

THE NEWS :

Hello to everyone, here is the 5th Newsletter for June and July 2010

In April we had high temperatures rising to as much as 33°C. In May, the ice saints were well named, for temperatures fell to near frost, and since the beginning of June it is rain that has taken over.

These unforeseeable changes in climate greatly disturb planting, the ensuing growth as well as the harvest. In addition they affect the quality of the fruits and vegetables once on the shelves...

It is up to us, the professionals in this field, to let the consumers know, so that they can continue to purchase our produce with confidence.



Enjoy your reading We'll be back soon,
Kind regards,
Jean-Luc

INFORMATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF ORGANIC AND DURABLE FARMING (SIAD) :

Biogaronne took part in the recent Exhibition from 3rd to 5th June, in Agen. A number of contacts were made with new producers in the South West, and some of whom were converting to organic farming. We can therefore envisage a significant increase in the volume of organic production, in the next 2 or 3 years in our region. Our approach is to accompany these producers

during this period, on a technical level, in partnership with the Agen chamber of agriculture for market gardening or organic Vini Vitis for dessert grapes, as well as on the sales front.

It seems to me essential to promote these fruits and vegetables during conversion as well as those who produce them, we cannot still complain about a lack of organic production, if we do nothing to help, when these farmers commit to a production that will protect our environment

Biogaronne currently has the following products in conversion : early potatoes, cherries, apricots ... and this winter there will be prunes!!

So let's buy, let's sell, and let's eat these products undergoing conversion!!



PRODUCTION PLANNING :

Produkten	Juni/Juli	Produkten	Juni/Juli
Frischer Knoblauch	15 à 20 t	Paprikaschoten	5 t
Auberginen	10 t	Neue Kartoffeln	20 t
Staudensellerie	15 t	Rispentomaten	35 à 40 t
Zucchini	150 t	Runde Tomaten	35 à 40 t
Fenchel	10 t	Kirschen	6 à 8 t
Ackerbohnen	10 t	Feigen	5 t
Grüne Bohnen	6 à 8 t	Erdbeeren (Mara & Charlotte)	20 t
Weißer Bundzwiebel	15 000 bunches	Rote Johannisbeeren	1 t
Glatte Petersilie	10 000 bunches	Charentais-Melonen	20 t
Erbsen	5 à 8 t	Blaubeere	8 à 10 t
Neuer Lauch	35 t	Pfirsich/Nektarine	20 t
		Goldene Reneklade	15 à 20 t



THE PRODUCERS :

Florence Lot et Garonne

«I am a native of the South West and I have always been in fruit and vegetables. To begin with, after studying agricultural engineering, I worked as a sales representative for a wholesaler in Toulouse.

Then I concentrated my training on sales and getting to know fruit and vegetables for all types of shop throughout France. Then finally, 2 years ago, I set up an agricultural business (away from the family environment) of 25.5ha of arable land entirely organic, on the clay/chalk slopes on the edge of the Gers. My aim as an organic producer is to respect the seasonality and authenticity of the produce. That is why I produce courgettes, aubergines, and field capsicum in summer, then in autumn and winter, various marrows, broccoli, red, white and green cabbage, as well as Brussels sprouts.

However, I must point out that access to quality organic seeds is a problem. Too often the preparation of organic seeds is geared to the amateur and in taking the risk of trying these out, you can sometimes lose a year and that year's revenue. We need to facilitate the requests for dispensation and the professional seed producers should pay serious attention to their organic ranges.

As far as I'm concerned, organic does not mean producing beautiful specimens at no matter the cost, but it is producing good, healthy produce. I think the future for organic farming lies in customer satisfaction. To guarantee to our clients, with the strict transportation standards of Biogaronne, optimum freshness, that I like!

To know that a courgette picked this morning is on the shelves in under 48 hours is really satisfying.»



Claude Tarn et Garonne

My land is situated in the north west of the Tarn et Garonne department, slopes which are clay/chalk, in the area of Quercy.

