

Even' Star Organic Farm (certified organic since 1997)
Brett Grohsgal and Dr. Christine Bergmark
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Farmer cell: 301-481-6832

Welcome to the Even' Star Organic Farm Warm-Season Subscription Service (CSA)! If you decide to sign up, please save this information packet. Here nearly all key CSA questions are answered.

This information packet contains:

- A summary of the CSA options and the warm season foods and services that we offer;
- a description of typical community-supported agriculture (CSA) and farm subscriptions;
- the crops we grow in the warm seasons;
- and the registration form and subscription contract. At the very end, if you still want to read more,
- the history of our farm.

If you decide to join our High Summer Delivered CSA or our Farmers' Market Option CSA, we urge you to send us your signed contract, filled-out registration form, and check soon. Please be aware that the yes-egg option sells out the fastest.

HOW TO GET STARTED AS AN EVEN' STAR CSA MEMBER

- **read and save** this document; it answers most questions that new subscribers have in their first season with us.
- **choose** whether you want the traditional pre-boxed option (July 12-late September) or the Farmers' Market Option (Chevy Chase: likely late April-to late October; or St. Mary's County: early April to November or December).
- **fill** in the right registration form.
- **read** the contract and sign it. It obligates the farm much more than it does our CSA members.
- Then **write "returning CSA member" or "new CSA member" on an envelope**, and **send** the registration form, the check for the season's payment (made out to Even' Star Organic Farm), and the signed contract to:

Even' Star Organic Farm
48322 Far Cry Road
Lexington Park, MD 20653

If you would prefer to pay for the foods on-line, our website (www.evenstarfarm.org) will have the updated forms and payment link by Feb. 14, 2024 (price will be slightly higher there, since the credit card processor and the web host charge us).

WHAT WE GROW IN THE WARM MONTHS

The crops that we grow that you may expect at varying times during the warm seasons are:

- 6 kinds of cherry and teardrop tomatoes
- 6 varieties of heirloom beefsteak and plum tomatoes
- 3 varieties of cucumbers

- new potatoes
- sweet onions and scallions
- Genoa basil, Thai basil, and lemon basil
- other fresh herbs such as parsley, mint, cilantro, and our Provençal herb blend
- 2 varieties of summer squash
- edible squash flowers
- butternut squash
- tender okra
- great petite strawberries (May & early June)
- French sorrel
- blackberries
- two varieties of figs
- three types of mild and tender eggplant
- superb cantaloupe
- 4 varieties of premium sweet potatoes, by late September
- Very diverse greens, radishes, and turnips, October to May; detailed in our winter CSA info
- 4 varieties of watermelons
- red and green bell peppers, plus 3 other mild sweet pepper varieties
- Many types of flowers for bouquets (for farmers' market members only)
- Shitake mushrooms when summers are rainy
- che fruit
- sunchokes

Please be aware that certain summer crops are either really laborious or impossible to grow in this region without constant pesticide spraying (especially cherries, peaches, plums, apples, and sweet corn). As certified organic growers, we cannot offer these.

THE CSA OPTIONS

- **CHOICE #1: THE FARMERS' MARKET OPTION. Excellent for people who travel extensively in the summer months, for single people, for families, or for pickier eaters. With this option, CSA members get near total choice of their foods, but have to go either**
 - To the Chevy Chase Farmers' Market (at Lafayette Public School, on Broad Branch Ave. in the Chevy Chase part of DC, Saturdays from late April until late October). **Or**
 - to the Homegrown Farm Market in St. Mary's County (Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm, late March or early April thru Nov. or Dec.). **Or**
 - to the farm itself, custom pre-orders only, those weeks we have the extra labor to offer. Probable start: mid-April or earlier.
 - **You may choose your own foods, quantities, and even which weeks during all those months to get our foods.** This option's flexibility makes it extremely popular with the majority of members that choose this option. For details please see that dedicated section. Costs for this are \$200, \$300, \$400, or \$500 (your choice). Members can easily re-up if their balances get low.
- **CHOICE #2: THE TRADITIONAL BOXED CSA MEMBERSHIP (*big change this year: pick ups only at the farm itself: see "RE-Focus" section if you live closer to WDC*).** In this option, the farm chooses the foods that members get each week based on heavy harvests and food diversity; typically 6-8 items per share per week. The summer cost for receiving this is \$468 (\$39 per week) for the full share. This covers 12 weeks of peak-summer harvests (July 12-late Sept.). For this choice, we strive to bring you

foods during the best harvest window of the summer, giving members the heaviest shares. This is a shorter time span than most delivered CSAs, but our winter CSA has 18 weeks of deliveries. This summer you can also choose the partial share: NOW the new 3/4 share, with about 3/4 the weight and slightly less diversity in each week's box, @ \$351 (we recommend this for single people, or those who don't eat many vegetables). The previous part-share was 3/5, but the share price did not cover the essentially equal labor cost.

