


# THE PRODUCE BOX

Consumers spend \$547 billion for food originating on U.S. farms and ranches.

Of each dollar spent on food, the farmer's share is approximately 23 cents. The rest are for costs beyond the farm gate: wages and materials for production, processing, marketing, transportation and distribution.

<b>Jul 27 &amp; 28, 2011</b>		<b>Find us on facebook!</b> 		<b>Volume 4: Issue 16</b>	
<b>BOX A*</b>	<b>BOX B*</b>	<b>BOX C* \$26</b>	<b>BOX D* \$26</b>	<b>BOX E* \$23</b>	
1 quart peaches	1 quart peaches	<i>bigger box/bigger appetites</i>	Blueberries	2 oriental striped melons	
Eggplant Variety	Green Beans	<u>2 quarts peaches</u>	Edamame	3 quarts peaches	
Vine Ripe tomatoes	Personal Watermelon	1 oz fresh rosemary	Cucumber Variety	Watermelon	
<u>Okra or Green Beans</u>	<u>six ears of corn</u>	<u>8 ears of corn</u>	Green Beans	Sprite Melon	
Oriental Melon	1 oz fresh basil	<u>Vine ripe tomatoes</u>	<u>Surprise Item</u>	Fresh Mint	
Pepper variety	Hot pepper variety	<u>Cantaloupe</u>	Heiroom cherry tomatoes		
Surprise Item	Butternut Squash	Okra			
		1 quart potatoes			
*Box contents listed	as Most Persishable	to Least Perishable		<i>Specialty &amp; add-ons on Page 3!</i>	

## "I've got extra blueberries today...need any?"

This is the phone call Kevin got Saturday afternoon from a local farmer. She'd been at the market that morning and hadn't sold FORTY pints of blueberries that she picked. Now think about that...she picked them in that awful heat Friday, or maybe waited until the sun went down a bit. Then got up EARLY Saturday to drive to the market, then sat in the heat AGAIN all morning and then didn't sell what she picked.

I'm willing to bet that she has a full time job during the week as well. Or maybe she doesn't and depends on her sales on the weekend to make a bit of extra money for her family to make ends meet.

Why didn't she sell them? Who knows? Maybe the crowds were down because of the heat. Maybe her blueberries (since they were unsprayed) didn't look as "perfect" as the next booth's did. Maybe the guy down the row had them for a few cents cheaper.

Regardless, she didn't sell them. So she called Kevin to see if we needed them.

Well, we could have used them, but since they were picked Friday, they wouldn't hold until this week's deliveries. So we had to say No. Gosh I wish we had talked to her earlier in the week. She could have left those berries on the bushes, harvested them on Tuesday and delivered them to us for at least "some" of the boxes on Wednesday. ARGGGGH!!

THIS is why we started the program. Because I saw what was happening at the markets and I knew how hard it was sometimes to go there on Saturday or Sunday as a mom. I had the best intentions in the world, but when Saturday morning or afternoon arrived, something always seemed to come up.

With our program, farmers call us on Thursday with what they think they are going to have the following week. We double check on Friday before we put up the menu (that's why it's sometimes a bit late). They don't have to worry about picking what they won't sell, and don't start harvesting until the day before they deliver to us. They are guaranteed to sell what we order from them and are paid in full on delivery. They don't have to give us "perfect" specimens where everyone exactly the same, we're willing to accept a less perfect item because you are. We can take the "neat" items that the general public might not try...like those cool tomatoes Billy Mason grows with the wrinkles and spots and weird colors. (see pic on next page)

Anyway, it's a good thing we all are doing....thanks for being a part of it.

*Courtney*

# THE PRODUCE BOX

**THE PRODUCE BOX** is teaming up with **BackPack Buddies!**

The **BackPack Buddies Program** provides children from food-insecure homes with weekend meals during the school year. Local corporations, civic groups, and individuals help collect and pack bags with kid-friendly non-perishable food. The children receive a backpack containing six balanced meals and two healthy snacks at the end of every week. The children are served in partnership with school principals, guidance counselors, and various after school programs.

Be on the lookout for how YOU can help!

## Oh, the Things You Can Do With a Farm-Share Box

by NICOLE SPIRIDAKIS

I stared at the box brimming with vegetables, wondering what I'd gotten myself into. Unidentifiable greens, tiny round potatoes, a clutch of dirt-dusted, perfectly red radishes, a small container of wild strawberries — all this bounty was mine, if only I could figure out what to do with it. Welcome to cooking from a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) share. You might not always recognize every item in your weekly box, but it's almost certain to inspire.

I ventured into CSA subscription years ago when I lived on the East Coast, prompted by my brother who was working on an organic farm in Virginia (his farm didn't run a CSA, but others in the area did). I loved the idea of supporting a small, local farm, and I saw it as a complete win-win situation for both the farmer and myself: The farm received a reliable weekly income, and I received incredibly fresh, organic produce that cost less than a trip to the supermarket.

