

Dear Kootenay Grain CSA Members (and prospective new members!),

Thanks to all of you who filled out our member survey. Your responses helped us to determine the size, cost, and composition of this year's share. The second page of this e-mail is an info sheet about how the grain CSA works, what we learned in 2008, and what is new for 2009.

The 2009 Kootenay Grain CSA Shares are now for sale!

Payment must be received by **April 30/09**.

This year shares are as follows:

Basic 100 lb Share:

Cost: \$125.00
Comprised of: 20 lbs Hard Spring Wheat
20 lbs Hard Winter Wheat
20 lbs Spelt
20 lbs Khorasan (also known as Polish Wheat or Kamut)
20 lbs Oats

Lentil Share add-on: (Available if you purchase at least one basic share)

Cost: \$25.00
Comprised of: 20 lbs Little Green Lentils

Red Fife Wheat Share (Canada's Heritage Wheat) add-on:

Cost: \$25.00
Comprised of: 20 lbs Red Fife Wheat

Please print out this Order Form and mail it in with your **cheque**:

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please indicate how many of each type of share you would like to buy:

Orders are subject to availability (first come first served) – shares will not be held for you without payment.

I would like to purchase _____ Basic Share (s) at \$125 = \$ _____

Add-ons available with the purchase of a basic share:

• I'd like to purchase _____ Lentil Share (s) at \$25 = \$ _____

• I'd like to purchase _____ Red Fife Wheat Share (s) at \$25 = \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Please mail a cheque for your total amount made out to **Wildsight – Creston Grain CSA**.

Please mail your cheque to: **Wildsight – Creston Grain CSA, c/o Brenda Bruns, 1239 West Creston Road, Creston BC, V0B 1G7.**

What is the Kootenay Grain CSA and why is it so important?

The Kootenay Grain CSA is a first step towards thinking differently about our food. We have been working to develop a new approach to accessing a secure and sustainable grain supply. By supporting local grain growers, CSA members provide them with a consistent market and an adequate income while they grow our food using natural, responsible farming methods. As consumers, members contribute to solving many global issues (see below), while supporting healthy, sustainable, locally produced food.

- **Local Agricultural Economy:** In our global market, it is impossible for local, organic farmers to compete with the imported produce from other countries with lower wages and a lower standard of living. The conventional solution to this challenge has been to resort to farming methods that endorse single-crop farming and the dependence on chemicals. Through environmentally conscious action, CSA members help fortify the local agricultural economy.
- **Environment:** CSA members become increasingly aware of the intrinsic connection between local farming practices and our water, our air, and the earth that wholly sustains us.
- **Climate Change:** The environmental cost of importing food from around the world brings to mind this question: Why doesn't our fertile Creston Valley produce the majority of our food? The farmers of the CSA are in the process of implementing progressive farming methods that will reduce fossil fuel consumption. We also make an effort plan creative, environmentally sensitive ways of distributing the grain, such as the 2008 event of sailing the grain to Nelson.
- **Delicious, Wholesome Food:** As locally grown food becomes an integral part of our diet, we learn to use and store nutritious food. The grains shareholders receive are less processed, deliciously fresh, and are milled, flaked, or cracked as we use it, preserving the nutrient content of each grain.
- **Food Security:** In a constantly evolving global economy, it is vital that each community has dependable access to a local, sustainable, and nourishing food supply. As Cathleen Kneen wrote, "Food security includes the imperative to feed the population – indeed, any jurisdiction which cannot feed its population is at the mercy of whoever does..."

How Does the Kootenay Grain CSA work?

As consumers, CSA members purchase shares in a crop before it is planted. In this way, local farmers are guaranteed a fair income for growing their crops. The shareholders agree to take part in the risk of farming. Local farmers are able to implement natural, sustainable methods, instead of depending on chemicals, monoculture, and fossil fuels. The farmers are paid half of the total amount at the start of the season; they use this money for costs incurred during the growing season.

Why has the cost of each share increased?

Organizing a CSA has been a learning process. We make an effort to set our prices in the range of those you would find in a store. Last year, when grain prices were lower, we estimated an average cost of \$1.00 per pound. This year, prices in the stores are higher, and we also know more about how much work it is for the farmers to grow small fields of naturally grown grain, and to clean and bag that grain for us. Last year, the combined yield of the three farms was lower than anticipated. Each shareholder received 81 pounds for their \$100 share. This works out to approximately \$1.25 per pound. From our survey, most of the 2008 shareholders felt that this cost was appropriate.

Last year, the farmers experienced a few challenges as well. In order to bag the grain in equal amounts per share, the yield from each farm had to be cleaned and/or hulled, weighed, totaled, and divided into 200 shares. Then the farmers weighed, bagged, sewed, and labeled that grain for each shareholder. This year the farmers have planted extra in order to provide enough grain for 20 pound bags of each commodity. Barring unforeseen climate or pest challenges, this removes much of the shareholder risk. The farmers are free to sell any surplus grain to local bakeries or community members.

Why should I pay for my share as soon as possible, rather than wait until the April 30th deadline?

The farmers are already planning for the growing season, buying seed, and planting time will soon be here – it is crucial that we know as soon as possible how many people are committed to the second year of this project. Based on the response the 2008 Kootenay Grain CSA received, we have estimated the total number of shares we will be offering for 2009. Until we receive your payment, we aren't sure of each shareholder's commitment to the farmers. Our goal is to keep administration costs to a minimum, enabling us to give more of the share price to farmers. That's what the project is all about!

Why does this year's basic share have two optional add-ons?

To make the project work efficiently for the farmers we want to have each shareholder receive 20-pound bags. Response to the survey guided our decision to offer a 100-pound share of the five different grains. From the survey, we learned that Red Fife wheat was the least popular grain. We made the decision to offer it as an add-on option. Lentils were a popular trial crop from 2008, so we decided to provide shareholders with the add-on option of a 20-pound bag of lentils.

We appreciate your participation. Without each of you, the Kootenay Grain CSA would not exist! Thank you for your commitment to supporting local, equitable, and sustainable agriculture.