



Hermit Creek Farm

CSA Handbook

**A Guide to
Understanding our CSA**

www.hermitcreekfarm.com

Hermit Creek Farm CSA Handbook



Steven and Landis Spickerman

Welcome to our farm family (OUR FARM-ILY)! We are looking forward to being your local food provider this summer. We are passionate about growing delicious, organic vegetables for the people we care about. AND, we also love teaching you how to eat them! Our hope is that you will not only love eating our vegetables, but you'll become more connected to a local farmer and community.

This is our CSA Handbook. We created it as a kind of “user manual” to help you understand how this CSA runs. Please skim the document to understand the Community Guidelines we abide by to keep this operation running like a well-oiled machine.

www.hermitcreekfarm.com

THE SPIRIT OF CSA

Do you know where your food comes from?

We think it's important to Know Your Farmer! To know who grows your food, where it's grown, and how it's grown. And that's where Community Supported Agriculture or CSA comes in.

CSA is a partnership between you and your farmer, where we work together to build a food system that works for everyone. You have a direct relationship with your farmer, your food, and the land it's grown on.

OUR GROWING PRACTICES

When we started farming at Hermit Creek, we made an important decision for both ourselves and the folks we grow food for to farm using organic methods.

Food is a language spoken by every culture. The simple act of choosing organic is an act of both cultural and biological conservation.

Organic is not the most efficient or easiest way to farm; it's slower, more complex, and labor intensive. But for the sake of our earth's long-term health, organic should be celebrated at every table, every day!

Certified organic, grown by farmers you know. It's food you can trust!

If you have any questions about how we grow our food, we invite you to contact us. We are happy to give you a tour and talk transparently about how we grow your food.

WHAT ABOUT THE ANIMALS?

We raise our livestock humanely on open pasture in a stress-free environment where pigs can be pigs and sheep can be sheep. And in turn, our animals help rejuvenate the soil as one part of an intricate crop rotation system.

Green grass and sunshine. We believe you'll notice the great taste and will feel good about your choice to support a gentler food system.

DO WE EVER BUY IN PRODUCTS FROM OTHER FARMS?

There are a few occasions when we "buy in" produce from other farms. This is mainly blueberries and cranberries to supplement our own production with something we do not grow. These will always be certified organic and we will always inform you when they are in the box. We believe transparency is paramount to the CSA experience .



UNDERSTANDING THE RISK OF CSA

As a member, you share in the abundance of our harvest, as well as in the risks that come with farming. We cannot stress this part enough! Although (after 28 years of growing food for our CSA) we have learned how to avoid or manage around most problems, it is likely that EVERY year, Mother Nature will throw us a curve-ball, and we may lose a crop to drought, flooding, disease, bugs, hail, or other acts of God. This may mean that you will not receive that particular affected crop for that season.

If this occurs, we will do our best to make up for the value of the share by substituting something else in its place or buying in a product from one of our organic partners. Another option is to make up the value of your share on the back end of the season as we attempt to quickly plant “quick-turn” crops to recoup our losses. We will communicate regularly to keep you informed of our Plan B, and we ask that you be patient with us as we do our best to mitigate the consequences.

We don't expect to please our entire membership with every share, but we are receptive to member feedback. Please know, we are committed to making your CSA experience the very best and we always wish to keep you satisfied. We thank you for your willingness to eat local and seasonal!



WHEN DO WE START?

We usually start the first or second week of June. Please refer to your CSA confirmation letter for the exact date. **We have different start dates for different options.** You will receive an initial email letting you know that we are starting, but there after you are responsible for remembering your schedule.

I ORDERED AN EVERY-OTHER-WEEK SHARE. HOW DO THOSE WORK?

If you ordered an **Every-Other-Week Summer share**, your start date is the week of **June 13, 2022**. That is your start date and you should continue picking up your share *every other week*. The best way to remember is to put it in your calendar on your phone with an alert.

If you ordered a **Works-Lite Share**, this is a bundle of all our every-other-week shares, including Every-Other-Week Summer, Every-Other-Week Fall and Winter Shares. Your start date is the week of June 6, 2022. Pick up your share that week then continue to pick up your share *every other week*.

