

# Customer Supported Agriculture (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 off-set the seasonal start-up costs the farm faced. In exchange for their investment, these members received 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.

As local food systems have developed, the CSA model has taken many different forms. Our 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 aim to deliver boxes with items that compliment each other each week. We also plan our boxes to spread the harvest out relatively equally across all 20 weeks, avoiding loading members up with too much food during peak production times, or having lean boxes in the shoulder seasons.

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, advanced level agricultural production and management. For this reason, we farmed at our current location for four seasons before launching a CSA, in order to begin to build our soil and get to know our farm. We honor the trust and investment of our members by filling their boxes with the best that the farm produces. To build relationships between CSA members and the farm, we plan to host several field days/CSA membership gatherings at the farm to keep members connected to the farm and farmers who grow their food.

We are so proud of the farm supporting a CSA program, but plan to continue to keep our membership relatively small in order to maintain quality and diversity of product offerings. There are a limited number of spaces available and memberships will come on a first come first serve basis.