



The word "energy" incidentally equates with the Greek word for "challenge." I think there is much to learn in thinking of our federal energy problem in that light. Further, it is important for us to think of energy in terms of a gift of life.
-- Thomas Carr

News from the Farm

In local news The Midwest Renewable Energy Fair (<https://www.midwestrenew.org/>) is taking place this weekend. The backside of the newsletter looks at Stoney Acres renewable energy installment and logic, but if you are interested in canning and local food cooking, gardening, renewable energy and home energy the fair is wonderful! Kids activities are also fantastic.

Cooking class- This Friday night starting at 6pm we will offer a cooking class with Kim Casey. She will be using some spring root vegetables like radishes, turnips, and kohlrabi and fitting them through simple prep into breakfast, lunch and dinner. Kim and one of us will be on hand to answer lots of other veggie question as well!

News from the field is generally very positive. We were able to get into the field on Monday after a much needed 2 days without rain and have been making hay (literally) all week. This season is exhausting but bountiful. Our brassica family (broccoli, kale, pac choi, radishes and much more) crops are amazing and other things that did not like the wet weather and coming around with the heat!

We have our 100% grassfed beef available for a short time and will be bringing more steers to the butcher in a week. If you are interested in an order email or call. You can pick up beef directly from us, from the Wausau farmers market (as a large order or by the cut), and larger orders can be delivered.

Remember the pancake breakfast is next week the 28th! The next newsletter will have details. *Have a delicious week - Kat, Tony, Riley, and Ted*

In Your Box

- **Broccoli or Kohlrabi** – as both crops in the hoop house wane.
- **Chinese cabbage** (napa cabbage)
- **Radishes**- red and purple with greens
- **Scallions**
- **Bok Choy** (pac choi)
- **Arugula**- bunched stronger flavored salad green. Can be cooked as well!
- **Braising mix**- a mixture of baby mild mustard greens

Next Week's Best Guess: kale, carrots, green garlic, lettuce, Chinese cabbage, pac choi, turnips, radishes

Special pizzas of the week – 5 Veggie: mushroom, broccoli, green garlic, bok choy, kale; Summer Solstice: Shitake mushrooms, kale, scallions, green garlic, and bacon; Cooking class special: Roasted spring root veggies and greens

Kat's Kitchen

Seared Salad

One large head of Chinese cabbage washed, roots removed and cut length wise; One bunch of scallions roots removed; Five radishes sliced paper thin; 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard; 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce; 1 Tbsp Soy sauce; 1 Tbsp Honey; 1 Tbsp Olive Oil; Fresh ground pepper to taste; Splash of hot sauce of your choosing; Pan spray. To char the veggies: Spray the cabbage and scallions with cooking spray (I used this method to minimize the amount of oil). On the grill over high heat, spread the cabbage out in larger portions. Let sit to char (about two minutes) then turn to char the other side. Repeat with scallions (they will take less time before turning). Remove from grill and let cool. Slice thin. For the dressing: Combine the dijon mustard, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and honey in a bowl. Whisk in the olive oil. Season with pepper and hot sauce.

Roasted spring veggies with their greens – 2-3 cups mixed cubed radishes, broccoli, peeled kohlrabi, pac choy stems (your choice). Toss with olive or sunflower oil and roast at 375 until softest veggie (the stems or broccoli) starts to brown 15-30 minutes. While roasting chop up 2-5 cups of fresh greens (kohlrabi, radish, Chinese cabbage, mustards, arugula...) and sauté in a pan or steam and set aside. Toss both portions together with ½ cup toasted nuts or seeds. You can also add protein such as thinly sliced beef, tofu, chicken or "stiff" beans like garbanzos. Toss with maple mustard vinaigrette (below) or a favorite prepared dressing (we love annies green goddess).