HOW DO I PICK UP MY SHARE?

Each delivery day (or every other week for you EVERY OTHER WEEK folks) you will have a window of time to pick up your box. Please see the “delivery site information” for the address and specific time frame for each pick up site.

At the site you will find a stack of full boxes.

- 1) Pick any box, unless it has a label with a name on it. These are the Choice Shares and are individually packed for that person.
- 2) Find your name on the delivery sheet located near the boxes (look for a clipboard in most places). **If your name is not on the sheet, do not take a box.** If you think there should be a box for you, but your name is not on the list, please call Landis at 715-492-5969.

3) If you are a **Choice Share**, please find your individually labeled box. We packed this just for you!

4) To bring home your produce, either:

Empty contents of box into your own bags and stack empty box neatly with the other empty boxes. Please GENTLY unfold your box by pushing in on the button on the bottom.

Or Take your box with you. If you do, please be sure to transport and store it in a clean place. Bring your box with you when you come to pick up your next box. Stack it neatly with the other empty boxes. If you forget to bring your box, no problem, just be sure to remember next time!

5) Please give each other plenty of space at the pick up sites. If someone else is at the site when you arrive, please let them get their share before you enter the space where the boxes are.

CSA DELIVERY SITES

From Duluth to High Bridge to Bayfield (and many points in between), Hermit Creek Farm has a delivery site near you.

Duluth-Superior (all twin Ports deliveries are on Wednesdays).

Chester Creek - At Sara's Table Chester Creek Café on 8th Street in Duluth is the absolute perfect location for a CSA delivery. The café embodies the idea of food = community, featuring local foods and brews and simple seasonal eating in a neighborhood setting. Look for our white CSA trailer. [Shares available 3-8pm](#)

Wussow's Concert Café - West Duluth's premier concert coffeehouse and plain old great spot to grab a bite to eat and a hot or cold brew. Owned by a HCF CSA member who features locally grown food on the menu and locally grown music on the stage, Wussow's is a perfect spot to pick up your CSA share in West Duluth. Share boxes are placed on the stage, self-serve [Shares available 2-6pm](#)

Lakeside 4429 Gladstone St- An east side Duluth drop site at a generous CSA's members house in the vicinity of Gladstone and 45th Ave East. A plus for this site is the gorgeous garden you walk through to pick up your box! Just go thru the gate to the 3-season porch. [Shares available 3:30-7pm](#)

Superior 306 E 5th - This Superior drop site is at the home of a long-time CSA member who single-handedly convinced us to expand our CSA delivery to the Twin Ports! The site is easy to access just off Belknap Ave. Shares located on their beautiful shaded porch. [Shares available 1:30-6pm](#)

NRRI (an employee only drop site) - Employees at the Natural Resources Research Institute can pick up CSA shares right where they work. Shares located in the delivery/recycle room. [Shares available after 2:30 pm](#)

Hermantown 5053 Jonan Dr- This drop site is at the lovely home of a CSA member in the vicinity of West Arrowhead & Getchell Roads. We are so grateful for the generosity of neighbors! [Shares available 3:00-6:00 pm](#)

Home Delivery - If you signed up for our home delivery service, we will simply place your share at your front door (or tell us where we should place it!). [Shares arrive mid-late afternoon \(variable\).](#)

Chequamegon Bay & Vicinity

Chequamegon Food Cooperative - Ashland's premier local, organic food hub. We've partnered with the Co-op for the past 30 years to bring fresh local food to the Bay Area. Convenient downtown location, self-serve CSA pick-up makes the Co-op a terrific spot to pick up your CSA share. Shares located up front under the front windows-self serve. [Tuesday Shares available 2:00-closing Friday shares available 3:00-closing](#)

Coco Café & Bakery - In Washburn, Coco's was still under construction when owner/baker extraordinaire Noreen called and offered her soon to open space as a CSA drop site. We jumped at the opportunity and have had a locally grown connection with Coco's ever since. Deliveries available Tuesdays- located on the south side of the building under the red canopy. [**Shares available 3:00-closing**](#)

