

Field Walk...

A couple weeks ago I was home for lunch when a sudden thunderstorm drenched our house. It was amazing and refreshing. And much needed. I biked the mile to the farm, though, and nothing. Hardly a drop of rain touched the farm, maybe sprinkles. Amazing. Such is the finicky nature of a thunderstorm.

It goes without saying that plants need water. Like us, plants are about 70% or more water. But, it's been about three weeks since the farm has seen more than sprinkles.

Water concerns have plagued farmers since farming began and in fact have been the driving force in shaping agriculture as we know it today. Drive west of here, and then further west, out across the plains, and you'll cross a very important invisible line cutting across the continent north to south. This is the line in the Great Plains dividing the half of the country that receives at least 20 inches of rain a year on average (the East) and that which doesn't (the West, with the exception of the Northwest). This is the dividing line between farming and ranching, between corn and cows.

In Illinois, we're deep in the safe zone, on average. However, this year we're hovering around that line. We're in the middle of another dry year and plants don't think much of averages. Of course, over the millennia, farmers have developed one "tool" that makes it all better despite the elements: irrigation. Add water to an otherwise dry soil, and you've got perfect weather. Sun, water, beautiful days. Irrigation has shaped farming in this country, especially the arid west, and most especially California. In order to produce crops, water works wonders.

At the garden, we're still in the process of completing an irrigation system. You may notice a new large storage tank in the East Field near the entrance. This will play a big role in drip irrigation for that half of the farm. Irrigation must be used with great care, however. Lands that are irrigated heavily for too long become degraded by the unnatural pressures of production. We must take care to use irrigation precisely and carefully in order to keep the farm whole and healthy. That, and hope for rain...

Kris

What's in Your Share

Fresh Onion

Cucumbers

Summer Squash

Turnips

Scallions

Lettuce

Salad Mix

Pick-your-own Cherry Tomatoes and Green Beans

What's For Dinner:

Cool Rice and Cucumber Salad

1½ cups white rice

Salt

1-3 Cucumbers, peeled and chopped

½ cup finely chopped parsley

3 tablespoons chopped dill

2 tablespoons chopped mint

¼ cup finely sliced scallions, incl. greens

¼ cup white wine vinegar

3 tablespoons olive oil

½ cup yogurt

Green lettuce leaves

1. Boil rice (with 2 tspn. salt) in 2 quarts water. Combine cucumbers and herbs.

2. Combine scallions, vinegar, oil and ¼ tspn salt.

3. When rice is done, drain excess water and put into bowl with cucumbers. Add vinegar dressing and yogurt. Toss gently.

4. Serve with green lettuce leaves as garnish

Volunteer Opportunities:

Next Workday is Saturday, July 22, 8 to 11... Any help works wonders!

We also need extra help with a few weeding "emergencies", especially in sweet potatoes and strawberries, so if you have extra time, even a single hour goes a long way...

New Crops on the way...

Potatoes, carrots, tomatoes...
peppers... melons... all right around
the corner...

Summer is here!