- **THE CUSTOM PRE-ORDERS:** during the height of the COVID crisis, we adapted to our CSA members' safety and food needs by letting all summer or winter members pre-order from a weekly email, and pick up these custom pre-orders at one of 3 sites: the farm itself (Fridays), at Homegrown Farm Market (St. Mary's County, MD; Saturdays), or at the Lafayette ES/Chevy Chase Farmers' Market (Saturdays). Filling these pre-orders takes a lot of management and workers' hours, so we will offer in 2024 only as our labor supply permits. We will email all CSA members the pre-order details and start dates (likely April) once our winter CSA deliveries have ended.

IMPORTANT 2024 FARM RE-FOCUS

Since the end of the COVID crisis, many DC-area residents work remotely. This empowers their travel away from our region during the hottest months. This has really hurt our High Summer Boxed-Delivered CSA: sign-ups in 2023 were the lowest since 2003. Planting and labor commitments that must be made in February were not paid for by the low level of summer boxed-delivered sign-ups. In contrast, the vacation-flexible Farmers' Market Option membership (and their consumption of our crops) has grown.

At the same time, while our summer crops yield well even during blazing hot weeks, our workers suffer increasingly when faced with "code red" heat-index days. The crops and land here are adapted to climate change; the workers, no. Managing people in intense heat, and the decline in summer boxed-delivered participation, have become our biggest overall challenges. These are all long-term trends, not just 2023 blips. Hence we must finally adapt by:

- **Increasing our acres, and crop diversity, planted for winter harvests.** Winter weather is more mild than when we started here in 1996. And the workers do not face severe heat stress. **We will continue to offer the 2024-25 Boxed-Delivered Winter CSA to members at all 12 sites we have serviced for decades.** With more manageable summer commitments, we will offer full winter shares but will likely be able to add a 3/4 winter share option. Winter cropping has been our love since before the inception of Even' Star; we embrace it anew.
- Adjusting our summer harvest commitments to better keep workers safe. We have produced surplus amounts of most of our summer crops 24 out of the last 26 years. Unsold surpluses cost labor \$ to harvest: you can't just leave ripe tomatoes to rot in the fields, unsold blackberries to ferment on the vines. We must stop over-producing at such a high level.
- **Ending, painful though this is, our High Summer Thursday deliveries to the Beltway.** This means we can better cope with super-high heat index days with the harvests that must occur. This also means that the most heat-adapted worker, Brett, the main farmer, can use Thursdays as an additional harvest day.
- **THE DOWN SIDE:** our loyal Beltway CSA members that have eaten our summer foods for decades will not get deliveries to their neighborhoods. We welcome these great farm supporters to be Chevy Chase Farmers' Market CSA members, though the drive could reduce the frequency of your market visits. Or the really motivated could call us (301.481.6832) to figure out on-farm pick-ups, by one person but for a group of CSA members, as many CSAs do. We appreciate your loyalty for all the decades and wish that summers were less heat-stressed!

- THE UP SIDES: We will serve our summer Chevy Chase and Homegrown Farmers' Markets better, with likely increases the number of weeks we bring foods to the markets in spring and autumn/winter. The on-farm traditional pre-boxed members will certainly benefit. We will reduce the stresses of managing too many workers who must be outside on too many excessively hot summer days.

