

Ignatius Farm CSA News

January 2007



Updates From Your Farmer



I'm delighted to anticipate our 2007 growing season. 2006, our CSA's 6th growing season, was marked by evaluation and exploration, which will also characterize 2007. Tara and I, the Core Group of members, and the Business Advisory Committee welcome your feedback and ideas as the CSA develops. Come to our spring open house, call the farmer line at 519-824-1250 ext. 275, or catch us or in the fields or the workshop if you don't meet us at a CSA pick-up—we love getting to know our members!

In 2006, we hired **Caitlin Hall** to formalize our internship program and other educational CSA activities. Caitlin enthusiastically organized our internships, developed an intern program manual for us, and prepared a manual for other farms wishing to host interns. Caitlin also took on market research, exploring the viability of new crops, of additional sales in our farm store, of purchasing labour-saving equipment, and researching new markets for our vegetables. We will let you know the results of her research at our spring open house and in the summer newsletters. As Caitlin wraps up, we are excited that she is starting her own CSA at Mapleton's Organic Farm.

We also took the significant step in 2006 to hire **Tara Scott** as CSA Assistant Farmer. Tara has five years of experience in market vegetable farming, and a background in horticulture, landscape design, and horticultural therapy. Together we nurtured the interns, accelerating their learning and the effectiveness and quality of our production. Tara now coordinates the CSA harvests, pick-ups, and additional vegetable sales, which are critical for covering 2 farmer salaries.

In January, I begin adjusting the crop plan according to member feedback and field observations. Your suggestions help improve the CSA every year: Below is follow-up on the crops for which we received more than 6 comments from the membership surveys.

New crops

These crops have particular horticultural needs that prevented us from growing them in the past, and require preparations that may not make them available in 2007. New crops may be sold separately or increase share price.

Fruit and Berries: We are evaluating adding berries to our production, strawberries being the most likely. A 2007 planting would yield our first harvest in 2008.

Sweet Potatoes: I would love to grow them, but they require more heat, which we could have thanks to global climate change... or by using plastic mulch. We have avoided plastic mulch for our crops, and are looking into less wasteful methods of production.

Sweet Corn requires a good amount of land per production unit, needs electric fencing for raccoon protection, and is susceptible to insect larvae that can make CSA eaters squeamish! If a significant portion of the membership request corn, and promise not to squeal at Corn Borers, we will consider growing corn.

CSA crops you want more of...

Tomatoes: 2005 was dry with abundant tomatoes; 2006 was wet with less quality fruit. We planted fewer heritage cultivars in 2006, as members weren't taking them in previous years. Some of you missed them, so we'll add back in half as much as we originally grew and hopefully everyone will eat their favourite tomato! We know you love tomatoes, so we'll do our best to provide plentiful amounts.

More ►

CSA Newsletters are also available online at www.ignatiusguelph.ca/csa.html
Get in touch: CSA Office, 519-824-1250 ext. 245 / E-mail: csa_members@ignatiusguelph.ca

Garlic: We are increasing our garlic planting incrementally—an additional row each year, in hopes of satisfying your allium appetites.

CSA crops you could have less of...

Kale and other greens: Understood! Regular rains in 2006 meant that kale planting #1 was producing beautifully all summer while new plantings came on! This is one scenario of sharing both the risk and bounty... Ample greens are more rare in a hot, dry summer when the tomatoes are amazing. Diversity ensures that some crops will thrive with the weather they receive. Kale plans will be adjusted, while ensuring that our kale lovers still taste their favourite green.

As we plan and prepare for the 2007 growing season, we are mindful of the mild winter, the unknown consequences that it will have on pest and disease cycles, and of the effects that global climate change will incur on food and ecological systems. In this sobering mild weather, we acknowledge that buying from a local food system, such as our CSA, is only one part of tackling our household, regional, and global environmental responsibilities with the creativity that has been gifted to each of us. Thank-you for your dedication to our land and to the broader community!

Heather Leks

Greetings from Tara

It is difficult to believe that almost a year has passed since I started as Assistant Farmer at Ignatius. After a fascinating first season I am happy to report that I will be farming with you again in 2007.

Having experienced some of the trials of being a farmer, manager, and educator with Ignatius Farm CSA, I have learned some valuable lessons. Heather and I are developing ways to simplify and improve logistics for our next season.

Pre-packaged option

We will continue our pre-packaged service with a few changes. This season we will package items in a reusable plastic container to reduce the amount of disposable packaging. The cost for the Regular Share is \$125.00, which includes a \$15.00 deposit. The cost for the Small Share is \$100.00 (\$10.00 deposit). The deposit will be reimbursed with the return of all containers used at the end of the season.

"I love the element of surprise when picking up my veggies and seeing what has become ready to harvest. It makes cooking an adventure that changes with the seasons."

Kim Schneider, Ignatius farm CSA member

Farm Store

Our Market Developer is researching the possibility of offering a few more organic grocery items in the farm store. We will be sure to keep members updated as to the decisions that are made.

Internships

We are replacing the senior internship with an education internship. This intern will spend 50% of their time coordinating education programs, volunteers, and administrative details and spend the remainder of his/her time participating in field activities. Contact Heather for more information about internships in organic agriculture (csafarmer@ignatiusguelph.ca).

