



Mid-season Update - Shawn McEntee, CSA Treasurer

Part-season shares available for new members - see <http://www.providentorganicfarm.com/> for details.

Hi Folks,

This is your treasurer with a mid-season report on the financial situation for the CSA. Since this is the first year we've had three farmers heavily involved in production, and the first year Jay has been able to put more of his energy into managing production (rather than money), I thought it would be a good idea to remind everybody about the principles of the CSA and update members about how their money has been spent.

As Jay told us in the first newsletter this year "Each of us [farmers] will be paid for what we provide rather than receiving an income regardless of the amount of food we give members. This is different from the typical CSA model in that it does not provide a guaranteed income to the grower but it does provide a guaranteed market. . . . This financial arrangement shifts more responsibility to the membership" (Season 7, Volume 1: 1). As you all know, a full share – produce and newsletter for 25 weeks of the regular season – costs \$575.00. That means average weekly share costs are budgeted at \$23.00 but this just the goal. This year so far has been particularly bountiful; a fabulous growing season, well-prepared land, and good management have led to higher than expected yields. As you may have noticed, this abundance is reflected in the amount of produce you've been picking up every week.

Accounting shows us that weekly share costs have averaged just over \$27.00 so far this season (through August 24th, the 12th week of the season). What that means is that halfway through the season you have received approximately \$325.00 worth of your share rather than the \$276.00 worth you would have received if the value of shares had been equally divided across 25 weeks.

Currently, our farmers expect the bounty to fall off only marginally in the next couple of weeks but then remain essentially as high as it's been for the rest of the season. Clearly, should we continue to receive above average shares, the CSA will run out of money prior to the 25th week of the season (at this rate, we'll run out in mid to late October, almost a month before the produce 'runs out'). Since the bounty is high and will be available at least through the 25 weeks of the regular season (and maybe beyond, Jay has a plan for that), we are hurting our farmers if we either can't buy the last four weeks of produce or we can't buy most of what is available for harvest over the next 12 weeks of the season.

However, since the bounty is high, and the CSA must stay on budget, current members' shares will have cost less than \$20 on average per week for the rest of the season. It also means, however, that since our farmers are producing to meet the budgeted demand of \$23.00 weekly average shares, they will still have an excess. To absorb the excess and pay our farmers for what they are producing, we are selling partial-season shares for the rest of the season at \$20.00 per week. The partial-share CSA members will then be receiving the same 'share' as full-season members and, if we can sell between 22 and 50 partial-season shares, we can cover a significant portion of our farmers' costs through the end of the season.

So, if your neighbors or friends or coworkers have expressed an interest in the CSA this year, please let them know to talk with one of our farmers or send them to one of the pick-up sites to join for the rest of the season. Jay and Ted will have partial-season application forms available and they can be downloaded from the website as well.

Of course, selling the additional partial-season shares covers only the costs of the new members' shares – the CSA may still run out of money before the scheduled end of the season. We can't sell more shares than we have produce to supply and current accounting shows that average share costs need to be below \$20 per share per week to make full-season members' money last through Thanksgiving. So, we will keep you updated and report again as we near the end of the season – or the end of the money if that comes sooner. There are options for all eventualities.

Here's what Jay, Ted, Craig and I have discussed. Barring unforeseen weather or other calamities that would wipe-out production, our farmers expect to have good quality produce past the scheduled end of the season – perhaps as late as the end of the calendar year. In addition, Ted has excellent storage facilities providing the possibility of storage of both less perishable late season produce as well as oversupply of more perishable produce (in other words, we could freeze surplus produce). One option is to allow current members (first come, first served) and others to buy coupons or some fixed value of produce that could be redeemed in increments at regular season pick up-sites and times until the end of the calendar year or the produce runs out – whichever comes first. These coupons would have to be used before the end of 2008; they would not carry over

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into 2009. A slightly different or additional option would be some form of 'winter share' to the extent that produce is available beyond the end of the calendar year.

Bear in mind also, folks, that if you feel your upcoming \$20 weekly share might not get you through the week, you can always supplement it with produce from our farmers at the associated markets on pick-up day. You'll pay a bit more for it, but our farmers could certainly benefit from the increased market demand. And remind your friends, neighbors, and co-workers that CSA produce is an amazing value: safe, healthy, locally grown food that is remarkably inexpensive benefits everybody and is what community supported agriculture is all about.

Great bounty to us all,

Shawn

Want to do something about world poverty?

Kiva is a service that enables people who would like to help other people lift themselves up, by making it easy to fund micro-loans to entrepreneurs. When potential lenders review Kiva's profiles of deserving people who need a small loan to get started in a worthy endeavor, they can use Paypal or credit cards to make a loan of as little as \$25. Kiva's micro-finance partners distribute the loan funds to your chosen entrepreneur. Partners will also provide training and other assistance to increase the entrepreneur's chances of success. Over time, the entrepreneur repays the loan, the lenders are notified, and the money is returned to them. You can find out more at <http://www.kiva.org/>

---Submitted by Katherine Munson

Recipe of the week

Baba Ghanouj

This is a traditional Middle Eastern recipe for baba ghanouj, a thick but light spread that is delicious as a dip for pita bread or vegetables or as a filling in a sandwich. Its distinct, nutty flavor comes from tahini, a sesame paste that is widely available in specialty stores and many supermarkets. Angelic Organics Kitchen (adapted from Fields of Greens).

Serves 4

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 medium eggplants (about 1 1/2 pounds)
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/4-1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (1-1 1/2 large lemons)
- 1/3 cup tahini (sesame paste)
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced (1/2-1 teaspoon)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

In Your Share This Week

Eggplant
Red Tomatos
Heirloom Tomatos
Peppers

1. Preheat the oven to 375° F.
2. Rub 1 tablespoon of the oil over both whole eggplants and place them on a baking sheet. Roast, turning once or twice, until very soft, 30 to 45 minutes depending on size. Let cool.
3. Meanwhile, toast the pine nuts in a dry, heavy skillet (preferably cast iron) over high heat until they start to brown in spots and become fragrant. (Be careful not to overtoast them, as they will burn very quickly once toasted.) Immediately transfer the nuts to a dish to cool.
4. Cut the eggplants in half and scoop out the flesh. Purée the eggplant flesh in a food processor or finely chop it on a cutting board. Transfer to a bowl.
5. Add the lemon juice, tahini, garlic, cumin, salt, cayenne, and the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Mix until well combined.
6. Transfer to a serving bowl and garnish with cilantro or parsley and toasted pine nuts.