

COMMUNITY  
FARM  
OF  
ANN ARBOR  
MEMBER HANDBOOK





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### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

*The purpose of the Community Farm of Ann Arbor shall be to support a farm that grows a variety of farm products to be shared by members, using biodynamic farming methods. Biodynamic agriculture was inspired by a series of lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in 1924. A further purpose shall be to demonstrate to the community at large the advantages of socially and environmentally responsible agriculture, and to serve as a living model of a community-supported enterprise.*

## BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER OF OUR FARM

- Together we own the farm and each of us has a voice.
- You receive weekly farm visits filled with soulful relaxation, colorful beauty, and fun.
- You get to select a bounty of fresh-picked, delicious food that will feed a family.
- Our members are our priority. We grow our food for our members, not the markets.
- You benefit from a growing season that goes all the way to November. The food can last through winter.
- You gain peace of mind knowing that our solar tractor cultivates the fields and we continue to take steps toward the use of sustainable energy.
- Members have access to free U-Pick opportunities to gather even more favorites like tomatoes!
- We care for our animals as important (non-edible) members of the farm to the benefit of all that grows.
- You can attend educational classes for both preparing healthy meals and nurturing a vibrant garden ecosystem.
- We support the fair employment of farmers and apprentices who learn to grow for the future.
- Biodynamic agriculture produces higher quality food through farmer-tested methods. Soil life is enriched by using good plant & mineral mixtures in accord with planetary rhythms.
- As a member, you are connected to a caring and committed Community that exists through the cooperative participation and action of all members!
- We support a path that celebrates past work, appreciates the present, and prepares for a bright future.
- Community Supported Agriculture Supported Community!

# HARVEST DAYS

## Wednesday

Pickup is from Noon-7:00 p.m.

\*OR\*

## Saturday

Pickup is from Noon-4:00 p.m.

If you need to change your pickup day, please tell Paul or Anne at least 24 hours ahead of time.

### PICKING UP YOUR SHARE IS RELAXING AND FUN.

Harvest for pickup is in the distribution area inside the barn named Miriam. Check your name off on the list, on the table to the right as you enter the barn. On the blackboard, you will find a list of the week's goodies along with important announcements. Fill your bags/boxes/baskets with what is on the list. (There are some bags in the barn in case you have forgotten yours). Harvested vegetables like a cool place, so keep them in the shade.

### ADDITIONAL THINGS FOR SALE

Our biodynamic honey, the farm cookbook, the farm children's storybook, and occasionally other items are for sale on a table inside the barn. Milk, cheese, eggs, meat, and some other items are for sale Wednesdays in the parking area by a beloved farmer. Bring your own jars for milk.

### HOW DO I STORE MY FOOD?

There are many do's and don'ts when storing produce. For instance, basil and potatoes don't like the refrigerator and fresh greens do.

Some folks preserve food for winter by freezing a little each week starting in June. See the Community Farm of Ann Arbor Cookbook for good suggestions on storage as well as delicious recipes.

### U-PICK CROPS

We often have extra bounty and we welcome you to pick those crops. It may be tomatoes, parsley, peas, eggplants, greens, strawberries, or beans. We will post their location, limits and how to pick. All plants love tender care, so as you harvest, remember to work the plants gently.

## EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the weekly pick-up, there are many joyful events and opportunities on our farm. Sometimes non-members are invited, sometimes with a fee. But these events are always free of charge for our members.

### Easter Egg Hunt

Each year on Easter Sunday we have an egg hunt. Whether it is snowing or sunny we enjoy the efforts of the Easter Bunny.

### Spring May Pole

We tidy up the farm, dance around the maypole, and prepare for the beginning of the growing season.

### Plant Studies

Under the joyful and loving guidance of Karen Chalmer, you can see & discuss the wonders of the plant world.

### Weed & Sing

You can learn new songs while getting credit for volunteer hours.

### Cooking Class

You can be guided by our collective wisdom to transform vegetables familiar or unfamiliar into dishes of pure delight.

### Fall Festival

Closing out our growing season, we celebrate all the work with a feast, dancing, bon fire and more.

### Cow Caroling

The cows always enjoy good music, especially during the cold and somewhat lonely times of the winter so we gather and sing to them.

All of these events are inspired by the membership. We hope that they help us become acquainted with the farm and celebrate each other. They are not only infused with the joy we bring when attending them but are made successful by the energy we put into forming these events.

## OWNERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Since the beginning, the CFAA has dwelled on rented land. We currently have an 86 year lease, which will be valid with whoever is our landlord. The Legacy Land Trust holds the development rights of the land to insure that it shall remain open farm land and not be subject to development.

The business itself, the incorporated CFAA, is owned by its members -You! The financial base of the farm is supplied by us together. The direction and development of the farm is supplied by us together. The hope and life of the farm is supplied by us together.

