



**The Farm at Miller's Crossing**  
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Week of August 18th 2008 [farmatmillerscrossing.com](http://farmatmillerscrossing.com)



**The tomatoes are in!!!**

## FROM THE FARMERS...

This season will definitely be remembered as a wet one. We have had more frequent heavy rains this year than any in recent memory. Heavy thunderstorms, huge lightning strikes and damaging hail have been a common occurrence in 2008.

For the most part, we have made it through these storms. One of our biggest concerns has been the tomato crop. Everyone loves a fresh ripe tomato, but tomatoes do not like lots of rain. We have always grown a lot of tomatoes—beefsteaks, heirlooms, and cherries. In a hot and dry year, providing you irrigate, tomatoes flourish. 2008 has not been hot or dry, yet we are hoping that we can defy the weather and still have a decent crop.

Though August brings tomatoes to our plates, the crop begins back in the winter. First we comb through seed catalogs to select the best varieties. Generally we grow about ten different types, and every year add or subtract some based on new and interesting varieties. In early March we plant the seeds. Protected and warm, they grow in the greenhouse until early May. Once the threat of frost has passed we “harden-off” the plants

outdoors in the wind and cooler temperatures. Then these plants are transplanted onto mulched beds in the field, with drip irrigation underneath.

As the tomatoes grow, they need vertical support to keep the growing fruit off the ground. This is done by driving steel stakes into the ground every third plant and weaving trellis twine through the stakes to hold the tomatoes up off the ground. Each week as the tomatoes grow taller, we add a line of trellised twine to support the new growth.

By the time the first tomatoes are ready to pick, we have quite a bit invested in the crop. In a wet and somewhat chilly year, there is always the possibility that the income from the tomatoes will not even cover the cost of growing it. However, with cooperating weather and high yields, tomatoes can be one of our best crops in financial terms.

Making a living farming is a gamble. Though we try to control as much as possible with planning and smart equipment purchases...the weather is the ultimate factor for many crops, especially tomatoes. This week's hot and dry forecast will help us to re-coup our investment, but more importantly, allow us to deliver these seasonal delicacies to you!

Chris & Katie



**Tomato plants trellised & staked**