One bonus of CSA cooking is that I have learned to cook vegetables with which I was previously unfamiliar (chard, for example, and kabocha squash). A hearty dinner of "beans and greens" (shredded and sautéed kale paired with white beans and a lot of garlic or spring onions) has become a staple.

The concept of Community Supported Agriculture was introduced to the United States from Europe in the mid-1980s and has built in momentum and popularity especially during the past decade, particularly for those living in cities or suburbs without gardens. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, data collected in 2007 indicated that 12,549 farms in the United States reported marketing products through a CSA arrangement.

What certainly keeps things interesting is that a CSA share involves a perpetual element of surprise. You don't always know exactly what you're going to get, because while the farm you've signed up with might email or post a potential weekly produce list online, the farmers themselves won't know what's perfect for picking until they're in the fields, which can leave you wondering what the heck you'll do with all those mystery greens. It's almost always an adventure.

What I love about getting the bulk of my fruits and vegetables through a CSA share is that it challenges me. OK, this week I have a lot of squash and chard, so how I can use them up in interesting ways? Should I bake with the peaches, or just eat them in long, juicy slices? Maybe I can just do without when I have so many other things from which to choose. Of course, everything tastes so much better when it's eaten within a few days of being picked.

Cooking from a CSA forces me to cook outside my comfort zone, to try new things, to experiment. It also saves me money, because I force myself to cook mainly from the weekly share — augmented with staples such as bread, cheese, beans and dried goods, and the occasional trip to the farmers market — until I use up everything.

For an urbanite such as myself, being connected to a farm brings a bit of the country into the city. It reminds me that there's a vast acreage out there not bound by concrete and tall buildings, helps me to eat with the seasons, and brings home how important it is to know the source of my food.

## MARBLES KIDS MUSEUM

**IS INVITING ALL KIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO "EAT THEIR VEGGIES" TO VISIT FOR FREE!**

**WHEN? SUNDAY, AUGUST 7 or 14th, 2011 FROM 12-5.**

**WHO CAN COME? ANY MEMBER WITH A GIFT CERTIFICATE FROM THE PRODUCE BOX**

**THIS IS A FREE BENEFIT FOR ALL MEMBERS and their KIDS!**



# THE PRODUCE BOX

## SPECIALTY ITEMS

<u>This Week</u>	<u>Next Week</u>
Sweet Lass Scottish Shortbread	Great Harvest Bread's
Floury Apron's	Breakfast Blast
Wheascuits Parmesan or	GroWild Granola:
Tomato & Oregano Crackers	Power Packed or
<b>My Porch Dawg Dog Treats:</b>	Cherry Chocolate Chunk
<b>Peanut Butter or Variety</b>	



**YOUR DOGS WILL  
LOVE  
OUR TREATS!**



All the TREATS are baked fresh and daily. The ingredients in our treats are all basic ingredients, the same items found in your kitchen pantry. Return the unconditional love of your pet with Healthy, Tasty Treat!!!

This month **MY SOUTHERN SONS** brings you

## Sweet Lass Scottish Shortbread

This is a pure vanilla and butter shortbread with a tender, flaky crust that melts in your mouth.

As with all MY SOUTHERN SONS products, our shortbread is completely natural with no additives or preservatives.

Each small batch is made by hand and crafted to perfection. Sweet Lass Shortbread is the essence of purity in baking, using only the finest ingredients.

Feel free to order an extra to freeze for future enjoyment or to enjoy alongside a cup of tea, coffee, or even some ice cream.

From our family to yours - enjoy a sweet moment with MY SOUTHERN SONS.

## WANTED

**YOUR STORIES AND PHOTOS!**

Please send your contributions to:

**Laurie Rosenfeld, Newsletter Editor**

[laurie@theproducebox.com](mailto:laurie@theproducebox.com)

Please write 'newsletter' in the subject line.

Thank you!

## SPECIALTY ITEMS / EXTRA SHARES

### Extra Produce Available

1 quart jalapenos: \$2

1 butternut squash: \$2

### STOCK UP BOX

6 quarts of peaches: \$15.00

### Specialty Items

Free family gift certificate for August 14th to Marbles Kids Museum

Sweet Lass Scottish Shortbread cookies (about 14): \$5.25

Fadias Handmade gourmet crackers: Parmesan or Tomato/Oregano: \$4.99

My Porch DAWG dog treats (6 oz bag) Variety or peanut butter: \$4.50

## THE HEAT IS ON!!

I'm writing this Monday morning.....while Kevin is busy coordinating the farmer's harvests. So far today, one farmer doesn't have "quite" enough cucumbers (heat issues) and another doesn't have ANY blueberries (heat issues). Three farmers are combining their harvests to make the MINT order for the fruit boxes and four are working together for the SURPRISE items. This heat makes a busy Monday morning even MORE challenging. Many thanks to Kevin for working so hard for us all!