On an area of 90ha, I grow 60 ha of cereals, 5ha of dried vegetables (lentils, chick peas, white haricot beans), 4.5ha of vines for dessert grapes (Alphonse Lavallée, Ribol, Muscat, Centenial, Exalta et Chasselas en AOC Moissac), 3 ha in garlic and onions, 2 ha in various marrow varieties (Patisson, Jack Be little, Patidou, Potimarron, Butternut...) and

15 ha of meadow. Converting to organic has enabled me to get back to my trade as a farmer and to earn a proper living. I engaged in organic in 2001 and since 2009 all my

land is certified. My land lends itself well to growing garlic, and I have decided to develop this : the cloves, called « caieux » are planted between October and November. During the winter I weed by hand and I hoe several times to work the soil. Garlic doesn't usually need to be watered. The harvest of fresh garlic takes place from mid-May to the end of June, pulling up, cleaning, skinning and calibrating and packaging, all this is done manually.

Fresh garlic has more taste than dried garlic, but it doesn't keep as long. So after this date, garlic which is harvested is dried for three weeks and then sold as dried garlic from August to January.

Working with Biogaronne allows me to programme my production several months in advance and to be guaranteed an outlet for it. I would also like to pass on a message to other buyers: to find organic haricot beans or cherries at Christmas seems outrageous to me. One must respect the regional calendar of production in order to provide consumers with seasonal fruits and vegetables, which seems to me far more logical and in keeping with organic farming.



**Guillaume
Lot et Garonne**

«I come from the Netherlands. After finishing my studies in biology/ecology at university in 1979, I came to settle in France with my wife. We were two townies with a great passion: organic farming.

We wanted to show that organic farming was a real alternative to conventional farming, which is hazardous to the environment and to mankind. After 10 years in our first farm, spent in the picturesque slopes of the South West, we are now (for the last 20 years) settled on the banks of the Lot in a valley well-suited to market gardening.

My wife and I work, now, with 11 staff on a farm of 20ha: 1.5ha of glass houses, 6ha of open fields and 10ha of meadow dedicated to our other passion, horses, Frison breed.

Today, 30 years later, I realize, as a producer and manager of Biogaronne, that the message has got through.

In 2002, we created Biogaronne with 14 producers and Jean-Luc as our sales director. Today, more than 70 producers deliver to our group, and each week we have more requests from producers who want to work with us. A lot of young people are taking over family organic farms, or farms being converted. I find this reassuring for the future.

Amap, organic baskets, markets, shops and wholesalers are developing regularly. Biogaronne needs all the producers, large and small, convinced and conscientious in order to reply to the demand for organic fruit and vegetables in the South West.

I am convinced that organic farming is a durable alternative.»



**Sandrine
Pyrénées Atlantiques**

«My farm is situated 15 kms north of Pau, on the slopes of the Béarn. I have been in organic farming since 1994, with 3 ha of blueberries of which half is in full production, that is about 15 tons, and the other half will reach full production in 3 to 4 years.

A blueberry orchard starts producing only after 7 years from plantation and is in full production from 12 years. It was my father who originally planted the orchard with 5 different varieties, about 30 years ago, with up to 56 tons harvested at full production. At that time it was all sold frozen for jams but it wasn't at all viable.

When I took over the business in 1998, I only kept one variety BLUECROP and I targeted the organic fresh fruit

wholesale market as well as direct sales. I also rear beef cattle, "Blonde d'Aquitaine", which became organic in 2010, with 25 breeding cows on 30ha of land, the product of which is sold entirely through direct sales. In blueberries, last year, I sold about 9 tons to a consumer association, and at the farm, people come to pick their own for jam. The 6 tons sold by Biogaronne were packaged in 125gm punnets, all done by hand, and the labour costs rise each year impacting directly on the price.

I have 25 seasonal workers for 6 weeks from the end of June to mid July to pick and pack the blueberries and this enables us to send out up to 600 kg a day. I have been working with Biogaronne since it was set up, with a desire to invest in a distribution organisation, in which the producers themselves participate in the management and organization, not just by producing the fruits and vegetables. I am also President of Civam organic Béarn, which supports new organic farmers in my department. The network is getting established slowly, but it is a long term project.

In order to get to know my product, I invite you to come along during the open days which I organize each year in July, when I will be delighted to welcome you.»

