

MASSARO FARM HIRES MUNNO

LocalNews

FARM: Spring crop this year is first

From page 1

The general intent of a CSA is to offer sustainable, local farming. The organization sells shares to interested consumers; those shares entitle the consumer to a portion of the produce as it ripens over the growing season. The income from the shares is used towards sustaining the farm.

The efforts by the Massaro Farm Committee are about to pay off. The committee has accomplished a number of major milestones recently. The farm was awarded a \$300,000 federal grant in 2009 and was granted IRS status as a 501(c)3 organization, making it tax-exempt. Perhaps the most important step has been the successful hiring of a professional farmer. Munno has had extensive training in operating a farm, including the financial aspects of such a venture.

Munno took the reins of the Massaro CSA in hand, having acquired his farming tutelage in California and Massachusetts. After graduating from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Munno worked as the assistant manager at an organic farm run by the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Munno spent two years there. In fact, Munno was working at the California farm when the nation was hit with an outbreak of food-borne illness attributed to tainted spinach grown in California (at a different farm).

Subsequently, Munno moved to a CSA farm in Lincoln, Massachusetts, where he worked as the greenhouse manager and a grower's assistant.

The farm is part of the Food Project, a non-profit organization that supports locally-grown agriculture, educational outreach and hunger relief.

That CSA is a thriving entity, with 450 members. Along with providing locally-grown produce to area residents and providing educational opportunities for area youths, the CSA is active in hunger relief for the residents of Boston, donating 25% of its produce for hunger relief.

Munno was drawn to the Massaro CSA because of the tremendous community support for the CSA venture.

He was impressed with the effort and commitment put into developing a CSA. Munno said, "The community is really essential to a

farm."

In addition, Munno was attracted to the CSA's plans to develop a strong educational outreach program and its commitment to hunger relief.

Having come from a CSA with well-developed programs for education and hunger relief, Munno said, "I well align well with the Massaro CSA."

Munno's interest in farming, particularly locally-run farming, was sparked during his undergraduate years at Wesleyan.

In 1998, Wesleyan had a CSA that served its students. Munno was intrigued, and, in fact, pursued studies in environmental protection and sustainability.

Munno also admits that his interest in farming is closely linked to his love of food.

"I love food. I enjoy eating healthy, fresh food," said Munno.

As Munno draws up his plans for the spring, he projects that the farm will be able to offer 40 different types of vegetables and over 100 different varieties.

Some of the produce will be familiar — like carrots and lettuce, but some will be more unusual. Munno promised that the farm would provide aid for how to prepare those less well-known vegetables. Munno said, "There will be recipes involved with the shares."

Depending on the cooperation of the weather, Munno plans to start the season in late March or early April.

If all goes well, the existing farm house will also be ready for Munno to live in. The building has been gutted internally and is ready to be refurbished.

Jason Morrill, the president of the Massaro Farm Organization, was eager to begin work on the farm house.

The organization is hoping members of the community will step up to donate money and/or materials toward the completion of the house. Morrill pointed out that the farm is now a 501(c)3 corporation, so any donations would be tax deductible. Morrill said, "Now is a very good time to donate."

To learn more about the Massaro CSA, go to the following websites:

www.massarofarm.org/membership
www.massarofarmcsa.org/wp



Photo by Marilyn Moss

Steve Munno is the new farm manager for the Massaro Community Supported Agriculture Farm. The goal of the farm is to provide locally-grown produce that is sustainable. Money for the farm will come from shares sold to consumers, entitling them to a portion of the produce. Munno is poised to initiate the first growing season of the Massaro CSA.

Spring plantings already being considered

By Marilyn Moss
 Special to the Bulletin

WOODBIDGE — Steve Munno, the new farmer for the Massaro Community Supported Agriculture Farm, is already hard at work. This year will yield the first locally-grown produce from the Massaro CSA, a community-supported farm located in town. Munno's tenure as farm

manager began on Jan. 1, and Munno has already begun planning for the coming growing season. Munno is busy assessing the needs of the farm and choosing which crops to plant in the spring.

The idea to start a CSA in Woodbridge took hold in 2008 when the town began considering how best to use the 57 acre Massaro farm at 41 Ford Road. The Massaro family

had tilled the land for 40 years before retiring from farming. In order to preserve the land, the family passed the farm to the town for use in agricultural or recreational purposes.

At the request of the Woodbridge Conservation Commission, the town appointed a committee to pursue the goal of starting a CSA on the Massaro property.

See FARM, Page 8