response to the soil testing we did at the end of 2011, which indicated very low levels in several minerals necessary for truly vibrant produce. This will continue for several seasons and will consist basically of spreading an organic mineral blend on each field in the spring and sowing a legume/grain cover crop in the fall to raise nitrogen and organic matter content in our clay soil.

In 2013 we plan to continue to expand production by opening the last fallow field in the back, which means more food per share consistently throughout the year. This will bring all of our currently available land into active production. We have expanded our workshare program by adding the extreme workshare to help with the heavy transplanting schedule in April and May. I hope to add another greenhouse to the three we currently operate. But with the major field infrastructure up and ready, we are freer now to focus on crop quality and quantity. I've learned much in the last two seasons about the nature of the soil and weed pressure here, and look forward to making good use of that experience in 2013. I've set a goal of filling 200 shares for 2013 (with single shares counting as 1/2 of a share), of which a total of 40 will be workshares. All that we have accomplished thus far has been made possible by you, the members, and I thank you for supporting us through our developmental stages. I hope that many of you will continue to be a part of building the community here by [renewing membership for the 2013 season](#). Thanks very much to those of you who already have. We've begun the crop planning for next season, and are working towards the 2013 seed order which we will place in January. To help us give you more of what you want, we've built a SurveyMonkey online survey. Please take a few minutes to give your opinions and suggestions on how to make the experience here even better. Thanks again for a great season, [Steve](#)



I also want to point out that the compost bin in front of the distribution area will still be there throughout the winter, so if you want to keep bringing your kitchen scraps, please do. Any biodegradable plant matter is welcome. We will add it to the heap and eventually use it in the field for much-needed fertilizer. Also the Neshaminy order is still happening every month, same as always. If you signed up for it, you'll get email reminders as the orders become due. Thanks! Have a nice holiday and hope to see you at the winter market and/or next season. – [Robyn](#)

Clockwise from top: the farmers, Robyn, Rhea, Steve, Jake and Silas; the new tractor hauling in the summer carrots; and the work share crew harvesting kale for the share this past fall.

