

# HEN HOUSE

## MARKET®

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### Welcome to the 2008 CSA program!

On behalf of all of our store teammates, Good Natured Family Farms and Bridging the Gap, we would like to welcome you to the 2008-2009 Grower's Alliance CSA. If you are a returning CSA member- WELCOME back! If this is your first CSA, we are happy to have you join our special program. We are proud to offer this unique experience to the community of Kansas City. We have supported local farmers and producers for many years and enjoy bringing their wholesome, nutritious and great tasting products to you. Not only will you get a great bag of local products each week, you will receive newsletters with grower and nutrition information, storage tips, recipes, updated crop reports and the use of our trading table. This newsletter is filled with background information to help you with a few aspects of the program.

### About the Grower's Alliance CSA

This is the third year that Hen House Markets has been sponsoring a CSA. We have worked over the past 10 years to gather some of the best local growers together into our Buy Fresh Buy Local network. Currently we have about 125 growers involved in our program. These growers are located in 5 states and generally operate within a 200 mile radius of Kansas City.

In our CSA, we try to utilize all the farmers' products. So you could see milk from a farm in Nebraska, tomatoes from a farm in Missouri, cheese from a farm in Kansas, and pumpkins from a farm in Iowa. Our CSA has the widest variety of products in it. We are one of the few CSA's that have beef, cheese, milk, honey, tofu, chicken, and eggs in the assortment from time to time.

We especially love the feeling of community associated with our CSAs. Our teammates get to know the customers since they see them pick up product every week for four months in a row. We get to know you by name and know your likes and dislikes. This reinforces in our teammates the special pride we take in serving your needs.

We like to use the CSA as a way to expand your palette. We look for the new and different to offer in our CSA. This way we can bring you an appreciation of the bounty of flavors available from our many growers. We hope you enjoy this spirit of experimentation and look forward to learning how to serve your family many new and often heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables.

As with all CSAs we are subject to shortages of product caused by Mother Nature. For example, last year we did not have any local apples or peaches for the entire season. They were destroyed by a late frost in April. That same frost cost us many of our early vegetables. So we had a season of many repeats each week. You should be aware of this and know that it could happen again. That is part of the risk you bear as a member of the CSA. You get to eat whatever the farmers can produce and in a difficult year that may be zucchini squash more often than you would normally select it. We work very hard to make sure this does not happen but you need to know the possibility exists.

Last year we had over 400 people involved in our CSA. It was at only five stores. This year we hope to double that amount since it will now be available at all 12 Hen House Markets. So you will be part of a very diverse community spread throughout the metropolitan area.

We hope you enjoy your experience and look forward to serving you for the remainder of this CSA season. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns just give us a call and we will be happy to help in any way we can.

Thanks for being one of our special customers!

### History of CSA programs

The first North American CSA was started in the mid-1980's. In 1990, it is estimated that there were 50 CSA's nation wide, now there are over 1,000. In Missouri, there are 38 CSA's and in Kansas there are 22 listed on [www.localharvest.com](http://www.localharvest.com).

Traditionally, "Community Supported Agriculture consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production". ([www.nal.usda.gov](http://www.nal.usda.gov)).

According to the Land Stewardship Project, "at their most fundamental level, CSA farms provide a weekly delivery of sustainably grown produce to consumers during the growing season (approximately June to October). Those consumers, in turn, pay a subscription fee. But CSA consumers don't so much 'buy' food from particular farms as become 'members' of those farms. CSA operations provide more than just food; they offer ways for eaters to become involved in the ecological and human community that supports the farm."

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M A R K E T



## How to Use the Trading Table

The purpose of the trading table is to allow you to trade out items that do not fit your dietary needs. Many of our customers are vegetarian, vegan, or have other dietary restrictions which make some of the products in the bag not useful to them. They can use the trading table to exchange items to meet these special dietary needs.

Each item on the trading table is assigned a value. In order to trade an item you simply put the item on the table by the sign for its value and pick up an item or items that have a trading value equal but not greater than the item you left. It is that simple.

The purpose of a CSA is to share in the harvest of the land – whatever that harvest might be. That helps all the farmers and producers we do business with be a success. Many times there will be unusual items in your CSA. We encourage you to experiment and expand your food choices. At least give everything a try once. We want to help you prepare and handle each item correctly so if you ever have a question about how to prepare, handle or store an item just ask. We can help with recipes and proper storage techniques to make your experience with the new food item a success!

## Can't Pick Up My CSA This Week?

### What Am I Gonna' Do?

We know that your busy lifestyles present you with challenges from time to time. So if you run into this situation we have two solutions for you.

**One** – consider donating your bag to charity. Each of our stores has selected a local charity to take the bags that you cannot pick up. If you would like to do this simply come in and pay for your bag and let us know to donate it to charity. We will give you a receipt for your taxes and the selected charity will get some wonderful local foods to enjoy in their kitchen or food assistance plan and share with those less fortunate.

**Two** – give us a call in advance and let us know that you will not be able to come in and pick up your merchandise. Ideally, we would like to have this information 48 hours in advance so we do not order merchandise to fill your bag. But in any event, please do not be a “no show” without calling us. This causes us to have excess merchandise that we are not always able to sell through before it goes bad.

As always if you have any questions about this or anything pertaining to our Growers Alliance CSA just give us a call at the store. We will be happy to answer your questions.

## New this Year-

### We want your recipes!

We would like to have your favorite recipes using local foods to share in the CSA Newsletter. We will feature several recipes in each week's newsletter. We are looking for recipes with heirloom tomatoes, tofu, basil, bison, eggs, chicken, sweet corn, peaches, Athena melons, vine ripened tomatoes, zucchini, and yellow squash. Just send them to Jennifer Egeland at 5300 Speaker Rd, Kansas City, KS 66106.

## Good Nutured Family Farms



Our labor of love is taking local farm fresh foods from the small family farm to the mainstream supermarket. Today the GNFF alliance is comprised of over 100 family farmers in KS & MO Reach us at [www.goodnatured.net](http://www.goodnatured.net)



Our mission: to encourage local and global understanding of our interconnectedness and to develop this understanding through community education and action. For more info go to [www.bridgingthegap.org](http://www.bridgingthegap.org)