

# Spring Creek Farm CSA – FAQs

## **What is a CSA?**

CSA stands for community supported agriculture, a concept conceived in order to support small farms that wish to market their products locally and directly to customers in their communities. Customers purchase CSA shares at the beginning of the season and receive a distribution of vegetables each week throughout the farm season. By paying up front, CSA members support small farms by sharing in the risk of growing vegetables. The idea has helped support local food production around the country and the world and encourages customers to get to know their farmers directly, shortening the food chain and giving people access to information about how their food is grown.

## **What am I supporting when I purchase a CSA from Spring Creek Farm?**

Spring Creek Farm is a unique CSA program because it is affiliated with Alaska Pacific University. By purchasing a share from the farm, you are helping support APUs Kellogg Campus Mission of serving as “a center for sustainable and socially responsible living through collaborative processes of project-based learning about resilient foods systems and renewable, innovative design.” We do this through three strategic initiatives:

**Food** – We provide fresh, healthy, local, and naturally grown food for members of the APU, ANTHC, and greater Palmer and Anchorage communities. We also grow vegetables for the Alaska Tilth program, which helps low-income individuals access locally grown vegetables.

**Education** – Our farm is a living classroom that conducts research and offers educational opportunities promoting local, sustainable, inclusive food systems adapted to Northern Climates.

**Community** – Community is in the name - Community Supported Agriculture. At Spring Creek Farm, we believe in food access and choice for all. By purchasing a CSA with us, you are helping us to build local partnerships, increase development and access of educational programming for local and indigenous foods, and better connect APU students with our broader community. You might even meet a new friend at our farm stand during pick up!

## **How big is a CSA share?**

A typical full-share contains enough fresh vegetables to feed a couple or small family for a week. A half-share is designed to meet the vegetable needs of an individual or couple. The full share will range from 7-15 items a week, and weigh approximately 6-15 lbs. The half share will range from 5-10 items a week, and weigh approximately 4-8 lbs.

## **What will be in my CSA share?**

We produce a wide range of vegetables on our farm including lettuce, mixed salad greens, carrots, beets, potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, herbs, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage, napa cabbage, bok choy, kale, swiss chard, peas, turnips, radishes, zucchini and more. In June and early July, your share will include more leafy greens and salad items. In July

and early August we will add some root vegetables like carrots and beets in addition to larger items like cauliflower, broccoli, tomatoes, cucumbers and zucchini. In the fall, we will keep distributing many of those vegetables while adding the heartier fall crops: potatoes, brussels sprouts, and other roots.

### **When does the CSA start?**

The CSA begins the second or third week of June, depending on the weather.

### **How long does the CSA last?**

The CSA lasts 18 weeks from the start date.

### **What is Alaska Tilth?**

Alaska Tilth is a partnership between Spring Creek Farm, APU, UAF, the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Cooperative Extension that produces and distributes healthy food to people in the Mat-Su Valley. Tilth donates produce to local SNAP and Family Nutrition Educators, who use the produce as a means to give cooking demonstrations to low income community members. Please consider adding a donation to your CSA membership fee to help us fund this program!

### **Does the Spring Creek Farm CSA use Organic practices?**

While Spring Creek Farm does not pay to be Certified Organic through the USDA, we use practices that match or exceed those standards. We have never used chemical fertilizers or pesticides on our fields, and manage soil and plant health through cover cropping, the addition of compost and organic fertilizers, crop rotation, and natural pest management techniques. If you have any other questions about our growing practices, please contact us!

### **Who will be growing my food?**

Ben Swimm, the farm manager at Spring Creek, has been farming for nearly ten years in Alaska, Vermont, and upstate New York. He is returning to APU as the Kellogg Farm Manager after having been the Assistant Production Manager during the 2010 and 2011 seasons. In between, Ben gained experience managing St. Lawrence University's Sustainability Semester farm, a unique off-campus semester program for students looking for an immersive experience in Sustainability Studies, as well as co-managing Brown Dog Farm, which produces naturally grown flowers and vegetables in Palmer, AK, with his partner, Mimi.

### **How do I sign-up?**

Complete the CSA sign-up form and mail it to the farm (address on form) with your payment by check or email your form to us and pay by credit card to the APU accounting department via phone (number on form). Your spot is not guaranteed until we receive your payment.