



Veggies on Wheels



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1760 Erb's Rd. W., St Agatha – (519) 725-4282 – Fax (519) 725-9968 – E-mail: store@pfenningsorganic.ca – <http://pfenningsorganic.ca/>
"Veggies on Wheels" (edited by Wolfgang W.) appears about once/month. Biweekly or irregular customers may receive the latest issue at a later date.

Dear Pfenning's Food Box Community,

March... and many of you have now chosen to alleviate the seasonal abundance of **root veggies** and tubers, opting instead to give the Local Basket a short break or liven it up by alternating it with the Wild or Blender Basket. Good choices! As you know, we still give preference to local production whenever possible, even in the Wild and Blender Baskets. The closest local item in our **Fruits Baskets** for the moment comes from B.C. – Spartan Apples. Well, at least they're from Canada! A first-time item in our Fruit Baskets this week is **Papaya**, coming from Mexico. Apparently, they are bigger than the ones from Hawaii, another big Papaya producer. Unripe Papaya is used in some areas of the world as a vegetable substitute, but is not recommended as a food when green, unless cooked. Papaya is great for juicing, but also adds zest to salads, salsa, and, of course, is a treat to eat just all by itself. It is abundant in vitamin C and B and is known to aid in digestion due to the papain which helps to digest proteins faster.

Local production on the Pfenning's Farm, for veggies, of course, is still going strong. Below a recent shot from our **Potato line** – with part of the team: Adelia and Angel (from El Salvador), Mi Her (from Laos) and Lee (from Myanmar). This is also the line where all sorts of other round roots get graded, such as Beets, Rutabaga, Turnips, Celeriac and Jerusalem Artichokes. Local Greens, the ones coming from the Hamilton greenhouse, are packed on another line. The quality is exceptional, and it's such a treat to see local greens at this time of the year. We just packed some gorgeous Green Kale and Red Chard which you will soon be seeing in our Baskets.



What about the Lettuce?

Speaking of Greens, you will have noticed that there is currently not as much **Lettuce** in your Baskets. This is a direct result of generally less Lettuce being available at this time of the year, and the higher prices which inspire Almut to find better priced alternatives to put in your Baskets. Some of you may not miss a thing when you don't receive any Lettuce with your delivery. We have quite a few customers who have asked to have Lettuce substituted with another veggie or green. This may in part be due to a preference for local greens, knowing that Lettuces at this time of the year will mostly come from the south, or to minimize all the time and work that goes into preparing a salad (washing, cutting, preparing a dressing). But we have a feeling there is more. We would welcome any feedback from all of you who shun Lettuce as to your reasons. Give us a shout!

Local Greens and Carrots

All you Lettuce eschewers, or possibly all of us, may be happy to hear that, other than our Local Greens from the hothouse, we are continuing to receive regular shipments of Dandelion, Chard, Kale, Broccoli and soon **Carrots** – Juice Carrots too – coming up to us from Florida and Georgia. We are genuinely thrilled to see all this fresh produce coming up to us at this time when roots and tubers are more or less the staples of our sustenance.

Milk Prices

On a bit of a sobering note, the Milk Marketing Board has decided to **adjust its Milk prices**. Admittedly, after quite some time and not in great amounts – about 5-10 cents/litre. This does not (yet) apply to Guernsey Milk. The new prices have been uploaded to our online Catalogue and we will also be adjusting the orders of all of you customers receiving Milk with your deliveries. We will let you know about your new total as we go along.

Maple Syrup

With the weather's ups and downs being perfect for this year's **Maple Syrup** production, we will confidently be dropping off all those jugs and bottles provided by our customers who have ordered fresh bulk Maple Syrup from the farm. Thank you to all of you who are participating. Knowing from past years, you will not be disappointed with this wonderful and well-priced syrup. We have been getting it for many years and would not want to miss it. As soon as it has been tapped and made its way through the sugar shack into your jugs, we will be picking it up and letting you know that your fresh Maple Syrup is on its way.

In the News

Recently, I overheard a CBC newscast stating that while **life expectancy** continues to rise in some countries, notably South Korea and in some European countries (especially Switzerland; and I believe Canada was also one of the fortunate ones), newest statistics have shown it to be **declining** for the first time since 1993 **in the United States**. Rising fatalities from heart disease and stroke, diabetes, drug overdoses, accidents and other conditions were seen as causing the lower life expectancy. Interestingly, it was mainly attributed to the absence of universal health coverage in the U.S. Nutrition was not mentioned as a possible factor that may have a bearing, emphasizing instead the lacking health care coverage as the main cause. Strangely, this brought to mind some other statistics, going back about 2 decades, from Israel. Back then, a doctors' strike subsequently resulted in a sharp drop in death rates, suggesting that there was a connection between the doctors' strike and fewer deaths (<http://tinyurl.com/z2urs59>). Another study lead by American and Canadian scholars (<http://tinyurl.com/hzgmeu2>) and published shortly after in the reputable journal, Social Sciences and Medicine, came to similar results, finding that "when doctors strike, patients stop dying." Makes you wonder whether there may actually be too many doctors in the U.S., something we Canadians don't seem to have to worry about at this time.

Have a Merry month of March,

Wolfgang