

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014**

Dear Customer,

So what's in the bags this week ! We have heritage Peach Blossom potatoes from Royal Oak, along with their delicious purple-ribbed kale. Kale is very 'a la mode' at the moment. It is to today what a smear of celeriac puree was to yesterday. And, it is the new 'superfood' .... another one. A superfood is a fruit or vegetable which comes with a halo hovering over it. The reason why it is so super is it's richness in calcium, folate, lutein, vitamins A, C and K. It had taken since the Middle Ages for it to make it's way from being the 'ordinary greenstuff' of the rural poor and cow fodder, to the dinner bowls and juice bottles of Beyonce and Gwyneth Paltrow.

It's such an easy crop to grow too - mud, rain, sleet, fog, ice, it loves it all - it loves Britain.

In celebrity style you could try juicing kale with apples and a dash of lemon or have a go at one of these recipes. I'm sure it would give your immune system a boost to fight these bugs which are doing the rounds. Or you could try one of these great recipes:

**Halloumi, Kale and Lentils**

<i>olive oil</i>	<i>1 large onion, finely chopped</i>
<i>1 carrot, finely diced</i>	<i>3 cloves garlic, chopped</i>
<i>200g puy or green lentils</i>	<i>100ml wine (or stock or water)</i>
<i>300ml stock or water</i>	<i>good splash balsamic vinegar</i>
<i>1-2 tbsp mustard</i>	<i>bag of kale</i>
<i>150g halloumi</i>	<i>juice and zest of a lemon</i>
<i>handful of parsley, chopped</i>	

*Add a splash of olive oil to a lidded pot. Cook the onion, carrot and garlic until softened. Fold the lentils and bay leaf through and season well. Allow to sizzle for a moment then pour in the wine. Let it bubble up for a bit. Pour in the stock or water. Lower the heat, cover and cook for 40 minutes, or until tender. Taste and add a splash of balsamic vinegar for sweetness and add the mustard for a kick. Finely chop the kale so it is like chopped parsley. Fold the kale through the lentils and cook a little. Remove from the heat and set aside. Thinly slice the halloumi, then cut it into little cubes. Fry them in olive oil until golden then scatter over the lentils. Finish with parsley and lemon juice and zest. Serve with crusty bread.*

**Crispy Seaweed Kale**

<i>kale</i>	<i>drizzle of sunflower oil</i>
<i>pinch sea salt</i>	<i>pinch of castor sugar</i>

*Preheat your oven to 220C/Gas 7. Pull the leaves off the stalks, finely chop the leaves and drizzle with a little oil. Toss to coat and dust with sugar and salt. Arrange in a single layer in an ovenproof tray and bake for about 5 minutes until deep green and crispy.*

**Celeriac Mash with Tarragon Butter**

<i>large celeriac peeled and cut into 5cm chunks</i>	<i>1 medium potato</i>
<i>200ml whole milk, heated to boiling point</i>	<i>60ml melted cream</i>
<i>60ml melted butter</i>	<i>leaves from a small bunch of tarragon</i>

*Put the celeriac and potato in a pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and cook until tender. Drain, mash or puree in a blender with the hot milk, then add the cream and season. Transfer to a serving dish and keep warm. Meanwhile heat the butter with the tarragon. Just before serving, pour it over the mash.*

Last week I contacted 3 Michelin-starred chef Monsieur Alain Passard . eh oui. It was he who astounded the French establishment by eschewing meat in his Paris restaurant, L'Arpege and taking it practically vegetarian. Ironically his bookings soared. He is probably the best vegetable cooker in the world. I suggested to him that he should come to London to do a pop-up restaurant this autumn, if I could organise it - to which Farmarounders will have first call on seats of course. He is very interested and I intend to go to Paris this spring to discuss and of course to taste his 3 Michelin stars.

I am aware that I never really told you what happened to the Cow Nation milk, and that it just disappeared overnight. I must say, it was a shock to me too. Having 2 months earlier spent a fortune buying pasteurising and bottling equipment for the farm, I received an email, out of the blue, saying they didn't want to carry on. I was told that the work involved was ruining their marriage as it meant processing on a Sunday, and that was that. It was non-negotiable. We also had thousands of pounds worth of milk and cheese labels to bin. Of course my first thoughts were for the future of those cows and it has been agreed with them that should those Cow Nation cows' lives ever be in jeopardy, that we will buy them and bring them to sanctuary.

Since then we have been searching for a new partner. Our friends at the Great British Food Project, where our rescued hens are housed, have come up trumps with a farm near them in Tosside, Lancashire. It will be very convenient logistically as we can collect the eggs at the same time as the milk, North Devon had been a logistical nightmare. A local farmer gave his daughter her own farm to do whatever she wants with. The farm is currently empty but she has decided that she wants to work with us on the Cow Nation project. Yesterday they went to see a small herd of beautiful Friesian cows which are for sale. I should find out in the coming days if these are our new Cow Nation cows. I hope so, I love Friesians ! I will keep you updated.

Well February, what a great month isn't it. I look forward to it all year - the days are lengthening, we have an 2 extra minutes of daylight each day, and the snowdrops are coming out !

Hope all good with you,

Kind wishes,

Isobel