

Growing Culture

The Buffalo Organics Vegetable and Fruit Subscription
Program Newsletter
January 2004

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Dear vegetable lovers,

What a year! A new farm, a new baby, the new winter share program, 18 new cows, 13 of which were pregnant; it's no wonder you have not been hearing from us. We are back. We have lots of news, some old and some new. First off, thank you for buying our vegetables! Your support keeps us farming.

A review of the year is in order. It was wet. We were very thankful for our sandy soils.

Membership Cap

We provided about 200 families with fruit and vegetables last season. We do not want to become a big CSA. Many CSA's are growing beyond 500 members. Let's keep it simple. Would we grow over 200 varieties for 500 families? Would we trial as many varieties? Would we know the shareholders? Would we be enjoying ourselves? The answer is NO. Our long-term goal is to distribute vegetables, fruit, and specialty foods all year long. This year we are capping membership at 200 shares. We will accept all registrations until April 15th. After this date we will accept families if space is available.

If you have friends that might be interested in joining, please tell them about the farm. The bottom of the registration form has space to add names to our mailing list. Spread the word.

Organically Grown

Certification costs thousands of dollars in fees and requires many hours for paperwork. We are deeply committed to organic farming and have farmed no other way. We follow organic standards and keep detailed records but are not certified. Certification allows commodities like corn, soybeans, and milk to be traded internationally. It insures that peas grown in New Zealand for Cascadian Farms and sold frozen in Tops were grown according to uniform standards. *We always have and we always will grow organically.*

How we determine the cost of the share

In a sentence our pricing lies between wholesale and retail. Surveys returned consistently report that people are getting great value. When you buy a share or a bunch of arugula you are buying more than vegetables; you are supporting our family. We work very hard to earn a modest living. The price we receive for our shares makes it sustainable for us to continue doing what we love. By supporting us you not only get incredibly fresh and great tasting vegetables full of nutrients and vitality, but a food source you can trust.

The Winter Share and Spring Greens

This will be our second season offering a winter share. The 2003/04-share program enabled us to improve the share. We now have a very good idea of what quantities of crops we need to store and how much fermented vegetables are needed. We know how to store the crops to keep them vital and tasting good. We know what crops to store together. We have learned a lot and are ready to take the winter share to the next level. This season we are offering spring greens as part of the winter share. This is an experiment. Since we do not know what the quality or yield of the crop will be, *we are not charging for the greens* this season.

230 Varieties

This year we are continuing our shift to open pollinated vegetable and herb varieties. We feel they are the very best plants in terms of flavor, disease resistance, and nutrition.

We have increased the varieties we grow to 230, up from 140 in 2001. Many of the varieties you will not be able to find elsewhere. We trial new varieties every year. New crops this season include sweet corn, scorzonera, salsify, edible flowers, rosemary, tarragon and a few other surprises. If you have a favorite let us know.

Artisan Foods

Deb and I purchase as much of our food as possible locally. Not only does this support other farmers, but also it provides us with incredible, high quality artisan foods. You can not buy this food at Tops. Part of our mission is to make the great foods we eat available to you. This season we will offer shareholders raw honey, maple syrup, free-range eggs, and hopefully farmstead butter.

Greenhouse Tomatoes

Stewart is attending a sustainable greenhouse design and year round greenhouse workshop in March. When he comes back we will begin construction of our transplant greenhouse. Half of the 30' x 100' greenhouse will be used for seedlings and the other half will be used for growing soil culture tomatoes. We experimented growing greenhouse tomatoes at Arden Farm in East Aurora. The tomatoes were amazing. Compared to field grown tomatoes, the greenhouse tomatoes tasted sweeter with significantly less disease and splitting. The plan is to grow all of our indeterminate tomatoes inside.

Sweet Corn is not only for crows!

We love sweet corn and were not happy last season when the crows ate the entire crop. They would hop down the rows and dig out every seed. Two seedlings managed to emerge out of a field of thousands! This year we are planting closer to the house.

Substitutions

We will continue to offer a choice of staples for your share this season. When available we will have lettuce, cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, and potatoes on a weekly basis. You can substitute the staple item for anything in your share.

