



Now is the time to consider your Intervale Community Farm membership for the 2007 season. As a current member, you have first priority for 2007 membership. We will hold a spot for you through January 31, 2007. Every year, we experience increased demand—therefore, we encourage you to renew extra early this year!

RENEW!

Joining now insures your supply of delicious organic vegetables for 2007, and also helps the Farm by reducing our need to borrow money for working capital this winter. It also helps alleviate the heavy administrative workload that we dread during the busy spring and summer months. Payment in full is particularly helpful, and saves us from billing you during the season. If you need a membership form, we are happy to send one; however, if you prefer, just mail a check and enclose a note with your current address, phone and what share size you would like for 2007. The standard deposit is \$50. Small Shares cost \$390 (\$370 if paid in full by 1/31/07), Medium Shares are \$550 (\$525 if paid in full by 1/31/07), and Large Shares are \$700 (\$670 if paid in full by 1/31/07) Please call the farm at 658-2919 and leave a message if you need more information about membership, are interested in our Supported Share program, or if you have friends who may be interested.

Your continued membership at the Intervale Community Farm insures that we can better serve your needs as member-owners, and the needs of the larger Burlington community. Not only do you and your family enjoy the produce from the Farm, but your membership supports our wider mission of developing a stable local food system that can assure everyone access to high quality food. We hope to see you in 2007!



The 2006-2007 Winter Share is under way, with an abundance of delicious local food. The mild weather has enabled the farm to provide fresh-picked produce late into the season, including broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kale, and spinach. In the photo above, members select root crops in the newly renovated heated barn space.

Steering Committee Election Results!

Congratulations to **Jennifer Green**, who is newly elected to serve her first term on the ICF Steering Committee. We would also like to congratulate **Michael Healy**, **Christopher McCandless**, and **Parm Padgett**, who have all been re-elected to serve another two-year term. We are also excited that **Bonnie Acker**, **Evan Goldsmith**, and **Tiffany Tillman** continue to serve out their two-year terms.

We are enthusiastic to have such an incredibly thoughtful group of people guiding the farm, and extremely glad to welcome the fresh perspective that Jennifer will offer. A long-time ICF member and active member of the Burlington community, Jennifer says that although she has long appreciated the food and community of ICF, “I have recently come to feel that the ICF is more – to me, the ICF is a part of the solution to the intricate and multi-dimensional problems that threaten the earth. In short, being an ICF member is one way I can be part of the solution, not the problem.” Welcome, Jennifer!

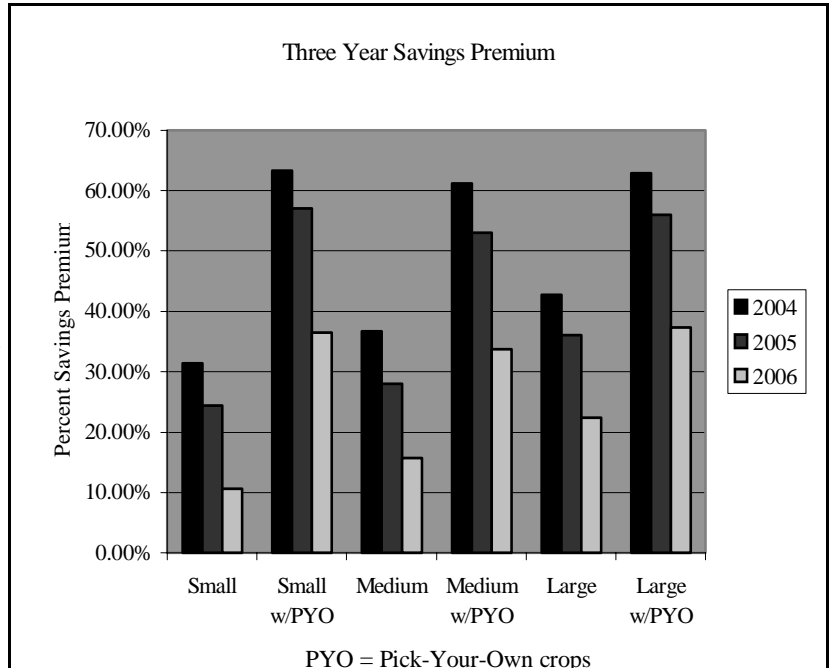
2006 Share Value Report: Members Still Benefit Despite the Challenges of 2006

By Becky Maden

2006 started out as a promising growing season—a beautiful sunny April enabled us to get into the fields early. By the beginning of May, we felt comfortably ahead of schedule and quite excited about the season. Then the rains began. And continued. The river rose, flooded, receded, rose, and flooded again. While farmers in the Intervale and around the state were more severely affected by wet soils than the Intervale Community Farm was, we still struggled to get crops planted on time and to keep plants healthy. Rain during the month of May meant fewer pollinators were active, while it also increased the likelihood of plant diseases. As a result, high-value crops like eggplant and peppers were planted late and suffered from cool wet soils. Crops that depend upon sunny days and insect activity for fruit set (such as winter squash and pumpkins) yielded far less than usual.

