



Dear ##[Name | First]##,

May means warmer weather, longer days, and the kickoff of the main local food season. Whether you get your seasonal eats through a CSA, farmers market, or backyard garden, there is so much to enjoy this time of year!

In this issue, we explore how one Kentucky farm is impacting their community, share a few tips to enjoy spring greens, and highlight how mulch can help combat weeds in a vegetable garden.

This month we hope you dive into Kentucky's delicious local food and boost your excitement for spring flavors!

Wishing you a delicious start to the season,
The OAK Team

Local Eating Spotlight...

Building Food Systems Through Community Partnerships with Lazy Eight Stock Farm

Family farms are deeply rooted in the health of their land and communities and have a unique capacity to foster community resilience and holistic transformation. Farms typically engage with their community through markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and education events. Today, however, we are highlighting a Kentucky farm that has made collaborative community outreach a central part of its business.

Farmer Bryce Baumann of Lazy Eight Stock Farm raised his first crops as a middle schooler, on the property that has been farmed by his family since 1947. His family's farm once operated traditionally with cattle and tobacco but now grows diversified produce without synthetic inputs as part of the USDA organic program. The farm has been certified organic since 2012 and is proud to produce delicious foods in a way that builds soil health.

Lazy Eight Stock Farm also strives to nourish the larger community. Through strategic partnerships with nonprofit organizations they have been able to reach more Kentuckians and help increase access to local, organic, nutrient-dense foods.



Keep reading to learn more about some of the community partners that enable Lazy Eight Stock Farm to feed more Kentuckians!



Lazy Eight Stock Farm Brings Produce to Kentucky Workplaces

[Kentucky Farm Share Coalition](#) is a program of the [Organic Association of Kentucky](#) (OAK) that connects Kentucky employers to local farms to offer community supported agriculture membership (CSA) as an innovative health benefit. Being part of a CSA has a long-lasting impact on the health of an entire household. By sponsoring a portion of a voucher, companies invest in employee well-being while supporting a local farm. Lazy Eight Stock Farm has been with KYFSC since the program's founding in 2015. They currently serve three employers through the KYFSC program and others through private partnerships, bringing over 250 weekly vegetable shares to Kentucky workplaces each year.

Lazy Eight Stock Farm Brings Produce to Pregnant Mothers

[Fresh Rx for MOMs](#), facilitated by [Community Farm Alliance](#) (CFA), helps mothers receiving Medicaid to access fresh, local produce. Mothers-to-be are referred to the program through the Garrard County Health Department to receive a weekly Lazy Eight Stock Farm CSA share. This program supports improved health outcomes for expectant Kentucky mothers and helps build strong food systems by further connecting farmers to their communities.

Lazy Eight Stock Farm Brings Produce to Schools and Families

[Grow Appalachia](#)'s [Berea Kids Eat](#) program nurtures Berea families through nutrition education programming, free summer meals, and food security work in partnership with local and national partners. Lazy Eight Stock Farm worked with Berea Kids Eat throughout the pandemic to provide seasonal, local produce to their community through their initiative at the Berea Farmers' Market.

Lazy Eight Stock Farm's incredible impact in partnership with these organizations is a testament to the power of collaboration. Through the inspiring work of Lazy Eight and other Kentucky farms, we can see the holistic connection between organic farming systems, soil health, and human health, leading to transformative community wellness.

OAK is hosting a [Field Day](#) on Tuesday, June 4, from 1-4 pm ET at Lazy Eight Stock Farm in Paint Lick, KY. During this event, Bryce will share information on biological farming systems with fellow farmers and those interested in agriculture production. Learn more about this event and consider joining on the farm or at the [OAK social event](#) afterward at Nightjar from 3:30 - 6:30pm ET in Berea, KY.



Seasonal Recipes...

Making the Most of Spring Greens

In the spring, greens reign supreme, making them a delightful seasonal eating staple. Whether it's tender head lettuce, delicate spinach, or the more robust kale and collard greens, there are so many different preparation techniques. Enjoy greens fresh, tossed in a simple vinaigrette to highlight their natural flavor, or embrace the heartier texture of braised greens for a comforting meal. And if the bounty overwhelms, fear not, for greens can be preserved through blanching and freezing, ensuring a taste of spring even when the season has waned. See our list of cooking resources for greens below to get inspired!



HOW TO MAKE VINAIGRETTE



3 Parts Oil

Start by adding your oil to a jar with a lid. You can use other kinds of oil, but olive oil is most commonly used.



1 Part Acid

Add an acidic component like vinegar or lemon juice.

Vinaigrette uses a 3 to 1 ratio, so if you used 1/2 cup of oil, add 2 tbsp + 2 tsp acid.



Aromatics

Next, get creative by adding crushed garlic, herbs, and other aromatics to your jar.



