

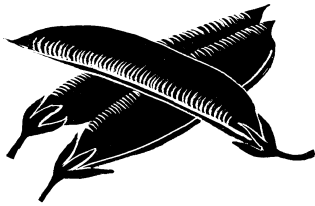
MACSAC

Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition

JUST EATING

A newsletter for CSA farm members and other folks interested in eating seasonally, locally, and organically

Spring 2000 Volume 1 Issue 1



Welcome 2000 CSA Members!

by David Perkins

MACSAC Coordinator and Farmer at Vermont Valley Community Farm

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Beautiful farms, good friends, tasty healthy food, and great fun; a bit of what it's about.

Welcome to Community Support Agriculture! Joining one of our dozen farms is a great opportunity for you, your family, and your health. The organic produce provided directly from your farmer is unbeatable for flavor, freshness, variety, and convenience. Our farming practices respect the environment and the people who consume the harvest. Membership offers you a relationship with the land, the source of your food and your farmers, a

unique and wonderful opportunity. Don't miss it!

A great amount has already been accomplished by the dedicated group of community members and farms that comprise the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC). Joining in the work of the Coalition is yet another opportunity. The surest answer to preserving small family farms is putting your food dollar directly in the hands of your farmer. Please read on to learn more from the perspective of other farmers, CSA members like yourself, and MACSAC volunteers.

Thank you for joining, and enjoy the bounty of the 2000 growing season! ✎

Lettuce, Love, and Locality

by Jack Kloppenberg

Associate Professor, UW-Madison
Department of Rural Sociology

Why be part of a CSA farm? Why choose local food? Surely readers of this newsletter have heard all the usual reasons: fresher carrots, tastier tomatoes, seeing the face of the farmer reflected in the glossy skin of an eggplant, treading more lightly on the land, knowing you are supporting family farmers, and strengthening the local economy. What can I add?

So I thought about why I garden. And I remembered how, in the remarkable and unseasonable heat of early March, I had tilled up one of the raised beds in front of my house. I

mixed together some old lettuce seed and some spinach and some arugula, and I sowed them as a kind of mesclun mix. I didn't have to do it. Almost certainly there would be more cold weather, and my planting was unlikely to survive. But I wanted to sow. It was pure joy to feel my muscles stretching in that vernal heat, to smell the freshly turned earth, to run the seed through my fingers, and to anticipate the emergence of the delicate plants that would feed the bodies and souls of my family and friends.

And I thought, maybe a good reason for people to join a CSA farm and eat locally is because those who work on CSA farms love what they are doing. CSA farmers don't farm for the money. Nor do the hired workers; they

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Why *Just Eating*?

CSA farming is an alternative relationship between farmers and consumers that is based on justice among communities, society, and the environment. Citizens and farmers take responsibility for this justice by making choices about the food we eat: how it is grown, harvested, and processed. After all, it's *Just Eating!*



MemberSpeak

by Lori Guderyon
Member of Vermont Valley
Community Farm

My earliest childhood memories are of chasing my brother and sister through rows of corn much taller than I was,

and of swinging across the creek on a rope swing. I can still bring back the smell of freshly baled hay and corn cobs in the silo. I had the good fortune of spending my early years on a large dairy farm; so when I heard about Vermont Valley, a CSA farm near Black Earth, I was intrigued. I had lived in Madison for almost 30 years, and though I had biked past many of the fertile farms in Dane County, I had never stopped to visit one. I also was beginning to realize that my son would soon grow up to be one of those children who believe that tomatoes grow in

fours wrapped in cellophane, and milk comes out cold.

The idea of receiving a box of freshly picked veggies delivered to our neighborhood weekly, in addition to being able to visit the farm to see where our vegetables were grown, was too good to pass up. Immediately, we realized the difference in the quality of the produce: the taste of leaf lettuce picked that morning has no comparison to the supermarket variety. The first year, we noticed we were eating more vegetables in a more creative way because we always had plenty of fresh veggies on hand. Over the years, we have grown to love new veggie dishes because of the recipes that come with each delivery. (Potato-kale soup or squash chili, anyone?)

My son has reaped the benefits of eating a healthier diet; he was the only one in his second grade class to report that his favorite food was spinach! When I asked him what was the best thing about belonging to the farm, he said it was making pesto at the Pesto Fest (an annual event), and the rope swing across the creek.

