

Ignatius Farm CSA News

January 2005



Ignatius CSA: 2005 Core Group

The Core Group at Ignatius is the link between the Farmer and interns, the members, and the landowner. The Core Group coordinates sale of shares, membership activities, the bi-weekly newsletter, and fundraising events. This year's core group members who have volunteered their time and talents are:

Co-ordinator/co-chair: Siobhan Hanley

Co-ordinator/co-chair: Yolanda Wiersma

Secretary: Delma Lobo

Secretary: Gail McCormack

Membership Co-ordinator: Sande MacEachern

Graphic Design and Marketing Co-ordinator:
Katherine Filleter

Human Resources Assistant, Business Advisor:
Moragh Lippert

Business Advisor: Hector Barber

Business Advisor: June Hofland

Membership Liaison: Pat Dares

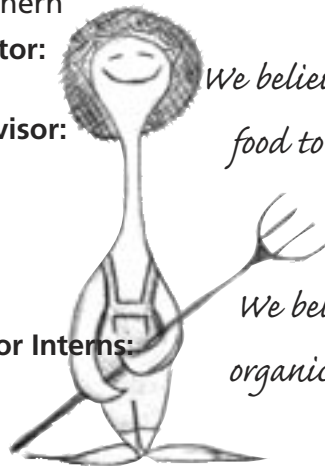
Hospitality Co-ordinator, Representative for Interns:
Julie Flaherty

Intern Rep: Erin Harkins

Jesuit/Landholder Rep: Bill Clarke

Members-at-Large: Pat Thomas, Terin Robinson

Farmer: Heather Lekx



Ignatius Farm CSA Vision Statement

*We believe in respect for people and for the land
and the importance of fostering community
among both.*

*We believe in the importance of sustainable
agricultural practices and the production of
healthy, organic food that is readily available
while still fresh.*

*We believe in connecting the people who eat this
food to those who grow it in a relationship of
mutuality.*

*We believe in the formation and training of
organic growers to assure a healthy future for
people and for the land.*

Winter Farm Store Hours

Tuesdays: 2-4 p.m.

Saturdays: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Our first fully certified organic beef is now available!

New CSA website!

The Ignatius Jesuit Centre is redeveloping its website, and is incorporating the CSA information. It is under construction, and will continue to be updated.

Our new web address is:

www.ignatiusguelph.ca/csa.html

Get in touch: CSA Office 824-1250 ext. 245 / E-mail: ignatiuscsa@sentex.net
www.ignatiusguelph.ca/csa.html

FARMER MUSINGS

by Heather Lekx

Blessings for 2005 to you and your household!

As I settle into the winter routine of farming and all of its planning and office activities, I'm very aware that the non-growing season really only lasts 3 months! Between the December field clean-up and March greenhouse seeding, we squeeze in evaluations, re-planning, and preparing, which encompasses: Core Group transitioning, budgeting, promotions, crop planning and seed selections, research and field planning, internship redesign, recruiting & hiring, intern housing upgrading, greenhouse repairs, modification and care of our machinery, speaking engagements, funding applications, conferences... and some holiday and extra sleep unavailable in other seasons!

I'm excited this winter to be going to Cuba, for a short holiday, and to visit various organic farms. Because of the political situation in Cuba, and the sanctions it has experienced, it has become a leader in both organic and urban agriculture – in practice and research. I anticipate being inspired and stepping off the plane almost directly into the greenhouse!

Backing up to conferences, I was thrilled in December to be joined by our first year-round intern (Erin Harkins) and 2 Core Group members (Siobhan Hanley, Moragh Lippert) for a CSA conference in Michigan. I felt our CSA maturing with our community, intern, and farmer representation. The development of our CSA is tangible to me in our Core Group meetings, where everyone's creativity and energy are working together. This growth is reflected in the various contributions in this newsletter. The commitment of the Core Group and Interns to Community Shared Agriculture enables us to farm as we do, so Thank-You to all involved! We'll see many of you at the Guelph Organic Conference, January 22nd-23rd. www.guelphorganicconf.ca

Back further to evaluations and re-planning: What will change for the CSA in 2005?

