

## **FLOODING HAS US LANDLOCKED!**

Greetings - We are reporting from north central Iowa.

Our immediate problem is flooding that has us landlocked. Living adjacent to a wetland, the road and our lane are flooded, cutting off access either direction. Monday morning we had access one direction. By noon the water has risen and we had to ferry folks in and out of the farm by kayak. We have vegetable crop harvested for member delivery - fully expecting to be able to get out the one direction, but now we are waiting. It does look like a tiny window may allow us an overland route, but with DM as our target destination, we think we'd be wise to hold off as they deal with pending water levels. And then more rain is predicted which may shut our travel route for a day or so more. This is a holding pattern issue. More pressing is the same general issue others are reporting - the whole season impact of this weather. Repeated wet conditions, cooler start to this season are all contributing to slow and uneven development of crops. Now the fields are not easy to get into and the weeds are taking advantage of this opportunity.

A posting Gary forwarded this morning from Hardin County commented on disaster status. Might be helpful to educate us a bit - what characteristics are involved in such declaration. I presume conventional farmers are anticipating government insurance to come through, but many sustainable farmers have a different situation.

Communication with farm members is important right now. Our high water level imparts static to our line which hinders internet access. We were able to send someone off the farm to take advantage of library high speed access. The couple of responses we have received indicate a lot of support.

Chicken sales have been brisk as we've started this summer and now we've just heard that Greene, IA - where the chickens are processed - has had flooding. We're wondering if this might impact butchering plans there.

Here we are amidst growing demand for local food and we are struggling to pull off a decent crop. One of the farmers markets we sell at is in Mason City which has been dealing with significant water problems. But our vendors were planning on going and

the one vendor from Mason thought it would be a good thing to have the market go forward. Restaurants have been shut down and grocers are watching their supplies dwindle. The spirit of community support - so evident in times of crises - can be expressed in our food system. And...local comes through when distant based food systems have been interrupted.

I think this is a very teachable moment. I could see an interesting story come out of this that could make a good feature in Growing for Market newsletter - experiences and insights from the summer of 2008.

I really appreciate that Gary/the PFI staff support by asking for stories and then the stories and perspective that have come in. It's helpful to hear how others are thinking about the situation - both the production strategies they are pursuing to make the best of a tough situation and the longer range, bigger picture discussions. I would appreciate hearing more about how CSA growers are thinking about this season with their members. We just have not dealt with such production problems as we are having this season.

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