It's wonderful to know that the memories will live on. ✍

The Partner Shares Program: Extending the Reach of CSA

by Sharon Lezberg
Partner Shares Steering Committee

This year will be the fourth year that the Partner Shares Program has worked to make CSA shares available to low-income and special-needs households. By providing financial assistance to households and institutions, the program ensures that participants receive healthy, organic produce from a CSA farm share. The program's goals are:

1. To make cost of CSA shares affordable for low-income participants and to spread payments out over the course of the growing season
2. To provide access to healthy food
3. To ensure that CSA farmers receive the full price of a share

To accomplish these goals, the program has established an Assistance Fund which pays CSA farmers the regular price of the share at the beginning of the season. Members of low-income/special-needs households are then responsible for paying only a portion of the share cost back to the Assistance Fund over the course of the growing season.

Grants and donations for the Assistance Fund come from local organizations, religious groups, foundations, fundraising events, and individuals. We encourage CSA farm members to participate in fundraising events or to donate to the Assistance Fund, in order to increase support to households in need.

To raise funds and learn more about CSA farming and the Partner Shares Program, consider sponsoring a **Farm-a-Thon** through your community group or church organization. Farm-a-Thon participants seek sponsors for the labor that they do at a CSA farm during a partial- or full-day event. Farmers determine work activities according to the season and the number of people who will be involved. Farm-a-Thons offer an intensive, hands-on experience with CSA farming, while helping households in need.

If you prefer to send a donation, send a check to the address on the back of this newsletter, made payable to the Partner Shares Program. All donations are tax-deductible.

For more information or to schedule a Farm-a-Thon, call Doug at 226-0300. ✍

(Lettuce, Continued from page 1)

could be making more flipping hamburgers. And what accounts for the willingness of volunteers to turn out when needed to transplant onions or bring in the tomatoes before a hard freeze?

In the face of many other, often more remunerative possibilities, those who produce food for us on CSA farms have chosen their row to hoe not because they have to but because they want to. The fruits and vegetables and flowers from a CSA are the product of love and affection for the land, for the plants, and for the work itself. Is the same true of the broccoli grown for us by landless Mayan peasants on the blood soaked fields of Guatemala? Is it love that drives tractors across the pesticide drenched valleys of California's corporate lettuce country?

Why eat locally? Why join a CSA? Maybe because it's a heart-healthy thing to do. ✍

Just Eating is the quarterly newsletter of the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC). The goal is to provide information and educational materials for CSA members and the general public about CSA farming, sustainable agriculture, and eating seasonally and locally. Submissions are welcome 1 month prior to printing. Send to macsac@wrdc.org or 4915 Monona Drive #304, Monona WI 53716.

Editor: Sarah Lauffer. Newsletter Committee: Isabelle Dissart and Mark Voss. MACSAC logo and food book etchings: Bill Redinger.

Making the Transition to "Eating out of the Box"

by Sarah Lauffer
MACSAC Program Coordinator

As you embark on the bountiful journey of a CSA farm member, you will undoubtedly enjoy feasting on a multitude of sumptuous, Wisconsin-grown vegetables, fruits, and herbs.

But what about when the rogue kohlrabi, the stray kale, or the extra cucumber finds its way into your weekly box? You've paid good money for that food; your farmers worked hard to grow, tend, and harvest that food; should it really end up in your compost heap? But what can you possibly do with another hunk of celeriac?

Make the transition—and the commitment—to eating locally and seasonally.

How? The *Just Eating* newsletter will help you. We're developing a series of articles that will provide morsels and mouthfuls of mechanisms to destine your produce toward your tummy, not the compost.

This season, we'll explore MACSAC's own resource for making the transition, *From A to Z: A Guide to Farm-Fresh, Seasonal Produce*. So read about the food book in *The First Step* (the adjacent article), and eat away...and compost your coffee grounds instead. ✎

Notes from the Field

by Rink DaVee
Farmer at Shooting Star Farm

When Jenny and I started farming, we were drawn to the experience of working outside growing healthy organic vegetables. However, the reality of running a small vegetable farm means we are also the marketers and accountants as well as farmers. Though we enjoy the satisfaction and challenges of wearing the various hats so to speak; our initial motivation for operating Shooting Star Farm remains.

Each year I appreciate more and more one of the ways that CSA is different from our other markets. This is because the marketing and money are dealt with prior to the season. With each paid share, a bit of anxiety goes away. Though the hard work remains, the speculative aspect of farming is lessened and we can focus on growing the best tasting varieties, using the best growing practices and harvesting at a crop's peak. The CSA relationship helps us fulfill part of what drew us to farming in the first place. ✎

The First Step: *From Asparagus to Zucchini*



by Susan Streich-Boldt
Food Book Committee
Member and Member of
Harmony Valley Farm

From A to Z is chock full of recipes and resources to help you make the transition to eating seasonally and locally. Created as a "how-to" manual by MACSAC farmers to help members use their weekly harvest shares, this book suggests ways to weave local and seasonal food into the fabric of your diet.

