



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 30, October 5th and 6th, 2016

Wage Bills, by Stephen Pedersen

Two bills were signed into law that will have dramatic effects on all agricultural businesses in California. The one most people are familiar with is the minimum wage law that was signed back in April that will result in a \$15 minimum statewide by 2022. People outside of agriculture, however, may not be aware that another bill, with possibly larger effects, was also signed into law--AB 1066. This law removes the overtime exemption for agricultural employers and means that by 2022 employees will be paid overtime after working 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week as opposed to the current 10 hours a day and 60 hours weekly. Agriculture is highly seasonal in our area—during the busy season 10 hour days and 60 hour weeks are the norm, so this will obviously have a huge effect.

There is great uncertainty among growers I know about how things will shake out. As one analyst said, it is an experiment whose effects won't be known until it fully takes effect. I fear that organic farms, which are inherently more labor intensive, will be at a further disadvantage compared to conventional farms. I am also concerned that larger, corporate operations, which can afford the wave of mechanization that is sure to come, will have an even larger advantage over small farms like ours. Already, large conventional growers in our area, through the use of herbicides, chemical thinners and mechanized harvesters, are able to produce crops of lettuce and spinach with very little labor. The exodus of labor intensive crops like strawberries and raspberries for countries like Mexico, where they pay less than \$15 dollars for an entire day is another very real possibility.

What this means for consumers is that prices are certain to increase—there is no way around it. The gap between organic and conventional prices will likely increase as well--whether this will be enough to drive consumers away from organic remains to be seen.

From our perspective we find the goals of both these laws laudable. We have an incredible crew of responsible, hardworking folks who deserve to earn a decent living. Relative to other operations in our area we have always paid well. If we are able to maintain our farm on a sound financial footing, we agree with what these laws are trying to accomplish, but lots of questions remain.

Since few farms can afford to pay overtime with such a high minimum wage as standard practice, one would assume that there will be an increasing demand for labor to fill the void, but where will this come from? Labor is already extremely tight throughout our area. There are signs up everywhere in our valley from growers seeking people to pick their crops. And stories about strawberry or other crops being disced in for

lack of labor to pick them around. Whether an increase in the minimum wage and overtime pay will be enough to draw laborers back into agriculture from other areas remains to be seen.

What also remains to be seen is whether an increase in produce imported from countries with lower labor and environmental standards will mean unfair competition for those who stick it out here. Even small, direct-market, farms like ours are affected by what consumers are paying in mainstream grocery outlets. And, although I am certainly not an expert on international trade, it would have been good to see a concurrent effort to protect markets here from a flood of imported produce that may undo a lot of the good these laws were trying to accomplish.

Veggie Notes, by Molly Jacobsen

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated except **tomatoes** and **winter squash**.

There's been a shift in the weather this week bringing us crisper mornings with slanted sunlight that hints towards a more traditional idea of fall. After the heatwave of last week, we welcome this cool respite along with the beginning of our cool-weather crop harvests that bring to mind the nourishing and cozy meals of autumn. This week you'll be receiving one of two types of winter greens- either **collards** or **scotch kale**. These cruciferous vegetables are closely related and have been cultivated and enjoyed in many cultures since ancient times. These hardy greens are packed full of Vitamins A, K and C, and are a good source of iron and dietary fiber, so it's no wonder they've been such a popular vegetable for so long!

Another close relative to **collards** and **kale** that you'll be receiving this week is a family favorite- **broccoli**! That might sound like a joke, but broccoli is one of the most widely-consumed "leafy greens" in America- and it's not even truly a leaf! The part of the plant that we're most familiar with eating, and which you'll find in your box, is actually the flowering head of the **broccoli** plant. If the heat wave of last week had kept up, these cool-weather plants might have

IN THE BOX

Strawberries

Mixed Tomatoes OR
Mixed Peppers (Padron,
Hungarian Hot Wax,
Corno di Toro)

Red Leaf Lettuce

Broccoli

Collard Greens OR Scotch
Kale

Italian Parsley

Mixed Summer Squash
OR Orange Kabocha
Winter Squash

Bunched Carrots*

Everything is certified organic. Carrots are from Everlasting Garden. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

prematurely bolted, leaving us with stalks of bright yellow blossoms instead of these delicious and tightly clustered buds.

Nothing denotes the transitional nature of fall like overlap of harvests between **summer** and **winter squash**. You'll be receiving one of these two kinds of cucurbits in your box this week. While they are similar in their needs while the plants are growing, the end products from these vines are relatively different. **Summer squash** are harvested young and consumed quickly, while **winter squash** take longer to grow, are harvested at the end of the season, and can often be stored for months if kept in the right conditions. Enjoy the last tastes of summer through a sauté of **summer squash** with **tomatoes** and **peppers**, or embrace the transition into cooler seasons and cook up a hearty **winter squash** stew.

