

EXCERPTS FROM "A NOTE FROM THE FARMER"

BY MICHAEL AHLERT

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Dear CSA members,

The sun finally came out this past week and the farmer and his wife breathed a sigh of relief. It has been a long wet slog the last two months and we have been feeling rather water logged. I imagine many of you have felt the same way. Well, if you have, its justified!! Here are a few statistics to explain that spongy feeling you might have been having.

August:

Sunny days: 8

Cloudy days: 23 (of which rain fell on all of them)

Monthly total rainfall: 8.65 inches (making August the 6th wettest in recorded weather history for this area.)

Sounds pretty wet right? Maybe your toes are starting to feel a little wrinkly.

Now look at **September:**

Sunny days: 4

Cloudy days: 26 (of which rain fell all but two)

Monthly total rain fall: 15.9 inches (making September the wettest month **EVER** in recorded weather history for this area!!)

So here we are in October the elusive golden orb has begun to appear in the sky again and we all have a chance to take off our socks and tend to our trench foot. Our feet no doubt will heal, not so for many of our crops. Two months of unprecedented rain with little sun in between to dry things out has put some farmers out of business. Saturated low flat fields have seen crops wither and fail. Pumpkins, tomatoes, broccoli, root vegetables have rotted all around the region. Some flat land farmers near rivers and streams have lost nearly everything.

Fortunately for us, our elevation and shaley soil have spared us the worst of the effects of the weather. It has not however been without its costs. Less than two weeks of sun over two months is not enough to keep things growing abundantly and 25 inches of rain in the same period is enough to wash many of the nutrients out of a stony, well drained soil like ours. Needless to say nothing is growing very fast (or

in some cases at all). We have had some things rot, like much of our winter squash crop, but more serious is the number of crops that are small, late and not ready for harvest. It has been a hard frustrating second half to a season that started off fairly bright.

The purpose of this letter however, is not to complain. We accept what we are granted, try to adapt and recognize our limitations. Farming is effective at teaching limitations ... Farming is ever a lesson in patience and humility. Try as we might we can't make everything turn out the way we want. At times fewer things turn out than do not. Perhaps life as a whole is more like that than we wish to admit. So, we continue to endeavor, we continue to strive, and we continue to learn to accept what comes. We accept, not as helpless victims, but as participants in this grand process. Two months of clouds and rain will cause a farmer to wax philosophic (what else can one do when the fields are full of mud). This is what we believe, however: we're not in charge; rather meant to learn and serve as best we can. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and your families over this past year. It is a blessing to us.

Kind Regards,
Farmer Mike

**...AND WHAT THIS HAS TO DO WITH YOGA
BY CHRISTINE (CITRINĪ) WARE, Ph.D., E-RYT**

Just as farming teaches us about limitations, patience, and humility, so does yoga. We have all certainly learned about, adapted to, and recognized our limitations on the mat. Yoga also teaches us to "accept what we are granted" while simultaneously moving in the direction in which we'd like to move - whether in a posture, in a practice, or on our spiritual path. We can strive and strive and strive for a certain posture or a calm mind, yet "try as we might," we may not be able to achieve this through striving or through effort. It is interesting that in farming, as in yoga, as in life, there is a duality in continuing to strive and to bring effort toward our endeavors, while also accepting that over which we do not have control, surrendering and trusting that these efforts will be fruitful and continuing to "learn to accept what comes." It is as simple and as mysterious as going to one's edge in Leg Stretch, aiming to expand the posterior thigh and bring the leg toward the torso, to find that the stretch deepens only when one relaxes, releases, and fully surrenders into it (body-breath-mind) AND when the time has come for this deepening. We are both participants AND we must relinquish the illusion of control. We are both active agents AND unable to direct the ultimate outcome of our efforts. We are "not in charge" AND we contribute what we can. We must both take care of our individual (and family) needs AND trust that we will be generally

"taken care of," for there is truly so much that we cannot take care of ourselves (such as which crops grow in a given year and what food will be available). The discipline of regularly encountering oneself on (and off) the yoga mat is tapas, meaning sustained effort (or heat). Such lessons take self-inquiry, willingness to see, patience and humility. Kaliji has said that with this sustained effort, we move from effort to effortless effort to effortlessness. In the process, we "serve as best we can," cultivate gratitude, and learn to balance our sense of agency with surrendering that over which we have no power. Through experiencing the duality of self and other, we experience connection with one another and with all existence. Through experiencing the duality of effort and surrender, we ultimately experience union with That Which Is.

~ Hari Om Tat Sat ~



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