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Cycle Farm CSA Newsletter

February 14, 2013

What is a CSA?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership of mutual commitment between a farm and a community of supporters. CSA members purchase a "share" in the farm in the spring and are, in turn, provided with produce from the farm throughout the growing season. Becoming a CSA member creates a responsible relationship between people and the food they eat as well as a commitment to environmentally sound, local food production.

What does it mean to be a member?

Being a farm member means becoming a "farming partner", sharing the inherent risks as well as the potential bounty of the seasons. At Cycle Farm, we incorporate several growing techniques to protect members from weather-related shortfalls. CSA members have top priority throughout the season as they receive weekly shares of delicious, freshly harvested produce picked at its prime. If you love to eat, appreciate freshness and flavor, value local farming, and are willing to explore a different way to think about your food, join Cycle Farm for a CSA subscription in the 2013 season.



About us: 2013 will be our second year farming at Cycle Farm, a 3 acre farm in Spearfish Valley. We grow diverse fruits and vegetables for both the CSA and the weekly Spearfish Farmer's Market in the Park. We feel that farming here in Spearfish Valley enables us to have a meaningful engaged relationship with our community. Farming allows us to work directly on issues we are most concerned with, including building local resiliency and farmland preservation.



About our philosophy and practices: At Cycle Farm, we...

- produce food that is diverse, chemical-free and naturally grown.
- grow for flavor and nutrition, rather than ease of shipping and shelf-life.
- preferentially grow open-pollinated and regional varieties.
- use no-till, full-circle, sustainable farming practices to both build soil and grow food.
- seek methods that limit off-farm inputs, enhance land health, and encourage ecological diversity.
- work to build community resilience in Spearfish Valley by growing food for our neighbors.
- foster community engagement and education regarding our local food system.
- aim to connect with and promote this region's agricultural, land-based roots.

Nuts and Bolts: Our 2013 CSA share period will run for 18 weeks, from June 20 to October 17. The price is \$500 for an average weekly value of \$27.50. A typical share will generally feed a family of four, or a couple who really enjoy eating their veggies, depending on individual eating habits. Each week's share will contain anywhere from 7-11 different vegetables. The shares will be more plentiful in the summer months, simply because this is when our crops are in abundance. Also when available, we will add fresh cut flowers or herbs.

During the 2012 season, our first year farming, we provided 11 CSA shares over 18 weeks, from mid-June to mid-October. The total cost of the CSA plan was \$425, making the average cost of a weekly share roughly \$24. After careful deliberation, with calendars and spreadsheets, at the time we felt reasonably confident that we would be able to grow enough food to fill these shares fairly. As it turns out we underestimated ourselves. For our 2012 season, the total market value of each share was \$511. The average weekly market value of each share was just over \$28. To better reflect the true cost of production and not wanting to reduce the size of shares for this next season, we decided to raise the share price to reflect these numbers.

CSA pick-up is at the farm, Thursday afternoons from 4-7PM. We encourage CSA members to come to the farm each week and visit with us, take time to walk around the farm, see how things are growing. The weekly share pick-up is a good opportunity for this – we really enjoy getting to know you. Please pick up your farm share on the designated pickup day, on time, or send a friend, family member, or neighbor to pick up your share for you. With our current infrastructure, we cannot hold share baskets on the farm. All farm shares not picked up by 7:00PM on Thursday evening become Cycle Farm property – we will donate the share to a local family or the Spearfish Food Bank. We really appreciate your help with this, of course if a situation comes up and you can not make it to the pick-up time please call us and we'll work something out.

CSA Crops we are growing by season:

Spring/Early Summer crops:

Mustard greens, Radishes, Spinach, Bok choy, Lettuce, Chinese cabbage, Collard greens, Snow and snap peas, Beets, Scallions, Turnips, Herbs

Summer crops:

Lettuce, Swiss chard, Scallions, Carrots, Kale, Summer squash, Cucumbers, Green beans, Garlic scapes, Garlic, Peppers (sweet and hot), Eggplant, Tomatoes, New potatoes, Raspberries, Melon, Cabbage, Tomatillos, Broccoli, Fennel, Collard greens, Leeks, Mustards, Herbs, Cut Flowers

Fall Crops:

Broccoli, Kohlrabi, Onions, Potatoes, Celery, Daikon radish, Leeks, Carrots, Beets, Parsnips, Rutabaga, Spinach, Mustards, Chinese cabbage, Winter squash, Collards, Cabbage, Lettuce, Bussels sprouts, Garlic, Grapes, Fennel, Watermelons, Herbs

Each week's CSA pick-up will be set up buffet style, with a list of what is in each share for that week. We encourage you to bring your own box, basket, or grocery sack for loading up the items in your share. This helps save us from having to source boxes and bags. Members are also encouraged to bike to the farm to pick up their share. We are right in town and there is nothing quite as lovely as a summer evening ride along the bike path.

Other notes: Each week's CSA share is accompanied by a CSA newsletter. The newsletter has a list of what is in the share that week, a recipe or ideas on how to prepare something delicious with what you have, a farm update, and often a bit of farmy ramblings. In order to conserve resources, we are not printing the newsletter, but instead you can find it posted online through our website. If you would prefer a print copy please let us know. Cycle Farm also has farm fresh eggs for sale – first come, first served. We try to post photos and farm updates regularly throughout the season on our website – if you don't have time to tour the field, you might like to check in on what's happening online. And lastly, we would like to offer a couple discounted shares available to low-income families, and are working to figure out how best to coordinate this. If you are interested in helping facilitate a discounted CSA share, please let us know.



CSA Members are invited and encouraged to attend events at the farm. We have currently scheduled monthly volunteer work parties, a crop flight sampling, hop picking party, a Weed-and-Read, and an end of the season special Harvest Party. As always, please contact us with any questions, concerns or feedback.

Your farmers,
Trish and Jeremy