Important CSA dates:

- **the High Summer Boxed CSA: Friday July 12 through late Sept. (12 weeks of on-farm pick-ups)**
- **Farmers' Market Option, Washington, DC: nearly all Saturdays, late April-late October**
- **Farmers' Market Option, Lexington Park, Saturdays at the public Homegrown Farm Market: late March/early April thru Nov. or Dec.**
- **Custom pre-orders: to be determined based on our labor supply, but very likely.**
- **The Boxed-Delivered "Orion Rising" Winter CSA: late October through April; 18 delivery weeks, apprx. 12 pick-up sites in VA, MD, and WDC**

EXCELLENT VACATION FLEXIBILITY FOR OUR BOXED CSA MEMBERS

Only pertains to the boxed-delivered winter members, and the summer on-farm, pick-up-every-week members. The Farmers' Market Option members already enjoy full travel flexibility. If you know of travel plans 48 hours or more before a pre-boxed pick-up, you can get a credit and not have your share prepared. You need to both A) CALL THE FARM CELL AND SPEAK DIRECTLY TO BRETT, and also B) EMAIL US WITH "CSA PICK UP AND VACATION" in the subject line. Give us your name, exact pick-up site, and dates of travel. We will email you back with a credit, redeemable by (your choice):

- printing out our email and bringing that to a farmers' market we service, for foods of your choosing, OR
- doubling up on some future delivery, OR
- having us donate that week's share as food to our local soup kitchen (St. Mary's Caring), OR
- ordering your favorite food we grow, but in bulk, OR
- printing out the email and sending it back to us with registration form and an adjusted check for a future Even' Star CSA membership.

We need you to tell us 2 ways because it is easy for CSA adjustments to slip through the cracks when we are so busy with the crops. And the "48 hours before a delivery" is important; we harvest and plan for x number of members the six days before each delivery. Please call the farm cell if you would like clarification on how the vacation credit works.

Active-duty military and front-line health care workers have even more flexibility, if they get deployed or stationed out of our region. Please call the farmer cell for details. We greatly appreciate how many sacrifices health-care families and the military must make.

DETAILS OF THE FOODS AND SERVICES OF THE EVEN' STAR ORGANIC FARM CSA

We offer three subscriptions annually. See the CHOICE section above for warm-season dates and costs.

THE "FARMERS' MARKET OPTION" CSA MEMBERSHIP

*This option should get even better for the many members who are used to it and prefer it. **The Farmers' Market Option is excellent for people who will be vacationing or out of town during long periods of the summer; your CSA money just sits there, awaiting your return and resumption of getting our foods. This is the first of two warm-season CSA choices. The Farmers' Market Option starts earlier and ends later than the on-farm pre-boxed option; see the dates above.***

For 14 years, this CSA option has been really popular with the many members that choose it. Unlike the on-farm pre-boxed share, CSA members may come to either:

1. Homegrown Farm Market in southern Lexington Park, late March or early April thru mid-Nov., Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm,
2. OR the Chevy Chase Farmers' Market, late April-late October, Saturdays, opening at 9:00 am and closing at 1:00 pm
3. For weeks we can offer custom pre-orders: the farm itself, April-September, Fridays between 12:00 noon and 4:00 pm sharp, April to September.

No delivery to your neighborhood, but instead you come in weeks that you choose to either of the two farmers' markets above during market hours, tell us which foods you want and in what quantities, we total the amount that would be due, you initial (sign) the tab, and that amount is subtracted out of what you have in your account. You choose an initial value level (\$200, \$300, \$400, or \$500). This check is sent to us with the registration form and contract in the spring, as per traditional delivered CSA memberships. We add 5% to the amount you send us as a joining bonus, so (for example) a \$300 check is worth \$315 in goods and a \$500 check is worth \$525. **Most important, you can miss weeks of market days and your balance will not change!** Your account is like running a tab: we keep track of how much food you've gotten to date on a spreadsheet and subtract out each week's foods from your previous balance. You can check your balance any week you come to get foods. Mid-summer, we send an email to Farmers' Market Option members who are getting low their balances. You have the option of adding to your account if you decide you would like more of our foods when your initial investment has run out.

We started this in 2010 because surveys of CSA members have shown many want more choices: members don't agree on what is too many or too few summer squash, or watermelons, or cukes or basil. We also found out that this option increased the flexibility of the farm in terms of harvesting. We bring the greatest diversity of foods to the Farmers' Market, as many of the foods have too small a harvest for all of the pre-boxed CSA members to get that item. The Farmers' Market Option brings great choice to those members who really want it. Members who receive the traditional boxed on-farm pick-up may choose to augment their boxes by coming to the Homegrown Market on Saturdays. We encourage this, most especially in the May through June period before High Summer deliveries begin.

