

APRIL 2020

# THE RHETORICAL ROOT

A monthly farm newsletter

## Seasonal Rhythms

PLANTING AND LAMBING TIME  
HAS ARRIVED ON THE FARM

### MEET THE FARMERS!

- A re-introduction of the  
Prairie Roots duo

### SEE WHAT'S GROWING

- And what fresh veg you can  
snag at our first market

Dear Friends,

What a whirlwind of a month it has been. Life has felt profoundly different, yet day-to-day rhythms seem to go on much the same. Those never-changing rhythms, dictated largely by the seasons, are what brings me comfort and keeps me going.

The pandemic has created a renewed interest in gardening across the country, and it has been exciting for me to watch folks get excited about planting their own "victory gardens." Several major seed companies that we order from have been overwhelmed, even needing to turn down customers. What a phenomenon! I wholeheartedly commend those who are claiming resiliency-- who want to provide nourishing food for their families when so much seems uncertain. I desperately hope that the woeful weaknesses that have been exposed in our industrial food chain will lead to some real change, or reevaluation at the very least. Our complete reliance on middlemen to process and package agricultural goods has created bottlenecks, forcing farmers to euthanize animals, dump milk, and leave fields to rot. I don't pretend to understand the complexities of supply and demand and all that is happening in our food supply due to the Coronavirus. I'm just grateful to know where the produce we work hard to grow is going. And not just in a general sense! We get to see the people receiving our CSA boxes and picking up veggies at the Farmers' Market. And for now, that is enough to give me peace that, somehow, everything will be ok.

We hope your household is finding its own ways to be resilient. This is truly a moment to center down on what's really important in life.

-Lillie



# WHAT'S GROWING?

By this point, nearly each of our 6 plots has at least a few 30"x 100' beds planted. You've got the potatoes going on "trailer plot", brassicas on "north plot", peas in "sod 1", and onions in "jungle plot". And then there are the 3 tunnels, filling up quickly. Truthfully, there is a lot going already! But because everything is so spread out, it can feel like we have a long ways to go before we see the garden in real production. And it can be daunting when weeds are already popping up all over beds that will soon be peppers or cucumbers. But everything has to happen in it's own time.

Right now, we are taking our first big harvest out of the first caterpillar tunnel. Radish and spinach were seeded on March 16. We hope to begin supplying our local grocery store after we see how well things move at the Yankton Farmers' Market this Saturday.

We got a load of compost from Iowa yesterday. We had run out of our homemade compost, so we are back to planting! Tomatoes are next on the docket, followed by bok choy, cauliflower, zucchini, lettuce, and herbs. Our favorite part of planting season is watching everything suddenly take off. Pure pride and joy!



## *First Farmers Market*

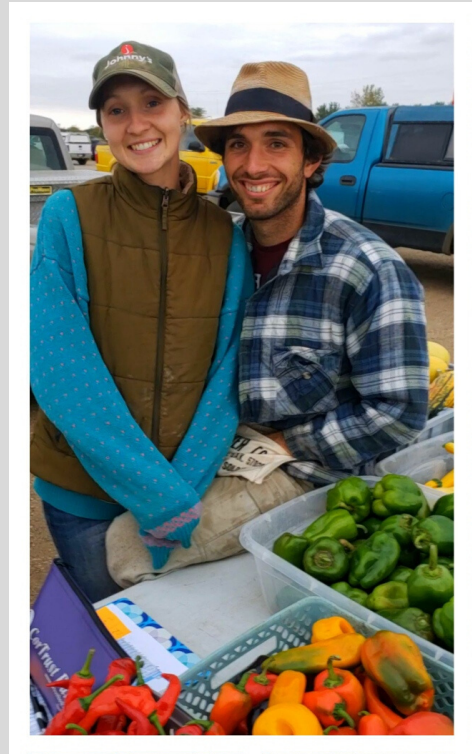
Happening this Saturday morning! If you live in the area, come on down to the Meridian Market in Yankton to say hello! We will have radish, lettuce, spinach, and mixed greens. Also soap & eggs!

# Meet the Farmers

It occurred to me recently that we have a number of new CSA members and followers, so it might be time for a little re-introduction. Even some of our regular CSA members hardly ever get to see our faces!

We are André & Lillie (Koerner) Eisenbeis, a husband-wife duo near Freeman, SD. We are creeping past our mid-twenties and this is our third year of vegetable farming. We are highschool sweethearts who went to different colleges in Iowa and Indiana to get ag & environment related degrees. Small-scale local-food-centered farming was always our goal, thanks to growing up on families deeply involved in the local foods scene. In 2018, we struck out on our own & started Prairie Roots Produce on my (Lillie's) grandmother's farm.

Being married business partners is both a blessing and a curse! After hearing news stories about couples not knowing how to spend so much time together while quarantining from COVID-19, we laugh knowing that this is our reality most days of the year! Despite our good working relationship, it has helped immensely that we developed a natural division of labor and can each be "the boss" when it comes to certain things. Although we still find ways to butt heads on a regular bases :)



## Division of Labor



### Lillie: Production Planner

- orders seed & starts transplants
  - lines up marketing outlets
  - maps out garden plots
  - runs social media & does most contacting
  - writes newsletters
  - decides what's ready for harvest & CSAs
- BOTH: harvesting, washing/packing, planting, weeding, going to market, delivering



### Andre: Director of Infrastructure

- takes care of the animals (choring, fencing)
  - operates machinery
  - does construction projects
  - installs mainline irrigation tubing
  - sets up trellising & fences
  - lion's share of bed prep in spring
- BOTH: harvesting, washing/packing, planting, weeding, going to market, delivering



# Hello, Babes

April means tiny animals! This year, we expanded our sheep flock from 4 to 13. Still small, but it felt like more than enough for us beginner shepherds during lambing season. We have been really enjoying the meat from last year's grass-fed lamb and can't wait to build our flock and share it with you. It's a lean but tender and flavorful meat.

On the poultry side, we got a batch of 150 cornish cross chicks several weeks ago. They aren't nearly as cute anymore now that their feathers are coming in and they look half-naked! Andre is constructing a second chicken tractor (a mobile cage that allows us to rotate them on grass), and as soon as the chicks are big enough, we will send them outside to eat and graze until we process them later on in June. Whole birds will be available to CSA members through the CSA plus. There is NOTHING that compares to a homegrown broiler raised outdoors!



## Are you quarantine baking too???

Seems like sourdough bread has become all the rage while people are stuck inside with nothing to do. I have tried multiple times to get a sourdough starter going, and finally had success last month! I probably have less time than ever to experiment in the kitchen, but my first successful bake was so rewarding that I pledged to make it part of my weekly routine. Have you joined the sourdough cult? What are your secrets? I just might have a new CSA bread option to roll out this summer!