## Recognizing one of our Neighborhood Coordinators.....

Neighborhood coordinator **Lindsay Osterhoudt** deserves a high five for her hard work she has done this season, all the while toting her new baby boy, Maverick. You wouldn't know she is a mother of three young boys with her level of organization. Many times she has already contacted her replacement request members by the close of orders on Sunday. She generally delivers about 50 orders each week, which means two separate trips to get them all delivered, with a few pit stops for "snack" breaks. She pays special attention to all her boxes- checking each strawberry individually during the HOT strawberry weeks. I am truly impressed with her dedication. So here's a high five for you, Lindsay! ^5 (I had to check with my daughters for that one, I'm really not that cool.)

Bethany Stempien, Area Manager

## Heirloom Tomatoes from Billy Mason

Rich compost supplies nutrients, humus and prolific biologically active earth that sustain our veggies. One of our secrets is adding wood ash from our woodstoves we return missing micro nutrients and minerals that help make vibrant and strong plants that naturally resist insect pests and bacteria. If you garden, adding wood ash will improve your soil immensely. We use extra deep straw mulch to reduce weeding, hold moisture. maintain moderate temperatures and increase soil fertility. Everything is hand-harvested and packed at the peak of ripe perfection. It is our privilege to be a source for **THE PRODUCE BOX** and its Members.



We love living and working on our farm. Thank you for supporting your local North Carolina small farmer! The six heirloom varieties shown in the photo are:

*Brandywine, Japanese Black Trifele, Pineapple, Ceylon, Pruden's Purple and Cherokee Purple*

Please do let me know if you need more information or assistance. Life is amazing,

### **STORAGE & USAGE**     *Remember, all TPB produce is very ripe. If you see a \* eat this first!*

**Edamame**- Store fresh and cooked edamame in the refrigerator or freezer. Steam in microwave or on stovetop; salt; eat by pulling beans out through pod with teeth. Discard pods.

**\*Peaches**- Store peaches on the counter at room temperature until they are the ripeness you prefer. When ripe, peaches should be stored in the crisper bin of your refrigerator and will keep for up to five days. **Easy freezing method:** When freezing, peaches should be ripe and soft but not mushy. Wash peaches thoroughly in cold water (ice water is preferable for keeping the fruit firm). Peel and slice a small amount at a time, mixing about 1 teaspoon ascorbic acid (available at grocery and drug stores - is not harmful and will not affect the taste of the fruit) with 1 cup sugar, then sprinkle over sliced peaches. Pack in air tight containers or jars (suitable for freezing), and fill to 3/4 full, then freeze.

**Green Beans**- The best thing about storing vegetables such as green beans is that they can be stored in refrigerator without any loss of quality for several days. Proper moisture is important to avoid wilting and drying out, plastic bag or plastic container usually does the job. For the same reason do not wash them before refrigerating; wash green beans just before using.

**Okra**- Place fresh okra in a paper bag, or wrap it in a paper towel and place inside a perforated plastic bag. Store in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 days. For longer storage, blanch the whole okra then freeze.

**\*Sweet Corn** - Eat corn as soon as possible after harvest for maximum sweetness. If sweet corn cannot be eaten right away, leave in husks, remove long shanks and store uncovered in the refrigerator. ***See last week for how to freeze!***

**Hot & Sweet Pepper**- Store peppers for short-term use by refrigerating them in the produce drawer of your refrigerator. Hot peppers can be frozen whole.

**\*Oriental, Cantaloupe, Watermelon or Sprite Melon**- Ripe melons should be stored in the refrigerator. Once the melon has been sliced or cut into chunks, it should be kept in a sealable container in the refrigerator to keep it from drying out.

**\*Heirloom, Field & Cherry Tomatoes**- Unless you're planning to store your tomatoes for over a week, a windowsill, counter-top or bowl works fine. If you know you won't use them in the next few days, then lower temperatures (a cool entryway, the refrigerator) will help preserve the fruit. Contrary to our common practice in the US, storing in a refrigerator is not otherwise recommended, as the cooler temperatures can reduce flavor and cause mushiness. Your fresh-picked tomatoes will last longer on the kitchen counter than store-bought ones, which are probably a few days old when you get them.

**Eggplant**- Uncut eggplants will stay fresh for about a week in the refrigerator. Be sure to place them carefully without cutting or scrapping the skin. The skin is an important part of the plant that keeps them fresh for a longer period of time either in or out of the refrigerator. Storing eggplant in the vegetable drawer keeps it away from the freezer compartment so that it stays cool without freezing. Use the eggplant as soon as possible and within 5 days of refrigeration to avoid shriveling and aging.