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Happy New Year!
 Schedule Reminder For Winter Share Members:



Group 1 Pickups: Thursday, January 8 and 22 (and every other week thereafter)
Group 2 Pickups: Thursday, January 15 and 29 (and every other week thereafter).
 We hope everyone had a wonderful and veggie filled holiday!

Winter Shares Begin

Strong

--And Summer Share Sign Up Is Around the Corner!

At ICF a sure sign of winter is when we move our CSA distribution into our indoor headquarters across the street. Our large, heated space doubles as our storage for crops like Butternut Squash and Sweet Potatoes. Each week, we proudly display our spread of produce: a wide breadth of roots, ranging from carrots, beets, and potatoes to kohlrabi, turnips, and



celeriac; crisp napa, green, and red cabbage; sweet buttery winter squash, sweet potatoes, kale, and salad greens. It's hard to imagine life before this bounty was at our finger tips--did we really ever suffer through grocery store vegetables in the winter? Or try to live off of frozen vegetables and canned tomatoes? We are so proud and grateful to share this abundance of produce with you! And even prouder to lengthen the "winter" share until mid-May!

For those of you who are not Winter Share members, we are looking forward to seeing you in a few short months. It's never too early to start thinking about reserving your share for next year; simply email [Kathie](#) or stay tuned for an email in later January.

Staff Profile: Silas Branson

Silas Branson joined the ICF team in 2010 after two years of prior vegetable farming experience. He quickly became invaluable to ICF with his capacity for varying types of work--as a carpenter, as a mechanic, as technical support, as a speedy harvester, as a welcome and friendly face at pickup, and as a dear friend to other ICF staff. Silas has also been an avid follower of the [Smitten Kitchen blog](#), and the ICF staff have been fortunate to taste his perfect renditions of recipes over the years. It's hard to imagine ICF without Silas--we thank him for all his hard work! Here are some of Silas's reflections:



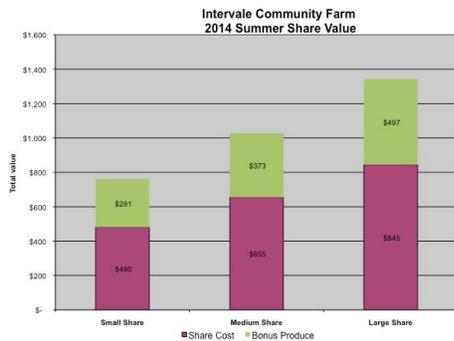
I came to vegetable farming largely through happenstance, but it quickly became clear how well the work suited me, and it is now extremely difficult for me to imagine wanting to do anything else. The close, grounding connection with place and nature is important to me, as is the tangible, physical nature of working at ICF. Day to day, however, I think that the variety of tasks and challenges I encounter, and the endless opportunities for growth and learning, are the largest factor in my love of farming. Every year I feel like I see a little bit more of the big picture at ICF – all the different cycles, rhythms, and progressions that blend together to form the farm as a whole. Still, it's always clear that any picture I could paint is far from capturing all of the farm's complexities.

The community of farmers, friends, and members in the Intervale and at ICF provides me with a unique and crucial support system. From it I can glean knowledge, determination, passion, wonder, conscience, mindfulness, and a powerful sense of worth and inclusion that keep me centered, energized, and pointed in (more or less) the right direction.

2014 Summer Share Provides Savings to ICF Members

In the midst of celebrating 25 years as a community support agriculture farm, ICF also celebrated a banner season from a production standpoint. The weather cooperated with nearly all of the crops--something we don't take for granted in this era of climate variability. While we've done our best to mitigate some of risks from tricky weather, the truth is, we still depend on the right combination of sun, rain, and warmth to help our crops ripen on schedule for our CSA members.

Historically, ICF shares consistently provide a bonus value to members. Typically, this ranges from an unusual low of 20% bonus (2011, which was truncated on both ends by spring floods and by Irene) to over 70% on an exceptionally good year. We calculate the share value by comparing the amount ICF members receive with comparable retail value for Certified Organic produce in local markets. Clearly, this analysis is not perfectly accurate since ICF members have some choice over which crops they choose at pickup and how much pick-your-own they participate in. However, year after year, our analysis provides us with an enlightening sense of what value we are providing our members.



2014 was indeed bountiful. As you can see from the chart above, members who participated in an average of 50% of the Pick-Your-Own crops benefitted from a 58% bonus of share value over what they paid for the share (this held true for all share sizes: small shares enjoyed 58.5%, medium shares, 56.9%, and large shares, 58.8%). Members who harvested 100% of the pick-your-own enjoyed an even larger bonus, hovering around 97% for small shares (86% for medium and 82% for large shares). Members who never harvested any pick-your-own still fared well with a 22% bonus for small shares (27% for medium and 32% for large shares).

We are thrilled and proud that our cooperatively-owned farm can provide a bonus to our ever-

supportive farm members. Year in and year out, farm members have faith in ICF's ability to grow a quantity of fresh, organic food in a sustainable way; and year in and year out, ICF tries hard to fulfill our commitment to our members. We're proud that for twenty-five years, we've always guaranteed a return on your investment in the farm--even if it does mean you have a few extra tomatoes on your hands in mid-August!

The percentage of produce bonus members receive has been an active topic of conversation among ICF board members, as they consider how best to direct the excess produce that the farm produces. For more on this aspect of the conversation, read our February 2015 Bottom Land Newsletter, and if you have thoughts on this topic, let us know what you think!

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Bottom Land News is published periodically. We are always grateful for your feedback, favorite Farm photos, poems, letters, recipes, and ideas for articles. Visit our website www.intervalecommunityfarm.com for past issues.

The Intervale Community Farm is a member-owned consumer cooperative, growing organic produce for over 550 households in the greater Burlington, VT area. Our land is located in the Intervale, a place "between the hills" where people have farmed for centuries. We are part of the global Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement, linking farmers and consumers together to build a sustainable food system. We are now in our 25th season.

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