



[Monday 14th November 2011](#)

Dear Customer

We've had our first frost, a little one, heralding the arrival of the brussel sprouts on stalks. Jonnie Watson has been out felling them for us this week. A few exotic creatures have slinked into the bags too this week – some fennel and butternut squash. Here's a delicious recipes you could try:

**Braised Fennel Gratin**

*1 or 2 fennel bulbs, cut in half lengthways  
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced  
5 tbsp light olive oil, plus a little extra  
300ml vegetable stock  
60g chestnut mushrooms, finely sliced (optional)  
dash of tamari for the mushrooms  
100g parmesan, grated*

- 1. Put the fennel and garlic in a heavy-bottomed frying pan and cover with the olive oil and stock. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer gently for 10-12 minutes or until the fennel is tender and the liquid reduced by three-quarters.*
- 2. Meanwhile, sauté the mushrooms, if using, in a little light olive oil. Add a dash of tamari when they are nearly done.*
- 3. Now, turn your grill on high and while it is heating up, stir the cream into the fennel, bring back to the boil and immediately remove from the heat. Stir in the mushrooms, if using. Sprinkle with the grated parmesan and place under the hot grill until just bubbling. Serve immediately.*

I hope you are enjoying our new super-welfare eggs and milk. Thank you very much for all your orders. This is the last week of temporary packaging on both the milk and the eggs, we will have the real thing by next week. Given what's happening in the economy, I was surprised to find such tremendously long lead times on label-printing, lids, boxes, bottles and the processes which assemble them. Most couldn't do anything until after Christmas. The first run of milk labels shrivelled off the bottles as soon as the cold milk went in.

These are fascinating times in Europe. Our Italian suppliers are in a state of shock with the departure of their pery Berlusconi. Over the last few years I've revelled in goading them when I order our cherry tomatoes. The euro was always doomed – a worthy ideology but in reality, hopeless. What was wrong with things before the euro – Europe was strong and harmonious with rural Greece and industrial Germany – all free to manoeuvre. Most countries economies' were balanced within themselves with

an industrial north and an agricultural south like Italy's. Then along came the euro. I hate those horrible little copper coins that you prod at in your palm at Carrefour check out, holding everyone up, wishing you'd brought your glasses, 'cos they all look the same. Bring back the huge, silver 5-franc pieces and the pesetas with the holes in.

It is Sunday morning, it's dark, and the third day the sun just can't be bothered to fight through the fog and cloud so has left us dark. I must finish this letter then go down to Suffolk for a photo shoot and interview with the Times in the morning as our eggs and milk are launching in Selfridges on 21st November - very exciting. I need to get there before the Strictly and X Factor results, even though they're both rubbish.

I hope all is well with you,

Kind Wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isobel', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Isobel Davies ([isobel@farmaround.co.uk](mailto:isobel@farmaround.co.uk))

