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a good food feed

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Farm Thrives as Demand for Local Flavors Blooms

July 1st, 2009 by Bree · No Comments

As kids, Fred and Stacia Monahan spent their summers working on farms. In fact, working on the same farm in Connecticut as children is where the two first met. It was only natural that one day would own and operate their own farm.

In 1998 the Monahan's founded [Stone Gardens Farm](#) in Shelton, Connecticut, not far from where Fred grew up. The success of their farm, farmers' market, and most recently the farm's Community Supported Agriculture Program (CSA) resulted from their dedication and hard work, but also from a rise in demand for sustainable food.

In the past few years, as knowing where your food comes from became a rising national trend, Shelton, Connecticut became an ideal place for agritourism. Located 90 minutes from Manhattan, this scenic part of Fairfield country is home

to many family run farms. Agritourists come from New York City and around Connecticut to cut their own Christmas trees, visit local wineries, tour local farms and dine on fresh-picked produce.

That, however, wasn't the case when the Monahan's first began their tiny farm. They started out selling the food they produced from their tiny farm off a table at a nearby friend's farm.

Local foodies fell in love with the Monahan's sweet corn, and as the demand for locally grown food grew, so did Stone Gardens Farm. Today the Monahans operate over 20 acres of farmland, and sell at four farmers markets throughout Connecticut. Stone Gardens Farm produces fruits and vegetables from May to December. While not certified organic, the farm practices integrated pest management, which minimizes their use of pesticides. When they do resort to pesticides, they use organic sprays to minimize the environmental impact. Chickens, turkeys, and cows raised on the farm are not only free of antibiotics and growth hormones, but every animal sold is born on the farm.

The most recent addition to Stone Gardens' business is their CSA Program. Started two years ago, the CSA costs \$600 for a full share, and runs for 22 weeks from the first week in June to the last week of October. The farm



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quickly sold out of its 250 shares for the 2009 season, and hopes to expand the CSA for next year. Shareholders can arrange to pick up their weekly allotment of food at the farm, which they can also tour, or at a drop off location in Westport, Connecticut. In June, CSA members can expect to receive lettuce, scallions, herbs, peas, beets, collards, spinach, and greenhouse tomatoes in their weekly shares. In July, shares will include tomatoes, onions, peppers, eggplants, and the sweet corn that first made the farm famous among Connecticut foodies. The fall brings leeks, potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnip greens, turnips, kale, Brussel sprouts, radishes, lettuce, spinach, and winter squash. CSA members will also occasionally find eggs, as well as fresh peaches, plums and apples, when in season.

The best part of the CSA may be the weekly email Stacia sends members every Monday, complete with a description of the items in that week's farm box, and recipes to go along with the food.

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