

**Monday 27th August 2012**

Dear Customer,

I won't mention the rain today, for the 14<sup>th</sup> week in a row, except to say that it is Monday morning and tipping it down. We have red sweetheart cabbages from Royal Oak Farm, Ormskirk in the bags this week and their stripey marrows - yellow or green, Florence fennel and broccoli. The potatoes are Nicola from Jonnie Watson. The grapes in the fruit bags are Alphonse Lavallee from the Languedoc and the black figs and Charentais melons in the luxury fruit bags are from Provence. Just writing that makes me want to get in the car and head for Dover. Please don't feel daunted by your marrow. You could try one of these fantastic recipes:

**Marrow and Roasted Garlic Soup**

1 large head of garlic	110ml olive oil
1 marrow	60g butter or margarine
1 medium onion, chopped	salt and pepper
1½ pints vegetable stock	5fl oz single cream (optional)

Heat oven to 400F/200C/Gas 6. Break the garlic into cloves, leaving on the skins. Put the oil in an ovenproof dish and turn the garlic cloves in it until they are coated ( it may seem a lot of oil but any less and the garlic risks burning. Roast for 15 minutes. Cool slightly then press out the pulp and mash it. Discard the skin. Strain the oil and use for other cooking. While garlic cooking, peel, deseed and chop the marrow. Melt the butter in a large saucepan and soften the onion without letting it brown. Add the marrow, stock, garlic pulp, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer gently until the marrow is soft. Cool, liquidise until smooth and sieve. Reheat gently, without boiling, and stir in the cream. Serve.....please.

**Savoury Marrow Bake**

100g plain flour	1 tbsp baking powder
1 tsp caster sugar	1 tsp salt
50g Parmesan, grated (or Cheddar)	1 tbsp fresh parsley, minced
1 tsp basil	1 tsp oregano
4 eggs	125ml olive or vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped	1 marrow, peeled, deseeded and grated

Preheat oven to 180C/ Gas 4. In a bowl combine the flour, baking powder, sugar, salt, Parmesan, parsley, oregano and basil. Beat together the eggs, oil and onion and fold into the dry ingredients until just combined. Fold in the marrow. Turn into a greased 30 x 30cm baking dish. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown and set. Cut into squares.

**Marrow with Peas and Basil ( a lovely side-dish)**

1 marrow	100ml olive oil
250g frozen peas	handful basil leaves
50g butter or margarine	juice of a lemon

Peel the skin from the marrow with a peeler. Halve it and remove the core and seeds and cut into 1 or 2cm width slices. Warm the olive oil in a casserole which has a lid. Add the peeled marrow. After 5 minutes of cooking on a moderate heat, pour in 100ml water, the peas, a little salt and cover with the lid. Let the vegetables bubble gently over a low heat until the peas are softening and the marrow is completely tender. Add the basil, butter, some black pepper and the lemon juice.

Last week was such a difficult week and it unfortunately impacted on some of the deliveries. I do apologise if you were affected. As an example of how Sod's Law was governing us - we bought a van to replace a broken down one. It was to be brought to London by a delivery firm on the Tuesday but that morning the delivery firm went into liquidation with our new van inside. I won't bore you with the lengthy catalogue but it was one hell of a week !

We're all very upset because three of our lovely sheep have been killed by dogs in their summer parkland near Durham. This included Jumping Jack ( as Ernest called him ). He sails over 5-bar gates and springs out of his pen at clipping time - so has never been sheared. Or at least he used to. What a terrible end for him. We're bringing them all back to Richmond tomorrow.

I can almost not bear to go out the door at this time of year and have to keep my windows shut. The lambs are being taken from their mums to be 'fattened' / 'finished', or sent to market. The mums are being graded - any past their best are gathered for slaughter. It's harrowing - hearing the cries from their separation day after day, night after night as all the farms in the vicinity start to separate and 'grade'. You can hear them from miles away. In the field opposite my house, the lambs have now gone and the ewes are lying forlorn in a group next to the gate, facing the gate, awaiting their return. On Countryfile yesterday, before I had to switch channels, Adam was doing the same on his farm, he said how excited he was to be reaping the rewards of his labour, weighing the lambs, his 'crop', sending them off to market, sorting out the mutton ewes. He was utterly dispassionate. My happy news is that I've got baby goldfish, 1" long, appearing in my pond - a source of great wonderment. It's about all the happy news I can muster. A friend of mine had to go to Haiti, she got terrible food poisoning and was desperate to get on her flight home but texted to say it got cancelled because of the weather. I did a quick 'google'. "It's Isaac", I texted her. "Its heading straight for you".

As we mourn the loss of another summer with no summer,

Kind wishes,

Isobel