

ONLINE Community Supported Agriculture

by Wendy Fachon

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs empower consumers to buy freshly harvested produce directly from local farmers, and several programs in the area offer online ordering and home delivery. As these programs grow, consumers will have more opportunities than ever to support a local system, access better quality food, improve environmental sustainability and keep farmland in production.

Long distance trucking compromises freshness, nutrition and flavor, adds cost and is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. CSA programs eliminate these transportation costs and middlemen, and fewer people are handling the products. The current pandemic is spurring the growth of programs that offer the added conveniences of online ordering, doorstep delivery and more consumer choice than a traditional CSA.

FRESHCONN

FreshConn is a food accelerator social enterprise currently serving Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, and is distinguished in personality, values and safety. While describing itself as “the instacart of farm fresh food,” FreshConn adheres to the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) standards, along with COVID-19 sanitation. The company’s app solves a national last mile logistics issue for farmers and artisans, contracting its drivers like an Uber for local food. The drivers, trained in FSMA standards, deliver food straight from the farm to the consumer.

FreshConn is also passionate about providing food where access to affordable and nutritious food is limited, delivering COVID-19 relief to residents of inner-city food deserts and those lacking transportation to purchase local food. From its online children’s book and its family meal show to job creation and community giving, FreshConn supports people everywhere. Learn more at FreshConn.com.



WHATSGOOD

WhatsGood’s technology brings communities together to enable an efficient, convenient and waste-free system for access to the freshest local fruits and vegetables, meats, seafood and artisanal products.

Customers can place an order any day of the week from as many vendors as they like. WhatsGood then aggregates the order and provides same-day home delivery or pick up at three convenient locations in Warren, Jamestown and Exeter.

The company also offers the option to purchase CSA Farm Shares. For produce, it works the same way as a typical full-seasonal farm share, except it is billed weekly. Farm shares for meat and seafood are highly customizable, as customers can order a chicken farm share, pork farm share, etc. These run for 12 weeks at a time.

WhatsGood is rapidly hiring, expanding operations and updating safety and sanitation procedures to serve as many folks as possible. Customers can shop with no minimums, commitments or membership necessary. It purchases directly from local farms, up until 1 p.m., the day before delivery, and then the farms deliver orders to WhatsGood every Wednesday and Friday. The shoppers’ orders are packed and delivered the same day. People can sign up for a free account by visiting SourceWhatsGood.com.

FARM FRESH RI

Farm Fresh RI is inviting residential customers to join wholesale buyers in using its Market Mobile service to get fresh food from local farms. In this unprecedented time, as restaurants and colleges have

had to close down, Farm Fresh RI's Market Mobile program has gone from about 300 wholesale accounts to thousands of residential home deliveries. The efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 is a test to the resilience of RI's local food system and agricultural community.

Market Mobile's goal at this time is to connect as many people as possible to locally grown food and mitigate the monetary losses that farmers and producers are experiencing with the suspension of wholesale buying businesses. Home delivery is available for Providence, Pawtucket and the East Bay. People from other areas are welcome to place an order for curbside pickup at Farm Fresh's packhouse, located in The Hope Artiste Village building, 1005 Main Street, in Pawtucket.

There is a minimum order size of \$60 for pickup or delivery. Since this online platform is traditionally used for wholesale purchasing, the quantities offered may be larger than what one is used to buying. Many people pool orders with family or neighbors to help make the larger quantities work for everybody. Farm Fresh's weekly order/delivery cycles are subject to change as it continues to scale operations to meet the current demand. The online order form is intentionally inactive outside the established ordering windows, allowing farmers and producers time to update what they have listed for sale based on their most current inventory. Find the most current and complete details and register at FarmFreshRI.org/homedelivery.

Wendy Fachon is a regular contributor to Sustainable Living News and host of the Story Walking Radio Hour on the Dream Visions 7 Radio Network. Visit DreamVisions7Radio.com and search out her podcasts on sustainable living.

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