

# Simple Gifts Farm

## Community Supported Agriculture

### Member Information 2010



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#### Welcome to Simple Gift Farm's CSA!

Thank you for supporting our farm. We love our community and enjoy getting to know so many of you from North Amherst and nearby neighborhoods. We have grown organic produce for the local market for eleven years. This is our fifth season farming at the North Amherst Community Farm, and we're honored to have the opportunity to be the stewards of this land.

#### Communicating with us

We send out as most of our member communications (receipt of payment, newsletters and occasional farm news) by e-mail, most often from [simplegiftsfarm@gmail.com](mailto:simplegiftsfarm@gmail.com), or occasionally from Audrey's address ([aabarker@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:aabarker@fas.harvard.edu)) or Jeremy's ([jbp@the-spa.com](mailto:jbp@the-spa.com)). We do not share your e-mail contact with anyone else. Make sure the messages get through your spam filter, or send us a message if you really don't want to receive any e-mails from us.

You can reach us by phone or email. The best time to reach us is 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. – or leave us a message. The farm season gets hectic, so it may take us a day or two to reply unless it is urgent.

#### The Season

We have garlic, strawberries, potatoes, onions, broccoli, carrots, tomatoes and greens in the ground, and our greenhouse is bursting at the seams. **The first weekly pick-up is right after Memorial Day - Tuesday, June 1; Thursday, June 3 or Saturday, June 5 (you choose which day you'd like to come).** June is still early season for New England, so the first 2-3 weeks tend to be on the light side in comparison to later weeks. The season runs for at least 22 weeks, through the end of October; depending on the weather, and yields of storage crops, we will have one or two late pickups in November.

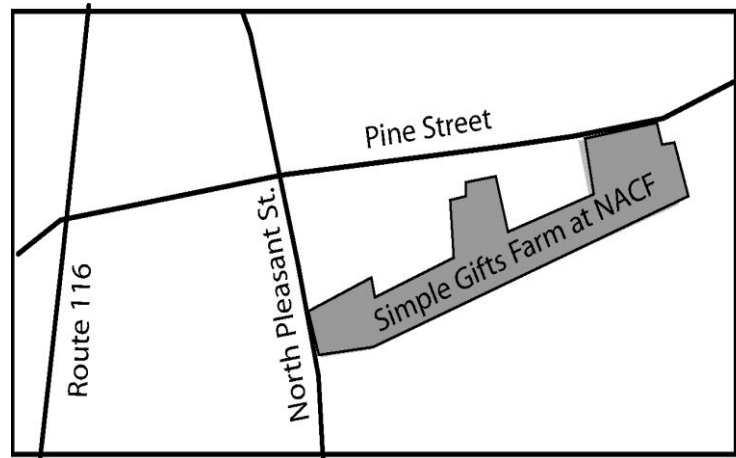
#### **Pick-up Tuesdays 3:30-7:00, Thursdays 3:30 – 7:00 p.m. or Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

Members pick up produce once a week, and can choose to come either Tuesday or Thursday from 3:30-7:30 p.m. or Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. You can choose which day, and you don't have to pick up on the same day each week.

We'll have the produce set up something like a farmers' market. Just sign in when you get your share. You'll get a bag at the first pick-up (we have a share-size and a large-share-size) and you can fill it up with your choice of available veggies. The first 2-3 pick-ups may not have a brimming bagful, but that will come along as the season progresses. Some extra-popular items or rarities (for example, the first tomato harvest) will have limits. We will also post what you-pick items are ready that week. We'll send a weekly newsletter by e-mail to let you know what is happening on the farm and some ideas on how to prepare the veggies of the week, and will have some printed copies available at pick-up.

At the distribution barn, we will have farm-raised eggs and meat for sale, as well as other locally grown or made items to make it easier for you eat local and enjoy the abundance of our Valley.

The pick-up site is at the North Amherst Community Farm at 1089 North Pleasant Street. Pull into the drive on the north side of the farmhouse (by the you-pick garden). Please drive slowly and watch out for kids. We're also on the bus route and encourage you to try walking or biking to the farm if & when you can.



### **What if you miss a pick-up?**

If you know you'll miss a week, you can have a friend or neighbor get your share. If you aren't able to make arrangements, your produce won't be wasted; it will either go to the Amherst Survival Center or to the farm stand.

