



# The Farm at Miller's Crossing

Week of June 22nd 2009

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## WANTED



sun to speak of, the crops have really slowed down. Instead of early harvest dates, we expect things to be right on track with a normal harvest year.

Maybe this is just nature's way of making everything right again?

As we sit and wait for the sun to re-emerge, we have also been battling our local wild life population. First, in the early spring our family sized chicken flock was decimated by a red fox.

Our early cabbage crop was grazed down heavily by two woodchucks, both of whom were trapped and escorted far off the farm (at least 5 miles.) We are currently experiencing lots of damage to our second planting of cucumbers and our newly planted sweet potatoes. Thanks to mid day hunt last Saturday by a friend (woodchucks are daytime feeders, deer prefer the cover of night) there is one less woodchuck in the hedgerow, but at least one more still there.

After direct seeding over acre of wintersquash and covering with poly cloth to promote germination, some little critter (field mouse or vole, or shrew, went under the cloth and proceeded to eat a row or two's worth.

And finally, our constant foes the deer; First they yanked out about 300 beet transplants, followed by eating the hearts of 200 romaine heads. There continues to be damage here and there throughout our lettuce crops, strawberries, and beets.

So what do we do, you ask? First you plant a lot more than you really need to accommodate some of the losses. Second, when possible we fence the crop from the deer, but woodchucks need to be trapped or shot. If the deer persist and fencing is not working, hunting the deer at night with DEC nuisance permits is the last option.

There is nothing more frustrating than losing a crop to bad weather, except losing a crop to your wildlife population. There is always some give and take when you're working with nature, and we always do end up giving lots of things out to the critters and to the elements. However, when the damages become unbearable, with some calculated strikes back at the problems we can hold off the losses long enough to have something to harvest for all of you! Enjoy the food, Chris

People often associate farming with the weather. It is true, we farmers do have to live with all of Mother Nature's mood swings, and right now she is feeling pretty cranky. After an early spring with tons of sun and warmth, and early planting dates, we assumed the harvest would also be really early as well. Well, after two weeks of rain, temps in routinely in the 60's, and no