

Frequently asked Questions

What is a CSA? CSA stand for “Community Supported Agriculture”. It is a financial model of running a farm where customers pay for their “share of the harvest” upfront, then receive produce “dividends” as it becomes available. We the farmer benefit by receiving payments at the beginning of the growing season, when we need them the most, to buy seeds and supplies to produce food. This reduces the interest costs of loans to begin the season. The CSA partnership is good for you, good for the farm, and good for our earth.

Why join Marini Farm’s CSA?

- You receive fresh locally grown delicious vegetables and fruit
- Connect with your local grower. By investing you are helping to preserve the largest growing vegetable farm on the northshore that has been your local farm for more than 80 years.
- Allow you to try a full variety of fruit and vegetables
- Reduce your carbon footprint, local produce travels far less than grocery store produce (an average of 1,500 miles less!)
- To buy the same quality product received in the CSA, you would have to spend 20-50% more money than the cost of the share.

Does CSA mean organic? No. All of the fruits and vegetables that are grown on our farm are IPM (integrated Pest Management). We have practiced IPM on our farm for more than 3 decades and consider it the safest method of producing crops. We were one of the first farms in the nation to adopt this method and now it is used throughout the world. IPM ensures the consumer safe produce while also protecting the environment. We have also introduced biological controls, which uses beneficial insects to control unwanted pests, reducing the use of pesticide.

How do I apply? Fill out the application form provided on our website and in our stand and mail it back to us. Upon receiving your information we will add you to our e-mail list. This is how you will receive up to date information regarding your investment in the farm.

What is the cost of the CSA program? There are two share types a large and a small. The Large share costs \$650 and the small is \$375. A \$50 deposit is due at registration to secure your spot in the CSA. The next payment is due on March 1st \$300 for the large share and \$325 for the small share. Large share holders may choose to pay in full on March 1st, however if they choose to split the payment the second payment is due by Monday, May 2nd.

Why are specific due dates chosen? A CSA is designed to help absorb the yearly start up costs that beginning the growing season entails. Our growing season begins in our greenhouses in the early part of February and our planting in the fields in March. By receiving payment by March we hope to be able to pay for the cost of seeds and lessen the yearly start up loans. By May we are now paying a full staff to

plant and maintain the growing crops on more than 250 acres. This is how we grow the quality of produce that has come to be expected of Marini Farm.

What are the share sizes? The Large share will comfortably feed 4 people and will have a weekly value of \$30 plus on average. The Small share will feed 2 people and will have a value of \$17 plus on average.

Distribution of Shares: Shares will be distributed on Wednesdays from 9 AM – 6:30 PM. If you are unable to pick up your share you may designate someone to pick up for you. If you are running late and will not be at the Farm prior to our 6:30 closing, we recommend that you call ahead of time to let us know that you are on your way. We will leave your share out for pick up between 6:30 and 9 PM. After 9 PM all produce will be taken in. If you miss your pick up, we are unable to carry over your share to the next day or credit you for the next week. What we will do is donate your share to a local food pantry or a charitable organization.

Can I sign up after the last payment on May 2nd is due? Yes. If space is available at the time your application is received, we will contact you to work out a payment plan to get your membership started as soon as possible. However, since we pride ourselves on quality and customer service, if your application is received and our membership for the 2012 growing season is full we will put you on the waiting list for the 2013 growing season.

Will all the produce come from Marini Farms? Some CSA's do not grow anything, just market local farm products. It is a personal challenge for us to be the majority producer of the produce you will receive from our CSA. That in mind we do have crop failures and want to be sure you are satisfied, if we find the need to bring in produce it will only be high quality produce from other premium local growers that Marini Farm has cultivated partnerships with.

What if I receive something I do not like or want? Our CSA will initiate what is known as a swap system. You will receive your share upon your arrival; if there is something you do not want you may put it in our swap bin and choose something else that is in the bin. The swap bin will be filled with excess produce from the fields and stand. For example, on that day we may have an excess of carrots in the stand but not enough carrots to provide for the entire CSA so it is placed in the swap bin. The swap bin is on the honor system that you put back into the bin approximately what you take out - allowing other CSA members to enjoy the swap bin throughout the day.

Will there be additional benefits offered to CSA members? Yes. Throughout the season we will provide opportunities for tours and farm get-togethers as well as coupons to be used in the stand and for special events.

Why would I want to join a CSA if I can shop anytime in the store? A CSA enforces a commitment and relationship with your local farm. You become committed to buy and eat local all season. It also allows you to try new things that you normally might pass up just because you have never been introduced to it before.

Is the CSA less expensive than getting my vegetables elsewhere? You can always find produce cheaper somewhere else, but we have found that for the same quality vegetables grown with similar growing methods, the CSA can save the shareholder a lot of money.