

Cyrenians Farm Winter Newsletter 2011.

2010 has been a good year on the Cyrenians farm and 2011 should be even better...

Growing Food

January is traditionally the time for farmers, gardeners and other green fingered enthusiasts to take stock, mend equipment, consolidate supplies and generally prepare for the coming season... This is exactly what we have been doing here at the farm. We had one polytunnel which collapsed under the weight of the snow which has been packed away, all of the mess which generally builds up over a growing season has been tidied away, other polytunnels have been scheduled for repair, propagating equipment has been refurbished compost sourced and seeds bought. To put it bluntly we are raring to go and just waiting for a break in the weather. Especially so we can finish ploughing, harrowing and preparing the ground for planting.



The fact we are waiting to plough brings me onto, what is without a doubt, the single most exciting thing which has happened to the farm this year so far - the arrival of our lovely new John Deere tractor and its associated equipment. The tractor has been gifted to us by a philanthropist who wishes to remain anonymous but I would very much like to thank them for the amazingly generous donation. Over the past five years we have streamlined and developed the farm to the point where we are ready to move our vegetable production to a higher level. For this we really needed to get some machinery to speed up the weed management and soil preparation processes. This tractor will give us the means to do so. After all, even the most diligent and keen trainee team can't manage a whole 8 acres with hand tools. I expect Capability Brown would have insisted on a team of 20 with scythes and shears on a plot that size.

Crops we are growing this year:

Look forward to: salads (including rocket, amaranth, oak leaf lettuce, baby leaf spinach, herbs, calendula and nasturtium), parsnips, carrots, beetroot, kale, sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, garlic, onions, pumpkins, courgettes, tomatoes, potatoes, broad beans, purple mange tout, runner beans, rhubarb, raspberries, strawberries and more. We will have even more of our amazing eggs, jams, chutneys and possibly some new products such as smoked garlic plaits and gifts of gardening essentials.



If you don't have the time to be a Champion you can still find our produce at retailers such as [Real Foods](#), [Earthy](#) and [Grow Wild](#) we will also be attending [Balerno Farmers Market](#) from May onwards.

Growing Opportunities

The following article was written by one of the farm Community residents Richard Coxon. Richard has been at the farm for over year and his article shows something of the way the Farm Enterprise Benefits residents of the Cyrenians communities.



My article for the newsletter

The farm is a Social Enterprise located just outside of Edinburgh. On the farm we have over 250 orchard trees where we grow plums and apples. We have 2 arks and 3 sheds where the chickens live - everyone helps to look after them. We also make our own jam which is very popular to buy.

I would also like to mention Liam who is one of the farm volunteers and who is a great cook. Liam's dog Treacle loves running around the farm and jumping in to the pond but dose not love the cats.

Christmas

Christmas is a daunting time for some people rushing about but don't worry you will love next Christmas after you have read this =].

Well the day had come – it's Christmaaaaaaaas I shouted at the top of my voice! I went in to the dining room and there was a Christmas tree as bright as a night star. We opened our presents and shouted AMAZING! Soon it was time for dinner and those lovely Cyrenians sprouts with butter - great. Later that night were outside building snowmen what a great day and to end it we had a nice brew and pies.

Richard Coxon

(I am a resident at the farm [community](#). I like working with the chickens and gathering the eggs.)

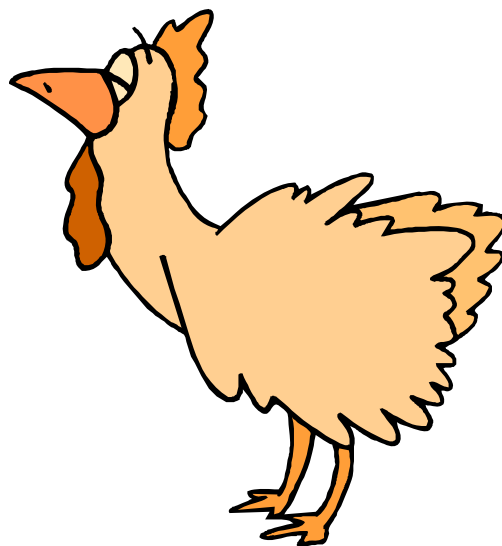


We will have a great team on placement yet again via the future jobs fund. Alan, Stuart, Catlin, Dean and Nicky bring different skills and abilities to help us through the coming season, they will be helped along by our day volunteer team - some of the old team (Ian, Euan and Liam) will be joined by Sarah and David.

Other Business

We're looking forward to teams from BAA, Urban Roots (Glasgow) and Common Purpose visiting the farm soon. Gillian Tinson from Edinburgh Airport has organised a team to come to the farm to fix one of our polytunnels. Urban Roots, which is a gardening project charity, are bringing a team to help prune some trees in our orchard and Common Purpose are coming with a team to spend the day and look at things from a different perspective.

As part of the gear up to spring we have just ordered fifty new chickens. This means that some of the older birds will be ready to retire from their jobs in commercial egg production. We are keen to ensure that they enjoy a prolonged and happy life so for a small sum of £5 each we are selling them on. They currently produce about three eggs per week each which is not enough to be commercially valuable to us but will provide the best eggs you can get for your Sunday breakfast. If you would like a few birds or if you know someone who would then contact the farm staff (0131 333 5202 or rob@cyrenians.org.uk)



We are, as always, currently looking for 'Farm day Volunteers' to help with administration, deliveries and general horticulture call Tom or Rob (0131 333 5202) to find out more about our excellent opportunities for day volunteers.

We are also looking for 'Farm Champions'. A farm champion is someone in a busy office who has 30 minutes a week to help us organise sales. The idea is that we let you know every week through the seasons what we have for sale by sending an email. You circulate the email through your office, you take orders from your friends and colleagues, and collect the cash and we deliver the goods to you to pass onto the rest of your team in exchange for the money. We think this is the simplest way to get the best food from the farm to you as fresh as possible. It means that at least one day a week you can leave work with some wonderful ingredients for supper without having to negotiate a busy supermarket. If you are interested in this simple approach give us a call at the farm (0131 333 5202) and we'll let you know when we are passing your office and when we could deliver. We have had great success with this in several offices in town including HBOS and Anderson Strathearn. It'd be wise to contact us soon for this; we are going to have a busy year this year so you want to get your name on the list before the rush.

WE WILL BE OFFERING DISCOUNTS AND INCENTIVES TO FARM CHAMPIONS THIS YEAR TO REWARD ALL YOUR HARD WORK.

Special Thanks

The past twelve months have been good for us but may not have been so without the huge support we have had from the following customers, funders and backers:

SCVO, West Lothian Council, SAC (Special thanks to Gavin Dick), SOPA (especially Debs Roberts), Real foods, Earthy, Henderson's, Grow Wild, BSKyB, HBOS, RBS, the Blackford Trust, State Street Bank, JP Morgan, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Wolfson Microelectronics, Standard Life (special thanks to Carol Mackay), Bartlett's, BAA, Aviagen, Kirknewton Development Trust, Tamar Organics and Balerno Development Trust.

Thanks to all our farm champions, all the staff from other Cyrenians services and all our other supporters – too many to mention.

Obrigado!

Gracias

Bedankt

THANK YOU