



# Veggies on Wheels



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"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,

So much for the balmy spring we were all hoping for. Not long ago, still in the midst of our honest winter, my brother-in-law, Wolfgang Pfenning, an avid ex hobby pilot with a keen interest in meteorological happenings, disclosed the long-range weather forecast. According to his findings, we would have to contend with not only a very hesitant and gradual end of the prolonged icy weather, but a drawn-out cool spring. While we always hope that such weather predictions turn out to be wrong, I have made a point of taking Wolfgang's predictions more seriously. After all, he IS the farmer and, on top of the genetic predisposition he is likely endowed with, has probably developed an unmistakable instinct for the weather and its whims. With that out of the way, the unconfirmed forecast calls for a cool and wet summer. Probably just being overly pessimistic...

With the traditional start to the planting season being set for May 1<sup>st</sup>, everyone on and around the Farm keeps a close watch on the temperature once April rolls around – with a mere four weeks left for the thermometer to finally display only positive degrees. Already, we have been getting down to the very bare essentials left in our warehouses and storage areas. Just the other day, we were going through the coolers and stores, taking stock, to realize that we have only potatoes, black radish, red beets and onions left in storage. The warehouse does still have some packaged stock of rutabaga, celery root and carrots from either Quebec or down south packaged by us under the Pfenning's label. Greens, however, are mostly from California where they are still dealing with very dry conditions, which has its bearing on the price. Thankfully, we are now seeing more and more local greenhouse production coming in: among others basil, chives, cilantro, dill, parsley, arugula, lettuces, baby spinach and even grape tomatoes. Of course, these are still costly, but they are the forerunners of the looming and long-awaited growing season which is set to start in just about four weeks.

### Aimers Organic Seeds

Anyone whose dormant planting frenzy may be on the verge of awakening will be interested in learning that we have **Aimers Organic Garden Seeds** (from the Ontario Seed Co.) available again. You can find the whole selection in our online Catalogue in the **Home** section – or give us a call at the Store at 519-725-4282 for more information.

### Meaghan on Baby Leave

Last Friday, **Meaghan**, whom many of you will know without even being aware



of it from all the Custom Boxes she packs for you, had her last day at Pfenning's Organic & More. Meaghan is about to have her first baby and will be on leave for a while on this new adventure. We all wish her the very best and are looking forward to hearing back soon from Meaghan!





## Sally Coming In

With Meaghan on maternity leave, we welcome **Sally** from Baden to the Store. She will be assuming Meaghan's responsibilities which encompass looking after the dairy and supplement departments and – of course – packing Food Boxes. You may also know Sally indirectly if you are subscribed to Almut's Store News and Specials Newsletter. Sally does all the graphics and touch-up work for Almut's Newsletter. Really looking forward to having you in the Store, Sally!

## Milk Price Adjustment

Much as we detest having to be the bearers of bad news, we need to pass on the decision by the **Dairy Farmers of Ontario** (formerly Milk Marketing Board) to raise their milk prices just in time for spring. As always, this step is being justified with overall rising production costs. Although the increase is not overly significant, you will surely notice it

when surfing our Catalogue or looking at your Food Box bill. Rest assured that this decision affects not only organic but conventional milk just the same. While it is cheaper than milk, I still don't think many will switch over to pop, much as this move would appeal to some teenagers out there.

## Packaging Considerations

Thanks to some of our customers' hints and requests, we have been looking into packaging your Food Boxes while at the same time using as little waste, especially plastic, as possible. We are open for any suggestions, but encourage you to keep in mind that we also strive to bring you everything as fresh as possible, which is quite the challenge without using at least a minimum of packaging.

In the meantime, Liz from the Brantford area has also urged us to take up the garbage gauntlet. Liz, who gets a weekly delivery for herself and her family, is on the Landfill Committee in the Brant rural area, which has inspired her to find solutions for the landfill and make garbage a commodity. Some of her suggestions are to use more paper for packaging, which we have tried in some cases with varying, not overly promising results (soggy paper on your veggies). Or ship certain items, such as beets, cabbage and apples, loose in the box. We already do this in most cases, although apples often already come in plastic bags, so shipping them loose would still leave us with the plastic and not really cut down on its use. Obviously, the challenge for us – and all shoppers, really – when buying from the suppliers would be to choose produce packaged with as little plastic and as sustainably as possible. Buying bigger amounts of anything and in bulk definitely cuts down on packaging, but requires you to have room and adequate storage conditions.

## Zero Waste Solution – Recycle and Reuse

The "garbage gauntlet" has been thrown down and we are all urged to look into ways how we can minimize the use of plastic and produce less waste. In the meantime, Liz is inviting us to a talk by **Paul Connett**, author of "**The Zero Waste Solution**" on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 2 p.m. at the Mount Pleasant Community Centre. Although this talk on recycling and reuse, hosted by the Brant Zero Waste Committee and the Scotland Oakland Wellbeing Team, will be out of the way for most of us, all our customers in **Brantford** and area may be interested in attending. If you would like some more information, you can get back to us and we can hook you up with Liz.

**Blessed and Happy Easter to all,**

**Wolfgang**

