THE FOOD BANK FARM

The Food Bank Farm CSA is a 60-acre, diversified, vegetable farm that donates half of its production to those in need. Each year the Farm donates over 275,000 pounds of organic produce, and it does so without any operating subsidy or grant funds. The farm relies on a variety of highly efficient production and distribution systems that enable the donation of surplus production.

* All Produce is grown without the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers or herbicides. The farm is not certified, but complies with all USDA standards for organic production.
Become Part of The Farm

Since 1992, the Food Bank has provided hundreds of satisfied members with a steady supply of premium quality organic produce. At the same time, the farm has also grown over a million pounds of food for those who are hungry in our community. When you buy a share in the Farm you will enjoy the freshest organic produce at a reasonable cost, support local agriculture and help to feed those in need.

Reap a Weekly Harvest

Every week, from June through November, bring home a bounty of our freshly harvested organic produce, tender gourmet salad greens, exotic heirloom tomatoes, fragrant herbs, sweet peppers, carrots, beans, broccoli...all grown without synthetic pesticides and fertilizers in a manner that is healthy for you, your family, and the land that supports us all. In November and December, a month's supply of winter crops (carrots, potatoes, and more) will be distributed from our root cellar. Our diversity of crops and extensive irrigation system insure against crop failure.

Share the Satisfaction...

The Food Bank Farm is about building community. On your weekly pick-up you will see where your food comes from and meet the folks who grow it. You will experience the harmony of the seasons. Sugar snap peas will announce the arrival of spring, followed by ripe tomatoes and sweet corn in the summer and butternut squash in the fall. You will also be joining in our effort to feed those less fortunate.

Your share of the harvest provides nutritious foods for:
- the unemployed family at a Springfield soup kitchen
- battered wife in a shelter in Greenfield
- the mother feeding her family from the Northampton Survival Center
- the hilltown widow trying to get by on a Social Security check

You Can U-Pick Too!

We offer certain crops for U-pick. Roll up your sleeves and enjoy tender green beans, luscious strawberries, an entire field of cut flowers, plum tomatoes, sugar snap peas, basil, cilantro and more! In most cases supplies are unlimited, you take what you need.

The Farm Share will feed a family of 3-5. The Farm Share Plus will feed 5-7 people. Shares will be smaller in the spring and will increase and expand in variety as the season progresses.

There is no work requirement. Produce will be picked and washed for you. Volunteers are always welcome.

Quality & Freshness

We raise over 50 different vegetables, fruits and herbs. Unlike the supermarket, where varieties are selected for their appearance and ability to be shipped over long distances, we select for flavor and eating quality. We harvest and handle our produce to maximize freshness, flavor and nutritional value. You enjoy the full benefits of organic produce.

Organic and Affordable!

The FOOD BANK FARM is an inexpensive way to ensure the safety of your food supply. See for yourself these findings based on a 1995 independent study.*

- Share Plus at the Farm $450.00
- Supermarket - Nonorganic $715.93
- Natural Foods Supermarket - Organic $1021.38

* Comparison based on comparable produce amounts. Price data compiled on a weekly basis.

Community Supported Agriculture — What is it?

Community Supported Agriculture farms (CSAs) are supported by members who buy shares in a farm and in return receive fresh produce throughout the season. The Food Bank Farm is one of the largest and most efficient CSAs in the country and the first to help feed the hungry in our communities.

Where is It Located?

The 60 acre Farm is located at 121 Bay Road (Rt.47) in Hadley. Visitors are always welcome.

printed on recycled paper
Here's what our members say about the Food Bank Farm...

Every week from May to October I head to the Food Bank Farm to pick up fresh, organically grown food. Little ones are chasing chickens, people are picking their own flowers...there are friendly faces in the share room....you can't get that at the grocery store. Cindy Hamel, Belchertown

...Vegetables are gorgeously fresh, varied, ample and inexpensive. It feels great to know that what benefits me also benefits others. A perfect deal. Marianne Simon, Whately

The farm offers me one of life's few sources of unambiguously good feelings...I think of it as a moral and culinary bargain. Marietta Pritchard, Amherst

...A tremendous sense of satisfaction knowing I am giving my family the best. Dr. Claudia Attardi, S. Hadley

Good, chemical free food, an opportunity to help feed the hungry...We've been 'Farm Folks' from Westfield since the farm began...Rev. Jim Potter and Family

