



Evaluation Criteria for Applicant Farms

The primary purpose of the application and interview process is to determine whether the applicant has the skills and resources to consistently provide quality produce and a positive experience for their CSA members. Applicant farms are evaluated on the following grounds:

Secure Land & Adequate Infrastructure

- Own land or have rental agreement in place offering some assurance of ability to continue growing on that land
- Appropriate level of mechanization for amount of acreage in production
- Provision for irrigating crops in dry weather
- Provision for washing and cooling harvested crops

Farm Production and Management Experience

- Preferred minimum of two seasons growing/farming experience (including internships/farm employment)
- Preferred minimum of one year of primary responsibility for all or significant portion of a farm operation
- Adequate labor capacity given size of operation
- FairShare strongly encourages those with limited growing experience to work toward developing a CSA by selling at a farmers' market or to other markets prior to making commitments to CSA members

Utilize Organic and Sustainable Farming Practices

- FairShare requires endorsed farms to provide documentation of organic certification for all vegetables, fruits, and animal products (newly endorsed farm members have until March 15th of their first year to file certification applications). There are exemptions for farms that sell less than \$5,000/year.
- Demonstrated knowledge of USDA Organic Standards
- Demonstrated knowledge of soil building techniques and organic pest control
- Demonstrated plan for weed control
- Humane and sustainable animal husbandry

Provide Quality Marketing & Membership Experience

- Experience communicating/selling food directly to people, stores, restaurants, or others
- Demonstrated commitment to offering products that are of value to your members
- Offering opportunities for member involvement
- Soliciting member feedback
- Clear, regular communication with members
- Clear, detailed descriptions of your CSA program for potential members

Understanding of CSA and CSA Experience

- Demonstrated understanding of CSA basics, including at least one year of primary responsibility managing a CSA of significant size relative future plans
- Provisions for diversity of items to be provided in share
- Knowledge and skills to reliably plan for, grow, harvest, package, and delivery goods to members

Agreement to participate in the FairShare CSA Coalition

- See list of "required to" and "strongly encouraged to" activities
- FairShare will only endorse CSA farms (or group of farms operating a CSA together) that produce at least 85% of the main CSA share on-farm and derive a majority of gross sales related to CSA from shares produced primarily on-farm
- FairShare requires endorsed farms to provide full disclosure of source and organic status for their products in brochure, website, newsletters, and/or other written format readily available to their CSA members
- Although FairShare does not regularly inspect endorsed farms, we do reserve the right to visit applicant farms and currently endorsed farms to validate their practices