

Wairarapa Eco Farms

Artisan Growers of Genuine Produce



FAQ's about our CSA

What is a CSA?

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. The CSA model for farming is also referred to as subscription farming or farm shares. In this model one subscribes a season's worth of vegetables, sharing both the risks and bounty of agriculture. You place your food dollar directly in the hands of a local family farm and in exchange receive a share of fresh, organically grown vegetables each week delivered to your local neighborhood in Palmerston North, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt and Aro Valley, Mt Victoria Berhampore, Kilbirnie (new), and Seatoun (New) in Wellington.

By joining our farm as a CSA member you gain greater knowledge of where your food comes from and how it is produced through weekly newsletters, farm visits, and recipes. Community Supported Agriculture unites farmers and consumers to create direct and mutually beneficial relationships around the production of environmentally sustainable and healthy local food. By joining a CSA you support small farms and a production system which provides nutritious and fresh food for your family.

Why would I join?

1. It tastes great. Food grown at Wairarapa Eco Farms is freshly harvested. It's crisp, sweet and loaded with flavour. Produce in New Zealand shops often travels long distances on trucks or even planes and then it is stored in warehouses.
2. It is very nutritious. We are a low input farm, which means that the plants get their nutrients from the soil, not from added fertilisers. They become nutrient dense and will fill you up. Also, locally grown food, collected at our CSA pick-up soon after harvest, retains its nutrients.
3. You help preserve genetic diversity. In the modern industrial agricultural system, varieties are chosen for their ability to ripen simultaneously and withstand harvesting equipment; for a tough skin that can survive packing and shipping; and for an ability to have a long shelf life in the store. In contrast, at Wairarapa Eco Farms, we grow a huge number of varieties to provide a long season of harvest, an array of eye-catching colours, and the best flavours.
4. It is safe. With all the issues related to food safety, there's an assurance that comes from looking a farmer in the eye or walking in the fields where your food comes from. At Wairarapa Eco Farms, you get to know "your farmer" and know that we take our responsibility to our members seriously.
5. You support local farm families. All over New Zealand, farmers are a vanishing breed. And no wonder – commodity prices are at historic lows, often below the cost of production. Local farmers who sell direct to consumers cut out the middleman and get full retail price for their food – which means farm families can afford to stay on the farm, and keep it active.
6. You help build a community. When you buy direct from Wairarapa Eco Farms, you are engaging in a time-honoured connection between eater and grower, and you are supporting a local business. It gives you access to a farm where you, your children and grandchildren can learn about nature and agriculture.
7. You help preserve open space. Our agricultural landscape will survive only as long as farms are financially viable. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive about preserving the agricultural landscape.

8. It is educational. For the past 100 years most New Zealanders have been increasingly distanced from their food. A CSA is a direct link between rural farmer and an urban family and through our website and regular newsletters and farm days you and your family have a chance to feel part of the farm and learn about seasonal growing and growing issues that we face on a day to day basis.
9. It benefits the environment and wildlife. Our organic farm is a place where the resources of fertile soil and clean water are valued. We grow cover crops to prevent erosion and replace nutrients used by our crops. Additionally, the habitat of our farm provides a home for wildlife.
10. It is an investment in our future. By supporting local farmers today, you can help ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow, and that future generations will have access to nourishing, flavourful, and abundant food.

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What do I receive as a CSA member?

- A year round supply of vegetable/fruit deliveries if you subscribe for a year, or 13 week supply per season. Our CSA is designed to bring you a diverse and seasonal cornucopia of produce. Each week you will receive a selection of at least 10 types of vegetables (in our standard large veggie share) from the different vegetable families.
- Regular farm newsletter with recipes.
- Farm events
- Ability to order additional canning vegetables, organic eggs and apple juice, all produced on our farm.
- A farm in which you can be involved in diverse ways – from harvesting your own food to letting us know your preferences for vegetable varieties. We are dedicated to answering your questions on how we grow your food or how to prepare the vegetables in your share.

What to expect in your share?

- Sample Fruit Box (\$10) April 2012: 1.2 kg Braeburn apples, 1 kg quinces and 600 grams of oranges.
- Sample Small Veggie Box (\$16.25) April 2012: 1.2 kg Agria potatoes, 600 grams Jumbo carrots, 2 bulbs garlic (the real ones), 2 short cucumbers, and 2 broccolis. (At least 5 different items).
- Sample Large Veggie Box (\$32.50) April 2012: 1.5 kg Agria potatoes, 600 grams Jumbo carrots, 2 bulbs garlic (the real ones), 1 short cucumber, 2 pak choy, 100 grams of snow peas, 1 Cos lettuce, 1 pumpkin, 200 grams of cavalo nero kale, and 250 grams of baby chard (at least 10 different items).

What if I do not like some types of produce?

To make it work for a small farm like ours, and as our ecological mixed farm is very labour intensive we have to keep the shares all the same. We have recently introduced potato-free shares, which mean that if you subscribe to one of these we will substitute the potatoes with something else.

Via our online shop you can add certain items we have in bulk extra if you like. Another way of dealing with produce you are not keen/ or extra keen on is to talk to other members in your pick up, as we have learned that everyone's taste buds are different and what you dislike someone else likes, and vice versa.

How do I join?

It's very simple. Just go to our website www.wefs.co.nz and go to the page about our CSA.

Click "join" and fill out all the details about yourself so we can contact you, about the shares you like, where you like to pick up and how long you like to join for. Click "send" and it ends up in our mailbox. We will then contact you with an email letter confirming you have joined, we'll send an invoice and some details about the pickup location and particulars about that site.

How does the CSA delivery system work?

Once you have joined, your name is on one of our weekly harvest and delivery lists. On Monday and Tuesday we harvest all the crops for that week. On Wednesday we have a big pack out and on

Thursday morning our local farm driver/courier drops it off at the different pick up locations in the region.

Each week, you go to your Pick Up location, during the time allotted, and pick up your share of fruit and vegetables to take home with you (we do offer door-to-door delivery via our online shop, but this incurs a packing and delivery fee).

In general you will find your vegetable and fruit shares packed in paper check out bags. There is a Pick-Up Protocol that explains it in detail and needs to be followed to ensure everything goes to plan and everyone on the list receives his/her share.

What if I go away for a week or more?

We understand that many people go away on holiday some time during the year and we are happy to hold you weekly subscription when you are away, unless you can find someone to take over your sub when you are away, or like the idea to gift your weekly order to a friend or family member!