

# 5 Reasons to Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program



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Early in the movie *The Matrix*, Neo is offered two pills. The pills offer two very different paths that Neo must choose from in a short amount of time. The first pill allows Neo to go back to his old lifestyle of being a copper-top that fuels the evil machines. The second choice offers him the opportunity to make a stand, stop supporting the machines and lead humanity to freedom.

After reading this article, you will also have two very different choices. The first choice allows you to continue down the path of buying your 10-day old, chemically treated and irradiated produce from foreign lands while filling the coffers of grocery corporations. The alternate choice of purchasing a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) leads to a healthy lifestyle that supports local farmers and workers. I'll also showcase two local farms that offer two outstanding CSAs at a very reasonable price. Here are 5 reasons you should join me in the fight to free humanity from tainted, old and in many instances genetically modified, irradiated, soaked in pesticides fruits and veggies:

**1. A CSA offers a consistent schedule of fruits and vegetables in your diet!** With a CSA, you are basically purchasing the rights to a farm's produce and pick up a bounty

of fruits, veggies and other items on a weekly basis for approximately 17 weeks.



**2. It doesn't get any fresher than a CSA!** When it comes to consuming fruits and vegetables, one of your primary goals should be freshness. CSA guarantees that the produce you pick up is harvested that day. It really doesn't get any fresher than that. On average, produce in a large grocery store chain is several days if not weeks old. This is due to the global distribution of our food. Due to the low cost and longer growing seasons, large grocery stores import much of their fruits and vegetables from California, Florida, Mexico and other southern hemisphere countries and states. Once picked, it's not uncommon for produce to take a week to completely harvest, pack, transport and finally become available to consumers in a grocery store. With a local farm, the produce is harvested and offered to the CSA member that day.

**3. CSA programs are healthier!** Fruits and vegetables provide the body with fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants – all needed to live a healthy life. As produce ages the health benefits of consuming that produce diminishes. When you

purchase your produce in a super market you really don't know how old the produce is. The instant a fruit or vegetable is harvested, the vitamins (and health benefits) begin to deteriorate. Additionally, produce shipped hundreds to thousands of miles can go through vast temperature changes, irradiation (to destroy microorganisms, bacteria, viruses, or insects before shipping across borders) and other harmful processes before reaching your plate further reducing its health benefits. Buying local produce helps ensure you are getting produce that is richer in vitamins and minerals.

**4. You support local farmers and workers!** There is something special about eating something grown locally. First, you get to meet the people growing your food and see the farm the food is grown on. Second, your money goes into the pocket of local workers who will in turn spend their money locally. It's a win-win for everyone!

**5. CSA programs offer more than just fruits and vegetables!** One of the biggest misconception with a CSA is that it is exclusively fruits and vegetables. Really, no CSA is the same and most offer things like local honey, cheeses, eggs, jams, mustard and meats. The key when choosing a CSA is price and what they have to offer. Most are VERY flexible when allowing you to substitute items (get more of one, less of another).

#### **Recommended CSA Programs:**

**Silverbrook Farm in Acushnet** – We did a full featured article that describes the history of the Farm and details their CSA program: <http://www.newbedfordguide.com/silverbrook-farm-acushnet-2/2015/03/27>. This CSA lasts for 17 weeks and offers basic (\$320), standard (\$420) and Master (\$855) CSA programs. Full details here: <http://www.thesilverbrookfarm.com/farm.html>.