

Hello RGG Member,

First of all, thank you for signing up for the 2009 season. Without you I would probably be doing something much less rewarding. Whether your main motivation in buying a share is to support local farms or to get a good deal on produce, you are now part of something larger. You are participating in a slow movement to create a local food system, one that is less concentrated and more diverse, less guided by profit and more by rationality; one that creates community not displaces it; one that is motivated to support true sustainability, not a green-washed version of the exploitative status quo. The road towards that future will not be easy; there will be many bumps along the way. Some obstacles we can avoid, some we can mitigate, others will hurt a bit more.

You are supporting a small farm that raises fresh goods for consumption by locally employed people in a sea of giant farms supported by taxpayer subsidies that produce commodities bound for subsidized livestock and energy factories. If you didn't realize this already, in becoming a shareholder member you have evened the playing field by sharing the risk of growing produce, of which there are many, especially in this part of the country. Some of these dangers in this area include risks from nature such as flooding, drought, hail, straight line winds and tornadoes, waves of new and old insect pests, late springs and early frosts; there are also cultural risks such as the lack of young people interested in careers in agriculture or food systems (the brain drain), and ignorance and apathy among the population at large regarding our shared world and shared future. It may seem like you're just getting a box of vegetables but it does really mean much more. So I thank you for participating.

Now, there are many details that need to be resolved and addressed before the produce starts coming. First, I must admit that I have not been as communicative as I planned to date and I hope I have not lost too many points for this. Second, planting has been hampered this spring by weather and disaster; we are behind a bit. I will address some nuts and bolts issues.

**When will it start?** is a question I have been getting. The flooding and late spring have postponed planting for just about everyone this year. I am feeling about 2-3 weeks behind schedule, but for the amount of water that I had here and the amount of effort it is taking to get things back together, I don't feel too bad about that delay. The best guess I can give today is this: there is a slim chance that the first delivery will be the week of June 22, more likely to be either June 30 or the first week in July. Not a very auspicious start, I know, but nothing grows in a vacuum.

**What day of the week and time of day will I deliver?** Tuesdays for the FM area, Thursdays for the GF area. The timing of the drops is less standard, meaning we can be behind schedule sometimes. The target times for delivery are as follows for specific drop sites: 4:00pm to downtown Fargo, 4:30 to Moorhead, 4:50 to south Fargo; home deliveries are harder to determine but are often after 6pm. The target time to arrive at the Grand Forks drop site is 4pm. For those of you who monitor your emails frequently, I will send out an estimated time of arrival email in the early-mid afternoon the day of delivery.

**What and where are the drop sites?** For FM they are:

- Downtown – Mosaic Foods building, at 69 N 4<sup>th</sup> St (SE corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and 4<sup>th</sup> St. Park in the adjoining lot or street; enter the glass doors facing 4<sup>th</sup> and head into the room to the left.) The space should be open until 8pm or so but please try to get your box before 7pm.
- Moorhead – a residence at 1425 River Dr S. This is the home of Ann and Mark and family, RGG members since 2006. The boxes will be set either in the garage or in front of it. Please come before 8pm.
- South Fargo – undetermined. I always need help with this location. I have taken suggestions and need to follow up on a couple of them.
  - Drop site requirements: a protected space that’s relatively cool, clean, and accessible. The space needed depends on the number of boxes; for south Fargo, I anticipate about 15 boxes which would take up about 10 sq ft if stacked a bit; it would need to be somewhat protected from rain and other weather. Cool can be anything from an air conditioned place to simply shade in the afternoon. Clean means at least a finished floor. And it needs to be accessible in space and time – on the first floor, parking nearby, and “open” until at least 7pm.

To Grand Forks, the one site is Amazing Grains at 214 Demers Ave. (Residents of your community are lucky to have this food coop.) There will be a wire shelf in the store somewhere with boxes on it. We will try to have the boxes delivered there by 4pm; you will have until 8pm (they’re closing time) to pick up your box. Remember, GF will be on Thursdays unless otherwise noted.

This message was sent to you based on the drop site location you have chosen. If you have not selected a drop site yet, please do so. Location and proximity is a factor but also consider the storage conditions: the Mosaic site will be air conditioned, Moorhead - outside, south – don’t know, could just end up being my enclosed trailer in a parking lot.

**What else do you need to know about the drop sites?** Please, please, please get to your drop site the day of delivery: do not forget! If you know you cannot make it, have someone else get it for you. Inevitably some do forget and if you do, I will try to contact you before the site’s “closing time” to remind you. I will know who does or does not pick up their box because you will sign a check list that will be placed close to the boxes. I would love to get to know you but not really under this particular circumstance. Also, I cannot guarantee you will be able to get it the next day. Boxes that do not get picked up will likely just be left at the site. I cannot guarantee that the contents will still be okay or that your box will even be there the next day. Just don’t forget.

Another thing routinely forgot is to return your empty box to the drop site. This is one of the most basic functions as a CSA member. Just place it somewhere closeby but not in the way; please do not fold it flat. No, I won’t penalize you somehow for forgetting – I don’t keep track of who does and doesn’t – but bear in mind that it does create problems for us when we run short of them. Last year we ran short of regular boxes and had to use the large boxes for many regular shares which almost immediately created confusion and chaos before and after delivery. So I’ll say it again, just don’t forget. The first week, of course, you won’t have a box to return unless you’re a returning member who held on to it all winter.

**When can you visit the farm?** I would like to get things a bit more fixed up before I take visitors here; give me a few more weeks. If you want to volunteer and work a bit, I can take you on pretty much anytime; just email me well in advance of when you might be available.

**When are the payments due?** Originally I had said they are due by June 1 – and I thank you for getting yours in if you have already – but I feel I should push that back to July 1. So there's the answer to that question: please make your final payment by July 1 or arrange with me to make monthly payments or make a volunteer/barter-based deal (e.g., you work up here X number hours per week or barter your expertise with taxes, website, other goods/services you can offer for X% off the share price). If you need a reminder about how much you owe I should have that information for you.

**What else?** Hmm... If you want to know what items you're likely to get please visit the RGG website, [www.redgoosegardens.com](http://www.redgoosegardens.com); there is a month to month list on the "Membership" or "Blog" page. Composting and/or reusing packaging materials is something we have tried to do some of and I would like to keep that up. For the reusing packaging, we need to set some tighter guidelines on what to send back with your empty box. And on the composting, a better collection protocol should be figured out. I'll think about these and have more details on them later. I'm sure there are other items I can't think of right now. Please let me know if you see an issue that should be resolved.

One last thing. I have set up a Red Goose Gardens Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shelly-MN/Red-Goose-Gardens/148361130045>) that hopefully will work as a blog and communication site. (If that url doesn't work just search for it on Facebook.) Please sign up and "become a fan". Whoo-hoo!

That about wraps it up for now. Thanks again.

Yours in the field,

Thor