

## Support Your Local Farmers

There's no question that eating locally grown produce is beneficial. It's better for our health, the environment and the local economy. One way to do this is by participating in a CSA.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a great way to buy local, seasonal food directly from the farmer that grows it. CSA "shares" are purchased before the growing season. You are essentially investing in that farmer's business and this season's crop. In exchange, you receive a portion of seasonal produce each week throughout the growing season.

CSAs are beneficial for both parties. Farmers can spend their time marketing their crops early in the year, before growing season (and their 16 hours days) begins. They also benefit by receiving payment for their produce early in the season, when they incur a lot of their expenses. Consumers receive ultra-fresh food, just days after picking, with all the flavor and vitamin benefits. Consumers also are exposed to new varieties of vegetables that they may not have had the opportunity to try yet. Kids may even be more willing to try food from "their farm" than from the grocery store. Farmers can get to know the people eating their food and consumers can be more informed about how their food is grown.

Part of the CSA model does involve a shared risk. By investing in a farm share before the season begins, you run the risk that something may go wrong. Drought, infestation and extreme temperatures may all affect the crop. Farmers do their best to provide an abundant share each week but there are factors beyond their control. This forms a "we're in this together" bond between farmer and consumer.

It's important to choose a CSA that is going to fit the needs of your family and that has a positive track record with their shares. Seacoast Eat Local provides a list of CSA farmers in the Seacoast area. They also provide a list of questions to ask when choosing a CSA to participate in and how to decide if a CSA is right for you. You can find this information [here](#).

Happy Farming!