Joining the farm was one of the best decisions we ever made. We get the finest quality food and our very own 60 acre organic farm with none of the work! John and Linda Miller, Granby

As a member of the Food Bank Farm, I don't just buy food. I buy justice and a right relationship with the land. It is one of the best places in this great valley. Rev. Donna E. Schaper, Amherst

It's well worth the drive from Longmeadow to give our children and ourselves a connection to the earth... Leslie and Dr. James Frank, Longmeadow

We get the freshest organic produce in the valley and a sense of community. Lynne Goldberg and Bob Wool, Springfield

Our family eats healthily, bountifully and creatively from the Food Bank Farm. Not only that, it's less expensive than buying comparable produce at the store. We've been members since 1993 and plan to continue until we get kicked out for picking too much cilantro! Karen Axelrod, Northampton

Harvest Schedule

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[PO]: U-Pick Option – Unlimited Supply (except strawberries at certain times)
How the Food Bank Farm can afford to feed the hungry
AND still be a good deal for its customers.

"Our shareholders get a good deal, and we can use the money to give away food to people who need it," says Michael Doctor, the director of the Food Bank Farm.

The farm's family atmosphere offers added appeal. Children pick as much as they wish of tomatoes, peas—
and even flowers. And they can help out in other ways too. Today, the Chrzanowski family helped prepare the food for distribution. Ed says it's a good experience for his sons, Josh, 14, and Justin, 10. "When they help out, I think they know the importance of what we're doing," he told me. "It's about being thankful for what we have."

Families, though, pitch in only if they want to. "This is a consumer deal and that's the way we like one how wonderful they are. We make our share last all year by freezing and canning."

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BY HARRIET WEBSTER

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Food bank farm grows on people

By DIANE LEDERMAN

HADLEY—It's 92 degrees and Molly K. Whalen has got her hands full of flowers she just picked with her six-year-old children at the Hadley Food Bank Farm.

Next on the agenda is a visit to the produce barn to pick up the family's share of eggplant, corn, and other assorted vegetables. Then it's back out to feed the two black goats that already have a pile of fresh vegetables in their pen.

The sunflower is the Amberst class's weekly visit to the Hadley Food Bank Farm. Whalen said it's more of an event than a shopping trip.

The food bank farm is one of many community-supported farms in the area where people can buy shares entitling them to produce during the growing season. The money provides the farm with income to operate.

At the Hadley Food Bank Farm, member shares also allow the farm to grow enough food to provide half of what's grown to the Western Massachusetts Food Bank, said Michael Doctor, farm manager.

Last year, they raised about 400,000 pounds of food, half of which went to the Food Bank to be distributed to its member agencies. They expect a similar bounty this year, Doctor said. All the food is organic.

Standing with her children inside the produce barn, Whalen said, "We just love it. We love the food of course. But it's more than that. The people we see here, the sense of community."

Just after 1 p.m., on a recent Wednesday, there were dozens crowding around her picking up their shares as well. Youngsters were outside petting the penned in goats, others were playing on the swing set. Whalen's son, Tristan, couldn't wait to go see the chickens.

Whalen said they love the pick-your-own side of the farm too. "It's nice for the children to see how food is grown. When they pick beans, they see how the beans grow."

Each week from late May until October, then twice in the winter, shareholders at the food bank farm are entitled to a portion of whatever is in season at that time — last week, for example, that included eggplant, corn, greens, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, among other vegetables and watermelon. The pick-your-own component offered flowers, beans, cherry tomatoes, lettuce and other herbs. Members can pick as much as they want.

The farm started about 14 years ago, Doctor said. It became a community member farm 11 years ago, with about 90 members, said Kathy M. Crivelli, harvest manager. Now there are about 600 members and a waiting list for people who want to join next year.

Doctor said about 80 percent of the members who join stay on. They might come because they want to support the food bank, but they stay because of the food, he said.

"Most of what members pick up has been picked fresh that day. And those farming know when to pick, he said, slicing a melon to show its luscious green color and ripeness.

Suzan M. Flinker of Granby became a member this year after picking up some vegetables for a friend last year and falling in love with what she saw.

"I love it so much," she said. She and her Mount Holyoke College colleague Deborah J. Novack were taking their lunch hour at the food bank recently. They came to pick flowers for their office.

Flinker said she gave up her own vegetable garden because she could get everything she wanted at the farm.

