



# COMMON GROUND FARM

Farming for the future, today.



## 2011 CSA Member Handbook

# 2011 SEASON FARMERS, STAFF AND BOARD

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Tim Heuer

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# Welcome!

Thank you for joining Common Ground Farm's CSA program! Our Farm serves as an educational model for people of all ages to learn how foods grow, how to raise ecologically sound crops without chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, and how to keep farmland healthy for generations to come.

Common Ground Farm is a non-profit farm project, offering memberships in our CSA which provide members an opportunity to connect deeply to the source of their food and the land, and to work alongside professional farmers in the fields. In addition to CSA memberships, the farm connects with the community through educational programming for kids and adults, through participation in farmers markets and through our food justice programs, including the Fair Share program, food pantry donations and Common Greens, our mobile market in Beacon.

This handbook is designed to help you understand the ins and outs of your CSA membership. **PLEASE READ IT AND REFER TO IT!**

In addition to this handbook, we communicate with our members through monthly newsletters, emails detailing upcoming events and work hours opportunities, and notices and "Farmer's Notes" posted at each distribution. Lastly, we are on Facebook and Twitter (twitter users can get up-to-date information on last-minute work opportunities and what's new in the fields at harvest for any given week).

## **Directions to the farm**

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Common Ground Farm is located on the grounds of Stony Kill Environmental Education Center, NYS Department Environmental Conservation, in the Town of Fishkill. Stony Kill is located on Route 9D, two miles north of the intersection with Interstate 84. The farm field is a fenced area located near the red barns, pond and Washington House and can be seen from the greenhouse.

# Distribution

As a CSA member of Common Ground Farm, you will receive a weekly share of the harvest at “distribution” for the season, from early June through mid to late October. Please understand, there are risks in farming that may be reflected in the yields of certain crops and that there is no guarantee of the exact amount of produce you will receive each week.



Bins of produce at distribution

## WHERE DO I PICK UP MY SHARE?

The distribution center is located in the smaller red barn on the grounds of Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center. It can be reached using either of the two entrances to Stony Kill but is located nearer the southern entrance.

## WHEN DO I PICK UP MY SHARE?

You have made a commitment to pick up your share on ONE of the following days for the duration of the farm season:

**TUESDAY 4-7 PM OR FRIDAY 4-7 PM**  
**SATURDAY: BOXED SHARE PICK-UP**

You must come on the same day every week as the farmers provide a fair share of the weekly harvest to everyone by picking for the shares allotted for each day.

## WHAT IF I CAN'T PICK UP MY SHARE?

- Send another member, friend, or neighbor to pick up for you
- Try and switch days with another member
- Leave your share at the farm and we'll donate it to the local food bank

## Getting Your Food

While the primary purpose of our weekly distribution is the culmination of growing our crops and the selection by our members to take home and eat—it is also a way to connect to the farm each week. At distribution you will find work-hours sign-up sheets & reports, farmer's notes, events postings, and other important information, as well as u-pick opportunities in the field. If you have the luxury, feel free to linger. Also, please sign-in each week when you arrive.

**SELECTION OF PRODUCE:** Produce will be displayed and identified in the style of a farmers market. There will be signs to indicate share quantities or weight of produce. Scales will be available for you to weigh your share. You do not have to take the full amount, but please note the harvest is determined by the share numbers. Taking extra produce means less for those who come later. The produce has been rinsed, but please wash again before using it!

**SPLITTING A SHARE:** Our CSA offers one share size. While we do allow the option for two individual members to split a full share, please understand that if you have chosen this option, you and your share partner will be picking up one full share each week and “splitting” it as you both see fit. You may not each select “half” at distribution as our shares are not allocated this way. You may go through distribution together, alternate weeks, or simply divvy it up at the tables outside—it is entirely up to you. If you have any questions, please contact the farm.

**BAGGING YOUR SHARE:** We STRONGLY encourage you to bring your own bag, canvas tote, basket or box. We cannot promise that there will always be bags available on site for your use.

**COMMON GROUND FARM NEWSLETTER:** As our paperless transition continues from last year, this season our updates will all be sent to you through our website and emails. Keep on the lookout for news and events. If you have any comments, concerns or favorite recipes you would like to share, email us at [membership@commongroundfarm.org](mailto:membership@commongroundfarm.org).

## Work Hours

### Everything you need to know about work hours

If you have signed up for a working share you will need to schedule 10 hours of work for the season (work available June through October). If you have a non-working share, your participation at the farm is still most welcome and appreciated. Find out how fun and rewarding working on our Farm can be!

Common Ground Farm puts tremendous value in our working memberships, which allow us to offer our CSA shares at a lower cost in exchange for time working on the farm. It helps to engage our members in the day-to-day work of running the farm while also deepening their connection to our wonderful farmers and the land itself. All of this is a big part of our mission.

Because this is primarily a working-member farm, we rely heavily on your commitment to work your membership hours. Regardless of weather, our food must be harvested, washed and organized twice a week for distribution. Weeds must be pulled, greenhouses mended, market stands set up and taken down, and weekly distributions run smoothly. All of this requires your generous help.