Take it Home and Use it

We are ordering cookbooks prepared by the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition. It is *A Guide to Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce* and is excellent. It tells you about the many different vegetables that you are likely to encounter in our program. A great feature is that it gives general cooking tips and tells you how to store the crop to keep it fresh. There are many easy to prepare recipes for each vegetable. The book is arranged by vegetable alphabetically so recipes are easy to find. We are going to make these available at cost which is \$15.00. You can order them on your registration form.

We will also be ordering canvas bags for you to take home your shares in. They will feature some nice artwork done by a shareholder and will also be available on the registration form for \$15.00.

Sweat for your Veggies

Again this season we are offering working shares. You pay \$20 and come every week on your scheduled day and you take home your share. Small shares generally work from 9 AM to 12:30 PM. Full shares start at 7 AM and finish at noon. Vegetables tend to taste better when you harvest them yourself. Most working shareholders return every season. Some people use the experience to learn how they can plan their own gardens. Insomniacs' report that a morning on the farm provides good nights sleep!

If you are interested in joining the harvest crew this season please contact us.

Beef

We purchased five feeders in the spring to raise as beef cattle. We had hoped to purchase many more but we could not find animals tame enough for our management style. When the opportunity arose to purchase a herd of thirteen bred heifers we jumped right in. The cows are almost tame enough to be pets. We were expecting our first calves to arrive in March. We were surprised to find a fresh calf in the barn in October! We named her Surprise. Now we have three calves. Eve our latest was born Christmas eve. The cows are the basis of our fertility program. The 500 pounds of hay they eat daily makes for excellent compost once it passes through them and mixes with the bedding. We have a sheltered area for the manure. Once the spring rains stop we will make compost piles outside. We plan of spreading beautiful compost on the fields this fall. In the meantime you can find Stewart and Jessica, the winter intern, in the barn feeding and shoveling.

Pork

Piglets will be arriving in April. We have enclosed an order form. Please send in a \$20.00 piglet payment with your order.

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Our website is online. Ken Stuczynski has been busy redeveloping the site. It looks great. What we plan on doing is having a picture of the farm every month taken from the same vantagepoint. This will give a seasonal perspective of what is happening on the farm. Newsletters, registration forms and other farm related business will also be posted there. Let us know what you would like to see included on the site. Our new email address is buffalocsa@NativeOfferings.com

Register by March 1st for the Early Bird Special

Thanks for making last season a success. Here is our new program. The biggest change this year is an increase in the price of the vegetable shares. Our operating costs have increased dramatically since we purchased the farm. We are building the infrastructure that will enable us to provide you with beautiful, delicious, and life filled vegetables for years to come.

What we do need is income now so we can purchase seeds and other supplies needed to grow vegetables in the coming season. Many of our expenses occur before the first lettuce head is harvested. We really need your support now. In appreciation of your early payment we are offering shares at last year's price if you send in your payment by March 1st. Shares can be paid in full or by installments.

The Early Bird Four Season Share

Full shares cost \$825 and small shares cost \$560.

The installment schedule for the Four Season Share.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Full</i>	<i>Small</i>
<i>March 1</i>	<i>\$412.50</i>	<i>\$280</i>
<i>First Distribution</i>	<i>\$412.50</i>	<i>\$280</i>

The Early Bird Summer Share

Full shares cost \$450 and small shares are \$300.

The installment Schedule for Summer Share and Fruit

<i>Date</i>	<i>Full</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Fruit</i>
<i>March 1</i>	<i>\$225</i>	<i>\$150</i>	<i>\$100</i>
<i>First Distribution</i>	<i>\$225</i>	<i>\$150</i>	<i>\$100</i>

The Early Bird July Start Share will be an option again this season that will appeal to those of you who do not want a lot of greens. The price of the share has been adjusted to reflect the smaller size of the June shares. During June the bulk of the share is greens.

The cost of a full share is \$390 and the small share is \$260.

The installment schedule for the July Start

<i>Date</i>	<i>Full</i>	<i>Small</i>
<i>March 1</i>	<i>\$195</i>	<i>\$130</i>
<i>July 6,8</i>	<i>\$195</i>	<i>\$130</i>

The Early Bird Winter Share

The cost for a large share is \$375 and small share is \$260.

