

Victory Acres CSA FAQ

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What is a CSA?

Community Supported Agriculture or CSA is a unique model of local agriculture whose roots reach back 30 years to Japan, where a group of women were concerned with the use of pesticides. Originally called "teikei" in Japanese, which translates to "putting the farmers' face on food," the concept later moved to Europe. Eventually, in the mid-1980s CSA made its way to the U.S. It is now spreading into the Mid-west. Indiana currently has 16 CSA operations.

Why a CSA?

CSA is a relationship of mutual support and commitment between local farmers and community members who pay the farmer an annual membership fee to cover the production costs of the farm. In turn, members receive a weekly share of the harvest during the local growing season. This arrangement gives the farmer a direct connection to and relationship with the consumer. Ultimately, CSA creates "COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED-AGRICULTURE" where members receive a wide variety of local in-season foods harvested at their peak of ripeness, flavor and vitamin and mineral content.

In a recent survey of 250 CSA members on the East Coast, the most important reasons for membership in a CSA were support for local farming, quality of produce, environmental and food resource concerns, and knowing the farmer. Victory Acres is providing all of these values. Our customers know us by name, visit the farm where their food is produced, and they approve of our farming practices. *We grow and produce all our own products.*

How long is the Season?

We plan on beginning the end of May and harvest for 21-24 weeks through the week of October 28. This is our third year, so we are still working on extending the season with hoop houses.

What will I get each week?

While it will vary week to week, and increase as the season progresses, generally:

End of May-July: lettuce, spinach (very weather dependent in June and July), turnips, rainbow chard, garlic scapes, sweet peas, beets, scallions, parsley, mini onions, cabbage, basil, kale, cucumber, broccoli, zucchini/summer squash, corn, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant

August-September: lettuce, rainbow chard, red/gold beets, peppers, mini-onions, cucumber, zucchini/summer squash, corn, parsley, basil, onions, tomatoes, potatoes, dandelion greens, beans, carrots, eggplant, greens, scallions, collard greens, turnips,

October-till heavy frost: lettuce, spinach, collard greens, onions, turnips, butternut squash, carrots, brussel sprouts, broccoli, leeks, potatoes, garlic, kale, celeriac, parsley, pumpkin, peppers, beets, hot peppers, acorn squash.

A limited number of herbs, apples, pears, and PYO fruit maybe available this year.

How much food will I get each week?

The amounts and varieties change quite a bit during the season. We grow over 40 different vegetables and herbs, which you will get a share of during the season. You will pick-up between 4 and 10 different vegetables each week. Early on there will be more leafy greens and early or "baby" vegetables, amounting to 4-7 lbs per week. In general, as the season progresses, heavier and larger vegetables will be harvested (potatoes, roots and winter squash), where your share will be about 10-22 lb by the end of the season.

Last year our full share members received over 390 lbs of produce for the season, while half shares received over 200 lbs. The CSA is great for people who are interested in trying different foods and eating lots of fresh vegetables. A CSA share is a good way to increase your veggie intake!

How do I pick-up my produce?

You will pick-up a weekly share at the pick-up location that you choose when you subscribe to our CSA program, either Indy, or at the farm in Upland. Possibly pick-up sites will be added as needed as we grow. Distribution days will be on Friday or Sat, and mid-season we may have a Tuesday pick-up due to the bountiful harvest.

At your location on pick-up day, a sign will denote how much you can take of each item. You certainly can take less depending on your need that week. Sometimes, we will include a newsletter, which will keep you up to date on Victory Acres activities and programs, as well as provide recipes from our members and information about the produce you will be receiving.

Please bring a bag or box with you to transfer your share into.

Please remember to call a friend or neighbor to pick up your share if you can't be there on your delivery day. You can donate your share for the week to a needy family we are in relationship with if you let us know two days before pick-up.

Can I choose which fruits and vegetables I receive?

Shares are available buffet style each week at the farm or at Victory Village Shoppe in Indy. Unlike a supermarket, everything is grown in season for our local area.

Many CSA members report the great satisfaction they experience from gathering their share each week. They enjoy learning what vegetables and fruits are in season, including some they might not otherwise purchase. Some members say it's like Christmas every week!

We make a serious and on-going effort here at the farm to balance diversity, interest and popularity when selecting items to grow and distribute to our CSA members.

What if a Full Share, which feeds 3-4 adults a week, is too large for my needs?

If you have a small family, or do not have someone to share your produce with, we offer a half-share. The half-share provides a typical week's supply of produce, meant for two adults.

Some single people have a half share, while others find they can't finish all the vegetables. If you talk with your neighbors, you may find someone who can conveniently "split" a share with you. If that doesn't work, we may be able to put you in touch with other people who are in your situation.

What happens if there is a crop failure?

