

Happy Spring!

On March 20th, folks across the Northern Hemisphere celebrated the vernal equinox, the marking of our first official day of spring. Equinoxes happen on just two days a year, when day length is exactly 12 hours at all points on the earth's surface, except for the poles. From then on, we begin to enjoy earlier sunrises and later sunsets! After a long winter in Wisconsin, any indication of the change of seasons is welcomed, and though the transition from winter into spring here is often unpredictable, one thing we can all depend on is the eventual return of green grass, leafy trees and the rich bounty of our agricultural fields.

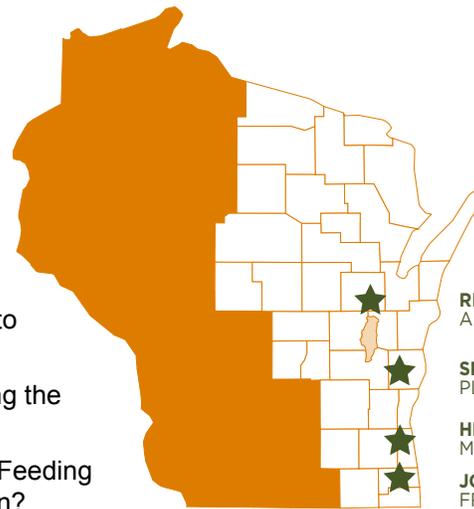
Early spring also mean a flurry of pre-season activities for the Farm Link team, from acquiring distribution materials and planning distribution routes, to getting the word out to members about what fresh local produce they can expect to receive. We are also checking in regularly with the farmers that make this work possible. This spring edition features all of them, where they are in the planning stages, what they look forward to most about spring, how they managed during the pandemic, and why they grow food for our food bank.

Catharine Kirwin,
Farm Link Coordinator

MEET THE FARMERS

In Their Own Words:

1. Where are you in the planning stages?
2. What do you look forward to most about spring?
3. How did you manage during the pandemic?
4. Why do you grow food for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin?



RIVERVIEW GARDENS
APPLETON, WI

SPRINGDALE FARM
PLYMOUTH, WI

HEALTHY HARVEST FARM
MENOMONEE FALLS, WI

JOHNSEN FARM
FRANKSVILLE, WI

RIVERVIEW GARDENS — APPLETON, WI



“Farm Manager Elisse Pavletich spent the winter months planning the Riverview Gardens 2021 growing season, ordering seeds, setting weekly goals and developing harvest schedules based on yearly last frost dates to determine when planting needs to begin. Elisse particularly looks forward to seeing asparagus sprouting which marks the real beginning of spring for her. A number of seeds have been started in an onsite greenhouse, while others are already planted in the ground in some of the

20 onsite hoop houses. Hoop houses are passive-solar greenhouses and help extend the growing season while also providing work opportunities for ServiceWorks participants during inclement weather.”

(Continued on next page.)

“ We are delighted to be working collaboratively with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. Farm Link represents an ideal partnership between two organizations dedicated to helping the most vulnerable people in our community. ”

Cindy Sahotsky, Riverview Gardens Executive Director

This year, Riverview Gardens will be growing **35,000 pounds** of certified organic vegetables as part of the Farm Link program.



SPRINGDALE FARM — PLYMOUTH, WI

For the past 35 years, Peter and Bernadette Seely of Springdale Farm have committed to growing tasty and nourishing vegetables on their 35 acre organic farm and CSA. Their CSA now provides for over 1,000 'shareholders.' Their 13 greenhouses allow them to produce food for seven months out of the year.



"We start planting in the greenhouse in February," Peter told us. "We just planted in the field yesterday, which is the earliest we have ever planted. We planted some onions, and spinach, potatoes, and carrots. We dug parsnips a few days ago as well; they are one of the few crops that can freeze solid in the field, and still be good quality when they thaw! Usually spinach is one of the first to come up in the spring.



Spring is great to listen to the returning birds! And the chance to start a new year, and try it out all over again!

The pandemic has not affected us much at all! Still individuals and businesses are interested in our produce, so we continue to focus on that! We did get a small USDA grant, and we also got some PPP assistance as well."

"I grow to try to include more people to be on the receiving end of quality produce!"
Peter Seely, Springdale Farm

This season, Springdale Farm will produce **75,000 pounds** of produce for Farm Link.



RIVERVIEW FARMS — CONTINUED

Riverview Gardens will be growing asparagus, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, broccoli, cabbages, radishes, peas, kale, salad greens, spinach, carrots, beans, zucchini, squash, pumpkins, herbs, and cucumbers. First crops will be peas, radishes, spinach, kale, and Swiss chard. Riverview Gardens also sells Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares to individuals and corporations.

Riverview Gardens pivoted its social enterprises during the pandemic from institutional/restaurant sales to supporting the basic needs of the community by filling gaps for food relief programs. In addition to partnering with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin to grow 15,000 pounds of organic produce in 2020, they became a food pantry site pick up location and donated 7,000 pounds of produce to food pantries, shelters, treatment centers, and meal sites.

farm link

FEEDING AMERICA
Eastern Wisconsin

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN



2018 – 45,000 Lbs.

