Greetings!

Earlier this month Local Food Hub’s three year anniversary passed in a blur, as we continued to move record amounts of locally grown food through our distribution hub. We are ever inspired by the commitment, ingenuity, and dedication to quality shown by our Partner Producers. This was certainly on display by those of you affected by the recent derecho, as folks came together, picked up the pieces and continued on after a truly devastating set of circumstances.

We have developed this quarterly newsletter as a way to provide you with updates, post educational opportunities, and to give you a glimpse of how your partnership with Local Food Hub is making an impact in the community. We are also hoping to provide a forum for networking through our ‘Producer’s Corner,’ where you can post ads for free, or ask questions of other growers. Many of you still rely on good old pencil and paper, so we imagine that this will develop into a hybrid web-based / paper mailing over time.

Our total purchases year to date stands at over $320,000, up 34% from this time last year. To handle this increase in sales, we now have two refrigerated delivery vehicles and a staff of 5 at the warehouse. Farm visits are ongoing, so if we have not yet made it out to your farm, please let us know!

In the Community

We recently welcomed more than 100 UVA Leadership on the Lawn campers to Maple Hill to get a taste of the farm life. The students helped harvest a third of our potato crop and also put in a few hours weeding the asparagus beds.

This spring we hosted our second annual Taste of the Farm event. More than 3,000 people joined us at the Farm to celebrate local food, purchase plant starts, and tour the fields. See photos: http://bit.ly/K094Q4

An expanded partnership between University of Virginia Medical Center, Morrison Healthcare Food Service, and Local Food Hub is ensuring that hospital patients and visitors get healthier, tastier, local food. You can now find local food in the UVA Hospital’s cafeteria offerings and in a seasonal farm stand. http://bit.ly/Mu8I2d

Pop-Up Markets are back! For the third summer in a row, we are partnering with the Boys & Girls Club of Central Virginia to host pop-up farmers markets at the Cherry Avenue Center. These markets help the kids raise funds for their conference and provide easy, affordable access to fresh, healthy food. http://bit.ly/P7rzPC

New!

Online Resource Library

Thanks to funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) we have been compiling helpful resources relevant to farming in our region. Access resources on pest management and transitioning to organic production by visiting:

www.localfoodhub.org/resource-library/

Use “farmservices” as the password to access any protected resources. To receive these resources on disc, contact us at farmservices@localfoodhub.org or 434-286-2176.

Local Food Hub was featured in a newly released document by the USDA, called The Regional Food Hub Resource Guide! The handbook is a collection of information, resources and background on everything needed to develop or participate in a regional food hub. Check out the Guide: http://bit.ly/N7ZKaQ

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your farm, expect a call or email soon! We're working hard to update farm profiles on the Local Food Hub website and for point-of-sale materials.

It's just about time to get those fall transplants in the ground. Email us at farmservices@localfoodhub.org to schedule your fall and winter production for Local Food Hub. We're looking for cooking greens (kale, chard, collards), broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, carrots, beets, spinach, salad mix, and winter squash. Off-season production is vital to keeping our relationships with buyers strong, and often provides farmers with higher prices.

This year on the Local Food Hub Educational Farm at Maple Hill, we have been partnering with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Charlottesville. We currently have three refugees from Bhutan working with us. As experienced farmers, they have been a great and productive addition to our staff and we'd be happy to talk about our experience with anyone interested in hiring through the IRC. We have also hosted workshops on Sustainable Soil Management, Beginning Beekeeping, Permaculture for Farm and Homestead (thanks Radical Roots!), and Ecological Pest Management. We have a great line up of workshops for the fall, so be sure to mark your calendars.

Take care in the heat and hope for rain!

~ the Local Food Hub team

2012 SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP SERIES

As a Partner Producer, you are welcome (and encouraged!) to attend all of the workshops in this series free of charge. To register, email farmservices@localfoodhub.org.

PRODUCER CORNER:

A place to post ads, ask questions, and network with other farmers

Several growers have been looking to source transplants for fall production or for someone who does custom growing. Any recommendations? Anyone interested in pursing this as a business opportunity?

Contact: farmservices@localfoodhub.org

Any leads on good (local) sources to find used specialty crop equipment? (potato diggers, plastic layers, transplanters...)

Contact: farmservices@localfoodhub.org

Interested in what it takes to hire-on seasonal labor? Contact Ken Shaver, Farm Placement Specialist at the Virginia Employment Commission and he can lead you through the process. Contact: Kendal.Shaver@vec.virginia.gov or 434-984-7640

Submit an ad or query for the next newsletter by emailing farmservices@localfoodhub.org or by calling 434-286-2176. The next newsletter will mail in October 2012 to 70+ growers and producers in central Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. You might also share helpful information or advice. Please include your contact information so that people can respond to you directly. This is a free service.

COVER CROPS AND CONSERVATION TILLAGE

Thursday, Sept. 27, 4pm-7pm @ Local Food Hub Educational Farm at Maple Hill

Ron Morse is a Professor Emeritus of Virginia Tech's Department of Horticulture and a world-renowned expert and pioneer in the field of organic no-till vegetable production. Don't miss this!

HIGH TUNNEL FIELD DAY

Mid-October @ Hill Farm, Louisa County

Susan and Scott Hill will share their knowledge and insights on high tunnel siting & construction, the engineering of efficient tunnel production systems, and the many specialty crops they have grown in their three high tunnels. In addition, they recently installed a cool-bot and have a highly functional washing and packing set-up in their commercial kitchen. Don’t miss this opportunity to visit an efficient and well-managed high tunnel operation!

GAP (GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES) TRAINING

Thursday, Nov. 8 (full day) @ Local Food Hub Educational Farm at Maple Hill

Finally - the full training many of you have been waiting for! Each participant will receive a comprehensive manual / disc to serve as a starting point in developing your own on-farm food safety plan. Experienced extension agents will give us an update on GAP, guide us through the process of creating a customized plan, and conduct a mock-audit at Maple Hill to give you an idea of the areas you may need to address on your own farm and some creative, low-cost ways to do so.

Super Wayne - our tireless warehouse volunteer!