

In the fall of 1999, my friend Dan asked me why I didn't use the community supported agriculture model to distribute our produce, I explained that we tried in the late 1980's, but the folks didn't want to drive out to the farm. His immediate response was "I'll drive it to them," and our present CSA was born.

I charged \$25.00 per week for a share. Our shares were too many vegetables for many people, so eventually we sold half shares for \$15.00 per week. We have grown together for 10 years now and have not raised our prices. As our costs rise, we just got more members and grew more acres.

My highly skilled workers make about \$8.00 an hour, and the intern staff gets no stipend, just room and board. The farm has a mortgage and more storage space is needed. Put simply, we need more funds.

One way would be to go back to selling at stores, restaurants and farmer's markets. This requires a lot of marketing, which I don't want to do. It also takes focus away from associative economics and fuels a food distribution system that I feel needs a radical change.

I can't have a CSA and them sell to other places, because the CSA owns the produce. To be supported by a community is important to me. I like the way we do it: Everything we raise is offered to our members first and the excess is given away to charity. I also supply three crops (potatoes, sweet potatoes and winter squash) to help other CSA's; only if we have extra.

Health food stores charge way too much and I don't want to be working for a corporation, I want to work for families. Restaurants also charge a lot; I do let Alan supply three because he and they have a relationship and want to continue. The restaurants are offered only what is left over after the CSA members have filled their blankets. And I would hurt other small farmers if I went to farmer's market because I sell so much cheaper and I don't feel like farmers should compete with each other.

So, for the first time in 10 years we are asking the members for more money. Since we don't want to raise the price for another 10 years, it will go up \$10 per full share and \$5 per half

share. If you can't afford it, talk to us and we'll work something out. You have supported us and we will make sure you get your produce regardless of what you pay. As long as the CSA covers the farms needs, I really don't care who pays what. Give what you can and take what you need is a spiritual path we like to tread on.

We will not lower our standards. We won't use the commercial poultry manure, fish emulsion, bagged fertilizer, organic pesticides or irrigation systems that most organic farmers rely on. your food will continue to be grown on rich humus soils supplied liberally with just homemade biodynamic compost and ground rock dusts. We work out of love impulses rather than monetary ones. I've put a price increase off for long enough. It's the only way we can remain a truly community supported farm.