Crop alterations will be made according to the surveys and field results, taking into consideration weather effects, and the past 4 years experience. Membership survey responses indicated that 89% were satisfied with quantity and 94% were satisfied with quality of vegetables. Four crops came back with 5 or more requests for more: broccoli, eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes.

The last 3 had decreased yields because of the cool summer. However, I will plant extra this coming season to try and compensate for this possibility. Broccoli has truly been a battle with the gophers and a new pest to Ontario, the Swede Midge. It is a microscopic organism that eats the bud shortly after transplanting and leaves

you waiting for a broccoli head that ends up deformed, if it ever appears. These struggles are cause for some winter research, and a plan to replace the beds designated for Cauliflower with extra broccoli production. In short, we have not been able to produce quality cauliflower. Few members have remarked on its absence, so I will be researching new methods on a small scale, rather than waste the land unproductively.

Other crop plan modifications will be made to facilitate ease of planting, weeding and harvesting, but should continue to provide the variety of crops you are looking for. We are reducing the number of shares to be sold for 2005 to 115 shares, so that we can be more on top of the care of the many crops we grow.

Finally a small celebration: we purchased an additional weigh scale for the CSA pick-up area with funds available at the end of the growing season.

There will be another change on the farm in 2005. Ignatius Farm is simplifying and going out of beef production. This is a major change for the farm and has implications for the CSA (such as manure compost availability), which will involve significant planning this year. The plan is to have certified organic beef available for sale in the farm store through the summer. Apple production will be given more focus in the future.

For CSA shares to cover more of the cost of production, the share price is going up this year, to \$565. It remains a high value share with freshness, organic guarantee, and quality that exceeds what supermarkets can offer, for a lower price. *(And we think the farm makes for a more enjoyable trip for food.) (And we like the community activities and friends that come to the farm.) (And it's only \$28.25 per week.)* We are nearly 1/3 sold out as of Jan. 3/05, so send in your deposits and payments soon!

I'm looking forward to seeing you at our membership meeting in April and come June with a basket of fresh greens!

In solidarity with you for fresh, local, organic vegetables,
Heather

Farm Wish List

Can you donate any of these items around your home, if under used but in good shape?

| | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Food processor | Bicycles | Stove |
| Soup bowls | Sharp knives | Garlic press |
| Tool shed | Hand tools | Pick-up truck |

Tax receipt available for donation of pick-up truck

WORKING ON THE FARM - A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN INTERN

by Erin Harkins

I'm up by 5:30 am and getting ready to begin my day. I might decide to wake up with a nice hot shower, or just decide to slip right into yesterday's grubbies; they're going to get dirty again anyway. What's for breakfast? Whatever's fast, healthy and will keep me going until mid-morning break. Perhaps some granola and fruit or toast with peanut butter and a glass of orange juice. After brushing my teeth, it's out the door. It takes about 15 minutes to cycle to the farm from home on a nice day. Ideally I want to leave the house by 6:10 am to give myself plenty of time to take in the morning on the way to work. Realistically, it's usually a rush of sweaty, leg-pumping effort in order to avoid a tardy start.

Once I've reached the hill leading up to Orchard Park I'm almost there. Gliding in on two wheels, I park my bike and head inside to the Workshop. I say a friendly "hello" to the other four interns and Heather (*the farmer*) while hanging up my backpack and coat. Everyone is busy filling various water bottles, and competing to use the washroom. Next, it's to the CSA office. This is where our real work begins – where we hold our round-table discussions (*without the round table*). There, we determine what was good (*and maybe not so good*) about the previous day's events. We then plan out our working schedule for the day on a multi-coloured dry-erase board mounted on the wall. Today is a Tuesday, which means it's a harvest day - so, together with Heather, we devise a harvest chart. The chart tells us what vegetables to harvest that day, and how much of each variety we need to supply a bountiful harvest to our CSA members.