Overall, ICF members for the 2006 season experienced at least a 10% savings for small shares excluding pick-your-own crops. If members did half of the available pick-your-own, there was a 36% savings. In order to calculate the overall share value, we gather prices of comparable produce from the Farmer's Markets and local stores. We then assign an average price to each vegetable. Our records from pick-ups are then entered into a spreadsheet to calculate share values. Calculating these share values can be tricky since ICF members have a choice between crops at pickups. For instance, although a potato and turnip are priced differently at the store, they are interchangeable items at an ICF pickup. In addition, many of the PYO crops retail at very high prices. If a member chooses to participate in all of the pick-your-own, he or she adds significant value to the share. As we calculate the value of these crops, we try to account for the fact that the members are harvesting their own pick-your-own items.

As member shareholders, you share in the risk of organic farming in Vermont. This includes accepting the disappointment when there is only one pumpkin available per household, or when the basil is far behind schedule. Without the support of members, years like 2006 would be tremendously difficult. We strive to continue to provide a good share value, and we also look forward to better growing conditions. We also hope that while members appreciate the economic value of ICF, they are also drawn to the larger goals of ICF. ICF strives to foster a vibrant and interactive community between farmers and consumers while sustainably farming the land. Thanks to everyone for their positive energy this year!



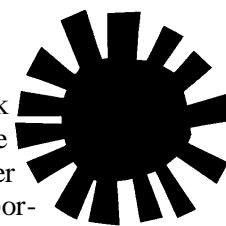
Farmers and Holiday Shopping

In late November, the catalogues begin to pile up in our ICF mailbox. Each day, a few arrive and we eagerly turn the pages. We are not thinking about clothes or shoes or toys or any holiday gifts, but instead we are looking at beautiful glossy pictures of melons, tomatoes, beans, and eggplant. Our mouths water with anticipation of next year's watermelons and juicy tomatoes. Excitement is stirred by a new pepper variety, and we dream of glowing sunflowers. This may be the best time to be a farmer: when the fields are frozen and next year can be mapped out perfectly in our minds.

At left, ICF staff Keri Latiolais and Jessie Alberts count and weigh the remaining 2006 seeds.

Global Climate Change and ICF

By Becky Maden



For a farmer, a stretch of warm weather in mid-December is a blessing; it is the last chance to work comfortably outdoors, harvesting last bits of food from the fields, and completing tasks that would take infinitely longer once frigid temperatures hit. Every bit of warmth that the late fall allows, a farmer hails with joy. The usual misery associated with chilly farm projects becomes instead a wonderful opportunity to continue working outdoors.

At the Intervale Community Farm, a mild fall for the 2006 season helped us catch up on several fronts. We were able to harvest several crops straight through December. Furthermore, although our barn renovation project fell behind schedule, the mild winter has enabled us to catch up quickly. Winter Share members have benefited from the bounty that has remained alive in the fields—broccoli, leeks, Brussels Sprouts, kale, chard, spinach, and salad mix.

But it is hard to embrace unusually warm weather without the sense that it is not right, that we shouldn't be working in T-shirts on November 30. Certainly, there are always weather flukes, but long stretches of above average temperatures (indeed, November 30 was a record-breaking high) are yet more evidence that global warming is taking place. It is difficult to ignore, particularly as it finally shifts from an environmentalist's scare phrase to a subject addressed by the mainstream media. We are witnessing a turning point; global warming has finally captured the nation's attention, but the question is whether people realize the severity of the threat and the need for immediate and significant action.

As farmers, we must think beyond the possible effects that climate change may have on our lives, families, recreation, economy, and natural environment. We must also consider the effects it may have on our crops, our soils, our growing practices, on the quality, variety and quantity of food we produce, and on our overall livelihood. In Vermont, farmers have traditionally relied on long months of hard winter freezes to eliminate pests and diseases. Every season pests and diseases migrate up the eastern seaboard from climates where they can over-winter. Many of these pests and diseases do not hit Vermont until quite late in the season, leaving us with several months of relatively trouble free growing conditions.

In recent years, however, Vermont and other northern states have witnessed the onset of diseases previously unknown here. This year, once the rains finally stopped, the peppers at the Intervale Community Farm suffered from a disease called bacterial leaf spot. When asked about the problem, Ann Hazelrig of the plant diagnostics lab at UVM said that this disease had never been seen in Vermont until very recently. Similarly, pumpkin and winter squash crops in New England have suffered in recent years from a disease called phytophthora blight. Both of these diseases have troubled southern growers for years, but never reached our wonderfully frigid state. Until now.

