

Crème de la Crop

Crème de la Crop is the first full scale certified organic food production farm in Valparaiso, Indiana. At Crème de la Crop we strive for perfection, searching internationally for unique organic and heirloom seeds known to produce excellent flavor. We want to improve the community as a whole through agriculture land preservation, farm-based education, and community supported hiring practices. We welcome you to walk with us through the fields, savor the taste and beauty of our produce, and be inspired by what we offer.

2011 CSA Share Details



We are offering two types of certified organic produce shares, a Standard Market Share for those finicky eaters, and an Epicurean Share. The shares will be available in two sizes, a full share and a half share. A full share typically satisfies the needs of two vegetarians or four people of mixed diet. Your weekly box will have an assortment of leaf crops, fruiting vegetables, root vegetables, onion crops and herbs. Please see our vegetable calendar for expected harvest dates. You will also receive a weekly news letter explaining what is in the box, along with recipes, and a brief to what is happening on the farm.

Summer/Fall Harvest - 18 Weeks - End of June through October

Our crops consists of over 200 varieties; mostly heirloom and unique produce known for its flavor and appearance. Standard Market members pick up the more common vegetables and herbs, while our epicureans receive everything we grow including edible flowers. Please read our [Good Food Brochure](#) for more information. A Full Membership should meet the needs of 2-4 people. This eighteen week harvest will include items from the list below. Weight is dependent on seasonal availability.

Standard Market

Spinach, Kale, Mixed Lettuce, Cooking Greens, Cucumbers, Cabbage, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Turnips, Rutabaga, Parsnips, Carrots, Onions, Potatoes, Corn, Summer Squash, Shelling & Snap Peas, Shelling & Snap Beans, Sweet Peppers, Chilli Peppers, Tomatoes, Celery, Melons, and Herbs.

Full Membership - \$615.00
Half Membership - \$315.00

Epicurean

Will include all items in smaller portions from the Standard Market plan plus Specialty Cooking Greens, Shallots, Leeks, Okra, Specialty Cabbage, Specialty Snap and Shelling Beans, Edamame, Tomatillo, Eggplant, Fennel, Specialty Melons, Celeriac, Specialty Herbs, and Edible Flowers.

Full Membership - \$770.00
Half Membership - \$395.00

CSA Producer Response

Leann Landgrebe

02/01/2011

1. What farming method do you use? For example: certified organic, organic (not certified), bio-intensive, or conventional (~ use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers).

USDA Certified Organic. Started CSA in 2003.

2. How many hours per week do you typically work during the growing season?

12 hours per day / 7 days per week during the main growing season.

3. How many hours per week do you typically work during the off-season?

15-20 hours per week (mainly research) during December & January.

4. How many full-time and/or part-time employees are needed to run the CSA?

1 full-time and 15 part-time employees (each working 15-20 hours per week).

5. How many acres are currently in vegetable and/or fruit production?

18 acres are currently in production.

6. What is the maximum number of acres you might commit to vegetable and fruit production in a given year?

70 acres.

7. What is the maximum number of acres you might commit to livestock grazing?

None. I don't have time to manage livestock.

8. What aspects of operating a CSA do you enjoy most and why?

- Seeing customers every week and experiencing their gratitude.
- Watching everything grow – seeing the farm develop organically.

9. What aspects of operating a CSA do you enjoy least and why?

Labor management – dealing with employee issues. Some people are lazy, don't care about the bottom-line, and sometimes don't use common-sense.

10. Has your CSA been profitable for the past three years? (Yes/No)

Yes, though I have re-invested the profits into developing the farm. (e.g. building a greenhouse, planting an orchard, drip irrigation, equipment purchases.)

11. If “Yes” to Question 10, then what specific factors do you attribute your success to?

- High demand for certified organic fruits and vegetables
- Mixed marketing strategy (CSA, high-end restaurants, local grocers)
- CSA members have top priority.
- Community is very supportive.

12. If “No” to Question 10, then what have been your biggest marketing and/or operational challenges?

- Biggest operational challenge has been reliable employees. I lead by example but obviously can't be everywhere at once. Work ethic of employees is a key challenge.
- Drought has also been a challenge.

13. Which of your marketing approaches have been most successful and why?

www.LocalHarvest.org has been a good referral source.
www.Facebook.com has enabled me to generate 500+ followers.
www.Mailchimp.com is a great way for me to market to my mailing list of 700 emails.

14. Can you briefly describe your CSA membership pricing model?

I offer Standard and Epicurean CSA shares, both in full and half shares. Prices are listed on my website at www.cremedelacrop.com

15. How many CSA members do you currently have?

180 CSA members in 2010, though am scaling back to 60 in 2011 because of my new full-time job as an interior designer for Walter E. Smithe Furniture Inc.

16. How many potential CSA members (if any) are currently wait-listed?

None has been wait-listed in the past, though that might change as I scale back.

17. Has your CSA membership level increased or decreased during the past 3 years? (Yes/No) (Increased/Decreased) Yes, it has increased steadily.

By what percentage (+ / --) during each of the past 3 years?

2008: ~ 25%

2009: ~ 25%

2010: ~ 25%

18. How many CSA memberships would you need to break-even?

Depends upon my capital re-investment in the farm.

19. What do you consider to be an ideal number of CSA memberships for your farm?

60 full CSA shares.

20. How much income would you like to see your CSA produce annually?

\$45,000 - \$50,000.