Features include:

- 46 different vegetables and herbs, cooking tips, and 370+ recipes
- At least four recipes per vegetable (and some less common vegetables have twelve recipes!)
- Key information about when each vegetable appears in share boxes during the season
- Storage tips for extending the season
- Historical accounts of each vegetable's cultivation and nutritional content
- Descriptions of the development and philosophy of community supported agriculture

So enjoy the tastes, the challenges when using your harvest, your relationships with the producers and knowing that you are doing something good for yourself and the earth. With these authentic recipes at your fingertips, you can create and serve nutritious food for all seasons. ✎

To order a copy of
From A to Z,
call 608-226-0300
or email macsac@wrdc.org.
Copies are \$19.00, which
includes shipping.

MACSAC Membership and/or Contribution Form

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Enclosed, please find a check in the amount of:

\$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 \$30 Other \$ _____

Send checks, payable to MACSAC, to:

4915 Monona Drive, Suite 304, Monona WI 53716

Thank you for your support!

Upcoming Events for Spring 2000

Compiled by Isabelle Dissart, MACSAC volunteer

MACSAC's Spring Open House. 3/25, 1-4 pm. Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison WI. CSA farms will be available to answer questions for the 2000 growing season. Contact: Sarah Lauffer at 226-0300 x204.

Extensive list of the upcoming agricultural conferences, maintained by Agriculture Network Information Center. <http://www.agnic.org/mtg/>

Appetite for Change: Food, Community and Sustainability. 4/5, 4/19, 5/3 at 6:30-7:30 pm. Elizabeth Waters Dining Hall, 2100 Observatory Drive, Madison WI. Contact: Jack Kloppenburg, 608-262-6867 or 231-3058

Farm-To-Table: Growing Healthy Foodsheds and Community Conference. 3/24-26. Olympia WA. Contact: Curtis Beus, 360-417-2279 or beusc@wsu.edu

Soil, Food, and People: A BioIntensive Model for the New Century Conference. 3/7-29. Davis CA. Cost: \$195. Contact: 800-752-0881 or <http://www.universityextension.ucdavis.edu/biointensive>.

Frontiers in Biology. 4/1. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison WI. Topics: Emerging Issues in Food Safety, The Future of Plant Genomics and Crop Protection, The Future of Animal Health, Industry Perspective on the Future of Systems Management, Impact of Bioethics on Agricultural Biotechnology. Contact: <http://www.wisc.edu:2784/ippm/>

Permaculture Fundamentals Workshop. 4/22. Summertown TN. Contact: Albert Bates, 931-0964-4324 or ecovillage@thefarm.org

Organic Beekeeping Workshop. 4/28 at 7:30 pm and 4/30

at 5 pm. Contact: The Pfeiffer Center, 914-352-5020 x20 or info@pfeiffercenter.org

From Community-Campus Partnerships to Capitol Hill: A Policy Agenda for Health in the 21st Century Conference. 4/29-5/2. Washington DC.

Contact: sarena@u.washington.edu

Millennial Stews: Food and Food Systems in the Global City. 6/1-4. New York University, NY. Contact: Trish Lobenfeld, NYU, 212-998-5580, food.conference@nyu.edu, or www.nyu.edu/education/nutrition/foodconference

A Practical Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture (Workshop). 6/1. Boulder CO. Contact: Cheryl Mulholland, 303-666-6397, hedgerowfarm@aol.com, or <http://www.naropa.edu/sustainableagriculture.html>

Sustainable Weed Management. 6/8. Neely-Kinyon Research Farm, Greenfield IA. Contact: Diane Mayerfeld, 515-294-0887 or dmayerfe@iastate.edu

Training Workshop on Sustainable Agroecosystems & Environmental Issues. 6/9. Dryland Institute - West Texas A&M University, Canyon TX. Contact: WTAMU, 806-651-2299, or bstewart@mail.wtamu.edu

CSA Summer Agri-Culture Conference and Fair. 6/10. Stanislaus CA. Contact: Committee for Sustainable Agriculture, 831-763-2111, csaefc@csa-ifc.org, or <http://www.csa-efc.org>

Virginia's Peak of the Season Food and Wine Tasting Celebration (Conference). 6/17. Buena Vista VA. Contact: Andy Lee, 540-261-8775, goodearth@rockbridge.net, or <http://www.goodearthpub.com>

Conference of Rural Womens's Studies Association. 6/22. St. Paul MN. Contact: Debra Reid, debrareid@aol.com

**It's not late to join a CSA farm
or MACSAC for the 2000 season!
Call 226-0300 or email
macsac@wrdc.org for details.**

Place
Stamp
Here

Address
Correction
Requested



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