



Bottom Land News



Winter Share Bounty!

The 2009-2010 ICF winter share is well underway. Members have reveled in the bounty of fresh greens, thanks to the balmy early winter weather. Baby spinach harvests in the hoop houses and greenhouse have begun, and the spinach is a wonderful compliment to root vegetable dishes. We look forward to three more months of winter share pickups!

RENEW!



Winter is upon us, which means it is time to think about renewing your supply of vegetables for the 2010 season. Early renewal insures your supply of affordable, delicious vegetables, while it also helps the farm with start up costs in the early spring. **If you are a current ICF member, you have a space reserved until January 31, 2010.** After this deadline, the farm is open to new members, and usually shares quickly sell out. If you pay in full before January 31, 2010, you receive a discount on the share price, and you also help the farm with cash flow during lean winter months.

Joining the ICF co-op as a member-owner is ultimately the best way to secure your access to the farm's bounty. By joining as a member-owner, you can automatically renew your farm share year after year, summer as well as winter, if you so choose. Joining as a member-owner also allows you the ability to run for or vote for the Board of Directors of ICF. Consider joining now—and you'll never have to worry about renewing again. For more information, please visit www.intervalecommunityfarm.com.

Survey Says...

by *Becky Maden*

As we nibble away on the remnants of fresh greens from the field, we are left with some time to reflect on the season behind us. As farmers, we are all too aware of the long nights, the cold temperatures, and the frozen ground. But as the exhaustion from the past season wears off and the calendar pages turn from 2009 to 2010, we relish the opportunity to learn from the lessons of last year, and to plan carefully for the next.

The 2009 survey results confirm many of the impressions that we had about this past year. The list of ten favorite crops (tomatoes, carrots, corn, salad mix, strawberries, raspberries, spinach, broccoli, onions, winter squash) has stayed relatively consistent over the past several years, although the order of preference changes slightly, and potatoes and winter squash are in a tight race for tenth place. In response to the consistently high demand, we try to prioritize these favorite crops. Some—like salad mix, tomatoes, and strawberries—are resource-intensive crops to grow, and others—like spinach and onions—can be challenging. However, the survey results help guide our decisions about what and how much to grow, and how often people want to see a certain crop at pickup.

Even though 2009 got off to a meager start due to the soggy, cool weather, most members still seemed pleased with the quantity and quality of food they received: (87% rated the quality as “excellent” and 91% rated the quantity as “excellent”). Many of the crops people would like to see more of—tomatoes, corn, strawberries, and winter squash—suffered from extraordinary challenges this season. As farmers, we were pleased to keep the tomatoes alive as long as we did, and also pleasantly surprised that the corn thrived despite the cool wet conditions. Although it is hard to EVER get enough tomatoes, corn, or strawberries, we hope to harvest a more substantial quantity next season. Additionally, the crops that members indicated that they’d like less of—kale, Swiss chard and cabbage—thrived in the rain of 2009. We hope to offer more balance in the bounty next year!

Most people seemed pleased with the service at the farm (89% “very satisfied”) and 71% said they were “well-informed” about the farm. Exactly one-third of respondents are member-owners of the ICF coop; of the non-member-owners, 20% said they planned to join and another 40% said they were considering it.

The annual survey always provides some hard data at a time of year when we can take a breath and glance backwards at the whirlwind of planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, and distributing food. Reading the feedback from farm members, both positive and negative, helps us gain a perspective on our own impressions and feelings about the year. And of course, there are aspects to the ICF experience which are unquantifiable—like the community that gathers at the farm and the vibrancy radiating from that. So thanks to everyone for the feedback, and for creating another wonderful season full of memories!

Gluten Free *and* Delicious

Over the past several years, it seems that dietary restrictions have defined my baking—friends who are vegan or lactose intolerant, allergic to oats or nuts, or unable to eat wheat. At ICF, our crew almost always includes someone with one of these restrictions, and it has become an exciting challenge to bake tasty treats that make everyone happy.

Here is a gluten-free recipe for pumpkin or squash bread. I usually cook several butternut squash at a time, and puree and freeze some for later use.



Ingredients:

- 1 Cup mashed butternut squash or pumpkin
- 2 eggs
- 1 Cup sour cream
- 4 tablespoons canola oil
- 2/3 Cup sugar (less for a more savory bread)
- 2 Cups cornmeal (Butterworks Farm Early Riser cornmeal is a favorite!)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne or paprika (optional)
- Pepitas to sprinkle on top (optional).

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9x5 loaf pan. Beat the first five ingredients together until creamy. Whisk together the dry ingredients. Fold dry ingredients into the wet until just moist. Bake for 45 minutes, or until dry in the center.