Working Share

We will offer a trial number of working share options in 2007 where members will work alongside the farm team each week to grow and harvest veggies. We welcome additional suggestions on how to ensure our vegetables are available to a broad group while keeping a balanced budget.





2007 Share Prices

The cost of the regular share is \$625 and the small share is \$390. We thank the members who have signed up early for next season and request that when you send in your initial payment you also include a completed membership form and post-dated cheques for any additional payments due.

Member Involvement

We invite members to contact us if you are interested in attending our Core Group and Business Advisory Committee meetings. These meetings offer insight into the details of our CSA and are attended by a fantastic group of dedicated CSA members that volunteer on your behalf to help ensure a smooth season.



"It is always so exciting to welcome the first snap peas in July, the emerging cherry tomatoes in late summer, winter squash as the first twinges of fall chill hits the air. I feel connected with the land, a fully participating member of the bioregional community."

Nina Pulver, Ignatius Farm CSA Member

Meals that Heal: C.S.A. Shareholder & Local Good Food Source

"People know what they want to eat," says Joshua Whitehead, owner of Meals That Heal at 297 Woolwich Street in Guelph. Josh describes the essence of Meals that Heals as: "you eat this for that". For example, a simple response to lack of vitamin C, Josh explains, "is to eat vitamin C-rich foods." Not all people can be vegetarian or raw foodists. "People know what they want to eat and not everyone wants to be a vegetarian."

"Let's make a good quality, real meat sandwich without any preservatives, or nitrates, or added sodium...a piece of meat that comes from a local supplier and is ethically raised. We use organic bread, perhaps yeast free or something else if they want that." For children, pizza dough might have "hidden nutrients" from a bit of added orange juice, confides Joshua.

He grew up in Scarborough, Ontario and was exposed to ethnic cooking styles early on. Later he played an active role in the nutrition of his mother, Yvonne, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1989: "I was her

caregiver." Joshua spent over 15 years studying food and cooking throughout the world. "Everywhere else in the world it's a given, food is preventative or curative..." He states: "the use of herbs has been replaced by the biomedical model."

"An important part of how people are nourished is: if they are eating within their tradition, it is comforting for them. Say you come from India—you might want to eat Indian food. How can we do that in a way that brings you the freshest, best quality ingredients, prepared with methods that don't damage the nutritional content and don't contribute toxicity?"

Meals that Heal delivers breakfast, lunch, and dinner and various combinations of daily meals and snacks. Some families order dinners once or twice a week.



Ignatius Farm CSA... Growing with Care



Mark Your Calendars

The **Guelph Organic Conference** is Friday, January 26th to Sunday, January 28th. Our farmer, Heather Lekx, will be a panelist on the public forum held Friday at 7:00pm. The discussion topic will be “What will the next generation of organics be like? Explore the future.” She will also be a guest speaker in Ann Clark’s seminar on “Make your Career in Organics” on Sunday at 1pm. Our booth will be set up at the trade show to promote our CSA so stop by to say hello downstairs in the University Centre.

We will be holding our **6th Annual CSA Open House** again in the spring. We encourage all our members to attend, bring children and friends, and take this opportunity to meet the farmers, interns and volunteers who work to grow your food. We’ll announce the date soon.

What’s the Big Deal About Buying Local?

There are lots of reasons why people may choose to buy locally. Buying locally is a way to support local farms and ensure they survive. It’s a way to support land used in an environmentally sustainable way. Local food is often fresher than food shipped long distances. For our family, there are personal reasons why we purchase not just locally—but at a local community shared agriculture (CSA) farm.

Something feels right about greeting and thanking the people who have worked hard to grow our food for that week. We develop a relationship and build trust. We begin to develop an appreciation for the amount of work involved in growing food.

Being a part of a CSA farm over the last six years has re-taught our family the joy of seasonal eating. With mainstream agriculture, we can get produce we want any time of the year. But when we purchase a share at the CSA we get what is growing that week. So when the season starts in June we look forward to our first leafy green salad after a winter of cabbage, carrot, and apple salads. And what a treat that is. We hanker for juicy tomatoes when we see them green on the vine in July. Anticipation seems to heighten enjoyment. Seasonal eating reminds us that food is a gift as much as a purchase.

Judy Miedema



We like our weekly trip to St. Ignatius; it's a time we can count on to visit with one another while enjoying...this 'Place of Peace'.

Sue Garcea and Kathy Brophy, Ignatius Farm CSA Members

Other Comments from the CSA Membership Survey...

"We love the CSA! Great food experience, totally satisfied...I have enjoyed working with the amazing young people as a volunteer...I hope you let me come back next year...I don't like kale very much...Thank you so much for providing such an excellent service to the community...We are very happy with the quality of vegetables and service at the store...Keep growing!"

If you have questions or need to contact the Ignatius Farm CSA, we can be reached at:

Ignatius Farm CSA, P.O. Box 1238, Guelph ON, N1H 6N6

519-824-1250 ext. 245

csa_members@ignatiusguelph.ca

www.ignatiusguelph.ca/csa.html