It's the time of year when **strawberry** plants start to slow down, so enjoy these little mouthfuls of summer while they last!

Enjoy your veggies!

NOTE: this is a friendly reminder to refrain from rummaging through other boxes at your CSA pickup site. Please only touch the box you plan to take! Even when there is an either/or item on the list (such as summer OR winter squash), all the boxes at a given pick-up site will have the same item.

Pan Crisped Broccoli with Pancetta, Tomato, and Herbs, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

The broccoli is blanched just enough so it is no longer raw, and then seared in a hot pan to crisp it up a little before being tossed with a sweet and savory mélange of pancetta, diced tomatoes, and herbs.

1½ pounds broccoli, cut into 1 inch florets, stem peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes	2 1/8th inch thick slices pancetta, cut into ½ inch bits with a very sharp knife*
1 small brown or white onion, cut into ¼ inch dice	1½ cups seeded tomatoes, cut into ¼ inch dice
½ cup (loosely filled) parsley leaves, chopped	1 heaping tablespoon fresh marjoram or oregano, chopped
Olive oil as needed	Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon good quality white wine vinegar	

Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Salt it liberally. When it returns to the boil, add the broccoli and cook just until the color brightens and the broccoli loses its raw taste. Tip into a strainer and allow to drain.

While water comes to a boil, heat a fry pan large enough to hold the broccoli in, roughly, a single layer, over medium-high heat. Also, heat a 10-inch sauté pan over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook until crisp all over. Use a slotted spoon to remove pancetta to a paper towel. If there is not much fat in the pan, film the pan bottom with oil, and when it is hot, add the onions. Cook gently until translucent, avoiding browning or burning. Lower heat if necessary. When onions are ready, season with salt and pepper, and add the tomatoes. Cook quickly, just enough for them to start caramelizing, breaking down a little, and heat through. Remove pan from heat.

As soon as the onions hit the pan, film the broccoli pan with oil. When it is just about smoking, add the broccoli and season with salt and pepper. Cook, tossing as needed, to color and crisp various parts of the stems and florets. The object is to heat the broccoli through, and to caramelize it in spots. The broccoli should not be seared or un-seared entirely. When it has heated through and gotten good color here and there, drizzle with the vinegar and a light touch of the olive oil. Toss, then transfer to a bowl or platter.

Now, fold in all the herbs, and the cooked pancetta. Add enough oil to make the mélange a little runny, taste and season if needed. Pour over the broccoli and serve while hot.

Chef's Notes: * You want clean lines on the pancetta for this dish, so use a sharp knife. Also, put the pancetta into the freezer for a few minutes before cooking.

Serves: 4

Kale with Mint and Tomato, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Quite easy, with big flavor. The sweetness of the tomatoes and mint, and the clean aromatic "whiffiness" are a great foil to the earthy kale. This dish would be fine with other kales as well as collards cut into ¼ inch ribbons.

1 bunch Scotch kale, stemmed and torn into bite-sized bits, squeezed, washed and spun	4-5 tomatoes (enough to yield 1½ cups), seeded and cut into ¼ inch dice
1 clove garlic, grated on a ginger grater or minced/pulverized	¼ cup tender mint leaves, finely sliced or torn into small bits
1 tablespoon high quality white-wine vinegar + 1 more	3 tablespoons olive oil + more as needed
1 medium shallot, finely diced	Salt and pepper to taste
Optional- 1-2 tablespoons of capers, rinsed and dried	

In a non-reactive bowl, add the garlic and salt and pepper. Add 1 tablespoon vinegar and allow to macerate 5 minutes. Whisk in the 3 tablespoons olive oil. Add the tomatoes and gently fold into the vinaigrette. Keep near at hand.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high. When hot, film the pan with oil. When oil is shivering, add the shallots and toss constantly to keep from burning. As soon as the shallots turn translucent, add the kale and toss to combine with the shallots. Use tongs to turn everything together, and fold the shallot into the kale. Drizzle with the other tablespoon of vinegar and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper.

As soon as the kale has wilted and is cooked through, but before it turns really soft, it is done. The kale should still maintain some of its original structure and have loft. Transfer to a bowl or platter.

Add the mint to the tomato mixture, and gently fold in. If using capers, add now. Spoon ½ the mixture over the kale and fold in, then top the kale with the rest of the tomato mint mixture. Serve right away. (The cool tomatoes and mint against the hot kale is a great combo.)

Serves: 4

Note: We can't print them all, but Chef Andrew's recipes are always available in full at highgroundorganics.com