Our farm is part of the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) movement. CSA is a unique model of local agriculture whose roots reach back 30 years to Japan, where a group of women concerned about the increase of food imports and the corresponding decrease in the farming population initiated a direct growing and purchasing relationship between their group and local farms. This arrangement, called "teikei" in Japanese, translates to "putting the farmers' face on food." This concept traveled to Europe, was adapted to the U.S., and given the name "Community Supported Agriculture" at Indian Line Farm, Massachusetts, in 1985. When our farm was started in 1988, there were about 11 CSA's in the country. Today, there are over 5,000 in the U.S., many in our area.

As a farm organization, we employ two main farmers and an amazing group of apprentices. We own our equipment, our animals and our seeds. We meet monthly to discuss many topics using consensus decision making which is a respectful process where all perspectives are considered and all voices are part of the decision - unlike majority rule.

At our monthly membership meetings we come together as a community, educating ourselves and sharing our ideas, our dreams, our fears, our goals. Through this life-affirming, organic process we form this farm.

## **VOLUNTEER WORK**

As you can imagine, the work on the farm is endless. There are many areas of needed help - tasks great and small for the children and very skilled. If you have a particular interest, talk to Anne or Paul and keep an eye on work postings in the barn. Some of the volunteer work is in the fields weeding, thinning, planting, and harvesting. You need not be knowledgeable. Our workers will be glad to teach you.

A few other areas of volunteer work involve sign painting, laundry, carpentry repairs, stall cleaning, mailings, field trip helpers, meeting note takers, meeting bakers, attendees at meetings, festival helpers, goat walkers, apprentice massaging, and stirring field teas.

For everyone who has signed up to do volunteer work, you simply track it yourself in the file box down in the distribution barn. It's a great way to get involved and learn about the farm.

## **OUR FARMING PRACTICE**

At the Community Farm of Ann Arbor, we concern ourselves with the well-being of our Earth. We use a practice called biodynamic agriculture, developed by Rudolf Steiner in the early 1900's. Responding to farmers concerned about the declining vigor of their crops and animals, Steiner described an approach that combines building healthy soil with a renewed awareness of all the forces at work on a farm among and between the soil, plants, animals, humans and the cosmos itself.

This work is manifested in many ways: by teas we spray on the fields, on the plants, in the greenhouse, and by the preparations we place in our compost. We are constantly learning and deepening our understanding of the moon, sun and other forces in the heavens above. We practice biodynamic agriculture in our beekeeping, animal care, tree-tending & fields. It is a very involved, full practice, so we invite you to work with us, talk with us, and learn with us as we continue to practice loving caretaking on this farm.

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AND BE CONNECTED

Beyond volunteer work there is a bounty of ways to get involved and be connected.

- Compost - Bring your home vegetable scraps to our piles and help to build our rich fertility heaps. *Please do not bring meat products.*
- Attend meetings - Even if you have nothing to say, attending our meetings will definitely inform you and enrich you.
- Simply take a walk on the farm - Around each field is a wide breadth of grass so you can easily walk all around. You are welcome to set up a chair, lay down a blanket and rest, or help with a project you may see going on.
- Join in on a field trip - Throughout the season we host many school groups at the farm. You can join in and help guide the kids and learn a few things along the way.
- Meet other people at the lunch table and share your meal ideas and recipes for using the beautiful bounty of the farm!

## COMMUNICATION

Weekly farm-related *e-mails* during the growing season are sent out via our *e-mail goddess*, Rosemary. They include notes about the state of our farm, tips and announcements. If you are not receiving *e-mails* and wish to, please let us know.

Our *web page* ([www.communityfarmofaa.org](http://www.communityfarmofaa.org)) provides general information including a calendar of activities, pictures and details of our solar tractor project.

If you have any questions, don't be shy. Ask a friendly farmer or co-member.

## ENJOYING OUR FARM

Together we make the farm a place of nourishment and healing. The farm is yours to see, feel, enjoy, and join in. Like many people around the world traveling to farms for a vacation, you can come and take a respite from busy life here.

### Children on the Farm

The farm is full of life's wonders. We want children to explore the farm for they may be our future farmers. They are welcome to join in on chores and even in the U-Pick fields. There are swings, wagons, and other fun things but your supervision is indeed necessary for safety's sake.

### Animals on the Farm

We tend many creatures that reside here on our farm: chickens, cats, cows, goats, and bees. Each one is amazing to learn about. Ask Anne, Paul, or an apprentice for more info (like feeding instructions). *Please note we ask you not to bring dogs to the farm.*

### Toilets

There are 2 enclosed toilets on the farm; one Porte Jon in the parking lot and a composting toilet up at the top of the hill.

### Picnics

There is an official picnic spot with a flower garden near the chicken coop. Pack a lunch and spend break time with the farm workers or other co-members.

### Fresh Well Water

The farm is blessed with clean well water. Feel free to bring bottles to fill and consider possibly leaving a donation. The pump is electric so you simply lift the handle all the way. If there are hoses connected, please check with Anne or Paul before using.

**ONE OF OUR MEAL-TIME MUSICAL BLESSINGS**

This food is a gift of the earth and the rain,  
the light of the sun and the air.

As it gives us our life  
may we grow to sustain  
this world with our love and our care  
(and our care)

*-Karen and Paul Chalmer*



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