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Notes From the Intervale Community Farm April 2016

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Quick Notes:

2016 Plant Sale Dates will be May 7, 14, 21. Watch for further details.

There are still winter share pick-up dates through May 19. Members have enjoyed fresh greens (baby kale, baby bok choy, baby lettuces, spinach) throughout the entire winter.

Don't Miss Out on a Summer Share



The summer share sign-up process started on February 1 and at this date we are 75% subscribed. Generally we sell all summer shares available and have a waiting list of anxious new members, but lately we have signed up anyone who requests a share (returning or new member) and dispensed with a waiting list. What does this mean to you if you had a share in 2015? It means you'd better not wait too much longer to secure your summer vegetables!

We need to hit certain membership targets to achieve our budget and program goals. While we appreciate returning members and value our ICF family, we realize life changes occur, members move, kids grow up; we actively seek new members on a regular basis to keep ICF thriving. We've had many member-referrals this year and we appreciate you spreading the word about the farm. Because of your personal recommendations in part, we have 55 new members in 2016 to date.

To sign up for a summer share, use our [online form here](#) or [print a copy](#) and mail your request with your deposit. A deposit of \$50 is required to confirm your share.

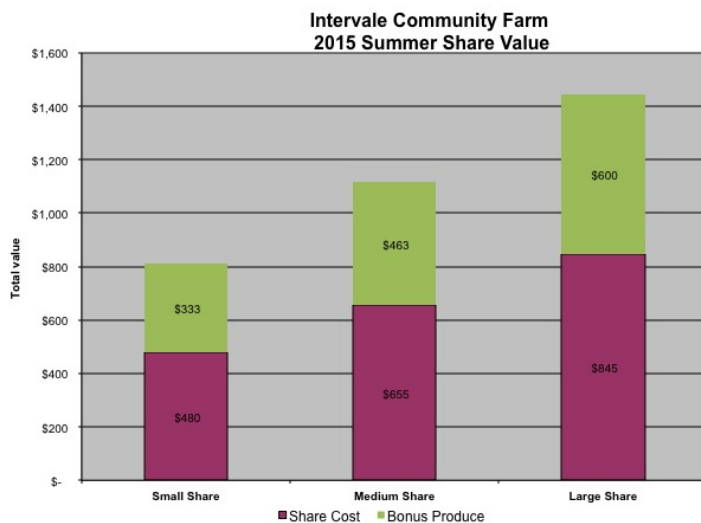
If you have questions about the value of an ICF summer share, keep reading. We outline the 2015 share value below.

2015 Summer Share Values & Reflections

by Farm Manager Andy Jones

Looking back at our 2015 summer share, ICF members came out way ahead, as usual. On average, members received a bonus of 70% above and beyond the share cost. (Share cost is calculated from an average of other local, organic produce prices at Farmer's markets and stores.) Year after year, we have similarly favorable results, despite varying weather conditions.

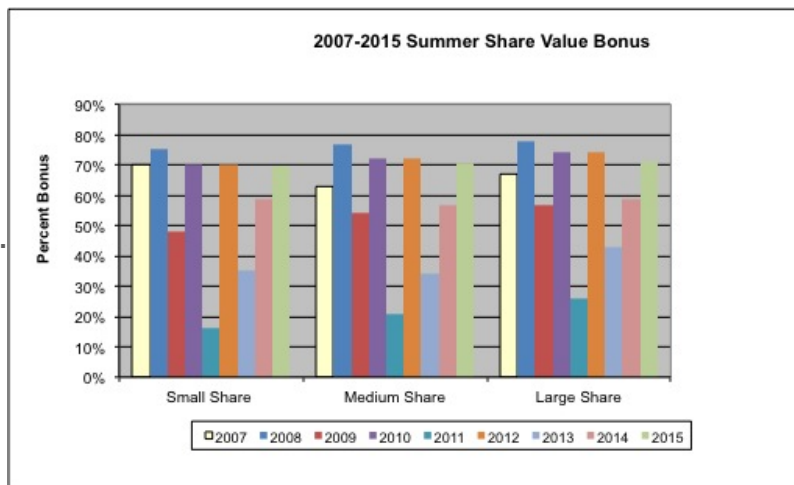
Some bonus beyond retail equivalency is important, as it compensates for the uncertainty of selection and timing of harvest, allows some wiggle room if you miss a few pickups, and so on. Fundamentally, some surplus is an important part of the social contract that characterizes community-supported agriculture.



That said, a bonus of 70% is considerably beyond operational targets, and exceeding the target of 40% set by the ICF Board by a wide margin. While it is uplifting and hopeful to provide so many great vegetables, the warm fuzzies come at some cost to ICF. Without incurring the additional costs required to grow all of that lovely bonus produce, we would have more resources to focus on other enumerated priorities: improving our sustainable farming practices with new tools and renewable energy, providing better wages and benefits for our seasonal staff, donating additional produce and/or time to productive causes in the local community, offering more supported-shares to qualifying households.

In 2015, we aimed to increase our direct food donations (primarily to the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, the Vermont Food Bank, and the Intervale Center Gleaning Program) in an effort to shift benefit from ICF CSA members to the wider community. It was, as my kids would put it, 'a big Fail': while we tripled our donations to over 36,000 lbs., we still didn't budge from our unnecessarily high share bonuses. Go

figure.



