



## THE ALLEGED FARM NEWS

### 31 August 2006

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Last week while I was away my farmworkers performed an agricultural miracle. They took 124 pounds of carrots and divided them evenly into 120 bags weighing 1.75 pounds apiece. For those of you without a calculator handy, I will just point out that makes for some odd math. Apparently in the course of placing the carrots into bags Andrea, Greg and Kari increased the crop's weight by roughly 50%. It is possible, of course, that they weighed the carrots incorrectly before or after bagging—or both, for that matter. In fact, come to think of it, it is entirely possible that they started with 210 pounds of carrots and ended up with 124, which while notable would prove considerably less useful to me.

Assuming, though, that they did in fact cause the carrots to multiply magically—and I have no reason to doubt their story—I cannot help wondering how reliably they can perform this trick and whether or not they can do it with other produce. Not that it isn't impressive with carrots, but we don't actually need extra carrots. That's one crop that has done reasonably well this year. We can get all the carrots we need using a plain old pitchfork, a few plastic tubs and the barrel washer. Of course, if I had known they could do this before I planted all those beds of carrots I could have put in fewer and cut down considerably on the weeding. But it's too late now. I suppose we could dig fewer, give the extra ones to Community Action. But we will almost certainly have enough to give them lots again this year without performing any miracles.

If my workers are going to go around increasing the size of the harvest I would rather they worked on crops we need more of, crops we cannot have too much of or crops that are just too tedious to pick in large quantities. For instance, I would like to see them turn a small pile of spinach into enough for everyone in the CSA. Of course, I would have to supply them with the small pile of spinach first, which apparently will take a miracle itself. I keep planting it. It keeps coming up and then dying (the wet weather did not help). But if I only needed to grow a few plants in order for Andrea, Greg and Kari to fill up 120 bags I am pretty certain I could do that.

I would not mind seeing them increase the number of melons either. As you can see, we did manage to get some this year. But I would be happy to have more. It would be particularly useful if they could identify the tastiest ones (identify them, that is, without having to cut them open and eat them) and make more of those. Actually, there is any easy way to tell which of the melons out in the field taste the best. Just look for the ones the voles have started to eat. Voles have an uncanny ability to tell the tasty melons from the bland ones. Perhaps they would be willing to share their method with my workers. Or perhaps I should negotiate directly with them, offering them fair compensation for going around the melon patch marking (but not nibbling on) the good melons with tiny cans of spray paint.

There's no question, though, that everyone on the farm would be especially thrilled if my three workers could conjure up more green beans. We have what I would consider a notably robust looking bed of beans producing right now. I offer this estimation based on close observation, which I carried out on Tuesday for a few hours while we were picking from these plants. I can vouch for the beans too, based not merely on observation, but also

**This week's share: Beans, Carrots, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Lettuce, Melon, Mizuna, Onion, Peppers, Hot pepper, Squash, Tomatoes, Dill**

on frequent taste tests (don't worry, when I tried a bean I ate the whole thing; you won't find any nibbled ones in your bag). What we don't have, despite all that time picking, is a lot of beans. Well, it is a lot compared to what most people have. But it would be nice to have a lot more, both because it would make the stoop labor feel more worthwhile and because they taste particularly good (if, in any event, you make sure not to overcook them; anyone caught boiling them for more than four minutes may not be allowed to have any more). And it would be especially nice to have a lot more without having to pick them, which is why I would be delighted if my workers could take the two tubs we picked and just turn them into three.

But why settle for a mere 50% increase? I hate to sound greedy, but anyone who has had to pick a 200 foot bed of beans will understand why I would like someone to turn two tubs of beans into ten. I am afraid, though, that may be beyond my workers' ability. Which is why I thought it might be a good idea to bring in someone with a proven record of impressive food multiplication. In other words, I am hoping to hire Jesus as a farm worker. I know he has done most of his work with bread and fish, but I figure beans are well within his powers.

I recognize the notion of having Jesus on the farm raises the question central to our form of government: what would Jesus do? Well, mostly picking, prepping and packing, but there would be some field work too. Actually, if he really brought his power to bear on our crops there would be a whole lot less picking, which would give us a lot more time for all the chores left undone when we get stuck in the bean patch.

I am afraid, however, that Jesus may not be available. In which case I need someone who can turn two workers into three (or ten). Sadly, Greg is going back to college next week (I have never understood my workers' strange compulsion to get an education), which means Andrea, Kari and I will have to take on these beans without his help. So if you happen to know someone (even someone who is not the Messiah) looking to do farm work for the next two months, have them call me—and please do not mention anything about bean picking when you tell them about the job.

Fruit share: Next week there will be tree fruit from Borden's Orchard. They could not get together enough this week, but promise they will have sufficient quantities of pears, plums and apples in the coming weeks.

**Do not forget that the next work day is on Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, starting at noon.**