

February 14, 2011

Dear current and potential Hope's Edge CSA members,

My wife and I first joined Hope's Edge four years ago as half share holders. 2011 will be our fifth year with Tom Griffin as our farmer. The past four years have allowed us to see a variety of different growing seasons which has given us a tremendous appreciation of what Tom does to satisfy his members.

During the 2009 season I decided to track all of the produce we received from the farm. I believe we spent \$275 on our 19-week half share that year. I gathered comparison pricing of organic produce from local grocery stores, co-ops and the Portland Whole Foods Market. Now remember; that summer was a horribly rainy and low yielding growing season but Tom still managed to eke out over \$430 worth of vegetables, herbs and flowers from his plot in Hope. I could kick myself for not having tracked last year's banner season! If I had to estimate it's value I would put it well over \$600. I even sadly admit to composting a small amount of the vegetables we were unable to consume, freeze or give away. Other than growing one's own garden, I challenge anyone to fill their weekly organic vegetable needs for less than \$8 per person!

I can't say enough about how wonderful it is to go to the farm each week. We view our Friday afternoon visits to the farm as a way to downshift from our work week. It's also a great trip for our dog. Not only does Hope's Edge fill our need of sustenance but it also fills a spiritual need giving us much-needed space to take a deep breath at the end of each week. We are grateful that the memories and bounty of the farm stay with us throughout the winter as well. Each year we are still using Tom's garlic, onions, potatoes and hardy squashes well past Christmas.

It has become trendy to speak of "buying local," "supporting a farmer," "eating organic" and "being good stewards of land and environment." But all of these expressions are hard to avoid when talking about our relationship with Hope's Edge. Lacking the time and space to be our own vegetable producers and our desire to embrace all of those philosophies is what led us to Tom back in 2007. It has been a wonderful experience ever since. It is with great anticipation that we look forward to the 18-20 Fridays in 2011 when we journey to the farm to see what Tom, his apprentices and Mother Nature have been up to for the week.

Best,

Erik Durbas