Now that we've touched base, and everyone is satisfied with the plan of action, it's time to slap on some sunscreen, cover-up with long-sleeved, light-weight shirts, throw on our hats and head out to the fields.

It's now time to harvest the lettuce heads. It's important to know that lettuces and other greens are the best quality when harvested first thing, as the tender leaves

will still be wet from dew and can be stored in a cool, shady spot before the sun and heat can wilt them. The lettuce knife is a bit dull, so I sharpen it with the whetstone, and proceed to spend the morning cutting various varieties of lettuce - Red leaf lettuce, Butterhead and Romaine. When finished at 11:45 am, my harvesting partner (*a volunteer*) and I have filled five crates with fresh, organic lettuce heads, and several plastic white buckets with organic broccoli, cabbage and herbs to be washed, refrigerated and picked up by CSA members later that day. I now have a bit of time to join the others and help finish harvesting snap peas before lunch. When finished, the sun is blazing high in the sky and it's hot. It's already 12:30 p.m. and time for lunch. Fortunately, one of the interns had left the field at 11:30 am to prepare a feast of fresh organic salad and a vegetable pasta dish. Without a doubt this is our favourite part of the day. Good conversation, relaxation and good food.

During the afternoon I'll be out in the fields, weeding the onions and carrots with two other interns. The carrots and onions are so small right now that they need as much help as they can get. Hopefully, the forecast is right this time and we'll be getting some rain by the end of the week to help them along.

The CSA pick-up is happening from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.. Approximately 65 people drop in over the course of three hours to select and weigh their vegetables. At 7 p.m. all workers pitch in to help clean up after the CSA members have picked up their share. At 7:30 p.m. I'm riding home on my bike. It's still light outside and I'm exhausted and looking forward to an early night. Tomorrow, well, I know I'll spend most of the day weeding more onions, leeks and carrots in order to ensure lots of healthy vegetables for September. The amazing part is that I'm already looking forward to seeing everyone again in the morning. More than anything, I've learned that the joy of working together is what keeps the farm growing.

THE BROADER FACE OF COMMUNITY SHARED AGRICULTURE by Siobhan Hanley

On November 12, 2004, four of us Ignatius Farm CSA Core Group Members drove to Tustin, Michigan for the first international conference for Community Supported Agriculture. We were quickly surrounded by people and information from many CSA organizations from many different places in the world. We found that "CSAs" have fundamental characteristics wherever they are: in each CSA the farmer is connected directly to the consumer. Members and participants share locally, organically produced food as well as some of the joys, responsibilities and risks of farming.

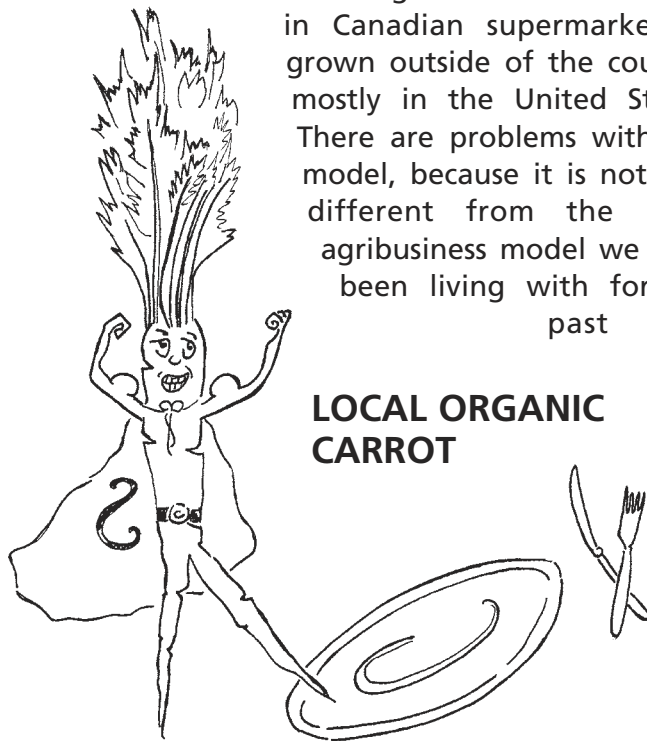
In our "weekend immersion" of workshops and shared meals we came to appreciate our CSA as one expression of a world wide movement which has many different models. As producers of healthy food, as agents of social change in middle class or inner city communities, as teachers of the cycles of life and as advocates for the creatures in our stewardship CSAs have much in common. At the same time, CSAs have many colourful and individual manifestations including the people who are part of them depending how and where each evolved. All are part of a "revolution" in the production of food that is both our most basic need and connection.

