



# LINSCOMBE FARM NEWSLETTER

Thursday 26th July 2011

Summer has returned. After a somewhat lackluster July it has been good to see some sunshine at last. Much appreciated by vegetables, staff and family alike!

So about time for another newsletter. Since the last communique we have been muddling our way through what is undoubtedly the busiest time of year: planting, weeding and watering most of the entire year's crops comes on top of the normal farm routine of picking and packing. We are just now starting to see an end to the worst of the mania - the weather has mostly been fairly kind and along with considerable help from luck and hard work we are keeping fingers crossed that things are looking mostly successful. Note the rather "farmerish" hedging of our bets there! Never any such thing as outright victory or a proper end to the tasks demanding attention; but all worthwhile to see the happy faces of our customers at the farmers' markets.....

Our new stall at Taunton attended by Helen every week on a Thursday, is starting to look promising and Exeter continues to draw in a loyal and appreciative crowd - always room for more though! If you have friends in the Taunton area, perhaps you could recommend us to them. The new monthly Friday market at Crediton has yet to find its feet although we have seen a recent pickup in the numbers visiting us on the normal first Saturday after a couple of years of gradual decline following (we suppose) the opening of the Tesco superstore in the town.

Following on from the news that Culm Valley Vegetables (based in Uffculme) have ceased their Box Scheme and vegetable deliveries back in the spring, we have also been hearing of other growers having, sometimes terminal, difficulties with their local sales. Along with them, we have also seen a serious decline in this aspect of our sales over the last few years. The irony of this is that, due to huge food inflation in the supermarkets and our own reluctance to increase our prices over the last five years, our vegetables are now cheaper in real terms than they have ever been. But perception and reality don't always concur

and the “anti-organic” lobby has had a successful time over the same period thus leading us to where we are.

To this end we have made a decision to join forces with a very like-minded business in an attempt to prevent more casualties amongst the already rarefied ranks of locally focused organic growers. Many of you will have heard of Rod and Ben’s Vegetables based at Bickham Farm, Kenn. Ben had already left a couple of years ago to start his egg business, Ben’s Hens at Hittisleigh, which many of you already support by buying his eggs from our website. Rod, in turn, started producing his superb soups from vegetables grown at Bickham to help generate a new income stream. Despite these changes, the time has now come to bring Linscombe and Rod and Ben’s together, at least for the time being, to help us all weather the economic climate. We are now sharing some resources and to help administrate these two separate entities, and following on from the modest price rise at the beginning of July we are making some changes to how we describe our Grower’s Choice options on the website and on your statements:

There are now four different sizes of Growers' Choice:

- Mini £9 (aimed at weekly needs for one to two people - usually 8 crop varieties)
- Small £11 (aimed at weekly needs for two to three people - usually 8 crop varieties)
- Medium £14 (aimed at weekly needs for a small family - 2 adults, 2 children - usually 9 - 10 crop varieties)
- Large £17 (aimed at weekly needs for a larger family or 4 adults - usually 10 - 12 crop varieties)

Generally, the different sizes contain a similar range of produce but in different quantities. **(Existing customers please note: sizes have recently been re-classified to enable us to introduce a new larger box, so our original small box has become a "mini", our original medium is now "small" and original large is now "medium" - they are pretty much as they were before regarding contents, it is only the name that has changed, although the "new medium" does contain extra variety!). All your produce continues to be grown by the Linscombe Team at Bidwell Barton Farm.**

Hopefully this is all fairly clear. If not, as usual, please email us for a more lucid explanation.

All the best. And may the sun continue to shine and the economy develop shoots of recovery.....Phil, Helen & Team