Please refer to the schedule below to understand how you can best complete your work hour commitment over the season. Most of your help is needed now, at the beginning of the season, and through the high-yield summer months. Please do not wait to start helping out until too late in the season.

We thank you!

# Work Hours Schedule

All of the work hours listed below—unless otherwise noted—must be signed up for in advance (so we can insure that the farmers will have help).

## **TUESDAY AND FRIDAY;** 2 hour minimum

Field Work (Harvest) 8:00am-12:00pm

**DISTRIBUTION** 3:30pm-7:30pm (2 people only)

**U-PICK GARDEN** 4:00pm-7:00pm (2 people only)

## **SATURDAY WORK HOURS**

Field Work 8:00am-12:00pm (Potluck lunch to follow)

## **SUNDAY BEACON FARMERS' MARKET**

Harvest/Wash (at farm) 7:00am-8:30am (3 people only)

Market Set-Up 9:00am-10:00am (1 person only)

Market Breakdown 3:30pm-4:30pm (1 person only)

There are other (non-field work/distribution) work hour opportunities available. Contact the membership@commongroundfarm.org for more information. Also, if you have a strong urge to come out and work on a day that does not normally have work hours scheduled, call farmer Tim Heuer in the fields to see if your help is needed: 517.775.3134 .

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU**

### **CANNOT MAKE YOUR SCHEDULED SHIFT**

Number to call if you cannot make your shift: 517-775-3134 (Tim's cell phone)

If you do not call and do not show up, then you will be responsible for completing an additional work hour for each scheduled shift missed. It is a tremendous hardship on our farmers if you sign up to work and cannot—for ANY reason—so please do everything you can do send someone in your place (anyone!) or to call enough in advance so we have a chance to find other hands to fill the gap.

All un-worked hours, including additional accrued hours for missed shifts, will be converted to a fee of \$12/hour at the end of the season, payable immediately. You will not be asked to re-join for another season until the balance is paid. This is the only way we can run our CSA, which is based 90% on working member shares. We appreciate your time immensely!

**PLEASE REMEMBER:** We would rather not collect your money; your work is much more valuable to us!

# Work Hours Opportunities

## **HARVEST**

Harvesting shifts can include picking and washing vegetables, thinning, weeding, and whatever else needs doing in the fields. Starting in July, our farmers need 10 work share hours of help for both the Tuesday and Friday harvest.

- Please be punctual. The shifts have specific starting times so the farmers can have uninterrupted stretches of work done on these very busy days
- Harvesting happens rain or shine, so if you've signed up, please come.



## **DISTRIBUTION**

This is a fun, social way to help. Greet people when they come to pick up their vegetables, show them where to sign-in, restock the vegetables as needed, and clean up at the end of distribution. Some people have found this is a good shift to work with their infants or children along, or if they can't work in the field. Distribution workhours begin ½ hour before distribution begins (for set up) and ends ½ hour after distribution (for clean up).

- You must be able to lift a heavy bin of veggies (or be willing to ask someone there to do it for you), but other than that you can sit in a chair, inside in the shade.
- Please work an entire shift, but you may work a half shift if needed. If working a half-shift, please indicate the start and end hours clearly.
- Shifts available are: Tuesday 3:30-7:30 pm or Friday 3:30-7:30 pm

## **GENERAL**

**FIELD WORK:** There are many opportunities to do your field work, including Saturday work days throughout the season. You can sign up for field work on sign up sheets at distribution. If you work during the day or want to limit your trips to the farm, consider signing up to do field work during distribution.

- Field work does not occur in the pouring rain so please reschedule any postponed shifts.

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:** There are other options for fulfilling your work hours, such as helping arrange member and fundraising events, delivering vegetables to the food bank, planning educational workshops, etc. Work hours opportunities for special events, committees, etc. will be posted as they become available at distribution or via e-mail.



Working in the field

**PARENTS:** You may bring your children with you to distribution, harvest, or field shifts. If a group of parents organize themselves to work a shift together and one of them entertains the kids part of the time, the "entertainer" will get work hours credit. Great workers who are 13 or over can fulfill their family's hours.

### **SIGNING UP**

You can sign up for available shifts at distribution. You are always welcome to work on the farm, but please try and sign up ahead of time for shifts for which you want work share credit. Knowing how many people will be working and when is a huge benefit for the farm and the farmers. Please schedule yourself to work half of your hours by mid-season.

### **WORK LOG**

When you work your hours, please sign the work log indicating date and number of hours worked. The work hours log book is located in the kiosk at the entrance to our fields; there is a separate log for distribution workers located in the distribution room. This is the only way we are able to verify hours worked. You are responsible for keeping track of your hours over the course of the season, and any hours not worked by the end of the season will be charged at a rate of \$12 per hour.

Work Hours must be **COMPLETED OR PAID FOR IN FULL BY NOVEMBER 15TH** of the current season. The Board of Directors of Common Ground Farm reserves the right to deny any working member who fails to complete his/her work hours the right to rejoin as a working member the following year.

