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Hi Everyone, Despite the blast of heat, Fall is sure here. We had our "second earliest frost on record" this year, with frosts for 4 early-mornings in a row. (heavy enough that we had to wait for lettuce to thaw out before we could start picking) The previous record was Labor Day several years ago, which I remember because it was even worse and killed the last of the beans and tomatoes.

**AUUGH** – my gripe of the week is: Please stay on the paths in the U-pick greens. I know that it doesn't seem very important when you are just one person stepping in the planted beds to get from one bed to another, but realize there are over 400 people per week (plus kids) going through there, and it really does compact the soil which will affect the drainage (especially when we get our rainy season). When we prepare the beds, they are "fluffy" and the crew takes care to get the plastic mulch down without walking on the beds. Hint- if where you are standing seems picked over, just move down a little – the best leaves are usually on the far ends of the beds where less people have gone.

**PRESEASON SIGNUPS** paper forms are available, and also on the website. **NOTE ERROR** if you picked one up last week – the due date for the Pay in Full discount is Oct 15, (not Dec 15 which was on the form.) Generally, we can stretch that to the end of Oct, and you can do a postdated check too if you are waiting for a payday. **How much have prices gone up?** Only 60 cents per week. We are happy that we can keep cost down. Part of the reason is that this year we started charging a fee for credit cards, thereby saving over \$4,000 in bank fees. We appreciate that everyone was so understanding about that.

**Oh, and just one tiny little gripe regarding phone numbers.** We do not share or in any way give out your phone number, and if we need to call you, it is important! (like we found your wallet, or I didn't understand your phone message) So please give me your **best contact number on your signup form**, not a house phone that you only check occasionally, or your work phone good only during the daytime hours

What do we use the pre-season signup money for? First we replenish our reserve fund, putting back whatever we had to use up this season. Having a healthy cash reserve fund means the farm does not have to use credit or operating loans to keep functioning which saves a lot. Then we start ordering supplies for next season, most of which we can get discounts on for early ordering. We also try to do all the property and equipment repairs that we feel are necessary during the off-season, and take care of any winter-storm related damage that may occur. There are two employees that work during the winter months, so we also have payroll.

**IN THE SHARES: Spaghetti Squash!** If you had trouble with it last year, **see the instruction handout** in the farmstore! I cooked two of them and paid close attention to exactly what I did. They were perfect. Plus, we tried a new variety and like it a lot, as the squash are smaller and more manageable.

**End of the Season – not until Oct 22-25<sup>th</sup>.**

**PUMPKINS -** Be prepared to start picking them up next week!!! They are ripe early, and will not last in the fields until Oct! This week we will be counting them and let you know in next weeks newsletter how many per membership. Goal is to get them all picked up by the end of the first week of Oct.

More later-