

Community Supported Agriculture at Against the Grain

What is a CSA?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a way for members to connect directly to their local food system by engaging with a local farmer in their area. The CSA model took root in the United States when a group of community members, who wanted to help their local farms grow and succeed, chose to directly invest in a farm at the beginning of a growing season. Their investments helped to offset the seasonal start-up costs the farm faced. In exchange for their investment, these members shared the bounty that the farm produced that year. This type of relationship is at the heart of the local food movement and is the material of which the fabric of local economies and communities is woven.

How does ATG's CSA fit in?

As local food systems have developed, the CSA model has taken many different forms. ATG's CSA is based with this initial model in mind, but the arrangement is a bit more formalized. By joining ATG's CSA, members still "invest" in the farm at the beginning of the season, and in return for their investment, CSA members are guaranteed the highest quality produce that the farm produces. We plan our planting schedule with the composition of the CSA boxes in mind and plan our boxes to spread the harvest out equally across all 20 weeks of the regular season. We strive to avoid loading members up with too much food during peak production times or having lean boxes in the shoulder seasons. To further strengthen the relationship between CSA members and the farm, we host several field days/CSA membership gatherings at the farm throughout the season to keep members connected to the farm and farmers who grow their food.

Shared bounty and shared risk

By investing in the farm, you are also participating in the possible risks involved in farming. These risks are not limited to, but primarily consist of, weather events like heavy rains, drought, high winds, and hail. CSA members trust their farmer to mitigate these risks through soil building practices, crop rotation, succession planting and variety selection. At Against the Grain, we consider CSA planning and production to be advanced level agricultural production and management. For this reason, we first market-farmed at our current location for four years to build our soil and get to know our farm organism before launching the CSA. We honor the trust and investment of our members by filling their boxes with the best that the farm produces.

Food justice and the Cost Share program

CSA members have the opportunity to support food security for each other by participating in the CSA Cost Share program. Members who are able and willing can contribute to the Cost Share fund to support those with limited financial means.

Starting in 2018, ATG delivered 4 CSA shares at no or low cost to elderly and underserved community members. The program has grown, thanks to support from our CSA members, and during the 2021 season, ATG offered 15 regular season CSA shares and 5 fall extension shares at reduced or no cost to neighbors and community members in the High Country! If you are interested in exploring the possibility of becoming a CSA cost share member or know of someone seeking access to local food, please email the farm at atgfarm@gmail.com.

Gratitude and Relationships

The farmers and farm crew are so grateful for the farm's relationship with CSA members. We are honored and humbled by the trust that members place in the farm with their pre-season membership payments. This gesture of good faith raises our spirits year after year to grow beautiful, nutritious food for members of our community!