



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?

A. Community Supported Agriculture consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm (in this case Tierra Miguel Farm) so that the farmland becomes the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Members or "share-holders" of the farm pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land and participating directly in food production.

We provide you with organic, locally grown, seasonal, fresh and nutritious produce delivered while the produce is still vital. Members also share in the risks of farming, including poor harvests due to unfavorable weather or pests. By direct sales to community members, who have provided the farmer with working capital in advance, growers receive better prices for their crops, gain some financial security, and are relieved of much of the burden of marketing.

Q. How do I sign up?

A. You can sign up anytime on our website with our Farmigo sign up wizard. Feel free to contact the office if you have questions or want to pay by check.

Q. What is your delivery schedule?

A. We deliver weekly.

Q. How much does a box cost?

A. You can invest in a 10 box CSA share for \$250. Buying larger shares gets you bonus boxes. More information is available in our sign up wizard.

Q. Why does the box cost what it does?

A. Our farm expenses include our land lease, water bill, electric bill, fuel costs, equipment costs (we have tractors), labor, seeds, compost, packaging materials, and more. The CSA covers a large portion of those costs. Conventional produce sold in supermarkets is artificially cheap due to government subsidies geared towards large-scale



producers and the ability of agribusiness companies to farm cheaply on an immense scale. There are hidden costs in these low prices including the cost to our health from eating food polluted with chemicals and devoid of nutrients and the cost to our environment including water, soil, and air.

Agricultural policy in the U.S. strongly affects the price of food. A “get big or get out” policy changed a system designed to prevent overproduction to one that encourages it. Government-subsidized basic agricultural commodities such as corn, wheat, and soybeans flooded the market and prices plummeted. Suddenly unable to break even, many small farmers were forced to sell their land to ever larger and more consolidated industrial farm corporations. Agriculture has changed radically. Today the farmer is so often just one factor in a giant food production, manufacturing, and delivery system called agribusiness. Farmers have to pay more for the production inputs they need: energy, fertilizer, etc. They receive an ever-diminishing price for their products, forcing them into debt or off the land¹. We price our CSA to cover the true cost of farming. Tierra Miguel is a non-profit. You are welcome to visit and see how we are investing your money into the land, into education and community outreach, and into food for all of us.

Q. Where are the sites to pick up a box of veggies?

A. Please view the second page of the pledge form:

<http://www.tierramiguelfarm.org/csa-forms.htm> for current sites. We stay in a 100 mile radius of the farm. If you do not see a site near you, please contact the office to see if we are developing a site in your area. You can also find CSAs through <http://www.localharvest.org>.

Q. How much produce is in a box? What is in a box?

A. Our boxes weigh about 15 pounds, depending on what we put in the box (strawberries vs. watermelon). The physical size of the box may be different on different days depending on what we are harvesting each week. Watermelon, for example, can't fit into our usual size box so we use bigger boxes to not squish the veggies inside. The box size increase does not mean the box will be filled at all times. When we have blueberries and strawberries the box contents are often less. To see the box contents, look at our online newsletter.

Q. What if I do not recognize some items in the box?

¹ Kimbrell, Andrew. Ed. Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture



A. We send a newsletter with each box that provides produce information, photos, and recipes. You can also view our harvest list or ask a more experienced CSA member for tips.

Q. Can I choose which fruits and vegetables I receive?

A. No you cannot choose what is in your box. We make up the boxes with the veggies and fruits that we picked the day prior.

Q. Are your Veggies certified organic?

A. Tierra Miguel Farm grows on a property that has been certified organic for more than fifteen years. We are currently certified organic by Stellar. We are in conversion to biodynamics.

Q. What happens to my share if I am going to be out of town on my day?

A. You can reschedule your share within the Farmigo sign up wizard on our website.

Q. What happens if I forget to pick up my box?

A. If you forget to pick up your box, we cannot replace it. You will receive a delivery schedule when you sign up. We try our best to adhere to that schedule and expect that you will too.

Q. Do you grow all of the box contents?

A. We do not grow all of the box contents. What we do not grow due to soil, climate, or other restrictions we get from other local organic farmers. In this way we increase the diversity of produce in your share and support other farmers in the area.

