



# Veggies on Wheels



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NEWSLETTER OF PFENNING'S ORGANIC FOOD BOX

April 1, 2020

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*"Veggies on Wheels" (edited by Wolfgang W.) generally appears around the beginning of every month.*

## Dear Pfenning's Food Box Community,

### Challenging Times!

**You may be assured that ALL of us at Pfenning's Organic & More are doing very well in body and spirit.**

However, collecting my thoughts to compose this Spring Newsletter took me a while – after a week of unprecedented demand for home delivery, and this extremely busy week in process as you are reading this. Yes, it is spring, and the seedlings have been growing in nearby greenhouses, awaiting the day when they will be picked up for transplanting – not far off.

Many of you know that agricultural operations depend to a large extent on the help of our **migrant worker friends** who come every year. The Pfenning's Farm is fortunate to have a great team of **Jamaicans**, some of whom have been coming faithfully every year for about 15 years. They start arriving in April and everything falls into place. They know what they are doing, are familiar with the routine, the tasks, the machines and equipment, and are ready and more than willing to do what needs to be done on the Farm. Working and preparing the land, transplanting, hoeing, weeding, harvesting, processing, packing, shipping... just a few words hinting at the plethora of activities involved in securing the food that goes out to the community.

This year, the procedure will be a bit different. While they have been exempted from the international travel restrictions, any foreign seasonal agricultural workers coming into the country will face health screening before travel and must isolate for 14 days upon their arrival in Canada. Fortunately they can come, because our food security really depends on this exemption.

While speaking of **food security**, one question that may have been on the mind of many of you is whether we are going to run into food shortages. The panic-buying and hoarding that we could observe in the past few weeks has only momentarily emptied the shelves. But grocers and supermarkets – us included – are set to restock and have not been running into too many serious supply issues. It just takes some time and effort to adapt, but like everyone else, we're on it. There's still **enough food**. Nobody will go hungry.

### Delivery Challenges

Seems like "challenge" is the word of the day. As we hinted above, this and last week's delivery run posed quite the defiance, with our Food Box numbers abruptly more than doubling this week. As many of you may have noticed, this forced us to temporarily no longer accept orders past Friday afternoon – although our regular order deadline is Saturday at noon. Our apologies to many of you who had hoped to get a delivery this week, yet found yourselves cancelled out of your orders. You may consider this the "emergency brake," as we are a **small local family business** offering home delivery within a certain area and not at all equipped to properly handle the unbelievable increase in orders in such a short time. Almut and I also want **Pfenning's Organic & More** to maintain its status as small local business and home delivery service. We have been doing this for a good while – the Store (not counting the years as a farm store on the Pfenning's Farm) since 1993 and Food Box Home Delivery Service since 1998 – and do not want to sacrifice the devotion to our patrons and our customer service in favour of a bigger operation. We believe this would end up being detrimental to the character of our Store and Delivery Service. We would no longer be able to give you the personalized attention and service that we are known for. Pfenning's Organic & More as you know it would not be the same any more.

## Taking on the Challenge

After this “wake-up call,” we have modified our website to allow us to close for online ordering when we have reached our maximum capacity. In that case, we will close down the possibility to place orders. You may log in and navigate around the site, but when you go to check out, you will end up seeing the message:

**Maximum order processing and delivery capacity has been reached.**

**We can not accept any more orders for this week. Please, try ordering again next week.**

**Thank you for understanding.**

We do not know when this may happen. As we are always hearing, this is a fluid situation and can develop quickly and unexpectedly. We CAN advise you to place your orders early, if you know what you need for the following week, as we may have to unexpectedly close down for any new orders at any time.

## A note to regular and Standing Order customers:

We are **fiercely devoted to our regular and Standing Order customers!** If you have a Standing Order of any kind, you may be assured that we will honour it. If you place an order every week on a regular basis (either Custom or Basket with Add-Ons, such as Milk which we pre-order for you), but missed the cut-off because we had to close for ordering, we suggest you place a “default order” as soon as possible, with items that you are sure to need on a regular basis. If you are unable to place an order due to the early shutdown, we will send you your default order. If there are any modifications to this order that you would like to make, just give us a call at the Store – 519-725-4282 – or send us an email.

We have come to fully understand the term so often heard these days: **desperate times require desperate measures.**

While talking about our home deliveries, please, do return your **cardboard boxes** on your next order delivery – just leave them out for us on your delivery day. While there is still some uncertainty about how long the Coronavirus survives on surfaces, studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. Our produce boxes, which we tend to re-use for reasons of practicability and sustainability, sit around for about 2 weeks before they are used again for Food Boxes – time enough for any virus to expire.

If you have a **Standing Order** and are getting your deliveries in the **Plastic Bin**, please, take a moment to **wipe down your Bin** before leaving it out for us on your delivery day, for example with household disinfectants or diluted bleach (1 part bleach and 9 parts water) before. We do our part of cleaning and disinfecting Bins at the Store before packing.

Finally, if you don't live too far away and can manage in any way, **come to the Store to shop!**

## Payments

For payments, we have resorted to **COD** (cash or cheque) or **e-Transfer** only. We are asking all our regular customers to pay with these methods going forward. Credit card transactions have become very time-consuming, cumbersome and costly for us and we are moving away from them. If you have not yet made the jump to e-Transfer or COD, we will be contacting you to push the point. Thank you for your consideration!

**Quick word on cash:** The Bank of Canada recently urged retailers to continue accepting cash to ensure people have access to the goods and services they need. It maintains that the risks posed from handling bank notes (cash) are no greater than those posed by touching other common surfaces, such as doorknobs, kitchen counters and handrails. "Refusing cash could put an undue burden on people who depend on cash as a means of payment," it said. The World Health Organization said there is no evidence that cash is transmitting the novel coronavirus (read the whole article here: <https://tinyurl.com/ughnvfq>).

I can just hear thousands of Mennonites heaving a collective a sigh of relief!

**Have a happy, healthy and stress-free spring,**

**Wolfgang**