

The Lamb's Quarter
A community-supported family farm
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Owings, MD 20736
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James & Patrice Bourne, Proprietors

2012 Farm Subscription Service (CSA)

Welcome to The Lamb's Quarter! This packet of information will explain how our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) / farm subscription program works, what you can expect, and a little about the history of our farm and CSA's in general.

A short history of The Lamb's Quarter. The Bourne family came to the colony of Maryland and settled in southern Calvert County around 1680. Around 1690, the Gantt family purchased a grant of land from the Hall family and settled in northern Calvert County. Twice in the 1800's the Bourne family and the Gantt family married, and the last marriage brought my great grandfather, Joseph, to live on the farm owned by Maria Gantt, his wife. Feeling the need to expand, my grandfather, James Sr., purchased a farm owned his aunt. This 139 acre farm became known as Sandy Hill Farm when my father, James Jr. named it in the 1950's. Over the years the farm expanded to its current size of 145 acres, over half of that being forest. Originally a tobacco farm, my father began direct sales of beef in the '70s. I took over operation of the farm in 1996 and in 2008, added The Lamb's Quarter as a community supported agriculture project. We continue to sell beef, as well as chicken, eggs, pork, and lamb. The mainstay of the CSA is our vegetable operation, involving 5 acres of cropland.

CSA's, Farm Subscriptions, and the Locavoure movement. Purchasing food from a local farmer is not a new concept. In fact, it is one of the oldest commercial arrangements in our human history. Whether through the barter system, or outright purchase, people have always sought to make up their own food shortfall by going to their neighbors. In many places throughout the world, the village market is still alive and well. People shop the market place often to take advantage of freshness, and to deal with their own limited storage capacities at home.

What is new is the American supermarket. Our supermarket system is reliant upon three things to make it work: monoculture agriculture; cheap farm labor and cheap fuel/transportation costs. Monoculture agriculture involves planting the same crop year after year in the same soil. It relies on chemical fertilizer (petroleum-based), and heavy use of herbicides and pesticides to produce the same crop year after year. It is also susceptible to diseases because its health is derived from artificial means. Cheap farm labor is necessary to bring the crop to market. American agriculture is dependent on foreign workers paid low wages. These workers place further strain on our public services since few, if any, have access to health care through their employers. Cheap fuel has been the backbone of the American economy for years, and the supermarket system is reliant on it to transport food from one end of the USA to the other. The tomato you bought in the store or had on your sandwich almost certainly travelled from the west,

or even further. Now, it is not uncommon to find food and “fresh” vegetables from other countries.

If we take away any one of these three lynchpins from the supermarket model, the whole deck of cards begins to waiver. The observant reader will realize that all three are in danger of giving way, which is the reason food prices have skyrocketed recently. I have often thought of the great oxymoron that is our modern system of feeding the masses – the supermarket sells the food that makes you sick, then sells the pharmaceuticals purported to make you well. I remember being told by one medical receptionist that my being well was not good for business. How well that applies here!

In the meantime, farmers and eaters developed a way to circumvent the now standard system of food delivery, and bring good, wholesome food to the table of thousands without going through the supermarket. First came the organic movement, a back-to-the-earth phenomena dating to the sixties. It focused on healthy soil growing healthy food, in turn nourishing healthy humans. The major focus of the organic movement was then **local**. In the late eighties, another movement called Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) swept the USA. It originated in Europe and soon found its way into the northeast/ New England area. The concept behind the CSA is to guarantee a farmer availability of funds to start the planting season and bring it to harvest by purchasing shares of the harvest, and paying for them upfront. Also in this financial arrangement is the concept of shared risk, wherein the CSA member assumes the financial risk of a complete crop failure. In exchange, the CSA shareholders received fresh vegetables on a regular basis throughout the growing season. In the original model, the CSA emphasis was on the community which gathered with the farmer to make this happen. A number of these CSA's organized as non-profit organizations, with a strong social aspect of creating access to good food for people who could not otherwise afford it.

As this model came out of the New England states, it met with some changes to better suit the culture of the adoptive areas. In Maryland, the CSA now looks more like a farm subscription service, keeping the financial arrangements of the CSA in place, but not requiring weekly work hours on the farm. The emphasis here has changed to focus on the farmer. Some local CSA's do allow volunteers to work, but the vast majority do not, and to my knowledge, none require it. The difference between the New England model and what developed in the Mid-Atlantic region is due to our heavy commuter culture.