Novack, who's not a member, said she would consider joining next year. "I can see coming here and spending hours." Flinker turned to her and said, "It's a dream." With so much to choose from, Flinker said, "I've actually broadened my knowledge of greens." The farm offers all kinds of greens from arugula to kale, to basil.

Besides selling what they grow, the farm sells products made by local people, including hand-made soaps, organic blueberries, breads from the Black Sheep in Amherst, turkey pot pies from Daisen in Wendell, Vermont cheddar cheese, among other products.

"We try to support small businesses," Doctor said. They also want to offer their shareholders one-stop shopping, Crivelli said.

Doctor writes a member newsletter and staff provide recipes and tips on how to prepare the produce that's offered. There are even bags of everything one needs to make organic chili for $4.50.

"The farm also provides the landscape to learning." Erin P. Johnson from Northampton, an aspiring farmer, has been working on the farm since April.

"It's a wonderful farm. I fell in love with it," she said. Everyone is very committed to working here and making it a better place.

Diane Lederman is reachable at dlederman@union-news.com.
Food Bank Farm a feast for eyes, table

By DENISE RIVKO SCHWARTZ
Photos by ROB STERN

There are great gardens that dazzle with color, contour and content and that speak to the gardener's love of beauty and soul. But a great garden experience feeds the heart, the body, the soul — and then gives something more.

And nowhere does a garden visibly feel more filled and fulfilled than when, in the middle of the 50 acres of fields at Food Bank Farm in Hadley, she stops and smells the cilia-
tans.

Rows of ferny cilantro stretch just outside the share room, where shareholders snack on "sale" and "as is" fruits and vegetables from the field. It grows south through an undulating field that seems to stop only where it gives into the deep green of the Mount Holyoke Range.

In this setting of abundance grown from the hard work of many hands, knowledge that those fields feed people of means and those without is as rich and sweet as any fragrant spice that fills the country air.

From banks of sunflowers that offer big, bright blooms on the farm's eastern border to the western horizon of hills and ponds, waves of organic vegetables and flowers crest and travel according to the rhythms of the summer. A volunteer worker has invented some of them, planting juicy sweeties with a machete-like blade.

A dirt road cuts through the farm, slicing in half a tableau: one part New England countryside scene, the other an American interpretation of a French Impressionist painting. In layer-cake rows, dots of hot yellow calendula underscore slashes of purple thistle; vivid blots of red, pink and sheer white poppies back up to pale green weeds, valerian, mint and echinacea.

Chris Bailey of Amherst, a full-time farm employee, puts by atop a red Farmall tractor with a three-point hitch cultivator on the back. Ready to cultivate the pumpkin, he happily stops to identify soybeans and to admire the streaks of larkspur and pop-

Charlotte H.C. Marshall, 7, of Northampton picks flowers at the Food Bank Farm in Hadley.

Oh, it is beautiful, all right, he says. "We have a little Monet painting in our pockets. We take it out and look at it and try to replicate it here," he says.

On this morning, under a sky so New England blue that it makes a person giddy, farm manager Michael Docter chomps on a fresh carrot as he stabs a staff person to find Suerd land resident Helen Telg's pickle recipe on the computer.

"We're doing something new," Docter says. "We're putting together a pickle pack. It has just the right amount of cucumbers, dill, garlic, that follow Helen's recipe and you got really delicious pickles."

Dressed in a battered straw hat and equally used T-shirt, Docter treks past rows of cosmos, salvia and verbena. This farm that feeds shareholder families from all over the Pioneer Valley and provides thousands of pounds of fresh produce for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts each year.

Over the last five years, the farm has produced more than 300,000 pounds of food for the Food Bank and its member agencies. In addition to the enormous number of vegetables it grows on-site, the share room offers members herbs, fruit, cheese, eggs, honey, bread and other products from local farms and enterprises.

The freezer holds grass-fed beef raised by Tommy Mahar of West Whate-
ly. The cooler offers goat cheeses and ricotta from Goats Rising Farm in Charlemont. Shiitake mushrooms from Shelburne, sweet cherries from Belchertown and blueberries from Hadley crowd the counters.

"We have things from far away, too," Docter says. He points to signs that show the distances the products traveled to get to Food Bank Farm, including bottles of olive oil that flew 4,772 miles to rest here.

"We're trying to get people to share a little bit about where their food comes from," Docter said.

It's the people's farm," he said while in the parking area that begins to fill with people in trucks and cars.