What good timing! On Friday evening the boys were able to squeeze in almost a dozen rows of plastic in our Hillside #9 field before the sun set. We’ve cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, and kale just at their best at just this moment. Another week and they’ll be turning yellow and wishing they could stretch their “legs” and grow. So, this week, at the crack of dawn and late into the evenings, we’ll be transplanting our fall brassicas during the cooler parts of the day. Typically we use a piece of machinery, called a Water Wheel - which allows two people, 18 trays of seedlings and 250 gallons of water (and fish + kelp fertilizer) to drag behind a slow moving tractor. The machine pokes and waters holes, while the people glide along in cushy chairs, jamming seedlings into muddy, fishy holes. The seedlings love it - and most of the interns do too - there’s not too many jobs on the farm that you can just sit and coast along!

We hope to have a better brassica season in the fall than we did in the spring. Our broccoli ‘bolted’ (turned bitter and went to seed), and the cabbage is coming along slowly. The biggest challenge for fall brassicas is that the deer pressure is considerably worse in the fall. Which is really saying something!

We also planted a bunch of White Egg Turnips (or Haukeri Turnips) which are divine when boiled, then sauteed with butter, and then drizzled with maple syrup. Alas, you’ll have to wait 45 days before we can harvest them!
S
omewhere in between
dangling from a
harness, screwing down
the last few sheets of roofing
on the new animal barn and
driving the tractor to prep
the fields for planting, is the
silver lining I have found here
on Blackberry Meadows
Farm.

My name is Jameson
Altott and I am very proud to
be a part of such an exciting
and true system of farming
and life here on the farm.
Every day, there is something
new to learn, explore or fix,
which in turn has given me
more of an education and
sense of purpose than most
can imagine.

I was born and raised
in Connecticut and graduated
from Slippery Rock
University with a Park and
Resource Management
Degree in December of 2012.
During my last year at SRU, I
completed my internship at
the university run Macoskey
Center for Sustainable
Systems and Research where
our director at the time,
Thomas Reynolds, took us on
a field trip to Greg and Jen’s
farm. We helped to pound
stakes and trellis grape vines
and had some of the best
brick oven, wood fired pizza
that I have ever tasted. When I
learned that the farm had
apprenticeships, I knew
where I would be the
following season. I fell in
love with the farm and now
have a great relationship with
Greg and Jen as well as the
rest of the apprentices. We
work extremely hard to keep
the farm in working order
and to provide every week for
CSA members and the
Farmer’s Markets. It is
amazing to work with
everyone here and learn from
each other’s differences every
day, knowing we all have a
common goal to work
toward. Being on the farm, I
have learned aspects of
planting, harvesting, running
a tractor, construction,
animal care, mechanics,
connecting with the
community and much more.
I value my time here very
much and couldn't be in a
better place.

My future plan is to
remain on the farm and help
Jen and Greg provide great
produce to the local
community. I have already
expanded my knowledge and
capabilities in the last three
or so months and know
wherever I go, I can take this
experience and what I have
learned with me. I see the
importance of supporting
local farms and knowing
where our food comes from.
We hope you all enjoy this
season's produce and
continue to appreciate and
support our hard work.
Without all of you making
the right choice, this
wonderful experience would
not be possible for any of us.
Thank you and enjoy!
Sincerely your farmer,
Jameson.
The Pigs are Out!

The pigs are on the move! This week our three pigs (Francis Bacon, Pork Chop and Tenderloin) graduated from their nursery into the wide green pasture. We packed up their pigpen with their feed trough, watering bucket and fence and headed out onto pasture. Since their move, the pigs have been quite content. They are now on the edge of our woods and the cool ground and shade is making them snooze a bit longer than they did in the nursery. Maybe it’s the amount of good food they’ve been stuffing down. We take at least one full 5 gallon bucket per day of veggies, milk, grains and of course, leftovers!

Heaven help us that one box of blueberries got jammed in the back of the fridge and wasn’t eaten before the softness began. We walked the box out there (Evelyn carried it) and tossed those berries around the pigs. They proceeded to hunt down and devour every blueberry on the ground. Those pigs have an unbelievable sense of smell to root out all of those tasty treats!

As many of you know, meats raised on open pasture contain high levels of omega-3 fats and many trace minerals that are not available to grain/feed lot animals. When they have access to a diversity of roots, bugs, and forage, those critters will have a balanced diet - which means the best in nutrition for us! Mmmm healthy bacon....

Patrick Keddie was in charge of all things animal this week and took the lead on moving the pen, setting up the pasture fence and installing their water bucket. The pigs like to knock over their bucket and wallow in the muddy mess. So it needs some good reinforcement.
A couple of items of note this week:

**The next Potluck is July 27th.** All are welcome to come and enjoy the farm from 4 - 7 pm! Bring games, blankets, drinks, and have fun! **We’ll be cranking out fresh pizza from the wood oven.** Bring a side dish to share, and your own chairs and place settings. **Please RSVP if you think you’ll make it.**

**We have Blueberries!** Fresh, big, tasty, and organic blueberries from Hunter Farm in Erie, PA. We’ll have a few on hand for sale - and you’re welcome to order a flat for next week. Pints are $5.50 and flats of 12 are $60.

Dana roasted some **amazing coffee** - we buy fair trade, organic green coffee beans from **Sweet Maria’s**. She’ll roast a fresh batch each week - try it out!

We bought a half a hog (**Pasture raised pork**) from Kevin Jarosinski -and we’re reselling it by the piece. Kevin runs a pasture based operation, raising chicken, pork, beef, hay and grain. Bacon, chops, steaks, ground - it’s all there. If you’re at one of our drop off locations - just shout out and we’ll bring down what you’re looking for.

We also bought a **half a cow** from Showman Farms, up in Erie Co. Jen’s folks live up there and buy their raw milk and eggs from this farm - they are a grass fed, organically based dairy. This is meat from a holstein cow - and it’s great!

Lastly, we have partnered up with **Una Biologicals**, a Pittsburgh based herbalist. We have lip balm, healing hand salves, and more for sale in the barn. Try it out and let us know what you think. We think she’s got a top quality product!

**The barn is open on Wednesdays from 11 am - 7 pm.** If you think you might be running late - just give us a call (724 226 3939). **The Phipps Market/CSA runs on Wednesdays from 2:30 pm - 6:30 pm, and we’ll be at the Boyd Center on Saturdays from 9 am - 11am.**

**Be sure to bring your own bags.**

Please remember to **check in** when you show up to pick up your share. If you’re new to our CSA, we’ll gladly give you the run-down on the operation and answer any questions you may have.

If you’d like something delivered to the Phipps or Boyd drop off locations - just give a holler - we’ll gladly send it on down to you.

Once a month (the last Saturday of each month 4 - 7 pm), we typically have a CSA potluck picnic - a very casual event. The goal is to give you an opportunity to come to the farm, relax, enjoy the countryside, and get to know each other. We’d also like to you to help plan for our annual CSA picnic extravaganza - **we’re looking for folks who would like to help plan activities, speakers, games, etc..**

We’ll discuss these ideas at each monthly picnic. Let us know if you’re interested in helping.

Thanks for supporting local organic agriculture!!