I think the take home message is that ICF CSA members will continue to receive a great deal financially, regardless of the year, and that your support provides many of the resources necessary for ICF to increase its contribution to the wider community.

Benefitting Our Community: Gleaning and Food Donation

by Aly Martelle

One of the ICF's organizing principles is "benefit the wider community through partnerships, donations, and service" which we accomplish, in part, through our work with area Food Banks and Food Shelves.

This past season at ICF we worked with the Vermont Food Bank and the Intervale Center (IC) Gleaning Program to continue our goal of increasing food donations to the community. We worked with Andrea Solazzo at the Food Bank who organized on-farm gleaning opportunities and direct pick-ups of extra food. Andrea brings donated food to area food shelves and does cooking classes and food demos encouraging the use of these veggies. Sarah Alexander at the Intervale Center also came to the farm to pick extras from the fields with volunteers and to take any donations directly from the cooler. The Intervale Center has set up a free summer CSA giving out the food donated from ICF and other area farms.

Having groups able to glean for us at ICF has made a huge impact on the amount of food that we are able to donate. When we harvest for pick-up we often leave produce in the field that is "seconds" quality, similar to the items you would find in the seconds area at pick up; this food is perfectly fine for eating but has a blemish, is misshapen, too big or too small, or needs to be eaten immediately. The IC and Food Bank were able to come after our harvests for pick-up and salvage produce that would have otherwise gone unused.

Because these groups come directly to the farm it has also increased the regularity in which we identify extra items from the cooler for donation. Most of these items that we donate directly from the cooler fall into one of two categories: either they are not going to be as fresh as we like by the next pick-up date or we have more than our membership could possibly eat. In addition to the Food Bank and IC picking up produce we also made donations directly to the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf.

This coming season Andrea from the Food Bank will be available at pick-up to let members know about the work that she does. Also she is planning on being at the Farm for gleaning on Tuesday mornings from 9–12am if members are interested in volunteering with her. We will continue to work with Sarah at the Intervale Center where they are expanding the free CSA program.

Info on the Intervale Center's Gleaning Program

<http://www.intervale.org/what-we-do/intervale-gleaning-food-rescue/>

Info about the Food Bank's Gleaning Program

<http://www.vtfoodbank.org/OurPrograms/FreshFoodInitiatives/GleaningProgram.aspx>

March Greenhouse News

Our greenhouse was opened for the season on March 7 and the seeding started immediately. We plant in trays containing 50–150 cells and our tray tables are filled.

In a few weeks these new plants will be hardened as the days get warmer and then transplanted to our fields. Our count so far:

Flowers: 5832 plants of 12 varieties
 Loose leaf lettuce: 3750
 Head lettuce: 2100
 Onions: 38,700 cells; 165,000 plants
 Peppers (for the hoop houses): 1650

Kale: 3300
 Broccoli: 2850
 Cabbage: 2250
 Herbs: 4220
 Celeriac: 3750



Tomatoes for grafting: 1000 tops, 930 root stock



Collard and Kale Seedlings



Cabbage Seedlings



Onion Seedlings

ICF Welcomes New Board Members



ICF welcomes long-time farm members Robin Berger and Mark Twery to the Board of Directors. Members of the board serve three year terms.

We are excited to have their perspectives!

This month, we hear from Robin Berger:

I became a member of ICF in the summer of 1999, or maybe 98. I wandered down the hill to a pick-up after tasting a friend's strawberries, peas, and salad and asked to join. I came for the food, the flavor, never realizing that it would help shape how I cooked, and what I valued. At the time I was a food geek with no food morals. I would go to the farm and receive an assignment of unfamiliar vegetables to cook, or allow to compost in my fridge.

I read Bill Mckibben's piece in Gourmet on eating locally and Michael Pollan's, The Omnivore's Dilemma, and worked to make more of my food dollars match my CSA. In addition to these changes I had 2 boys who love ICF as I do; for them it is a playground, farm, and extension of what they consider to be home.

I look forward to serving as a member of the ICF board and helping to guide and care for the farm that is such a large part of my family.

Reminder:

If you have outstanding balances, please pay soon! We rely on you to keep our farm thriving. Please email [Kathie](#) if you have questions about your balance.

Thank you!



Wanted for the Farm:

- **Clean, Full Sized Grocery Bags.** *Please no newspaper, produce, bread bags, etc.* You can leave them in the blue barrels at the Pole Barn.
- **Clippers.** We are in constant need of clippers for our cut flowers—donate your extra scissors or shears!
- **Tools.** Your unused carpentry, gardening, and mechanic's tools can keep us fixed up and greened up.
- **Bicycles.** If you have a bike that isn't seeing the use it deserves, ICF staff will happily ride it between fields.
- **Kids' toys.** We could use plastic toys for the sand box and rideable toys for the play area. We have to replenish these items on a regular basis to remove broken items.

Photography: Andy Jones, Jill Rotondo

Graphics: Bonnie Acker

Staff: **Hannah Baxter,** Silas Branson, Samantha DuPont, Abbie Harris, Sarah Howe, Andy Jones (Farm Manager), Aly Martelle, Erik Rehman, Jill Rotondo, Brian Shevrin, Kathie Sullivan (Member Services/ Bookkeeping).

Board of Directors: Bonnie Acker, Robin Berger, Kara Buchanan, Madelyn Cataford, J. Ladd, Christopher McCandless, Abigail McGowan, and Lis Mickenberg, Mark Twery.

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 27th season.

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