Q. What is the Tierra Miguel Foundation?

A. Tierra Miguel Foundation is an 84 acre education program and certified organic farm at the foot of Palomar Mountain in Northern San Diego County. We have been in operation since February 14, 2000. The Farm's function is to demonstrate sustainable agriculture and to provide a variety of educational opportunities about sustainable farming. We produce nutritious organic food and enhance and conserve the soil. We strive to demonstrate to the general public and to other food producers in the region that farming can be sustainable when conducted using conservation-specific agricultural practices. Our farming practices are common to certified organic and biodynamic



programs that involve enhancement of the soil through application of prepared compost and herbal preparations, cover crops and maintenance of biodiversity.

Q. Is it possible to visit the farm?

A. Absolutely! We love visitors. The first Saturday of every month we have an open house. All ages are welcome. Please bring a dish to share, closed toe shoes, a hat and water. The open house includes a farm tour, volunteer project, and potluck lunch. Our farm stand will also be open. We have biodynamic work days the last Saturday of every month. Please check our event calendar as the time may vary. Go to the Contact Us tab on our webpage for a map to the farm.

If you have a larger group or want to do a special event please contact our farm-to-school coordinator at jonathan.reinbold@tierramiguelfarm.org.

Q. Can I buy your produce at the farm?

A. We have a farm stand that sells our produce as well as produce and honey from other local producers. It is open Monday through Saturday from 7:30am to 4pm.

Q. What is Biodynamics?

A. To provide you with the best possible produce we practice biodynamic agriculture. Biodynamic agriculture is an advanced organic farming system focused on food quality and soil health. Biodynamics helps to restore the natural health and regenerative capacity of soils and produces healthier foods. One of the basic concepts of biodynamic agriculture is that food raised biodynamically is nutritionally superior and tastes better than food produced by conventional methods. We work with the Demeter Association, a certification program for biodynamically grown foods, which was established in 1928. We have been farming biodynamically for the last eight years. Biodynamics was the original organics of its time and pushes conventional organic farming closer to sustainability in a “closed system” farm.

Q. Does Biodynamics have anything to do with Genetically Modified Organisms. (GMO's)

A. Absolutely NOT! Biodynamics has nothing to do with GMOs. Genetically modified organism (GMO) or genetically engineered organism (GEO) is an organism whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques. These techniques are generally known as recombinant DNA technology. With this technology, DNA molecules from different sources are combined into one molecule to create a new set of



genes. This DNA is then transferred into an organism and causes the organism to acquire modified or novel traits.

Q. Can I cancel my subscription?

A. We do not guarantee refunds. You can contact the farm office if you have special circumstances.

Q. What happens if there is a crop failure?

A. We plant several successions of a variety of crops. It is rare that we have a complete crop failure. If we were to have a complete crop failure, it could be for a relatively short time until the next crop rotation matures. Thus any crop failure will have a limited impact on our CSA. This is the advantage of growing multiple successions of a variety of crops. Nevertheless, joining a CSA binds the consumer to the farmer and to all the risks and bounty inherent in farming.

Q. Why should I eat local produce?

A. Most fruit and vegetables sold in supermarkets are chosen for their ability to withstand industrial harvesting equipment and extended travel. Food in the United States travels an average of 1,300-2,000 miles from farm to table². Since 1935, the U.S. has lost 4.7 million farms³. Fewer than one million Americans now claim farming as a primary occupation⁴.

Top 10 Reasons for Eating Local⁵

1. Eating local eliminates the middleman.
2. Eating local saves on transportation.
3. Eating local improves food quality.
4. Eating local makes at-home eating worth the time and effort.
5. Eating local provides more meaningful food choices.
6. Eating local contributes to a local economy.
7. Eating local helps save farmland.
8. Eating local allows people to reconnect.
9. Eating local restores integrity to the food system.

² <http://www.worldwatch.org>

³ Nordberg,-Hodge, Helena. Et al. Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness

⁴ Rosset, Peter. "The Multiple Functions and Benefits of Small Farm Agriculture." The Institute for Food and Development Policy

⁵ Ikerd, John. Eating Local: A Matter of Integrity



10. Eating local helps build a sustainable society.

Top 10 Reasons to Eat Organic⁶

1. Reduce the toxic load: keep chemicals out of the air, water, soil, and our bodies.
2. Reduce if not eliminate off farm pollution
3. Protect future generations
4. Build healthy soil
5. Taste better and truer flavor
6. Assist family farmers of all sizes
7. Avoid hasty and poor science in your food
8. Eating with a sense of place
9. Promote biodiversity
10. Celebrate the culture of agriculture

⁶ Greene, Alan. Et al. "Top 10 Reasons to Support Organic in the 21st Century"
<http://www.organic.org/articles>. 11/5/2008.