Jon-Jon's Dressing (aka Maple Mustard Vinaigrette) – Super basic recipe invented by tony! Equal parts balsamic vinegar, olive or sunflower oil, and maple syrup with 2 tsp Dijon mustard. We actually make ours a bit less sweet so feel free to adjust maple syrup to your taste and to add herbs or spices. I also have used other types of vinegar and mustard!

Rural Renewable Electrification

This year we took a big plunge investing in an 8K photovoltaic solar panel array on the roof of our packshed and hopefully we will follow this up in the fall with, a wood gasification system which will allow us to burn wood cleanly and efficiently to heat not only the house but the packshed and a larger greenhouse. Both investments, unlike most farm expenditures and improvements are just that, investments financially but also ecologically, toward our larger goals individually but also for a society as a whole. Together these components let us get closer to a goal of sustainability and allow us to bring better quality produce to CSA members, to extend our own farming season in this cold climate and allow seasonal work in spring, fall and winter more to be more productive.

Our journey toward this pointed started 6 years ago. The estimated cost for a solar system at that point was about \$10,000 per kilowatt. We were looking at a system about ½ of the current size of our installment and \$40,000 for that system was unreasonable financially at that time for us, but also a larger issue because payback would be extremely long. Last year we revisited our dream and the site assessment put the cost around \$3,800 per kilowatt before tax incentives or major federal or state grants that have become open to small farmers like us over the past few years. With those incentives the cost falls to about half or less of \$3800, becoming a no brainer for us!

Ecologically, environmentally, this investment looks great on paper! Northwind Renewable Energy estimated that over 30 years we will displace 130.4 tons of coal (4.3 this year because of the later installment!) and we will reduce our carbon emissions 10 tons/year or about 328 tons over 30 years. In terms of total percentage of renewable energy we are on track to cover about 85% of our annual electricity use with the solar array and are hoping to up this percentage through conservation and perhaps an expansion to a 12K system in the future. At this point, give the policies on electricity, the buyback rate from our utility (if we produce more than 100% cumulative total) is very low 3 cents versus the 11 cents we pay per hour of use. We are grid tied meaning our electricity is shared when we use less than we are producing (sunny days our meter spins backward during daylight hours).

Why now? There is an alignment of many programs (USDA REAP grant, Focus on Energy's Small business program, Federal Tax credits for renewable) but also on the production side the cost of solar is down. Our electrical utility is now more familiar and not hostile toward the installation as well! In terms of sheer cost of panels the raw materials are the bulk of costs associated with solar which means as manufacture expands and price falls solar costs can fall dramatically. We also choose an installer with a grant writer who loves working with people engaged in sustainable agriculture and they even offer a discount to folks like us! This is a big deal. The 140 page application for the USDA funding (still not announced but we will keep you posted) requires something just short of an advanced degree in engineering to complete. In this case, Rob, the grant writer at Northwind Renewable Energy (<http://northwindre.com/>) was a savior.

Is there a better investment? If we were put our money into a savings account, even the best CD is 1.5 percent and the stock market is a crapshoot at best; but looking at the solar as an investment is something that few people do. Over the course of 30 years this investment will yield a rate of around 9%. Many major companies including Google and Kohls have noticed this and are investing directly in solar power. We have other motivations that brought us to solar but this is one rationale that makes this even better! Buy a car and you lose value over time, buildings, machinery most infrastructure decrease in value over time but solar pays back year in year out. The payback at many levels seems worth it, especially as we received our annual rate increase notice from our utility last week.

We will discuss the push toward efficient wood (biomass) energy production later in the season but our decision to move toward renewable energy at all levels of the farm was clarified when we did our infamous "5 year" planning last year. We are well known for turning 5 year plans into 1-2 year plans but we think that our bigger goal of being energy neutral in 5 years, will take that long at least! We have gas to contend with which is helped but the addition of a hybrid vehicle to the farm but will require a whole lot more in the future! For more information on installation, incentives etc go to the energy fair this weekend <https://www.midwestrenew.org/>