4 Corners Saloon - Mason. We've known 4 Corners owner Dave for most of the 30+ years we've lived at HCF and when a CSA member suggested his great bar and Friday fish fry hangout for a drop site, we jumped at the idea. Dave graciously accepted and we're grateful to have another reason to stop by and say hello (besides great fish and cold beer on Friday evenings). Deliveries are on Fridays. [**Shares available 4:00-closing**](#)

Bayfield Recreation Center - Centrally located and a hub of community activity and always friendly! Delivery on Tuesdays. [**Shares available 2:30-closing**](#)

Northlakes Clinic - Pick up your CSA share at either the Ashland (Clinic employee's only) or Iron River (open to the public) campuses. Ashland delivery is on [**Tuesdays, available after 1:30 pm**](#). Iron River is on [**Wednesdays, available 1:00-4:00pm**](#)

Hermit Creek Farm - Pick up your share right on the farm at 37099 Broeniman Road packing house location in High Bridge. Just go into the first building. Shares are kept in the cooler located in the back of the building. [**Available at the farm Tuesday or Friday after 1:00 pm**](#)

Please thank your CSA delivery site hosts whenever you can and patronize those businesses that act as drop sites as well. They really are the heartbeat of the community!

BIG PROBLEMS - BIGGER SOLUTIONS

From our farm to your table, we all have the power to reduce our impact on the environment & our communities through the choices we make.

At Hermit Creek Farm, our produce shares are packed in durable, sanitizable, and reusable boxes keeping thousands of cardboard boxes out of the waste stream every year. Now that is something to celebrate!

Please return these share boxes every time you come to get the next share. Also, help us out by unfolding the box (look on the bottom for the easy button instructions). Push on the bottom-don't pull apart! We sanitize these boxes each week so your produce comes to you safe and sound.



WHAT IF I CAN'T PICK UP MY SHARE OR SIMPLY FORGOT?

We ask that you be prompt in picking up your share. Our drop sites graciously offer space for delivery and we do not want to burden them (plus your veggies are simply better the fresher they are). If you can not pick up your share, please arrange for someone else to pick it up. If you simply forgot, check the drop site, it might still be there! Drop sites will dispose of the share in a manner they seem fit (we ask sites to hold your share for 24 hours).

I'M AT MY DROP SITE AND I DON'T HAVE A SHARE?

Hopefully this never happens, but sometimes it does! First, check the delivery site check list. If your name is not on the list, you are likely there on the wrong day (this happens to every-other-week folks from time to time). Okay, your name is on the list but still no box. It is likely someone else on the wrong schedule picked up a box on the wrong day or we made a mistake either in delivery or packing (this is rare but does happen from time to time). Give us a call 715-492-5969 and we will work out a remedy.

I'M GOING ON VACATION. WHAT HAPPENS TO MY CSA SHARE?

Everyone deserves a vacation and you shouldn't have to miss a CSA delivery to take one. If we know far enough in advance, we can arrange a delivery when you return. Let us know which week you will be gone as well as a date to receive your make up box. If you are an EVERY WEEK member, you will schedule a date to get two boxes. If you are an EVERY OTHER WEEK member, you can choose to get two boxes on a regular week, or schedule a box on one of your off weeks.

Or you can have a friend pick up and enjoy your share while you are away.

Please, understand that this bonus service is available once or twice a season. If you think you will be out of town more often, check out our Flex Plan share, the perfect share for those planning to take multiple vacations, etc.



WHAT'S IN YOUR BOX?

We spend a lot of time before the planting season even begins mapping out your box content plan for each week. Our goal is to provide you with a pre-packed box of 7-12 items each week. The items we choose are a mix of predominantly “popular” staples, but we also try to include an unusual variety to push you to try new things. One of the easiest and most satisfying ways to eat well is to simply cook and eat at home. It turns out that cooking our own food is one of the best things we can do for our well-being. It does not have to be a time consuming chore. You also do not have to be a chef or an experienced home cook or have a large fancy kitchen to enjoy the flavors and benefits of good food at home.

