



# Vermont Valley Community Farm

www.vermontvalley.com · farm@vermontvalley.com · (608) 767-3860 · 4628 Cty Hwy FF, Blue Mounds, WI 53517

## The Pesto Fest Saturday, September 11h

**When:** Arrive anytime between noon and 3:00. You begin when you arrive. We expect the last pesto makers to wrap up by 5:00, so if you are doing a big batch, come early. If you come late, please don't expect to make pesto.

**What to bring:** The farm supplies basil & garlic. You need to bring all of your other ingredients (oils, nuts, cheese, etc.), a food processor, a bowl or container to harvest basil leaves into, measuring cups and any other utensils you might need. Please leave your dogs behind, as always. Thanks!

**What will happen:** The event begins with harvesting basil. You will walk out into the field and harvest as much as you will use to make your pesto. You will pick basil leaves and peel garlic for your own use. When you are done with prep work, you will set up your food processor and begin the pesto making. Then clean up and make way for the next pesto-maker!

**A dollop for the farm:** We would love to enjoy some of the pesto that you make. It is a treat we get for hosting, thanks. There is a cookie sheet out if you want to donate a spoon full or two to the Perkins family!

**Picnic:** Rather than a pot luck, we prepare a large bowl of pasta that you can take from to try out your freshly made pesto. Bring out any other food you would like and you can enjoy a picnic in the yard or down by the stream. We will not have a group potluck because everyone will be finishing at a different time.

**Rain or Shine:** The event will happen even if it is raining. All pesto making happens under a roof.

**Taking basil home:** You are welcome to take basil home instead of making pesto on the farm. We may limit the amount for take home so there remains basil for everyone.

**Garlic:** You can buy extra garlic to take home for \$5/lb.

**Roma Tomatoes/Hot peppers/Tomatillos:** The 'We-Pick' will take place at 11:00 (not 9:00). If you are coming to the Pesto Fest you can pick up your tomatoes before you start pesto making.

### Tomato We-Picks

For information on purchasing roma tomatoes, hot peppers, and tomatillos see the August 12th newsletter. We encourage you to sign up sooner rather than later. We have an abundance of beautiful tomatoes. No limit on quantity. You can reserve tomatoes for this week's pick up through Thursday.

### Directions to the Farm

- From Madison take Highway 14 (University Avenue) to Black Earth. Turn left onto County F/Highway 78 (this is at the stoplight on highway 14, at the Shoe Box shoe store).
- Stay on County F for five miles to the intersection with County FF (Cty F turns right in Black Earth, then turns left 1 mile outside of Black Earth).
- The farm is at the intersection of F & FF.
- A map is on our website [www.vermontvalley.com](http://www.vermontvalley.com).



*Pesto making in the packing shed. Looks like fun.*

**Melon harvest** has happened every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the past three weeks. It's been a hot, sweaty, heavy job with a delicious reward. Cantaloupe and watermelon ripen over a period of several weeks. We know when they are ripe by looking for specific signs.



Cantaloupe begins to turn yellowish, that is an indicator that it may be ready to harvest. The true sign of a ripe cantaloupe is when the stem and the circular area around the stem slip perfectly off of the melon without ripping. Slight pressure to the stem will tell the harvesters if the melon is ready to harvest. Watermelon (pictured) is very different. The stem and vine need to be studied on each and every water-

melon to determine if it is ready to harvest. Where the stem meets the vine there is a curly tendril. If you follow the vine out to the left and to the right there is a tendril where the vine junctions. All three tendrils must be brown (they start out green) for the melon to be ripe. As you can imagine this is a lot of scrutiny. If the first tendril is green, job done, move onto the next melon, but if it is brown, then inspect the other two. Eight harvesters are spread out over eight beds of melon. As a melon is harvested it is tossed, person to person over to someone at the side of the garden who is making piles. If a melon falls and breaks open, score!, it gets gobbled up. It also gives us a chance to check our work. Yes, perfectly ripe. Yum. Jesse follows behind with a bulk bin in front of the tractor. The melons get counted into the bins. On a good day we fill 13 bins!



**Eggplant Harvest / Tuesday morning**

Eggplants have loved and responded to this season's weather. In the picture the eggplant harvesters are standing up, not kneeling! And Geoff is over 6' tall. We certainly have set a farm record for tallest eggplant plants, and we think maybe a world record (probably not). As we harvest the eggplants (from 3,160 plants) we crawl beneath the canopy of the plant in order to find the largest eggplants. Quite a good hide and seek place, except the plants make most people sneeze or cough, so they would be found.



**Red pepper harvest / Monday morning**

A red pepper is a mature green pepper. Our 5,470 pepper plants are extremely happy this season with all of the hot weather and rain. Soon all of the peppers on this farm will be red. We harvest peppers once a week.