



CSA

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

WHAT IS CSA?

Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, is a way for individuals and families to invest in a local farm by purchasing a "share" of their products at the beginning of the season and receiving fresh food as it is harvested.



What is a "share"?

A share is an offering that varies from farm to farm in size and product mix, but is essentially a subscription of farm fresh food that is delivered or picked up on a regular basis. Sometimes CSA shares are also called memberships.

1 IS A CSA RIGHT FOR ME?



- Does your household like to cook?
- Does your schedule allow time to prepare several meals from scratch each week?
- Will it be fun to try new foods and recipes?
- Do you have a friend or neighbor who would enjoy any extra produce you may not be able to use before it spoils?

2 ASK A CSA FARMER



- What kind of products can I expect to receive?
- How much food will I get? Does the amount vary throughout the season?
- How many weeks does your program run?
- Are the shares pre-packaged or do members pick out some or all of their own items?
- What is the cost? Do you accept SNAP/EBT as a form of payment?
- Where do I go to pick up my share? On which days?
- What happens if I go on vacation?
- How long have you been running a CSA program?
- Tell me about your growing practices.



Shop around! Different farms offer different season lengths, product mixes, share sizes, pickup/drop off arrangements and price points.

3 WHY CSA?



- CSA's are often a better value than purchasing from a farmers market.
- Many CSA farms have special events just for members to celebrate the "Community" aspect of Community Supported Agriculture.
- By paying the farmer upfront for products you will receive later, you help their business thrive during months that crops are still growing and sales are low.

4 STICKER SHOCK

- CSA prices are typically calculated for an entire season and may sound like a lot of money when presented as a lump sum.
- Try dividing the total price by the number of weeks in the program to see how it fits into your weekly food budget.
- Some CSA programs allow members to pay with SNAP/EBT and Double Up Food Bucks.



5 WHAT TO EXPECT

- A deeper appreciation and understanding of the variety and seasonality of foods grown in Michigan.
- As a CSA member, you make a commitment to support your farmer and their business by sharing the risks and rewards of agriculture. Sometimes weather or other factors outside of the farmer's control can lead to crop failures, and you may not get a particular fruit or vegetable that year.
- It is likely that your CSA share will not supply 100% of your fruit and vegetable needs, particularly if you want foods that are out of season or just don't grow in Michigan.
- You may receive some items in your CSA share that are unfamiliar to you. This is a great opportunity to try something new!



http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi_fresh



MSU Extension's Michigan Fresh website offers fact sheets, tips, recipes, and videos on preparing everything from rutabagas and kohlrabi to old favorites like carrots and tomatoes:

To see what is harvested in Michigan each month

<http://foodsystems.msu.edu/uploads/files/resources/mi-produce-availability.pdf>

6 QUESTIONS ABOUT LOCAL FOOD?

Contact your local MSU Extension educator by calling 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464) or visit <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/experts>

