

Hello everyone,

I wanted to start off by apologizing for how this season is turning out. I wanted you all to know that I'm very aware that the shares are weak... the quantities and in some cases the quality of the produce is not meeting my standards of acceptance. Most of you have been with the farm for years, and know that there is often an abundance that I am happy to share. I have always tried to be generous with the shares, but am simply not able to do that this year.

The simple explanation for the bad year is the weather. We have not seen a soaking rain since early May. Many other places have gotten a few downpours, but we seem to only be at the edge of them, getting a very small amount each time. This is now the driest I have experienced. What has made this especially challenging is that it was immediately preceded by the latest spring I have experienced. Because of the clay content in our soils, this pattern has made every task that involves working the soil unprecedentedly difficult.

The weather is always outside of my control, but why I want to apologize is that I have made some decisions regarding farm management over the years that have ended in me unable to adapt to this extreme of a situation. Most of these decisions have been based on attempts to tackle some of the ills of modern agriculture... distribution issues, fossil fuel issues, seed ownership issues, soil management issues, global labour and capital issues. I have perhaps tried to take on too many of these challenges and spread myself too thin.

If I was able to irrigate adequately, the extreme weather this year could be moderated. The systems that I have for watering the field are too labour intensive on top of all the other tasks that are part of this farm. To upgrade to an irrigation system that is more effective would cost several thousand dollars with the current location of the garden and water sources.

I don't think the weather is going to get any more stable. The way I have decided to address this watering issue is to move the garden to a different field. This is the field right beside the house and driveway of the farm. I will be able to easily apply drip irrigation to crops when it is needed. The other advantage is that with it closer to the house, the groundhog and deer problems that I have had (and this is sometimes significant, including this year when they are desperate for food too) will be lessened or eliminated. The reason I didn't do this earlier is that it a smaller field, and is land I rent from the neighbor. Growing a garden on rented land comes with some risks in terms of long term access, but the extreme weather is now a greater risk. Also, my decision to downsize means I will be able to grow on a smaller field.

That is my solution for the future. For this year, what I am planning on doing to help increase the share value is that I am going to greatly limit the number of folks who get winter vegetables from me, and give more of the fall harvest out to the summer members. This will come as more of a bounty in September and October, but also, at the end of the season, I will give a bit more storage crops to those who would like to keep them.

Thank you all for your continued support and encouragement,

Cory