2019 – 85,000 Lbs.

2020 – 160,000 Lbs.

2021 – 185,000 Lbs.

2018 - 2021

475,000+
POUNDS
DISTRIBUTED

A Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin Initiative. In partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin.

FeedingAmericaWI.org



HEALTHY HARVEST FARM — MENOMONEE FALLS, WI

“Healthy Harvest Farm designs our gardens usually in December so seeds can be purchased the first two weeks in January,” said owner and executive director, Kathy Hoffman. “The first crops that are already coming up in flats are broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage. Their first harvestable vegetables will be radishes, green onions, lettuces, and collards.”

“Because of the hoop house, we were able to grow radishes, green onions, lettuces, alfalfa, and bean sprouts for the farmers markets,” Kathy said. “The markets turned out to be a huge success for us in 2020, which allowed the farm to sustain while other businesses were closed due to Covid-19.”



They are looking forward to getting their hands in the dirt this spring and enjoying days under the sun surrounded by nature.

“Growing produce is my passion and that is why I was so excited to be a part of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.”

Kathy Hoffman, Healthy Harvest Farm Executive Director

“I get to share my product with people and know they are getting quality, nutritious food. As a partner of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin I get to do what I love and help those who need it. It’s a win-win!”

This year, Healthy Harvest will produce **15,000 pounds** of produce for Farm Link.



JOHNSEN FARM — FRANKSVILLE, WI



“As for the planning stages of our farming we have currently ordered all of our vegetable seeds. We have started our onions and cabbage seeds in the greenhouse to be planted around early May,” said John Johnsen. “Early May is when we will put onions, cabbage, sweetcorn and potatoes all in the ground out in our field. We will plant our cantaloupe in early June. When it comes time to harvest, we will harvest sweet corn and cabbage

first, followed by all the rest in the middle to end of August. Our farm fared well through the pandemic, thanks to the help of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. One of our big markets shut down for the year so we were still able to grow crops and have a place to move them through Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. Our hope is to get all our markets back up and on track this year.”

“What I look forward most to this year is growing vegetables. It’s what all farmers enjoy, the warm springs and watching the crops start as small plants and grow into food. It’s hard work but the reward of producing goods is so enjoyable.”

John Johnson

This year, Johnsen Farm will be growing **60,000 pounds** of produce for Farm Link.

To learn more about the Farm Link initiative and how you can get involved, contact:

farmlink@feedingamericawi.org

UPCOMING events



In the **2021-2023 biennial state budget**, Governor Evers has proposed investing \$20 million to connect Wisconsin producers with Wisconsin food banks and pantries that serve the food insecure. If approved, this kind of funding could provide support for programs like

Farm Link and increase food bank and pantry capacity for sourcing nutritious foods by strengthening their purchasing power.

To learn more about how you can voice your support for Governor Evers' proposal, visit [Feedingamerica.org/get-involved/advocate](https://www.feedingamerica.org/get-involved/advocate).



Every year, **FEEDING AMERICA EASTERN WISCONSIN** receives support for the **FARM LINK** initiative from generous donors like the

LUTSEY FAMILY FOUNDATION, INC.

Farm Link is a program that we as a family-owned organic farm are happy to donate to through our foundation. The funding provided to the program helps support agriculture in Wisconsin and our local small farmers. Not only that, it provides quality produce to the communities served by Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.

Tom Lutsey, Waseda Farms Chief Farming Officer.



Featured Recipe

PEA SHOOT PESTO

A springtime favorite of Farm Link team member, Melissa DeNomie

This intensely flavored, neon green pesto recipe is inspired by one that appeared in the New York Times. Add up to a half-cup of additional fresh herbs or alliums, including garlic scapes, chives, mint, arugula and parsley. Like most pestos, all amounts are approximate, so adjust according to your own taste. Try this pesto on a piece of toast with a sliced hardboiled egg; added to boiled potatoes with chopped green onions; or thinned with pasta water and tossed with wine.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup walnuts, raw or toasted
- 3 cups pea shoots, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan Reggiano
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- Sea salt to taste
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Makes 2 to 2 1/2 cups

Source: <https://www.fresh52.com/recipes/pea-shot-pesto>

DIRECTIONS

- 1) To toast the walnuts, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spread walnuts on baking sheet and roast until golden, about 10 minutes. Check by letting them cool and then breaking a walnut in half. The inside should be golden all the way through.
- 2) In a food processor or blender, combine walnuts, pea shoots, Parmesan and garlic. Pulse until roughly chopped. Add salt to taste. With motor running, slowly drizzle in olive oil. Blend until well-combined and you reach your desired thickness. Scrape pesto into a bowl and use immediately, or store in a jar with a thick covering of olive oil and use within three days. You can also freeze in ice cube trays.

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