



Some Feedback for Provident Farm CSA

A member, whose name is withheld, inquires about the amount of food in the share.

This is my first experience with a CSA share. The vegetables have been delicious and I appreciate that they are organic. However, I am disappointed with the quantities I have gotten. I pick up the share on *** at ***. I understand that early season can be iffy in terms of what is available, but I presume we are now in full season. With the exception of last week, I haven't felt like I've gotten my money's worth. Would you please review the quantities I have been getting recently. Is this what I should have been receiving? I am wondering if this might be a communication issue...***

*** Identity of member omitted to preserve privacy.

On July 8 I received 5 # 9 oz total:

cucumber (1# 2 oz)
golden potatoes (2# 4 oz)
zucchini (11 oz)
Magda squash (12 oz)
yellow squash (12 oz)

On July 15, I received almost 14 # total:

green bean/ yellow bean mix (3 #)
potatoes-mix of purple/ russian/ red (4 #)
8-ball squash (1 for 1#)
Magda squash (3 totaling 2# 10 oz)
tomatoes (3# 5 oz)

Today, July 23, I received about 9 # 3 oz total:

cucumbers (2 totaling 1# 3 oz)
yellow beans (2#)
butterball potatoes (2#)
zucchini (10 oz)
8-ball squash (9 oz)
yellow squash (12 oz)
tomatoes (2#)

Thanks for your help.

Signed, CSA Member

Email Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2008 7:59 AM

Subject: Re: Weekly CSA shares disappointing

To: (CSA Member),

I am Kelly, and I am the farm hand at Provident Organic Farm. Jay is out of town and your email raised some concerns I think should be addressed.

First of all, my apologies that your share has not met your expectations. As a co-op, our shareholders come first and they get the best of the best of whatever we have. We take care of the members first and markets, restaurants, etc. last.

Our CSA was formed with many goals in mind. We want to provide local people with local food and develop a relationship with the people eating our food. We want to provide them with food they can share and enjoy as a community. We want to grow our food in conjunction with mother nature using the gifts she provided. And we certainly want people to feel like it is worth it to shop locally and organically.

One of the aspects of a CSA that usually makes it worthwhile to the members is the shared risk and reward. This means when mother nature has cooperated (and those silly farm hands!) the CSA makes out really well. It also means that members take on the same risk as the farmer as far as crops lost to flooding, drought, insects, etc. This year, most farms on the Eastern Shore had early germination problems due to cool soil. That problem has passed and we are in the height of our season and most crops are successful, and therefore the CSA members are receiving what we would call a bounty.

CSA members pay approximately \$22 to \$23 per week for their vegetables. Using the numbers you provided and the price list from OC Organics (fresh beans - from Guatemala) your monetary totals were :
July 8 - \$24, July 15 - \$45, July 22 - \$33.

We try very hard to be consistent and fair. Sometimes we can not offer what we planned to offer when we made our crop plan in February due to crop failure. There will be weeks when the share goes below the weekly cost the members are paying. There will be weeks when the share value is well above the weekly cost.

(Continued)

(Cont.) As a farm hand, I love my job. I get to grow good food for great people that share my belief that working with nature is the only way to farm. When I am finished harvesting, I don't box it up and put it on a refrigerated truck to go to a grocery store I will never visit. I put it on my truck and take it to people hand it to them personally and comment on the trials and triumphs of being a farm hand on Provident Organic Farm. And that makes it worth all the while.

Sincerely,
Kelly Carey, Farm hand

Note from Jay

When I went to The Center for Whole Communities in Vermont for the Whole Thinking Retreat, it was the first time ever that I had left the farm in the height of the season. Both Kelly and I were apprehensive about my leaving, but agreed that everything would be alright, somehow, and the opportunity for me was one I could not pass up. As you have seen, the farm, Kelly and I all survived. It did not occur to either of us that Kelly would have to respond to off farm emergencies.

As you will read, Kelly is incredibly dedicated to Provident Farm and the members of the CSA as well as Greenbranch Farm (Ted) and Sunrise Farm (Craig). I am truly blessed to have a friend and helper like Kelly, so are you.

Onward,
Jay

Recipe of the week

Fresh Vegetable and Pasta Medley - By Shelton Lankford

This is a sauce I made to go over some fresh Buitoni three-cheese tortellini, but it would work just as well over any type of pasta. It takes advantage of seasonal vegetables that are plentiful in August and bursting with flavor. Vary the Jalapeño according to personal taste. One or two without seeds for mild flavor and two or three with seeds for spicy. If you use the long skinny peppers we have received a couple of times recently, use about 4-5 inches without seeds in order to break a light sweat.

Ingredients

1 medium onion
1 green bell peppers
1-2 small banana peppers
1 small yellow squash or zucchini
2-3 Jalapeño or other hot pepper to taste
1 cup chopped basil
1/3 cup garlic chives or plain chives
and two cloves fresh garlic
4-5 large tomatoes
Two tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

In Your Share This Week

Eggplant
Tomatoes
Potatoes
Peppers
Scallions
Sunflowers

Dice the peppers, onions, and squash, and chop or grate the garlic. Chop the tomatoes, preserving as much of the juice as possible. In a large wok or skillet, saute the onions, chives, and garlic together. Add the peppers and basil. Cook all together over high heat for about 10 minutes, constantly stirring. Add the tomatoes, pepper, and salt to taste. Lower heat to simmer and cook for about 10 minutes. Add a splash or two of water as needed during cooking to prevent it getting too dry.

Boil water and prepare pasta according to package instructions. Tortellini is really good with this sauce, but experiment. When the pasta is cooked and drained, toss with the sauce and serve, topped with grated or shredded Italian cheese, such as romano or parmesan. For an extra treat, slice crusty artisan bread and top with olive oil, garlic, and grated cheese and lightly toast.

Serves 3-4 people.

Note: My cooking, like most of my endeavors, is not an exact science. I am of the "that looks about right" school of measuring, and ingredients are almost never the same twice in the same recipe. Caveat emptor!