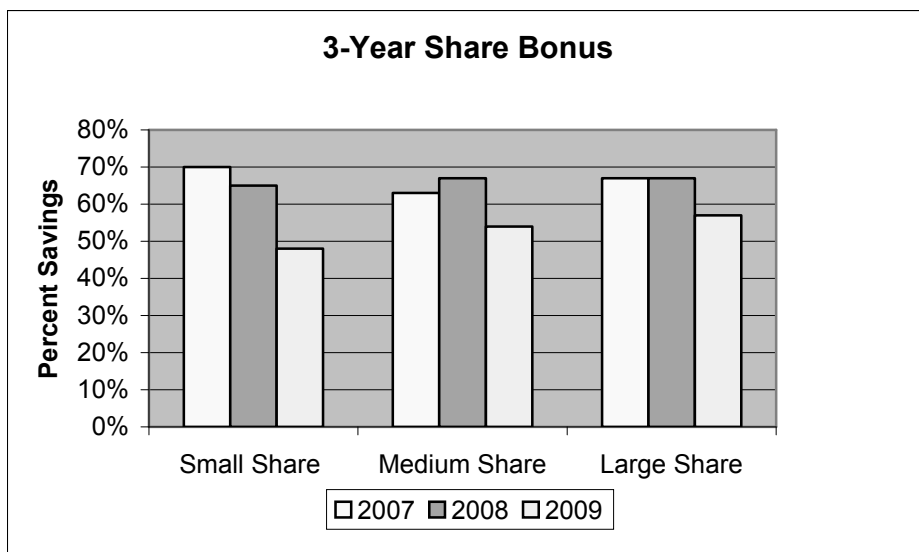
2009 Share Values

by Becky Maden

It's always difficult to answer that question that bombards us in the fall: *how was your season?* It comes on all fronts, not just from farm members, but from fellow farmers, friends, relatives—anyone who is remotely curious. I rarely know how to answer. Do they *really* want to know how it went? Do I tell them tales of broken tractors, frazzled communication mishaps, silly mistakes, and anxious moments? Or do I tell them of the vibrant harvests, delicious food, delighted farm members, and brilliant flowers? Do I tell them how proud I am of some crops, or do I modestly tell them what didn't go well? Or do I merely smile and give my usual answer: *Our season went pretty well.*

Record keeping is one of the few things that sheds some light on this question that is so hard to answer. Regardless of our impressions of the season's successes and failures as members or as farmers, we have careful records of all that was harvested and distributed in 2009. These numbers are recorded throughout the season, then tabulated on a "share values" spreadsheet. We gather prices for comparable produce (by averaging City Market retail prices with farmers' market prices) and multiply that by the amount of each crop farm members received. Since members are allowed choice at pick-ups, we create a value for broad categories like "roots" that is calculated based on the percentages of crops that were distributed in that choice. For instance, as one of the most popular roots, carrots account for 25% of the "roots" value.

There is also a value difference within the membership between people who make use of the PYO crops and those who don't. Some of these crops, like strawberries, basil, and beans, retail at a very high price. As we calculate the value of these crops, we try to account for the fact that members are doing the labor of harvesting them. We also assume that broadly speaking, most people take advantage of about 50% of the PYO crops.



The 2009 share values fell just below those of 2007 and 2008, with a 48% savings for small shares. This is well above the ICF goal of providing farm members with 30% savings over comparable produce. 2009 was lacking in quantity for many high value crops, like tomatoes and peppers, but other high value crops such as salad mix and corn performed extremely well.

As a diversified vegetable farm, the balance of vegetables shifts slightly each season based on the weather. The advantage to this is our ability to actually thrive during a wet, cool season such as 2009. So, the next time someone asks me how our season went, I feel like I can smile confidently and say, *It was great!*

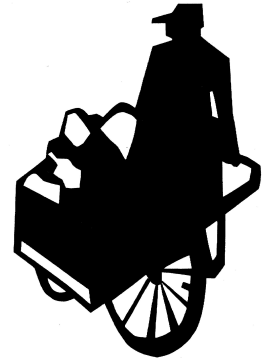


Eggplant Surprise

Despite the cool, wet weather, the ICF eggplant produced a glorious, purple hued bounty!

Part-Time Administrative Position Available at ICF

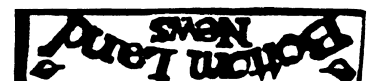
The Intervale Community Farm is seeking a dedicated, highly organized person to perform bookkeeping and administrative tasks for the farm. We are looking for someone with proficient computer skills, including a familiarity with QuickBooks and Microsoft Excel. The job also entails some membership administration tasks and requires between 10-15 hours of work per week, with some scheduling flexibility. If you may be interested or think you know the right candidate, please let us know! Email Andy Jones, andy@intervalecommunityfarm.com or call 802.658.2919.



WANTED FOR THE FARM:

- Bags!** We need bags all winter long... **PLEASE**, clean, full size bags only (no newspaper, produce, or laundry bags).
- Trucks.** If you have a truck that isn't quite town quality, we may well want it.
- Clippers.** We are in constant need of clippers for our cut flowers.
- Tools.** Garden, mechanics, and carpentry tools can often find new life at ICF.

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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 member-owned consumer cooperative, growing organic produce for over 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 21st season.



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