

OUR NEWS :

Hello there! Here is Newsletter n°12 for October and November 2011

This month we have the grape producers and those producing melon and Butternut squash who will share their passion with us.

The exceptional weather, high temperatures and the lack of rain have seriously upset our production since March. In our region high tonnages are predicted, due to a high return, of squashes (butternut, musk and pumpkin), onions, potatoes, walnuts and apples.... Let's be sure that the specialized organic market will put all its energy and its knowledge into action in order to sell on its produce at a profitable price for the producer, whilst remaining accessible to the consumer.

We take our hats off to Francis, one of Biogaronne's faithful producers, who has managed to transform his land to organic and to Stéphanie and her uncle, the takeover is assured....

Enjoy your reading. Talk to you soon.
Best wishes, Jean-Luc



PRODUCTION PLANNING :

Products	October/November	Products	October/November
Red Beetroot	5 t	Fennel	15 à 20 t
Swiss Chard	5 t	Purple turnip	10 t
Carrots in Bunches	15 000 bunches	Yellow 'Boule d'or' Oyster Turnip	10 t
Carrots in sand	15 t	White Onions	50 t
Oyster mushrooms	2 t	Red Onions	20 t
Chinese cabbage	30 t	Leeks (end of October)	20 à 30 t
Red and white smooth cabbage	10 t	Flat Parsley	20 000 bunches
Butternut Squash	70 t	Pumpkin	50 t
Musk Squash	40 t	Long black radish	5 t
Custard Marrow	10 t	Raspberries	3 à 4 t
Jack Be Little Squash	10 t	Part dried prunes in conversion	3 à 4 t
Patidou Squash	10 t	Sharon fruit	10 t
Autumn Courgette	40 à 50 t	Dried walnuts	30 t
Round Nice Courgette	5 t	Kiwi (end of novembre)	40 à 50 t
Lettuces		GRAPES	
Batavia, Oak leaf, Round, Cos, Little gem	150 à 200 palettes	<i>Exalta Seedless</i>	15 t
		<i>Muscat de Hamburg</i>	15 t
		<i>Ribol</i>	15 t
Apples		Potatoes	
<i>Pilot, Pinova Corail, Dalinette, Pitchounette...</i>	50 à 80 t	<i>Charlotte, Ditta, Désiré, Nicola, ...</i>	70 t



THE PRODUCERS :



Stéphanie Lot et Garonne

*From the foot of the vines of Montmartre to the vines of the south west hills,
A successful transition*

I come from Paris originally, not far from Montmartre, where I was manager of a fitness centre. Then with my uncle we began working with people on their allotments to encourage them to go organic.

From the age of 10, I have been drawn to farming and my dream has really come true in setting up

here in June 2011 as an organic farmer.

We were put in touch with Francis by the Chamber of Agriculture in Agen. This farmer, organic since 1972, was looking for someone to take over and we wanted to come to the Lot et Garonne. Francis gave us confidence and has been very patient, as the path has been long and hard.

In 2009, we met Jean Luc Charbonneau and Biogaronne, while visiting SIFEL in Agen. Over the winter of 2009/2010 I had to take up my studies again to get my Certificate of Farm Management, and then over 2010/2011 we did our training with Francis, to harvest our first grapes at last.

The cultivating land of 2 hectares of vines (Muscat, Italia et Ribol), ½ hectare of peaches, ½ hectare of market gardening and 1/3 hectare set aside and woods.

We are going to replant a hectare of vines this winter in Exalta and Ribol and erect 1000 m² cold shelter in order to produce lambs' lettuce and spring vegetables.

We work with Biogaronne because they give a warm welcome and it is important for us to feel confident.

We know that Francis was a good farmer who had high quality tasting grapes and peaches and we are doing our best to keep this up.

In addition the technical support from Vini Vitis Bio is good useful advice. Jacques Réjalot is always ready to listen to our problems of production, which is indispensable to us.

I want to pass on this message: even if you are not from an agricultural background it is really possible to set up in organic farming. There is still not enough organic produce in France to respond to the growing demand. That is why we plan in three to five years' time to plant more vines and to construct more greenhouses.

Francis Lot et Garonne

I have been producing organically since 1972. At the time I was with 'Nature et Progrès', but all that has changed now with certificating organisations.

The handover of my farm took longer than expected, but I'm happy to know that Stephanie and her uncle are soon going to look after it and above all stay in organic production.

I hope that they will apply and continue to practice what I have taught them. For me, working on the soil at the foot of the vines is very important, as well as keeping grass strips between the rows in order to sustain the micro bacterial life of the soil and to have good produce.

I have been happy to deliver to Biogaronne since their set up in Port Sainte Marie. This company, which maintains the human element, works hard for the producers and it's reassuring to know that our produce will be priced at its best, from beginning to end.

I'm going to enjoy my retirement now, and my grandchildren, and I still intend to build my own 7 metre yacht and then to sail the bay of Arcachon.

**Christian
Lot et Garonne**

A joiner and builder by trade; I began production at the age of 19. Since then I've had a number of jobs: green grocer, craftsman, driver...

I started on a surface area of 96 hectares. When I was farming conventionally, I produced melon and cereals and I was also an administrator in Nérac until 1990.

Since 2004, everything is organic as I was fed up poisoning myself. I had had to use more and more products which were costing more and more money.

Getting the sprayer out was never a motivator for me, so I went over to organic. 70 hectares of cereals and protein vegetables, 18 hectares set aside and 8 hectares of open field comprising: 2.5 hectares of melon for June to August, 3.5 hectares of butternut squash, 1 hectare of autumn courgettes and ½ hectare of small pumpkin.

Also ½ hectare of open field aubergines for Bioviver and Danival, transformers who hope to develop their role as suppliers in this area.

In three to five years' time, I hope to stop working and am looking for someone to take over my farm. My grandson, who is 15 already helps me in his holidays and could perhaps secure the future of the farm.

I'm happy with Biogaronne, it's a good team, and whether in the office or in the depot, they always respect the producers. My concern is the distance, as it takes me about 2 hours there and back to deliver.



I fear that organic is trying so hard to become popular, that the supermarkets are taking over and so the prices paid for the products will no longer be the same, whilst we do manage to make a living at the moment.