Opportunities for work hours occur throughout the season. There is a peak of work hours in the high summer months and a small amount of work hours in the fall. Do not wait until the end of the season to complete work hours. It is your responsibility as a member to be sure you get your hours in before the work hours run out. Once all opportunity for hours has passed,

**IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FARM TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO COMPLETE YOUR WORKHOURS.**

## **Board of Directors**

Common Ground Farm is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors. Directors are involved in the policy making, finances, fundraising, grant-seeking, membership recruitment, and important committees of the farm:

### **FOOD JUSTICE COMMITTEE:**

This committee is charged with assuring that the farm can serve all members of the community, regardless of income. Our Fair Share program, which provides shares for families and individuals who could not otherwise afford it, and our food pantry work fall under this committee. In addition, this committee provides support for the Green Teens—Common Ground Farm partners with Cornell Cooperative

Extension's Green Teen Community Gardening Program. Together, we provide farm-based educational programming for local teens and run "Common Greens" a mobile market that provides reduced-priced produce to low-income residents in Beacon. For more information, see [www.greenteen.org](http://www.greenteen.org).



**Common Greens Mobile Market**

photo: Dana Devine O'Malley

**FARM COMMITTEE:** This committee is charged with dealing with the policies and practices of the farm as well as the farm's presence in the larger community: from developing work hours policies, to improving signs at distribution to coordinating our open house and other public events.

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** This committee has the responsibility of developing and doing some groundwork on fundraising and grant-seeking for the farm, including fundraisers like our annual appeal and auction to assist on grants.

These committees are open to all members of the farm and are an exciting and rewarding way to get more involved with your community farm! If you are interested in serving on a committee, please contact us at [membership@commongroundfarm.org](mailto:membership@commongroundfarm.org) or at 231-4424.

## Farmer's Pledge

### 2010 Growing Practices and Community Ethics Statement

In accordance with the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York's Farmer's Pledge program, the practice of growing food at Common Ground Farm will be as transparent as possible. The pledge that we've committed to is based on integrity, education, and health. Any Farm member, market consumer, community member, or concerned citizen who wishes to discuss our growing practices with us is encouraged to do so, and will receive an honest, clear picture of how our growing practices affect the land and community that supports it. At a basic level, we pledge that in our farming practices we will:



Farm Manager, Tim Heuer

- Build and maintain healthy soils by applying farming practices that include rotating crops annually, using compost, cover crops, green manures, and reduced tillage;
- Serve the health of the soil, people and nature by rejecting the use of synthetic insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and fertilizers;
- Reject the use of GMO's, chemically treated seeds, or synthetic toxic materials;
- Treat our laying hens humanely by providing access to free-range, fresh water, and rejecting the use of non-organic feed;
- Handle raw manure and soil amendments with care;
- Encourage distribution of unsold but edible food to people who need it;
- Work in cooperation with other local farmer's to promote a more healthy and just regional food system;
- Train the next generation of farmer's by sharing and developing farming skills among apprentices, volunteers, and work-share members;
- Transparently discuss the wages of all farm workers and acknowledge their freedom of association and their right to collective bargaining.

Your Farmer,

Tim Heuer

## Common Ground Farm Field Rules

- **BE WARY OF THE FENCE.** It's electrified. Please don't allow your children to climb on the fence and do not touch it!
- **CHECK WITH THE FARMERS** before beginning work and when your task is completed.
- **SIGN IN AND OUT** when satisfying your work requirement; work logs are in the field and at distribution.
- **ALWAYS WEAR SHOES** to stay safe from sharp objects and ticks.
- **WALK IN THE PATHS BETWEEN BEDS, NOT IN BEDS.** Soil compaction and crop loss are important issues for the health of our farm.
- **KIDS AND ADULTS ARE ASKED TO STAY OFF OF EQUIPMENT** unless expressly permitted by the farmers. Keep yourselves and children away from tractors, tractor attachments and other farm machinery.
- **USE TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT CAREFULLY** and put them away after use. Consult with farmers as to proper use and storage.
- **CAREFULLY SUPERVISE YOUR CHILDREN** or any children you've brought to the farm. Help them to observe the above guidelines.
- Respect Stony Kill's **NO PETS** policy.
- **DRIVE SLOWLY** through Stony Kill—and please enjoy the bluebirds!

# The Farm's Office Hours

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Common Ground Farm is run entirely by part-time employees and volunteers. Due to this, it is hard for us to respond to you immediately. In general there is someone who checks emails and voice mails Monday through Thursday (except holidays). Any messages that are received Thursday evening through Sunday evening will not be returned until Monday morning the earliest. We apologize if this is an inconvenience to anyone, but please know that we always do the best we can to be sure everyone is helped and that all questions are answered.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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**MAIL:** Common Ground Farm  
P.O. Box 148  
Beacon, NY 12508

**WEB:** [www.commongroundfarm.org](http://www.commongroundfarm.org)

**EMAIL:** [membership@commongroundfarm.org](mailto:membership@commongroundfarm.org)

### Farm Phone Numbers:

General: 845-231-4424

Executive Director (Lisa Jessup): 845-297-1253

Farmer (Tim Heuer): 517-775-3134

Education (Jen Clapp): 845-838-1822

