

## Victory Acres INDY CSA FAQ

### 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.

### How long is the Season?

We plan on beginning the end of May and harvest for 20-22 weeks through the week of October 28. 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, sweet peas, beets, mini onions, cabbage, zucchini/summer squash, corn, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant

**August-September:** lettuce, red/gold beets, peppers, mini- onions, cucumber, zucchini/summer squash, corn, onions, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, carrots, eggplant, turnips,

**October-till heavy frost:** lettuce, spinach, onions, turnips, butternut squash, carrots, brussel sprouts, broccoli, potatoes, parsley, pumpkin, peppers, beets, hot peppers, acorn squash.

### How much food will I get each week?

The amounts and varieties change quite a bit 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. In general, as the season progresses, heavier and larger vegetables will be harvested (potatoes, roots and winter squash). By the end of the season the shares are quite large, and there is a fair amount of food which can be stored.

The CSA is great for people who are interested in eating lots of fresh vegetables, but it is probably not a good option for people who dislike a large number of vegetables.

### How do I pick-up my produce?

You will pick-up a weekly share at Victory Village Shoppe, 3229 E. 10<sup>th</sup> St. Possibly pick-up sites will be added as needed as we grow. Distribution day will be from 10am to 7pm on Friday.

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 CSA 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 delivery day

### Can I choose which fruits and vegetables I receive?

Shares are available buffet style each week 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 a two adults and a small child.

Some single people have a full 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?**

Our 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.

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 Victory Inner-city Ministries, you could donate your weeks share to a family that is in need. Just let us know.

**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. We will notify you by email if and when there is extra available.

**How Do You Harvest And Process the Produce?**

We harvest vegetables that keep well the night before pickup and greens in the morning of the 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.