

Haven't renewed your 2016 membership yet? Click "[Here](#)" to secure your share.



Today amid the drifting snow, irrigation pipe on transport trailers lays motionless, waiting for the warm days of summer to return.

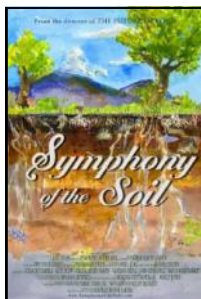
Welcome to the first winter edition of our farm newsletter. In the course of our off-season publications the topics will differ a bit from the routine content of "what's going on at the farm" and "what's in the box" type format that we follow during the summer. With more time for us to write we hope as Wisconsin winters go for most of you it's the perfect time to be inside your cozy abode settled into a favored nook with some reading material like our newsletter, and perhaps with an accompanying hot beverage.

One important goal of our published communiqués is to provide customers with easy to read information that expresses and defines the principles of our farming practices. In describing our approach to farming we interchangeably use terms like organic, sustainable, chemical free, biological, etc. From our own perspective it would be more appropriate to say all of the above terms represent a part of our practice but none accurately defines our style of farming completely on its own. If this answer is a little confusing let's break this discussion down into more palatable bite size pieces.

The word “organic” has become so commonly used in referring to the current “industry standard” that the expression we feel in some instances has turned into a rubber stamp. Seeing a USDA label on items we buy today gives all of us a sense of comfort knowing that an organic standard was adhered to in the production process. What’s become disheartening is the fact that while only a few businesses have been cited for actual violations there are some industrial-scale factory farms that have spoiled the integrity of the organic label by short-cutting program guidelines. For example, several egg and dairy facilities in the country have recently been called out by watchdog groups. Groups like The Cornucopia Institute revealed how some factory farms have exploited the term organic and yet still met the requirements to wear the USDA organic label. Further disappointing is the fact that not much immediate action is being taking by the USDA to close these loopholes. As our food system becomes bigger and more complex its become harder for the system to monitor itself for inconsistencies.

Although the foundation of our growing practice is based around traditional organic farming practices, we choose not to associate with today’s mainstream organic program, and for that reason we’ll continue to refrain from using the term “organic” in describing our farming practice. We have nothing against those who choose to farm under the USDA label, but at this time until we feel a greater customer demand to be certified we will continue operating our farm as being not “certified organic”. We simply want our customers to know that we do use organic principles as a foundational starting point. From there our routine practice of growing vegetables goes more into the specifics regarding the biological aspects in promoting and maintaining good soil health. Terms like sustainable, chemical free, and biological, are used to further substantiate our traditional use of organic farming practices.

If you haven’t seen the documentary “Symphony of the Soil” this is an excellent way to become better familiar with the vital relationship between our soils and our own existence on earth. We’ve attended a number of lectures and farm conferences where some of the people in this video have presented information on their research and studies pertaining to soil health. It has reinforced the way we regard our soil, and perhaps it will change the way you regard and respect where your food comes from and how its grown. This documentary may give you a better idea and understanding of what we’re doing here to care for our soils so we can grow better vegetables for you. Hope you find the presentation educational and interesting!



“Symphony of the soil” Watch it on You Tube

Watch both the “official trailer” and the next full episode labeled “Soil Documentary”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXRNF\\_1X2fU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXRNF_1X2fU)

Let the memories of your summer keep you warm throughout the winter.

Stay warm! Steve & Debra Jo





The off season at the farm brings on a whole new list of activities and recreation.