



Greetings Fruit Share Community Supported Agriculture Members!

As some of you may have noticed, it's been a tough start for Lancaster Farm Fresh fruit shares. Trying to determine when to start the fruit shares has always been challenging, particularly because the decision is made during the cold, dark days of winter. After multiple conversations with our producers – and sometimes even consulting the farmer's almanac! – we determine which week we think we'll have the first of our local fruit for the share, which in this area typically means strawberries.

In Lancaster County, the start of strawberry season is like the unofficial start to summer so we do our best to get them into your boxes, but sometimes weather, crop failures, and seasonal early or late harvests have other plans. Growing certified organic fruit and vegetables is hard in an ever-changing climate like ours, and strawberries are no exception. Wet, humid weather can make a perfectly ripe strawberry grow mold in less than 24 hours. While we've had several of our farmers grow organic strawberries over the years, many have given it up after only a season or two.

We took this into consideration when planning the start of the 2022 fruit share and decided that if we couldn't offer enough of our local fruit, we could adjust by supplementing with other organic fruits that are regionally grown – or even internationally grown. You may have noticed the language used on our website when purchasing your fruit share which read, "**Fruits are sourced from our member farms as well as local, regional and occasionally international partners. All of our fruit is either certified organic or cultivated using the environmentally sensitive IPM (Integrated Pest Management) standard.**"

While we appreciate that many of you accepted this and just rolled with it, we also appreciate the honest, heartfelt feedback that some have shared. We understand, and respect, your concerns about the value of Community Supported Agriculture because we have also struggled with those same concerns. Do we supplement what little we do have with non-local, organic fruits, or do we not deliver anything for a week or two and then try to make up the value over the rest of the season? We have tried both scenarios, and have even offered local, organic fruit jam in an attempt to find that "sweet" spot for all our customers.

Please know that we have great respect for all our members and are grateful for the trust that you have placed in us in making the best, most ethical decisions about where we source our food from. As a traditional, multi-farm CSA, we try to provide value to our members, and while we aren't perfect, we are proud of what we've been able to accomplish – saving land and promoting sustainable methods of organic farming.

We are committed to you, our farmers, and future generations, so please bear with us as we navigate through this food system to bring you the best produce around that we can.

Best,

Casey Spacht
Executive Director