



**Vision:** *“A community where everyone belongs and participates”*

**Mission:** *“Together with our community, KW Habilitation inspires abilities to enrich the lives of children, youth, adults and families.”*

**Our Farm Mission:** *Connecting People to the land, food, and each other through sustainable agriculture.*



*1. Asparagus gone to seed at DFR. 2. Early Morning at DFR – crops covered. 3. Fennel and Lettuce Bed at 115. 4. Bird Houses painted at Our Farm Day with YEP. 5. First Market Pickup by Richard in 2022.*

## **Our Farm Annual Report 2022**

Our Farm has finished our ninth season in 2022. Wow where did the time go! This season went well as you will see from the report. Of course, we always have rewards and challenges, and you will see these throughout the report.

Weather is our number one concern every growing season. This year proved to be the biggest weather challenge ever. During our growing season May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to November 1, 2022, we received only 9.4 inches of rain. June was the worst month and the driest in 15 years in Waterloo. As you can imagine this would play a huge role in germinating and growing. Our Farm had to be very innovative in how we could keep our seeds moist and germinating and our transplant wet and happy. Believe me when I said it was a huge challenge this year.

Even with covid continuing mitigation measures from previous years allowed us to host Canada Summer Jobs, Volunteers, and the University of Waterloo Hockey Team for a large working group.

Our Farm grows each year. Growing space is used more efficiently, distribution continues with the “self-serve” grab and go cart each Wednesday. In 2022 we froze more excess food and distributed to homes. We implemented dehydration for our herbs. This proved to be a huge hit. Some new crops were introduced like fennel. New recipes always go with a new crop to inspire innovative ideas for cooking in

the homes. This proved to be a huge hit. Flowers bouquets are always a huge hit each Wednesday at market pickups.

Our Farm always experiences hurdles throughout the year. This year water proved to be in such short supply that we had to truck in 3500 gallons. Another year went by with only using hand tools to work over one-third acre of growing space. Even though we had the equipment for the whole growing season it could not be used due to the H & S not in place for using the equipment. It was a disappointment.

**Gardens: - 115 University Ave** – the space at 115 continues to grow fantastic food. More “hands on” crops are grown here. Lettuce is grown in the raised beds, and we continue to succession plant to ensure a beautiful harvest for each market. Green onions, kale, tomatoes, second growing of cucumbers, about 90 percent of all the flowers we grow, most of the herbs & radishes all make their home at 115.

All the garlic crops were grown at 115 this year and we had “garlic nematode bloat” About 10-20 percent of our crop was a loss. First time we ever had a garlic issue. Our Farm continues to manicure and care for the pond less water feature as well. We continue to remove grass strips to make more growing room and to reduce the grass cutting. Some of the garden is too shady to grow anything and we need to accommodate that each year in our crop rotation planning.

**DFR Site:** – Even though we had a tough year and a lack of rain, food production was good, but yields were down. Germination proved to be tough. Pests were more than ever this year. Earwigs were in all the crops we watered, and beetles loved the heat and eating our greens such as cabbage, choy etc. However, we tried new methods to retain moisture in the ground to help seeds germinate. More transplants were grown to help with the germination watering and that worked well. We used board and covered new carrot seed to keep rows wet, and we only watered first thing in the mornings. Good yields were beans, kohlrabi, cabbage (small but nice), raspberry crop was good, but season was short due to dry weather. Leeks, onions, squash, and other crops did well. Carrots were poor as germination was an issue and parsnips never grew. One good thing to note is we tried tomatoes again at the DFR site, traditionally we always had blight, but we had a decent crop. Early crops like asparagus and rhubarb did well.

**Participants:** – Inclusive Living Participates were on hold again this year. Jeff from DFR did help with watering at that site. Our Farm did host a Reach for It group activity and hosted two Yep groups over the summer. Activities were enjoyed by all.

**Rockway Mennonite Collegiate:** – on hold due to pandemic.

**Food Production at Our Farm:** - \$16,739.00

Inclusive Living Pickups – 267

Sil Pickups – 86

108 Sydney Apt Pickups – 68

Giving Basket at 108 - \$222.00

Our Farm Plant Sale – Held in May of 2022 - \$2,076.00.

Our Farm Jam/Salsa Sale – Started November 7<sup>th</sup> and still ongoing – Sales to date \$ 3,803.00.

