



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a CSA?

A CSA is a farm which sells shares of produce to members. These shares are boxes of vegetables or other products from the farm. Consumers become members by purchasing a share, usually before the season begins, and are rewarded with a box of seasonal produce each week throughout the growing season. There are benefits for both the member and the farmer in this relationship. The farmer receives payments early in the season to help cash flow and to purchase what is needed for the season. The risk of crop failure is also not entirely on the farmer. All the members and the farmer share in the abundance, when it occurs, and the shortages, if they occur. The farmer also gets to spend growing season time on the produce and non-growing season time on marketing instead of having to do both in the middle of summer growing season. And, the farmer has actual contact and relationships with the people he is growing the food for. The members benefit by getting freshly picked produce. Usually the farm is organic or natural and always very local. Members are welcomed by the farmer to visit the farm, to help, to learn and to get exposed to new produce. Members also are able to develop a relationship with the actual provider/grower of their food. For more details please visit [the Local Harvest CSA page](#).

What is organic?

To many food consumers today, organic refers to something more-or-less vaguely natural (grown without pesticides, for example) that's somehow better (or less bad) for the environment and your health than something that isn't organic.

The formal definition of organic does have a lot in common with this idea, but there's more to it than simply the absence of synthetic pesticides. To organic farmers, food processing companies, scientists, and government regulators, the term organic refers specifically to food production that follows the rules of the United States Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program, or NOP. NOP provides very specific guidelines about both chemicals and practices that are allowed in the production and processing of foods that end up being certified as organic by the USDA and other certifying agencies.

It is worth noting that the NOP does allow the use of some substances – including pesticides – that are toxic to humans and/or other organisms, but which are believed to be less harmful to human health and the environment than analogous chemicals used in so-called conventional agriculture. One example of such a substance is pyrethrin-based insecticides, which are derived from flowers (especially chrysanthemums). While pyrethrins are toxic to humans, they break down quickly in the environment into harmless compounds. Other formal aspects of organic-ness have to do with the use of food additives and preservatives, for example, and with how animals are treated, rather than with what chemicals are used in food production.

It is also worth noting that some farmers, food consumers, and others do not like the NOP very much – they feel it does not go far enough in specifying an environmentally and socially responsible set of practices for agriculture and the food industry (the NOP says little, for example, about how agricultural workers should be housed, paid, or otherwise treated, such that they can still be exploited in organic food production and processing just as they have long been in the conventional system). However, the NOP is an evolving program and it may in the future tighten regulations about what is permitted in the production of "organic" foods. For now, the NOP represents a substantial step away from the mainstream food system of the last 50 or so years.

What is natural?

The term natural also has different meanings for different people. As with the term organic, to many food consumers, it refers to something grown without pesticides, that's better for the environment and health than conventionally grown produce. To others people it has a more earthy definition. This would be that produce is grown only with what nature provides - water, compost, friendly insects, callused hands, etc.

There is a national certification for naturally grown as well. [Certified Naturally Grown](#), or CNG, is an organization that provides small, local growers with a label and certification system that is an alternative to the NOP and that consumers can trust and understand. This is important because extensive paperwork, plus high certification fees, make it unlikely if not impossible for many small farms to become certified organic.

What is local?

In 2008 Congress passed H.R.2419 which amended the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. In the amendment locally is defined as "(I) the locality or region in which the final product is marketed, so that the total distance that the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product; or "(II) the State in which the product is produced". In May 2010 the USDA acknowledged this definition in an [informational leaflet](#). Even with these federally recognized definitions local is defined differently depending on the person in question.

So, what about Trogg's Hollow?

Trogg's Hollow is not certified by NOP nor by CNG. While we have no issue with any of the certifications, it is not an option we can pursue at this time or at this location. However, we do promise to grow things as organically, naturally and sustainably as we can. All of our seeds and plants are certified organic. And, so far we are putting nothing on our plants other than what nature provides. We reclaim and compost as much organic material as we can to help rebuild the soil and we do water when necessary. As far as local, we like to think of it as within a 200 mile radius or so, but we're not strict.