Farms throughout Vermont are learning to expect unusual weather patterns. This year's extended spring rains and flooding had a devastating affect on many farms around the state. Likewise, maple syrup producers are struggling to adapt to oddly timed runs of sap. Throughout the state and region, all farmers are noticing the changes, and most of us anticipate more to follow.

The Intervale Community Farm is fortunate to have a customer base that relies on diversity and supports the farm despite seasonal production fluctuations. As the 2006 season has taught us all, ICF is incredibly blessed to have such a supportive membership. We ended the season with an average harvest—not the bounty that many members expect, but enough food to make most people happy. As farmers, the support from the members makes most challenges seem surmountable. We can only hope that in the coming months and years, our community of local eaters and farmers can help lead the battle against global climate change.



Flood of May 2006: Lucky Ladies' Egg Farmer John Cleary and brother Joe Cleary canoe through Intervale fields to rescue chickens.



THANK YOU!

- A million thanks this year to our amazingly dedicated and thoughtful Steering Committee—and a special thanks to Mark Kuprych who leaves the Steering Committee after four years of wonderful work.
- Thanks to Bonnie Acker, Tiffany Tillman, and Rick Gencarelli for making wonderful samples for pick-ups.
- Thanks to our awesome working members for harvest help and good conversation.
- Thanks to our incredibly dirt loving 2006 staff!
- Thanks to **all the members** who bring good cheer (and sometimes even goodies!) to farm pick-ups.

Where Does *Your* Spinach Come From?

By *Becky Maden*



This fall, when three people died and 200 were sickened from an outbreak of E. coli on California spinach, many local farmers were concerned that consumers would turn away from their spinach as well. The strain of E. coli 0157:H7 came from cattle feces and has been traced back to four fields cultivated for processing by Natural Selections Foods in California. This particular strain of E. coli cannot be washed off. Only by cooking can the contaminated food be made safe to eat.

In a community where local food is heavily promoted and supported, the spinach contamination provides us with further evidence of why it is important to buy food from farms that you know. The plant that processes Natural Selections salad washes 26 million servings of salad every week.* It is frightening to imagine how easily contaminated greens could be mixed in with many others, bagged, and shipped all over the country for consumption. Determining the source of contamination is like a murder mystery, and sadly, little accountability results. Instead, overall standards for food safety will be tightened, placing a burden of expense on the small grower while not necessarily increasing overall food safety.

Like many local farms, we received many positive comments from our members about how happy they were to eat safe spinach. Knowing where your food is grown and who grows it provides consumers with a degree of confidence that their food supply is safe. Farms around the state were pleased that their spinach sales actually increased during the scare. Despite all of the media warnings against spinach consumption, many people clearly understood that local spinach was unharmed by the contamination.

The tragic deaths and sicknesses that accompanied this outbreak should give us all pause. Buying local produce not only supports farmer, preserves open space, and helps the local economy; it also helps insure a safe food supply.

*Information courtesy of *Growing for Market*, Vol 15, number 11.

WANTED:

- **BAGS, BAGS, BAGS!** The Winter Share means we need bags year round. Help us save precious resources by recycling your bags with ICF. **FULL-SIZED PAPER OR PLASTIC BAGS ONLY** (no produce, newspaper, bread, dry-cleaning bags, etc.). Please leave them in the blue bin near the pole barn.
- **LAPTOP COMPUTER.** Help us boost our administrative capacity by donating a laptop computer that might be too slow or old for you.
- **TOYS.** We can always use some excitement for the little ones at pick-up. You can donate any old toys by leaving them near the sandbox.
- **TRUCKS!** We **ALWAYS** are looking for farm vehicles. If you have a truck that isn't shiny enough for town anymore, consider a donation to the farm. Wouldn't you love to see your vehicle put to work?



Newsletter: Andy Jones, Becky Maden (editor).

Photography: Becky Maden.

Graphics: Bonnie Acker

Staff: Jessie Alberts, Andy Jones (Farm Manager), Keri Latiolais, Becky Maden (Assistant Manager).

Steering Committee: Bonnie Acker, Evan Goldsmith, Michael Healy, Mark Kuprych, Christopher McCandless, Parm Padgett, Tiffany Tillman.

Bottom Land News is published periodically. We are always grateful for your feedback, favorite Farm photos, poems, letters, and ideas for articles. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to reprint. Contact the Intervale Community Farm for information on subscriptions.

The Intervale Community Farm is a not-for-profit, member-run, community farm that provides organic produce for 500 households in the greater Burlington area. Our land is located in the Intervale, a place "between the hills" where people have farmed for many years. We are part of the global Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement, linking farmers and consumers together to build a sustainable food system. We are now in our 17th season.



128 Intervale Road
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 658-2919

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