Variations in weather conditions may cause some crops to "fail" or to yield less than expected. In farming, this is inevitable. However, because we grow a large variety of crops and because we often have a surplus of other crops, we can usually compensate for a crop failure.

I like the idea, but will I end up spending a lot on my produce?

Victory Acres farm produce is very affordable, and because it is picked just before delivery, can last longer after you take it home. In fact, according to a detailed, three-year study comparing the cost of supermarket produce (chemically grown) to the cost of a CSA farm, consumers who purchased the same amount of produce (as received from the CSA) from a supermarket would have paid 37% more at the supermarket!

And, with naturally-grown produce, there are no hidden costs incurred for the clean-up of water and other environmental resources contaminated by toxic pesticides and herbicides, medical or other costs associated with pesticide-related disease in human and animal populations.

Last year, members received 380 lbs of produce for the season, that is \$1/lb. Comparing our \$ / lb of produce to organic retail price offers a real customer value.

As the farm grows, that value will only increase as we will offer raspberries, blackberries, and asparagus in the future. Members also get first access to eggs, broilers, and other farm products that farm will offer.

What happens to my share if I am away on vacation or on business on distribution day?

If you are going to be away on your distribution day, you are responsible for arranging with a neighbor, friend or relative to pick up and/or use your share. Please let us know who this individual will be. We like to get to know our customers!

Or, because of our unique partnership with VICM in Indy, you could donate your weeks share to a family that is in need in Indy. Just let us know in advance.

Is it possible to visit the farm?

Just contact us in advance. We often have open houses a couple times a year. We will keep you updated via our website for future events.

Can We Pick Our Own?

If we have a sufficient harvest, members will have the opportunity to pick extra quantities. In 2007, we allowed subscribers to pick beans, peas, tomatoes, and other crops. Shareholders are welcome to pick their own herbs and flowers from our garden.

What other benefits are there to being a member?

You are our primary concern. We do sell to local restaurants, but you receive first fruits and best fruits. Members and their families are welcome to hike, camp, and picnic on the farm. We are currently working on a trail system. Members are also given first access to our other farm products; pastured beef, pastured pigs, poultry, pastured eggs, and other products before non-members and at a reduced rate!

How Do You Harvest And Process the Produce?

We harvest vegetables up to two days before pickup and greens in the day before your pickup day. We do a minimum of washing, trimming in order to preserve the nutritional quality of the produce. For that reason, you may find some soil and life in your produce from time to time.

Is Victory Acres an organic farm?

Our farm products are in the process of being [Certified Naturally Grown](#) (CNG). CNG is a third party certification agency that uses the USDA organic standards, but doesn't have all the red tape and high expense. We consider ourselves beyond organic, following a bio-intensive approach that seeks to leave the land, and the products we produce better than the year before. The ultimate standard is the relationship you and I have as farmer and customer. You see the farm, you know my face, and you know our methods. CNG is great because another farmer in our area comes and inspects us once a year, a time where we can share methods and keep each other accountable.

Why is Victory Acres a non-profit farm?

Victory Acres is a branch of Victory Inner-city Ministries (VICM) that is actively involved in community and economic development on the near-eastside of Indianapolis. VICM has been "making Christ visible" since 2000. The farm serves as a place to continuing making Christ visible by providing good work and good food. By "good food": we provide our customers with farm products that are fresh, high-quality, certified naturally grown, and from a local farmer they know. By "good work": individuals in relationship with Victory Inner-City Ministries (VICM) and Grant County Rescue Mission are provided with a place to rehabilitate and rebuild at Victory Acres. While they are doing good work that is helping to produce good food, they are rebuilding their health and their lives via learning a work ethic, valuable job skills, vegetable production, marketing, and a host of other skills and lessons that come with running and working on a small diverse farm. So, a CSA membership helps VICM in our efforts to help struggling families, troubled teens, and homeless neighbors. And in return, CSA members receive a share of the harvest knowing they are contributing to a larger vision of "making Christ visible."

What have farm members said about their Victory Acres experience?

- *"We really enjoyed the produce and the personal contact . . ."*
- *"Keep up the good work!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"*
- *"I enjoyed the surprise of seeing what vegetables our share contained each week . . ."*
- *"I learned to investigate new recipes and learn how to prepare these vegetables. I really enjoyed it!"*
- *"Thank you for providing this service to the people of Indianapolis and East Central Indiana!"*
- *"We enjoyed getting to participate in the process of growing our food."*
- *"One thing I didn't expect was how it stretched us to try food we otherwise would not have eaten."*
- *"We can't say enough about the quality of the produce"*
- *"It was an amazing experience and we look forward to participating again next year!"*

Further questions? Contact us:

Victory Acres Farm, 5275 S. 800 E. Upland, IN 46989

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