### **You-pick**

Some crops will be available to CSA members for you-pick. We'll let you know what is available at pick-up, but you are welcome to you-pick anytime and we will have a you-pick board listing items available, their whereabouts, and any limits on quantity. Major you-pick items will be strawberries, green beans, peas, cherry tomatoes, flowers and some herbs. For those not physically able to pick, member volunteers or we can do the picking – please ask.

### **Working**

We ask that all shareholders contribute 4 hours of work each season. This is a big help to us, and we think it is important to give everyone a taste of farming. We mainly would like help harvesting on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. or on our regular Saturday work days (see below). We also need the help of many at our annual Harvest Festival in late September – there will be opportunities to set-up and clean-up, help with kids' activities, selling tickets, organizing the event, etc. We'd also like ongoing help tending the you-pick garden (weeding, for example). You can sign up for a work shift at pick-up or send us an e-mail. Kids are welcome at workdays, and are encouraged to visit and help as they can. Wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty, and bring sunscreen, a drink and a snack. If harvest work would be difficult for you, let us know – we have plenty of non-physical jobs as an alternative.

### **Full Moon Saturday Workday/ Bonfire/Potluck**

This year we will be trying to get people out to the farm for regular social events. In that vein, we will be having monthly workdays on the Saturday closest to the full moon, followed by a potluck and bonfire on the festival hill. The dates for those days are June 26th, July 24th, August 14th, September 25th, and October 23rd. We'll let you know more details as the first one comes around.

### **How We Grow**

All produce and eggs are certified organic by Baystate Organic Certifiers. We rely on building soil fertility by rotating the land between tillage agriculture and forage crops grazed by our livestock,

plowing in cover crops and mulch, and adding compost. We use rock powders and organic fertilizers on a limited basis to correct soil imbalances. We employ a wide array of management strategies to control weeds in the farm ecosystem. Insects and disease are controlled only through organic methods. Priority is given to cultural techniques such as crop rotation, staking and mulching, and physical barriers. Beneficial insect habitat will be established in strategic areas on the farm. Certain pests are difficult to control with purely cultural techniques; for these we use the least toxic and most pest-specific organic controls available. Crop rotation also helps avoid major pest and disease build-up. Over the last year, we have developed an Integrated Pest Management plan. Our livestock get plenty of fresh air and have a grass-based diet, and are an important part of our fertility (soil-building) program.

### **About Egg & Meat Sales**

We have an expanded flock of laying hens, and pasture-raised, certified organic eggs are available throughout and beyond the season. Beef and pork will be available on a semi-regular basis in the summer and fall; we are working on building up our stock so that we can have a steady supply, but for now, we will process a batch of animals and then the meat will be available until it runs out. Lamb will be available for sale in the early fall. Our goats are not for milk or meat, but they do a great job helping control brush (even poison ivy!).

### **Farm Hazards**

Please be aware of potential farm hazards. The *barns* are in need of repair. This is an ongoing project. We have carved out a safe haven for the CSA pick-up, but please don't wander around in the old barns.

*Tractors* and other farm equipment are so exciting, especially for kids. There are dangerous parts, though, even when they aren't moving, so please stay off the tractors. We will give you the chance to climb on the tractors at one of the events, when we can supervise closely.

The *electric fences* are live. They won't knock you or your kids out, and won't cause any physical harm, but they do really sting. Be aware that dogs particularly find electric fence very frightening. The animals are smart and only need to test this once or twice before they know to avoid it.

The usual nasties of the great outdoors are here too: *poison ivy, ticks*, stinging nettles, sharp sticks and rocks. Keep an eye on yourself and especially kids. We have a *first aid kit* in the CSA pick-up area, just in case.

### **The North Amherst Community Farm (NACF)**

NACF is a non-profit organization that owns the farmland and farmstead. Simple Gifts Farm leases the land and buildings from NACF. This group of neighbors joined together to preserve the farmland when it came up for sale a few years ago, and is still working hard to raise funds to pay for the land. They are also working on putting together several educational events during the season. You are invited to make a donation or get involved! NACF and Simple Gifts Farm work together to make infrastructure improvements and co-host the fall Harvest Festival.



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