



one potato two

News from the Fields of Driftless Organics

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Week #13! We hope everyone is doing well and enjoying their boxes. All is well on the farm.

FDA OKs Irradiation of Lettuce, Spinach

Reprinted from *The Washington Post* (8/22/08)

Food producers can now use radiation to kill bacteria on fresh spinach and iceberg lettuce because of a new Food and Drug Administration ruling meant to help head off outbreaks of foodborne illness.

This is the first time the agency has allowed produce to be irradiated as a health precaution. Tiny doses of radiation already are used to kill pests on some fruits and vegetables. But the process is most often used on meat -- especially *E. coli* susceptible ground beef -- and some spices. The food is exposed to just enough radiation to kill off most, though not

necessarily all, harmful germs. For instance, the process won't rid the produce of foodborne viruses.

"The ruling is basically giving processors, giving those who deal with providing fresh or minimally processed spinach or lettuce to consumers, an additional tool, another technology to reduce the level of microorganisms that are of concern," said Laura Tarantino, director of the FDA's Office of Food Additive Safety.

The decision, effective today, comes nine years after a coalition composed mostly of food industry groups first petitioned the FDA to expand the number of products that could be irradiated. The original petition had sought to make nearly all foods, from processed grains to seafood, approved for the process.

But in 2006, after an *E. coli* outbreak traced back to spinach left hundreds ill and three dead, the petitioners went back to the FDA asking the agency to look specifically at iceberg lettuce and spinach.



the box!

Arugula/Red Mustard
Canteloupe or Muskmelon
Chard or
Red/GreenLeaf Lettuce
Edamame
Jalapeno Peppers
Mixed Potatoes
Raspberries
Red Slicer Tomatoes
Roma Tomatoes
Sungold Tomatoes
Tomatillos
Sweet Pepper Mix
Yellow Onion

BONUS ITEM: Basil and
Chitelpin Peppers

The FDA is still examining the other foods listed in the original petition.

Bacteria such as *E. coli* and salmonella can infect produce in a number of ways, including when animal waste makes its way into a farm's water supply, when processing equipment becomes infected or when spread by poor sanitation. Tarantino said that irradiation is not a silver bullet for the problem, and that producers still need sound sanitation practices.

Some health safety organizations questioned the FDA's decision, saying it would give producers a free pass to ignore basic issues.

"Having irradiation of foods provides a disincentive for animal factories and other food production facilities to clean up their act," said Bill Freese, science policy analyst with the Center for Food Safety, a nonprofit consumer organization that monitors industrial agricultural practices.

YOUR BOX!

ARUGULA/RED MUSTARD - yea for more arugula to add some zip to your salads or sandwiches! Besides being peppery & delicious, arugula is high in potassium & vitamin C. Makes an interesting pesto on it's own or with basil.

CANTELOUPE or MUSKMELON - One of Mike's favorite treats is half of one of these filled with vanilla ice cream.

CHARD or Red or Green Leaf LETTUCE - A slightly odd either/or but alas, not much lettuce until next planting comes in. Nonetheless, chard is great steamed with some butter and salt.

CILANTRO - we simply had to have cilantro for this box as it is the essential herb for all things salsa! Use it to make pico de gallo with red tomatoes or salsa verde with the tomatillos (recipes below).

EDAMAME - if you haven't had edamame before, you are in for a treat! Just boil up these edible soybeans, husks and all, for about 7-10 minutes. Drain, and rinse with cold water to cool. Then salt the heck out of them. Now, you pop the beans out of the pod and into your mouth!

JALAPENO PEPPERS - one of the mildest of hot chiles, jalapenos are a standard addition to many salsas, including both

recipes in this newsletter. The heat (capsaicin) is mostly contained in the seeds & white ribs, so cut these out if you're sensitive to spiciness. Wear gloves or be very careful if you don't want burning fingers.

RASPBERRIES - Take that muskmelon with ice cream and top it with berries! YUM!

MIXED POTATOES - Parboil or lightly steam them & then fry 'em up with garlic & herbs for a breakfast with scrambled eggs!!

ROMA TOMATOES - Make up some salsa (cooked or fresh), soup, or spaghetti sauce! Romas are the best tomato to cook with as they have less juice & seeds than slicers.

SUNGOLD TOMATOES - If you have a dehydrator, either of these are a snap to turn into very sweet, faux sun-dried tomatoes - simply cut them in half the long way (through the stem end) & place them cut side up on the tray & dehydrate until dry (you can also do this in a warm oven).

SWEET PEPPER MIX - There's a jumble of mini sweets swimming around in your box (we're trying to cut down on the pints), plus a pimiento and chocolate. All are sweet, except the Jalapenos, that are ALSO floating about.

YELLOW ONION - a perfect oniony onion for salsas.

ZUCCHINI - zukes are perfect veggies for grilled shish-kabobs! Beautiful on a skewer alternated with sweet onion & colored peppers - (add some mushrooms & meat if you eat it!).

BONUS: BASIL - Hope you're not sick of it yet. Make a big batch of last weeks creamy tomato basil soup & freeze it if you've got the time.

BONUS: WATCH OUT - these little red fire-balls are not for wussies. They pack a mean hot punch (hotter than habeneros!). Be careful. Wear gloves when chopping or your fingers will burn. Add one to some salsa if you dare, or chili or your favorite Mexican or Tex-Mex dish. So fascinating - Chiltepins, which grow wild all over northern Mexico & Texas, are thought to be the mother of all hot chiles - the oldest variety that all others have descended from.

PICO de GALLO (fresh tomato salsa)

- 2 medium slicer tomatoes or
- 4 roma tomatoes
- 1/2 medium yellow onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 - 3 jalapeno peppers, finely chopped (seeds removed if you don't like it hot)
- 3 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 1 lime, juiced
- salt to taste

Mix all ingredients & let sit for an hour for flavors to marry.

SALSA VERDE (green tomatillo salsa)

- 1 lb. tomatillos, hulls & stems removed
- 1 medium yellow onion, quartered
- 2-3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 3-6 jalapeno peppers, stems removed & cut in half the lengthwise (remove seeds if you don't like heat)
- 1/4 c. cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 lime, juiced (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. salt

Roast tomatillos, quartered onion, whole cloves of garlic, & halved jalapenos in baking pan at 450 degrees for 6-8 minutes, stirring once or twice, until tomatillos are soft & everything is starting to char. (You can do this in tin-foil on the grill if you've got the grill going, too.) Cool roasted veggies a bit & throw them, the cilantro, & salt in a food processor & pulse until smooth. Stores in fridge for about a week. Freezes super well.