

## Journey School Food Community CSA

### Week 8: January 20, 2007

As the cold snow blanketed our beautiful vegetables, we marveled at those pretty feathered girls going about their egg-laying business. The Aracauna hens, the ones who lay the green eggs, have totally taken the winter off but the Red Star, Black Star, and White Leghorn settled down to their new home and the record-breaking weather with nary a hiccup in production. Eggs are so good for you: “[they] are especially valuable as a source of protein. In fact, egg protein is used as the standard against which the quality of other food proteins is measured. One egg contains about 6 to 7 grams of protein. People of all ages need adequate protein for building and repairing body tissues. The fat in the yolk is so finely emulsified that it is digested easily, even by infants. The ratio of unsaturated to saturated fats is about 2 to 1. This is considered very desirable. Oleic acid is the main unsaturated fat. It has no effect on blood cholesterol. Eggs contain vitamin A, the B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin), and vitamin D. All are necessary during childhood and adolescence for growth. Eggs also contain an abundant supply of minerals, such as iron and phosphorus, that are essential for building and maintaining strong, healthy bodies.” University of Illinois.

Our family loves to eat eggs so much! We easily eat a dozen a week – each! Now I hear you all gasping, “But really, what about cholesterol? What about your poor clogging-up arteries?” Looking at the nutrition labels from store-bought eggs, one egg contains 71% of the total cholesterol intake per adult per day. When we realized how many eggs we were eating, we went on a research. Do hens raised as ours lay eggs with different nutritional values? Does different feed produce different cholesterol levels? Is the cholesterol from eggs the same as cholesterol from a Big Mac? The answers we found were frustratingly from a single source with different names: US Egg Producers Commission, Australian Egg Producers Commission, British Egg Producers Commission....you get the idea. All studies were paid for by the folks who will profit from our belief in their product. Then I found this 1982 article in the NY Times :

In 1976, James L. McNaughton discovered that cholesterol in egg yolks could be reduced by as much as 13 percent by putting laying hens on a high fiber diet - not totally, but by adding, say, 8.8 percent sunflower seed meal or 10 percent wood shavings to their rations.

After his findings were published, Dr. McNaughton, a specialist in poultry nutrition with the Federal Agriculture Research Service's South Central Poultry Research Center at Mississippi State University, cautioned that the new eggs were unlikely to become widely available to the public unless it was economical for egg producers.

But when asked recently if any producers had tried to market low cholesterol eggs, Dr. McNaughton said, "No, no one has tried it." He and fellow researchers think the fiber works to reduce cholesterol by scraping away high-cholesterol cells in the villi of the chicken's small intestine. The problem, he said, is that the egg industry works on such low margins of profit that adding fiber to feed would reduce total available protein and would slow the hens' growth. Thus, it is more expensive." He said he did not know whether consumers would pay more for low cholesterol eggs if they were stacked beside regular eggs in supermarkets.

The piece about feeding chickens “wood shavings” definitely freaks me out. Even more disturbing though is the idea that we could produce a different food item, or atleast test food that has been produced differently, but it wouldn't really matter unless it were profitable to mass-produce.

So, where do we go for answers about egg and cholesterol safety? Right back to our own lives. We'll be testing the cholesterol levels for all of the Mathias family. Jeff has records from a previous screening in 2001 (pre-farming) for a benchmark. We'll let you know in the next newsletter how our pretty feathered girls are treating our arteries!

### Hugo's Pasta ala Mama

1/4 pound fresh or 3 ounces dry tagliarini or spaghetti  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 clove garlic, minced or pressed  
1/2 cup chopped red or yellow onion (optional)  
2 or 3 large eggs, lightly beaten  
2 to 4 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese  
3 tablespoons chopped parsley  
Salt and pepper

In a 3- to 4-quart pan over high heat, bring about 2 quarts water to a boil. Add noodles and cook, uncovered, until barely tender to bite, 2 to 3 minutes for fresh pasta, 8 to 9 minutes for dry. Drain well. In a 10- to 12-inch frying pan, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add garlic and onion; stir until garlic is limp, about 1 minute. Add pasta and mix well until hot and coated with butter. Add eggs, cheese, and 2 tablespoons parsley; mix just until eggs are softly set and cling to noodles about 1 minute. Spoon onto a plate. Add salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle noodles with remaining 1 tablespoon parsley. Makes 1 serving.

### Roasted Root Vegetable Medley

\*\*\*This is the recipe as copied from the internet – I've used it many times with whatever root vegetables we happen to have on hand. This week your share includes beets, carrots, potatoes, and garlic. If you have the other items in the recipe, definitely use them. If not, the same cooking instructions work just fine without.\*\*\*

8 to 12 slender carrots, peeled and trimmed  
8 to 12 baby turnips, peeled  
6 to 8 fingerling potatoes, scrubbed and cut lengthwise in halves  
1 or 2 large parsnips, peeled, trimmed, and cut diagonally into 1-inch-thick slices  
1 or 2 medium onions, trimmed, peeled and halved, each 1/2 cut into quarters  
1 or 2 large beets, peeled and cut into thick wedges  
1 or 2 kohlrabi bulbs, peeled and cut into thick wedges  
1 celery root, trimmed and halved, halves cut crosswise into 1-inch-thick slices  
1 whole head garlic, separated into cloves, unpeeled  
2 or 3 sprigs fresh rosemary, sage, or thyme  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Put all the vegetables and the herb sprigs in a large baking dish. Season well with salt and black pepper, drizzle generously with olive oil, and toss them with your hands to coat them evenly. Put the baking dish in the preheated oven and cook, stirring the vegetables occasionally, until they are tender and golden brown, about 45 minutes. Serve the vegetables from their baking dish or transfer them to a platter to accompany a roasted main course.