



Bittersweet Farms Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program Covid-19 Proactive & Preventative Measures

Dear CSA Members:

Given concerns surrounding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), we wanted to update you on the proactive and preventative measures we have been taking at Bittersweet Farms to ensure the safety of our participants and staff and you, our loyal CSA members. We are monitoring updates from public health authorities at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure thorough efforts.

Preventative Measures:

- **Reduced staff and participants on the premises:** We have drastically reduced the number of staff working on the Farm during the pandemic, and unfortunately we have suspended our Day Program until further notice. When staff arrive to work, they are screened prior to entering the facility. Their temperatures are taken, they are required to wash their hands, and they complete a thorough questionnaire to evaluate COVID-19 related risks. The majority of our team is working remotely, and those who must work on site are required to wear face masks. Our small Gardens team is the only group allowed in the Gardens building where our produce is packaged and stored.
- **Increased frequency of sanitization:** We have strengthened our sanitization protocols for all surfaces throughout the Farm, especially all frequently touched areas such as door handles, prep tables, sinks and food storage areas. New standard operating procedures have been put in place regarding frequency of sanitization. Staff are required to complete and sign cleaning logs throughout the day.
- **Strengthening handwashing efforts among our staff and participants:** Handwashing has always been a priority on the Farm. However, we have placed a heightened focus on frequent and thorough handwashing in light of the pandemic. Staff are encouraged to frequently wash and sanitize their hands, and to remind our participants to do the same. To achieve this, we have installed additional hand sanitizing stations in multiple locations throughout the facility. In Gardens, in addition to increased handwashing, we also require that anyone handling or packaging produce wear gloves and change them often.

- **Using sanitizable boxes and disposable/recyclable paper bags for CSA shares:** Moving forward, all CSA shares, depending on their size, will either be packaged in a wax-coated box or hard plastic crate that will be properly cleaned and sanitized, or in a disposable/recyclable paper bag. As always, Medium and Large shares should return boxes when picking up your share each week. All boxes returned to the Farm will be placed in an isolated outdoor area for at least 24-48 hours, after which they will be sanitized by staff prior to reuse. Small shares will be packaged in disposable/recyclable paper bags. These bags are single use only and should not be returned. Small shares will be packaged in a fresh paper bag each week.
- **Digital CSA newsletter:** While our weekly printed CSA newsletters have been a highlight of past seasons, this year we will be providing a digital newsletter sent via email to all CSA members. This will allow us to safely relay information about the produce included in your share each week, as well as photos of our participants who assisted with harvesting and packaging the CSA boxes.
- **Proactive monitoring and planning:** We recognize that this is a fluid situation, and we are prepared to adapt as new information becomes available. Current information from public health authorities indicates that COVID-19 is not transmittable via food. We will continue to monitor and implement food safety and packaging practices recommended by local, state and federal officials. Our top priority is keeping our staff, participants, and CSA members safe, healthy, and nourished with the best local and nutrient dense produce available!
- **Continued focus on our mission:** Even in this uncertain time, Bittersweet's mission remains the same—to positively impact the lives of individuals with autism and those whose lives they touch. Your continued support of Bittersweet Farms as a CSA member makes our mission possible. Thank you!

Should you have any questions about our CSA program or about these safety measures, please contact our Gardens Specialist, Beth Kuntz-Wineland, at bkuntzwineland@bittersweetfarms.org.