

**Monday 4th March 2012**

Dear Customer,

We were just getting used to the spring and then winter came back. Rosemary Wass emailed and mentioned her wintry blast. I looked out of my bedroom and I could see forty miles across the plain over to the Yorkshire Moors and they were indeed white. Rosemary could probably see us back and that we were green. Cold but green. We have had it easy this winter. We managed to make almost enough of our own hay to feed the sheep through the winter. Last year, buying it in, they needed twice as much. John who works for Rosemary and manages the farm is pleased to have had an 'easy time' of it. They've been buying in seeds for this years crops and are getting zany. They've ordered the seeds for rainbow carrots, purple carrots and orange 'Sunrise' cauliflowers ..... whetting your appetites I'm sure for a psychedelic autumn. I can imagine the scene in the farmhouse kitchen – a cup of tea, a Yorkshire curd tart, the Suttons seed catalogue and 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds' on the cassette player. So get the Hendrix out in readiness to be the farmaround children of the revolution.

That is really going some for a Yorkshire farmer – they're even going to have a go at some shallots. Meanwhile away from the farm, John is hatching Bantam chicks for the summer agricultural show schedule. He forgot to tell me what colour they'll be.

Here are a few recipes you could try with the relatively dull contents of this week's bags:

**Roasted Cauliflower**

1 cauliflower  
flaky sea-salt and freshly ground black pepper  
½ tsp smoked paprika  
2 lemons  
3 tbsp olive oil

*Heat the oven to 220C/425F/Gas 7. Cut the cauliflower into medium-sized florets, rinse and let some of the water remain clinging to the florets. Put them in a bowl and squeeze over the juice from one of the lemons then season well. Put the florets on a baking sheet and toss them with olive oil and more salt and pepper, Dust on the paprika, cut the remaining lemon into 6 and scatter these in the tin. Bake for 25-30 minutes, turning once, until slightly caramelised at the edges. Squeeze over the juice from the roasted lemon segments and serve at once, scattered with a little flaky sea salt. Serve as a great starter or nibble with drinks !*

**Cauliflower and Broccoli Gratin**

1 cauliflower  
3 spring onions, trimmed and sliced  
550ml semi-skimmed milk  
1 egg beaten  
25g walnut pieces  
1 head broccoli  
25g corn flour  
75g Cheddar or Gruyere cheese  
100g fresh breadcrumbs

*Preheat oven to 190C/ Gas 5. Trim the cauliflower and cut into florets and cut the broccoli into florets. Blanch both the broccoli and cauliflower in a large saucepan of boiling water for 1 minute, then drain thoroughly. Put the spring onions in a saucepan. Mix the corn flour with a little of the milk in a heatproof bowl to make a smooth paste. Add the rest of the milk and to the onions and bring to the boil. Stir half of the hot milk into the corn flour paste, then return the mixture to the pan. Bring to the boil, stirring frequently, to make a smooth sauce. Remove the sauce from the heat and stir in the grated cheese, beaten egg and half the breadcrumbs. Stir in the blanched vegetables and season to taste. Transfer the mixture to a greased ovenproof baking dish or gratin dish. Scatter the rest of the breadcrumbs and the walnuts over the top, then bake for 20 minutes until golden.*

**Aubergine and Red Pepper Bake**

60g Cheddar cheese  
1 red pepper, cut into strips  
2 potatoes, sliced  
2 tsp mixed herbs  
2 tbsp Parmesan, grated  
1 aubergine, thinly sliced in rounds  
tin of chopped tomatoes  
4 tbsp vegetable oil  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

*Preheat the grill and the oven to 200C. Brush the aubergine and pepper with 2 tbsp oil. Place on a baking tray and grill, turning frequently for 5-10 minutes, or until the aubergine is tender and the pepper is slightly charred. Meanwhile heat the remaining oil in a saucepan and gently fry the garlic for 1-2 minutes over a low heat. Add the chopped tomatoes, 4 tbsp water and the mixed herbs. Season with salt and pepper and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the sauce develops a thicker consistency. Parboil the potato for 5-6 minutes and set aside. Spoon a third of the aubergine and pepper into an ovenproof dish, followed by a third of the tomato sauce and a third of the Cheddar cheese. Repeat*

*until all ingredients are used up. Season with salt and pepper then arrange the cooked potato over the top. Sprinkle on the Parmesan and bake in the oven for 20 minutes or until golden.*

Another ordinary week. I've spent the whole time crouched over my computer trying to catch up on the work I missed while I was away. I'm so happy today as I have finally got on top of it.

A guinea pig toe clip was long overdue, their nails were spiralling. When I get their manicure tin out the cupboard their faces fill with terror and they run behind the rubbish bin. I can't blame them, I try not to but I have drawn blood on occasion. My eyesight isn't too hot these days and their feet are so small.

It's hard because they just wriggle and writhe. Badgie is the worst. "It's alright, keep still, I'm not going to chop your toe off" wasn't working. He tried to bite me. But when I started making a hypnotic chirping sound like the mating call of a tropical bird, he just dangled motionless in my hand with his nails splayed out and I was able to snip them off. I brought him round and he went trotting off happily with his new trim feet. I am now a guinea pig whisperer.

Hope all well with you,

Kind wishes,

Isobel

**PS We are sorry for the inconvenience but there is no milk this week due to some technical problems at the dairy. Hopefully it will resume as normal next week.**