As the season progresses, you'll notice that the types of veggies in your box each week change. For example, spring turnips will only appear in June; sweet corn appears mid-August and runs through early September. Winter squashes and Brussels sprouts show up in the later weeks of the fall shares. Part of being in a CSA is learning how to eat with the seasons.

The early CSA boxes will not be quite as bountiful. In fact, you might look inside, calculate the math, and think, “This isn't the \$\$ value I should be getting per week.” This is how it is every year in the early weeks, and there's a good reason for it: There just aren't as many veggies that will grow in the early months of the season and you really wouldn't want a box of radishes. We do our best to provide as much variety as we can in the early weeks.

However, I assure you, by week 5, the boxes are packed with variety and volume, and the back end value of the season more than makes up for the smaller volume boxes early on.

Each Sunday/Monday, we post on our website a summary of “What's in the Box” for the week. Please bookmark this so you can plan your meals for the week. This list is usually about 75% accurate, but there are sometimes changes, since Mother Nature is fickle and we may not always have exactly enough of the same crop for everyone. This causes us to sometimes make adjustments based on site. We do our best to keep things fair and give you a premium item later to make up for it.

How do I know what to do with the veggies you give me?

One of the strengths of our CSA is teaching you how to cook the CSA way. We have developed a series of booklets to help get you started for success. We send these out as an attachment to a periodic email so please open all our emails! Here you'll learn the checklist of basic cooking techniques you need to master, what kitchen tools are a must for CSA success, how to store your produce to keep it from spoiling, and common vegetable “exit strategies” etc

Storing Your Produce

Keeping your vegetables fresh for an entire week takes effort. Part of that is our responsibility. We are very careful about when we harvest your produce, to insure that we pick it at its peak of ripeness and in ideal harvesting weather conditions to keep it lasting as long as possible. But part of it is your responsibility as well.

If you want to extend the life of your produce, it is imperative that you get your vegetables and fruits into a cool location asap. Leaving your box in your hot car is a very bad idea, and your produce will spoil very fast.

Here are some suggestions for how to protect the life of your produce from the Pick Up site to your kitchen:

1) We encourage you to bring a cooler or insulated bag with ice packs to pick up your produce. You can then transfer your items into your bag and get them home in a cool container. This will extend the life of your produce.

2) Purchase green bags from Amazon. These are around \$5, and are made of a special polymer that absorbs ethylene gas (emitted by vegetables causing them to spoil faster). They are reusable up to 10 times each. A great investment.

3) Take the tops off of your carrots, spring turnips, and beets right away when you get home, or you'll get limp-floppy carrots.

4) Wash, spin dry and store your greens right away.

We will be teaching you where to store your produce over the season. Read the newsletter included in the box and open and read the content we send via email. Another route is to post a question in our Facebook group to connect with many of our "CSA Masters". Hopefully this content will help you identify and master each vegetable.



HOW WE STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOU:

Via EMAIL: We do all our primary communication via email – usually on Sunday evenings. If you do not check email, we fear you will be “out of the loop,” and may not have as positive a CSA experience. Please be sure to “whitelist” our emails so we don’t end up in your SPAM folder. (For Gmail, drag one of our emails into your primary tab. For other email providers, just add our address to your address book).

Via Facebook Private Member Group: A lot of group interaction occurs here between members as they share advice and tips for making the most of your box. Request free access at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hermitcreekfarmcsa-what'scooking?>

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook: Follow us at <http://www.facebook.com/hermitcreekfarm>

Instagram: @hermitcreekfarm79

Our contact information :

Landis 715-492-5969 landis_hcf@yahoo.com

Steven 715-492-1369

www.hermitcreekfarm.com

65554 Springbrook Road, Highbridge WI 54846

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY

Not clicking with our CSA? No worries! We offer a money-back guarantee. If, after 5 weeks, you are dissatisfied with your membership and wish to cancel, or if you have to move out of the area and cannot continue your share, we will arrange a refund on a pro-rated basis.

