



OUR NEWS :

Hello everyone, here is Newsletter N°4 for April and May 2010.

Spring is here and so is the produce we have been waiting for as we emerge from winter: vegetables in bunches, asparagus, strawberries.....

We must be patient for some of these because the late cold weather and rain have delayed growth.

Biogaronne will be attending the first departmental conference of organic farming which takes place on 15th April 2010 in Temple sur Lot, in association with the Organic Agency, Arbio the organic joint trade organisation in Aquitaine, as well as the Regional Council, the General Council and the Chamber of Agriculture for Lot et Garonne.

We are also exhibiting at SIAD, International Fair of Durable Agriculture which is taking place in Agen from 3rd to 5th June 2010, in order to meet farmers and to encourage and assist them in moving towards organic farming.

Enjoy your reading ... 'talk' to you soon, best wishes Jean-Luc

PRODUCTION PLANNING :

Products	April/May	Products	April/May
White / purple Asparagus	15 t	New Leeks	10 t
Oyster Mushrooms	1 t	Gariguette and Ciflorette Strawberries	15 t
Courgettes	10 t	Round Strawberries	20 t
Broad Beans	5 t	Kiwi	100 t
Turnip bunches	50 000 bunches	Salad	
White Onion bunches	50 000 bunches	Lettuce, Oak Leaf, Webb	200 à 300 palettes
Flat Parsley	25.000 bunches	Little Gem and Cos	



THE PRODUCERS :

Didier Lot et Garonne

«I come from Normandy where I was already in agriculture and I set up in organic farming in the South West in 1999.

My plots are situated in the Vallée de Dropt on the border between the Gironde, Lot et Garonne and the Dordogne, with alluvial soil which is quite sandy.

At the moment I have 6 hectares of open fields for vegetables and 1 hectare under cover (vegetables in bunches, stick celery, old varieties of tomatoes, peppers)

15 hectares of land are being transformed into organic to increase my open field vegetable production (carrot, black winter radish, beetroot, turnip, lettuce...)

This enlargement will allow me to spread out the rotations and increase the amount of cereals and above all green fertilisers.

I have been working with Biogaronne since the beginning and I'm very satisfied with them, it allows me to sell on a significant volume of produce at a good price, I also have a shop at the farm which is open twice a week.

My aim is to produce quality vegetables high in flavour, and which keep well after harvest. These objectives dictate the choice of varieties and the methods of cultivation (limiting watering, prolonging the length of growth, harvest on request...)

I wish people did not expect the same standard of quality of presentation in organic vegetables as found in conventional farming, so that we're not just producing the same thing.»



Christine et Christian Lot et Garonne

“We are originally from Switzerland, trained as specialist teachers, and we set up in the South West as organic farmers in 1993.

Our land is situated close to the department of Les Landes, very sandy and conducive to growing asparagus.

We produce asparagus in the spring, and field courgettes and Chinese cabbage in the autumn. We also raise organic chickens for cooking, which gives us fertilizer to spread on our land.

We are very pleased to have been associated with Biogaronne since it started, because we know that the sales team is professional, and looks after the interests of its producers in a transparent manner.

We think that organic still has a bright future, and we don't understand why more producers have not set up in organic market gardening.”

Thierry Lot et Garonne

“My land is situated in the Masse Valley, which is the valley where the pioneers in organic farming began forty years or so ago.

On 70 hectares of agricultural land, I have 50 hectares of organic cereals, 14 hectares of organic market gardening in open fields and 6 hectares of conventional apple trees, which I intend converting in the future.

1 hectare of peas, 1 hectare of broad beans, and 1 to 2 hectares of autumn courgettes and green beans, as well as 2 hectares of strawberries which make up my open field cultivation. For this year I have set up 28,000 Gariguettes strawberry plants and 30,000 round strawberry plants (Matis and Cléry varieties). This cultivation on such a scale has required employing 9 to 10 staff, as well as a significant financial investment, notably for the plants.

The planting is carried out the first week of July, on plastic straw with an irrigation system. In August we take out the flowers, in September and October we cut out the suckers, beginning of February we clean up the plants, cut the leaves, and leave just the heart. Mid February we cover the plants with plastic tunnels. At the end of March, beginning of April we cover the earth between the rows with organic straw, which prevents the weeds from growing back, and the soil from splashing onto the strawberries when it rains and enables us to have clean packing cases.

I begin the season with Gariguettes around 20th April and finish in mid June with the round ones.

My Gariguettes plants are organic; however not the round varieties, which are accepted by special dispensation by the certifying organisation, because they don't exist in organic form yet, which gives our producers a real problem in finding quality plants.

I have been in organics since 1989, which is far more labour-intensive, but for me organic farming is an ideal, it enables consumers to eat healthily.

I have a 17 year old son who is studying agriculture, and I am hopeful that he will take over and continue this organic farm, especially as we are only 4km away from Biogaronne, which allows us to deliver our produce regularly very shortly after harvesting, guaranteeing its freshness.”



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