**Corporate Groups and Community Groups:** – Our Farm hosted the University of Waterloo Men’s Hockey team on Monday October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. With Covid measures in place we had approximately 50

hours of work completed by the team. They lasagna layered beds that needed composting, moved extra bricks to skids, moved wood shavings and distributed around our berry bushes. It was great to have them back and to complete work that needed to be done.

**Volunteers:**

**115 Site:** - Janet

**DFR Site:** - Gerry, Alex, and Melanie

Total Volunteer Hours at Our Farm this Season

**Canada Summer Jobs Staff:**

**115 Site:** – Cooper and Evangeline – All were first time CSJ employees at Our Farm

**DFR Site:** – Breanna, Kasra, and Aidan – All were first time CSJ employees at Our Farm

**DFR Farmer:** – Aishwary joined the team this year. He was a great asset to the team. He will not be returning in 2023 as he decided to move on to explore other interests.

**Learning Opportunities for Our Farm:** – Jenny attended the EAFO conference in person for a one-day training on farm machinery usage, butchering, how to up your production and seed trials.

Canada Summer Job Gang/DFR Farmer had a tour of Fertile Ground Farm to see how a CSA runs and larger more intense growing operation. The team had a chance to see a new carrot washer and tour the greenhouse to see succession plantings of crops they grow.

**Donation from Our Farm to the Community: -**

Better Tent City – surplus fresh veggies - \$244.00

Working Centre - \$39.50

House of Friendship – surplus veggies and basket of garlic - \$72.00

Ray of Hope – tomato plants for community garden - \$75.00

Steed & Evans – water donation to DFR site

**Donation to Our Farm from the Community: -**

100 Woman Who Care Wilmot - \$10,000.00

Horse Manure – Fred and Maria Gaat – (neighboring horse farm to DFR)

Tools/Wheelbarrow – Hacienda Garden

Honey from Bee Blessed Honey – 12 jars for the Jam and Salsa Sale

Irrigation Plus continues to provide a discount for Farm “stuff” such as soil, pots etc.

**Community Users of DFR garden space: -**

**Seeds of Diversity** – Bob Wilfong has been using space at the DFR site for the last 6 years. He grows heirloom garlic and then distributes the bulbils to various parts of the country to keep strains of garlic viable. He is continuing in 2023.

**Bee Blessed Bee Keeping:** – Mark Frey continues to keep his bees at the DFR site. After a tough year in 2021 with both mite infestation, losing queens and several of his hives dying, he made a good comeback.

He is hoping for a good winter, will feed them through the winter with hope for a particularly good season in 2023.

**Bird Habitat at DFR site:** – all the houses had birds in them this year. We know this because each of the houses had nests in them when we did the fall cleanout. We strive to encourage the birds we want but I am sure we had a “rebel” among the group. A common sparrow. It was beautiful to watch the bluebirds all summer long.

**Our Farm Trail:** – The trail was well used at DFR. It is always great to be weeding in a bed, looking up, and seeing people walking on the trail. It takes lots of work to maintain and groom the trail but a good break from the garden once a week. Our trail was groomed monthly, trimming on both sides of the trail to keep long grass down and pulling weeds directly on the path. We noticed this year more than other years the seeds that blow from the field cover crop often germinate. These must be taken out by hand. Any ruts, or deep crevices from rain or wash outs are fixed by hand. Next year in 2023 we will need to look for a solution to germination on the path. A vinegar solution sprayed once a month would help but that is yet to be determined.

This year all the directional and signage for the trail was installed. We had great feedback about all the useful information on the signs. Everyone loved reading about the bees, trees we planted and the different trail sections and where they lead. We also installed an entrance sign and length of each trail section.

**What New Things and connections were made at Our Farm this year:**

New netting for bug control such as flea beetle. Longer hoops were purchased to accommodate wide beds.

New tarping – thick plastic was purchased for weed barrier. This was laid on a bed after it was prepped, or a crop removed to help keep weed growth down or to burn off a crop residue from the heat generated under the tarp.

Sandbags were also purchased to place on top of the tarps to hold them down on windy days.

Our Farm grew some of its succession seedlings such as cucumbers, lettuce, and zucchini to have ready when the first crops finished.

Sold excess Raspberries at Fertile Farm CSA pickup.

**Wrap Up:**

Overall, the 2022 season was successful. Getting over the hurdles took some maneuvering but healthy food was grown and distributed. The 2023 season is in the planning stages. New veggies – not sure yet. Waiting for all those wonderful seed catalogues to come in to explore. Good things from Our Farm will continue and we look forward to another growing season. Stay tuned!

Respectfully submitted,  
Jenny Weickert  
Our Farm Coordinator