The most recent innovation has been the “locavore/localvore” movement. When the US Department of Agriculture decided to regulate and control the organic movement, it did so in such a way as to enable large, multinational companies to get in on the game. Originally, “organic” always meant “local.” Now, your organic produce in the supermarket is just as likely to be grown on another continent. The locavore movement has come of age in the last several years due to two factors – the enormous success of Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, and Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma*; and the continued reaffirmation that anything imported from China is bad news (especially food). Locavores seek to get their food within a “foodshed,” the tighter the radius of farmers to their home, the better.

The Lamb's Quarter CSA Program. Our 2012 program consists of 22 weeks of vegetables, delivered to a drop-off point, or picked up at the farm once each week. The season will run from May through October. As with all things in farming, the weather doesn't always cooperate with our plans. Our shareholders need to understand the need for flexibility in

delivering vegetables week to week. The program is 22 weeks long; the beginning and ending are sometime negotiable depending on the needs of the crops. (In 2009, we needed to postpone the start of the CSA program 2 weeks due to unusually wet, cool weather).

We plan on increasing the variety of our vegetables, while still offering the basics. Boxes will include 7-8 items or more, in generous quantity to feed the “average” family of 2 adults and 2 children for the week, vegetable-wise. I know, “average” is vague. Not all families eat alike; some eat more, some less. Vegetarian households may need more, as well as those who eat little meat. Other families of the same size may be overwhelmed.

A full listing of our planned vegetable offerings may be found at www.localharvest.org/farms/M21147.

One of the critical things to keep in mind for your enjoyment and our success is the concept of averaging. Droughts come, wet weather brings disease, and weeds and pests are a big issue in an organic production system. Farming is rarely predictable. Our best plans may not come to fruition, and crops do fail. We practice what is known as succession planting in order to average out the variances of the weather and the pests. Succession planting is the planting of the same crop at different intervals in order to lengthen out the harvest. It is our strong desire and commitment to our members to give you a solid return on your investment. Averaging what you get in your boxes over the entire season means that you will anticipate some weekly boxes being “light,” while others will be “heavy.”

We plan to continue to deliver to Alexandria, Port Republic, and would like to deliver to the southern Anne Arundel area. We would like to have neighborhood coordinators at both locations to host a pickup sight. In that light, we would like to stress some necessary etiquette for picking up your share boxes. Please pick up your boxes within the allotted time frame. If you have any questions about your share box, please contact us, not the coordinator. **If you cannot make it to the pickup sight, please have someone pick up your box for you.** We don't want you to miss out on the great vegetables. Shares not picked up will be donated to the Chesapeake Cares Food Pantry. Due to the increase in anticipated fuel costs, shares not picked up at the farm will be charged a delivery fee.

In addition to the neighborhood coordinators, we also offer opportunities for members to volunteer at the farm, and in the process learn a little about farming. We've had one member consistently show up on Thursday evenings; another on off-days at work. Our farm is beautiful, and many hands make light work. If you want to come and bring your children, you are responsible for them.

We maintain a website, www.thelambquarter.com, where you can find recipes, helpful hints, and a variety of other odds and ends.

This year, we are offering a number of options for shareholders to take advantage of. The first option is the **Traditional shareholder vegetable box**, loaded with 22 weeks of high quality, organically managed vegetables for a cost of \$625.00. The second option is the **High Summer shareholder vegetable box**, loaded with 11 weeks of great produce from our farm for a cost of \$400.00.

The third option this year is our **Chicken Share**. The chicken share runs May thru October, and will be based on you receiving two of our premium free-range chickens each month based on a price of \$4.00/lb for a 4lb chicken. Many of our chickens weigh over four pounds; the extra weight is your bonus for belonging to our chicken share. The cost of this option is \$192.

Finally, our fourth option is the **egg share**, 22 weeks at \$88 (or 11 weeks at \$44 if you choose the High Summer option). We are not offering half shares of eggs this year. The egg share provides one dozen free-range eggs each week of your program option. The egg share and the chicken share may be added to either of the vegetable share options, or the chicken and egg shares may be purchased together without the vegetable option.

Returning shareholders will notice the absence of a full meat share this year. We have had this option the past two seasons and decided to discontinue it in favor of the Chicken Share. We realized that the record keeping system was simply too much to handle in the middle of the summer, and that some shareholders simply failed to use their credit with us. **We continue to offer pork, beef, chicken, lamb, and eggs at our farm store**, and encourage you to choose from our selection when you pick up your vegetable shares. You may also arrange to come on another day and shop from our meat selection.

We plan to offer a total of 75 shares this year. Preference will be given to returning shareholders until March 1. Returning shareholders who sign up with a deposit by March 1 will be able to enjoy last year's pricing. New shareholders who pay in full by March 1 will also benefit from 2011 pricing (\$600 for the Traditional share).

