

Dear Ignatius Farm CSA Supporter,

Now that our 2009 farm season has ended Donald, Carl and I are looking forward to our Christmas break before we start gearing up for next summer. However, the planning gears are already in motion amidst our work on machinery storage, restaurant sales and preparing for our winter shares. By February of next year, only three months away, we will have hired our next crop of interns and will be laying the groundwork for both fieldwork and educational goals for each of them. We take the growing of our food seriously and we take the education of our interns seriously too. Interns do far more than 'labour' on the farm - they are here to learn and we honour and facilitate that throughout their time here.

As the founder of the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training in Ontario (CRAFT Ontario), with a strong reputation for solid internships, Ignatius Farm CSA has become a leader in Ontario's organic farming community. We completed two books last year based on our experience. Our Oh, to Grow! Primer for New Farmers was updated with a second edition. This resource is provided to interns throughout the CRAFT network to introduce them to organic agriculture concepts. Nurturing New Farmers is a guide for hosting interns and mentoring the next generation of farmers. We developed this resource for farmers in response to the many inquiries we receive about how we operate our internship. Last year in November, we also hosted the first Great Lakes Community Shared Agriculture Conference in collaboration with the Ecological Farmers Association and Canadian Organic Growers. Feedback comments included 'Best agriculture conference I've attended'. Many of our former interns and staff attended the conference, including Jennifer Campbell, who describes her farm operation below.



Jennifer shows off some bounty from her farm in Prince Edward Island.

After I graduated from Sir Sanford Flemming, I was accepted as an intern with Ignatius Farm CSA for the 2002 growing season. I had grown up on a conventional potato farm in PEI and was really excited and intrigued in the world of organic farming. The CSA model of farming/marketing was totally foreign to me but I quickly came to realize it was something I wanted to pursue. During my internship at the farm I was exposed to all aspects of running a successful farm such as planting, weeding, greenhouse maintenance, harvesting, budgeting, crop planning, observation and recording of trends, crop health, pest & weed

pressure, running the CSA pick-up days, communicating with share members and weekly planning of garden tasks. Heather was a great teacher and gave us interns many opportunities to take on responsibilities and to exercise rolls and skills we would use if and when we operated our own farms.

After I finished my internship I returned to PEI and started growing veggies on my family's farm as a hobby. While working full time at the local dairy, I slowly expanded the vegetable plots year after year and began selling at the local farmers market. My husband and I purchased our own farm in 2006 and in the spring of 2008 I left my job to pursue farming full time. We started our own CSA operation in 2008 with 13 members and expanded to 30 members in 2009 while also selling to a local store and the farmers market. We are expanding again for 2010 with 50 members and plan to continue and expand to 75 members in 2011.

The internship at Ignatius strongly shaped my career in organic agriculture and I am very grateful to Heather and other Ignatius Farm personnel for my time spent on the farm.

Jennifer Campbell

If we have done our jobs well, each of our interns leaves here with a healthy respect for food and how it is grown, a greater understanding of organic agriculture and the ability to walk more gently on the earth. Whether they move towards managing their own farm or pursuing other endeavours, we know that they are giving back to their communities as we have given to them.

Please consider donating to our internship program so that we can plan for next year's interns.

http://www.ignatiusguelph.ca/csa/csa_giving.html

To unsubscribe from our Ignatius Farm CSA Supporters list, please send an email to csamarket@ignatiusguelph.ca with 'Unsubscribe CSA Supporters' in the subject line.

Heather Lekx
CSA Farm Manager
Ignatius Farm Community Shared Agriculture
Ignatius Jesuit Centre of Guelph
5420 Hwy 6 North, RR#5, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2
www.ignatiusguelph.ca/csa
csafarmer@ignatiusguelph.ca
519.824.1250 ext. 275