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# THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD

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## The Dollars and Sense of a CSA Model

Continuing the discussion of pros and cons of the CSA model, I'd like to touch on the weekly value of the shares. This year the shares cost \$564 for a Large and \$350 for a Regular. The farm plans for a 22 week harvest season running from mid-May through the end of October. If the weather cooperates and allows for a full season (last year we were cut short by two week due to early hard frost), that averages \$25.63 per week for the Large share and \$15.90 for the Regular share.

Some farms will try to put the exact retail value of the average weekly share into the boxes each week. We pay attention to that average weekly value, but do not hold fast to it. Rather, we allow the boxes to fluctuate with the ups and downs of the farm. In the early season the value of produce in the boxes is easily under the weekly value but as the garden grows so do the share sizes and more often than not the value of produce in the boxes exceeds the weekly average.

We tend to value the produce going into the boxes more on a wholesale scale as we are producing large quantities on a pre-paid basis. The great thing about the CSA model is that it gives the farm some set guidelines on how much food to grow based on our membership size. We factor in farmer's market sales and wholesale accounts to the CSA numbers and are able to figure our production numbers fairly close. This

accounts for less waste on our end and a large part of our operating budget up front before the season starts.

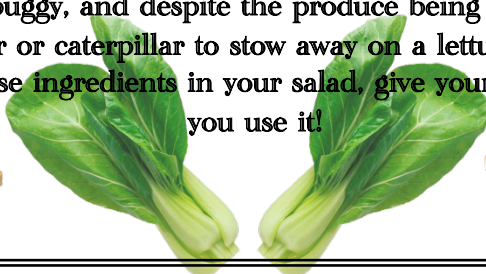
Many people wonder why we don't increase the size of the CSA and let in more members if we turn people away each season. The easy answer is that we are a teaching program and have to balance the business side of the operation with an adequate amount of quality training. We've also discovered it's easier to grow larger amounts of just a few crops rather than grow more of everything that goes into the CSA. These "cash crops" are ones that do well at the farmer's market or have been requested from WSU Dining Services such as tomatoes and carrots.

I went back and looked at last week's harvest to see what the cost for each box would be if you were to purchase everything from us at the farmer's market. The Large Share came in at \$26 and the Regular at \$15. Pretty close to the weekly average! If you were to purchase this same amount of organic produce at the Moscow Food Coop or one of the other large grocery stores you can count on higher prices across the board. While purchasing a CSA share does have its limits, the monetary value of the produce is a good deal.

--Brad

### DON'T FORGET TO WASH!

This time of the year can be buggy, and despite the produce being washed out at the farm, it's easy for an errant ladybug, spider or caterpillar to stow away on a lettuce leaf or other veggie. To be sure you don't get any surprise ingredients in your salad, give your produce an extra rinse before you use it!



As school gets back in session and weeknights get busier, menu planning can sometimes go by the wayside. So here is a recipe that is wonderful in its flexibility. It can accommodate just about as wide a range of vegetables as we receive in our CSA shares, coming in oh-so-handy when we come home wondering what we can do with the big zucchini, kohlrabi or bag of green beans in the fridge! It keeps well for a few days, too, and will no doubt make a good addition to the lunchbox.

--Jamaica

### **Farro and Mixed Vegetable Salad**

*The basis for this recipe came from the terrific food blog, 101cookbooks.com by Heidi Swanson. Farro is what's sometimes called a "relict crop." Related to wheat, it was one of the first domesticated grains in the Near East. It can grow well in poor soils and is resistant to some rust diseases. Available at the Moscow Food Co-op, it's grown in Marlin, WA by Lentz Farms.*

*Other grains, brown rice or pearled barley, for example, are fine substitutes in this recipe. Likewise, the vegetables are interchangeable. I'm sorry I didn't include this the last time we had fennel bulbs! But tomatoes, corn, finely chopped chard or other greens, and green beans would all be delicious with the dressing and grains. Diced and roasted summer squash would be excellent. These proportions make a salad to serve 6.*

2 medium cloves garlic, minced	3 small zucchini, sliced paper thin
1 teaspoon fine grain sea salt	1 medium head of fennel, trimmed and sliced paper thin
1 cup buttermilk	2 cups farro grain, (will make 4 cups cooked)
1/2 cup good-quality white wine vinegar	6 cups water or stock (vegetable or chicken)
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil	chopped chives for garnish
1/4 cup chopped dill	
1/2 cup chopped chives	
1 tablespoon chopped thyme	
7 small radishes, sliced paper thin	

Cooking farro is much like cooking brown rice, but it helps to soak it over night—otherwise it can take a *long* time (over an hour) to cook. The ratios, however, are 3:1 water to grain. Rinse the farro, then put it in a pot with a tight-fitting lid along with the water or stock. Bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce to a simmer, cover, and continue simmering until the grains are tender and cooked through, about 25 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the dressing and the vegetables.

To make the dressing, mash the garlic and salt to a paste using the flat side of a knife. Add to a pint jar (or other lidded jar). Then add the buttermilk, vinegar, oil, and herbs. Put the lid on and shake vigorously. To prepare the vegetables, simply slice them as thin as you can and set aside.

When the farro is finished, let it cool a bit, and then combine with the dressing in a large salad bowl. The dressing will look runny, but will be absorbed some by the farro and will thicken as the two are combined. Finally, add your vegetables, mix well, and serve.