This year brings new challenges for us as we get a handle on the new food safety law and the paperwork that will be required; the increased pressure to comply with the TDML from the EPA and its increasing regulation over farms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Both of these initiatives are good in concept; the challenge is in complying with the documentation necessary to prove the practices already in place. All these things add to our cost of staying in the business of farming.

That said, the greatest challenge of farming is simply getting out there and doing it. It is also the greatest reward. We are able to enjoy the created order in a unique way, for which we are constantly thankful. Over the last several years we have brought on interns and apprentices to train in farming. This year I've decided to give it a name – the **Future Famer Program**. We are looking for young people looking to spend a summer (intern) or a year (apprentice) learning more about farming and animal husbandry from a uniquely Christian perspective.

We encourage you to do “due diligence” as you look at what we have to offer, what other CSA's are offering, and of course, the reputation of each. A CSA program is not for everyone. If you are expecting a grocery store experience, there is every chance you will be disappointed. If you are expecting a fresh-from-the-farm experience and a connection with a local farm family, you're the person we're trying to appeal to. CSA's make people cook with items they initially may be unfamiliar with, cope with quantities that reflect the seasonality of farming, and generally ask you to be flexible in your menu planning. In return, you receive food fresher than you can purchase from even a roadside farm stand, produced without pesticides, or chemical concoctions, by people who really care about their land, their customers, and the produce and meat they provide for you each week.

If this is what you are looking for in a CSA/farm subscription service, we invite you to join us for another successful season of vegetables and beyond.

Your Farmers,

James and Patrice Bourne
The Lamb's Quarter
thelambsquarter@comcast.net

The Lamb's Quarter
Shareholder Form
2012 Harvest Season

Program Quick-Glance

- Traditional Shareholder Vegetable Box – 22 weeks of vegetables (May – Oct)
- High Summer Shareholder Vegetable Box – 11 weeks of vegetables (June 20-August 29)
- Chicken Share (2 chickens per month, May-Oct)
- Egg Share (1 dozen per week)
- Pickup at the Farm, Port Republic, or Alexandria. Other locations possible
- Payment plan available
- Tuesday and Friday pickup at the Farm, 4-7pm
- Wednesday pickup at Port Republic, 5-6:30pm
- Alexandria pickup @ Old Town Farmers Market on Saturday 7-10am

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Please check your selections:

____ 2012 Traditional Shareholder Vegetable Box -\$625 (returning shareholders w/ deposit by 3/1, \$600; new shareholders paid in full by 3/1, \$600)

or

____ 2012 High Summer Shareholder Vegetable Box - \$400

____ 2012 Chicken Share - \$192

____ 2012 Egg Share - \$88 Traditional; \$44 High Summer; no half shares

I will pickup my share: _____ at the farm; _____ at Alexandria (add \$35 delivery fee)
_____ at Port Republic (add \$25 delivery fee)

Total: _____

____ **I am interested in being a neighborhood coordinator for delivery of weekly shares.**

Please note: We will correspond with you exclusively through email. Please set your email to receive notices from thelambquarter@comcast.net.

Enclosed is my payment/application for the 2012 harvest season with The Lamb's Quarter. I understand that every effort will be made on the part of The Lamb's Quarter to supply me with vegetables; however, I also understand that I share in the risk of farming with the farmers and may not receive everything intended.

Signature

Payment Plan:

Payments may be made over the course of the months leading up to the week of May 16. By the first pickup/delivery, all accounts must be paid in full. We offer the following payment plans: (please circle the one you will use)

- Payment made in full with application
- 3 equal installments due Feb 29, March 31, and April 30
- 4 equal installments due Feb 15, March 15, April 15, and May 15

Notice on refunds:

We have made every effort to accurately describe our farm subscription/CSA program in this letter. We invite your questions and encourage your due diligence in making your decision regarding our program. Refunds are at the sole discretion of the proprietors.

I have read and understand the Notice on Refunds. _____.
(Please initial)

Checklist:

Read all the information.

Filled out form and signed waiver.

Initialed notice on refunds.

Selected payment plan.

Returned both form pages and payment to The Lamb's Quarter

Marked my calendar for the first week of veggies!

We will email you with the exact start date in May when we know how the weather will treat us!

Contact Information:

The Lamb's Quarter, 8111 Bourne Rd., Owings, MD 20736

410-257-4399/443-624-3365

thelambsquarter@comcast.net; farmer@thelambsquarter.com www.thelambsquarter.com