YOUR CSA: WHY LOCAL IS IMPORTANT

by Yolanda Wiersma

Environmentalists concerned about the impact of their food production on the planet's well-being should be celebrating the emergence of organic food into the mainstream, right? After all, isn't the fact that President's Choice has launched a line of organic foods a sign that the public is finally showing some concern about how their food is produced? Statistics show that organic food held 1.8% of the market share in Canada in 1999, this is expected to rise to 4.4% by 2010. These things should be celebrated as achievements in increasing environmental awareness... but with caution. The emergence of organics into the mainstream markets has the potential to hurt small, locally-based food producers, those who originated the organic movement in the first place.

Much organic food that is found in Canadian supermarkets is grown outside of the country, mostly in the United States. There are problems with this model, because it is not very different from the large agribusiness model we have been living with for the past few



LOCAL ORGANIC CARROT

decades. When a few large companies control the bulk of the market, they are able to financially out-compete small-scale farmers, for whom the transition to organic farming can often carry with it extra costs. Buying organic at the supermarket vs. from a local farmer (*like CSA members are doing!*) also means less money in the farmer's pocket. Direct sales from farmer to eater can return up to 80 cents

of each dollar spent to the farmer, conventional food models yield only 19 cents profit to those who grow the food.

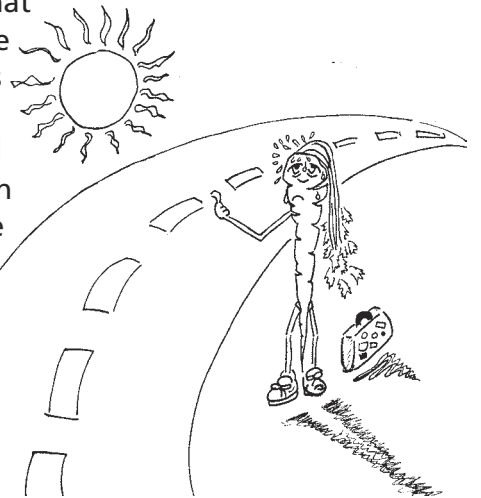
There are many advantages to buying locally grown organic food. For one, the product is fresher. A CSA member gets to eat a tomato that **CALIFORNIA CARROT** was harvested that

day and not one that spent 2 days on a truck from California and several days on the shelf at the supermarket.

Secondly, buying local organic means less of an ecological footprint in terms of the energy and

materials required to get the food from grower to eater. Finally, buying local means you, the eater, know exactly how the food was produced, and might even be involved with its production as part of a community effort. So, by getting your food from Ignatius CSA, you are not only getting good quality organic food, but you are part of an alternative economic food model.

Information: "When organics go mainstream" by Vijay Cuddeford. Alternatives Journal 29:4 (Fall 2003). Pp. 14-17.



Membership Meeting

Food, food activities, food & farm plans for 2005, food community building: for new and returning Ignatius CSA members.

Wednesday, April 20th, 7:30 p.m.

Ignatius Hall, Orchard Park Office Centre,
Ignatius Jesuit Centre

Come with a friend!