Shake

It's important to emulsify the ingredients for a smooth result. The easiest way to do this is to close the lid tightly on your jar, and shake!

Make a Simple Vinaigrette

Vinaigrette is a simple salad dressing that is built around a ratio of 3 parts oil to 1 part acid such as lemon juice or vinegar. Once you've created this easy mix, you can enhance it with herbs and other additions like Dijon mustard, mayonnaise, or avocado! Either shake to emulsify or blend.

Check out [this vinaigrette guide](#) for an explanation of different oils, acids, aromatics, and more!

Freeze Greens For Later

Spring greens are plentiful and delicious, but they can also be a bit overwhelming. Freezing them can be a great way to preserve this abundance and use later for soups, casseroles or other warm dishes.

This method isn't recommended for tender greens such as head lettuce, but works perfectly for things like kale, spinach, collards, and chard. Explore [this step by step green freezing guide!](#)

How to Freeze SPRING GREENS

- Wash greens in cold water
- Cut to desired size or leave whole
- Submerge in boiling water for 90 seconds
- Place directly in ice water for 2-3 minutes
- Squeeze water out of the greens
- Freeze on a sheet pan for 1 - 2 hours
- Pack into a freezer safe bag
- Enjoy within 12 months of freezing

**This method does not work with tender lettuces*



Explore More Resources for Cooking with Seasonal Greens:

- [Dishing Up the Dirt](#) for Farmer-approved Recipes
- [Kentucky Farm Share Coalition Veggie Guide](#) for storage and preparation tips
- [Make a Date with your CSA](#) for adaptable preparation techniques including blanching greens

In the Garden...

Using Mulch to Beat Garden Weeds

A thriving spring garden often includes the first of the season's battles with pesky weeds. While at times there is nothing to do but pull by hand, incorporating mulch into a garden plan can help suppress weeds before they take hold.

Mulching serves several purposes, in addition to weed suppression, it can keep the soil moist to regulate its temperature and prevent erosion.

Read below to learn about three common mulching options in an organic garden!



Compost

Compost is a mixture of plant scraps and other decomposed organic materials that improve soil fertility. When applied to a garden bed in a thick layer, between 3 and 6 inches, it can keep weeds at bay while simultaneously adding nutrients to the soil. Compost can be purchased or made at home using things like kitchen scraps and lawn clippings. Some composts are more suited to mulching and others for use as a growing medium. Be sure to ask your supplier about their compost before applying it to your garden.



Wood Chips

Using wood chips can be an economical solution for your garden, as they can often be dropped off for little to no cost by landscaping companies working nearby. They make a wonderful weed barrier, especially in garden pathways.

However, no two gardens are alike and you should consider if wood chips will work for your unique context. For example, wood chips are prone to moving around in heavy rains if your garden is on a slope. It is also worth noting that wood chips should not be worked into the soil, but instead used as a barrier on the top.

Hay

Hay is grass that has been dried and harvested into either round or square bales. It is nutritious for your soil and has other benefits such as cooling soil temperatures. Because of its impact on temperature, be mindful of the time of year you are using it and the preferences of specific crops. Hay can also contain weed seeds that can introduce new weeds into your garden. It's important to check in with a supplier to confirm where it was sourced.

For more information about the mulching options discussed above and others, check out these resources:

- [How to Use Every Mulch: The Ultimate Growers' Guide](#)
- [HO-106: Mulch Myths](#)
- [Mulches for the Vegetable Garden](#)
- [Composting and Mulching](#)



Upcoming OAK & Community Events

Save the Date OAK Field Day & Social Meet Up on June 4 in Berea, KY!

Kentucky Farm Share Coalition member farm Lazy Eight Stock Farm will lead participants through his systems of reduced tillage, cover crops, and crop rotations at a OAK Field Day on Tuesday June 4 from 1:00 - 4:00pm ET in Paint Lick, KY. This will be followed by a social meet up at Night Jar (also Native Bagel) - open to anyone interested in connecting with the organic and local farming community in Kentucky from 3:30 - 6:30pm!

[Learn More](#)



REDUCED TILLAGE, COVER CROPS, AND CROP ROTATIONS ON AN ORGANIC VEGETABLE FARM

Lazy Eight Stock Farm | Madison County

OAK SOCIAL MEET UP

Nightjar | Berea, KY



Join OAK at Bluegrass Veg Fest in Louisville on Saturday June 22!

Come see the Kentucky Farm Share Team at Kentucky's largest vegan food festival, Bluegrass Veg Fest at the Mellwood Art Center in Louisville, KY from 12:00 - 6:00 pm! We'll be sharing information about community supported agriculture, seasonal eating, and lots of resources on how to connect with local, organic farms in your area!

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