

Wise Acres Farm CSA

2018/19 Member Update

2018 Season Bonus

In 2018, we made good on our intention to provide a bonus to our CSA members. We provided you with an average share value of \$26.55, representing a **10% bonus of free, premium veggies!** Those of you who picked up on the farm were also able to take advantage of access to surplus and second-quality veggies at a discount. We plan to offer additional produce again on the farm in 2019 (available to all members if and when you can make it out to the farm – it's worth the 12-mile trip from Bangor, we promise!).

Pricing Update

A note about pricing: we are **not** raising the weekly share price (\$24/week) this season, but you will see a higher total price for the shares (\$432 plus delivery) because of the longer 18-week season. We also want to note that while we have not increased weekly CSA or delivery prices in the four years we have offered shares, we **have** increased the value of some items in the shares when we have raised corresponding prices at our farmers' markets. That has resulted in a slightly smaller quantity of produce in each share. When we surveyed members last fall, nearly all expressed that they were happy with the size of last year's shares. You can expect the quantity of produce to be about the same in 2019 as it was in 2018, as we do not plan on increasing the price of very many individual items this year.

We thank those of you who are able to pay for your full share early in the season. However, we recognize that it represents a significant up-front cost and we are always happy to accept a deposit and installments during the first half of the year.

CSA Member Survey Results

As always, our member survey results demonstrated that everyone's preferences about the types and quantities of produce they want are a little bit different! However, we always strive to balance any trends we see in the survey and other feedback with the strengths and needs of the farm. By popular demand, we will aim to include more **cucumbers, peppers** and **bok choy** this year! We will also dial down somewhat on the quantity of **scallions, eggplant** and **baby kale** in the shares.

There are always plenty of votes for more **strawberries** and **raspberries**; while we prioritize CSA members for these sought-after crops, our small plantings mean that we don't expect to include significantly more fruit than we have in previous years.

We do plan to increase the quantity of **salad greens**. Based on survey feedback, we reduced the planned quantity of greens last year. However, we had a variety of struggles with our lettuce plantings, which ended up making the total amount of salad in the shares less than we would have liked. We are making some tweaks to the lettuce system this year and hope to provide the equivalent of a mini head of **lettuce** and 1/3 lb of **baby greens** each week, with some big lettuce every few weeks. We also hope to debut **spinach** in the shares this year!

We do our own "survey" each year of what crops are helping us and which ones are holding us back. Based on that, we have decided to radically cut back on the amount of **snap beans** we grow. They take a tremendous amount of time to pick during the busiest part of the season, and we don't feel we can reasonably charge enough for them to offset paying the pickers (a.k.a. ourselves and our employees) a living wage. So, we are cutting back from ten to two bean plantings, which we will grow mainly for CSA members. We also had to apply the same logic to **watermelons**; while I love growing them and we've tried a whole host of things to make them work, we just can't charge what we would need to in order to make them profitable at our scale. Thus, they are not in the crop plan this year. We will use the additional time and space freed up to grow a little more of just about everything else!