In all weeks we'll email you by Friday morning with a list of what we'll be harvesting, especially when we have unique or scarce-quantity foods. **To encourage people to use this option, we add 5% to the initial value level you choose (i.e., the check you send to us before the summer season starts) to your balance in our ledger. A \$300 initial value check is therefore recorded as \$315 worth of goods, a \$400 check is worth \$420 in goods, and a \$500 check is valued at \$525. Any further \$100 addition to their balance that a member may choose also gets the 5% bonus. Any and all of our CSA members who come to the farmers' market have the same rights to get scarce foods that we reserve for members, e.g. first of the season May strawberries, or Cherokee Purple heirloom tomatoes, or chanterelle mushrooms, etc.**

Some farmers' market items must be limited to one per customer per week, like scarce first-of-the-season tomato baskets or baskets of figs. Also, we'll strongly encourage any unused balance left in the member's account be used up by you with non-perishables such as October sweet potatoes or our superb seasoning salts, but balances left by end of market season may be rolled into the 2024 part of the boxed-delivered winter CSA or will be donated as food to our local soup kitchen (member's choice).

THE TRADITIONAL BOXED CSA OPTION

We provide the above diversity as much as possible, but new summer members need to know that typically 60% (by weight) of all high-summer harvests are our diverse tomatoes, melons, and cucumbers, so if you don't like these, you should instead choose the Farmers' Market Option. Bouquets are provided only to farmers' market patrons, not to the summer boxed delivered CSA. We try new crops every season and are planting a few crops not listed above. You also need to know that our summer CSA members may occasionally get specialty foods from us like our Provençal or Thai seasoning salts, or canned foods like our ratatouille or

tomato sauce. Our winter CSA members get these more often. We prepare the specialty foods primarily from what we grow here, and hoard these nonperishables for delivery weeks when we want to add value to your CSA box because the harvest of fresh foods wasn't big enough.

We strive for six CSA items per week. So what might some typical full-share subscription boxes contain?

mid July:

three to four pounds of new potatoes
blackberries
French sorrel
Genoa basil
cucumbers
yellow and green summer squash
cherry and/or Roma tomatoes

mid August:

two pints of rainbow cherry tomatoes
heirloom slicing/salad tomatoes (e.g., Cherokee Purple, Rutgers, etc.)
cucumbers
Plum tomatoes
Sweet peppers
mild eggplant
large watermelon or cantaloupe

or late September:

two pints of rainbow cherry tomatoes
first-of-the season Beauregard sweet potatoes
Butternut squash
Provençal herb blend
heirloom tomatoes
Kosher dill pickles
sweet red bell and green bell peppers

The **average** weight per week of the summer boxed-delivered CSA full share, 2010 through 2023, has been 10.5 to 12 lbs. The **average** value of each week for our pre-boxed summer subscription service is \$39, picked up strictly at the farm. We typically underprice compared to other organic farms that sell in the Beltway, and our produce costs less than organic produce sold in most supermarkets. But our produce does cost more than the crops of conventional farmers in rural areas like St. Mary's County. We calculate the values based on what it costs to grow each crop organically and what customers have happily paid for our foods at the farmers' markets. The average value per week is important because weather variations give farmers highly bountiful harvests in some weeks and lower yields in other weeks. We and the subscribers must adapt to these seasonal variations.

We co-wrote two really useful cookbooks, *The Farmer's Kitchen* and *The Farmers Market Cookbook*, to help CSA members easily and deliciously prepare the diverse foods we grow. They are very well-reviewed and are available from Amazon. We urge returning CSA members who don't already own a copy to consider getting one, and all new members really should. The cookbooks were prepared by this farmer and an old chef friend of mine; together our total restaurant cooking experience tops 35 years.

The cost of the 2024 Pre-Boxed Summer full share is 12 times \$39, for a total of \$468; the 3/4 share costs \$351. The contents of the boxes are designed to feed a couple or small family with a lot of seasonal, diverse options. **We know that the full-share quantities may be too much for single people and strongly encourage these folks to split a full share with a friend or close colleague. If splitting, it will be your responsibility to divide the contents, but we want to add both box partners to our email list such that all will be notified of box contents and delivery times. If you opt for a split subscription, please list both names and emails on one registration form. THIS YEAR WE ARE ALSO OFFERING THE 3/4 SHARE instead of the previous 3/5 share.**

Customer and farm box re-use saves all of us money and is right for our environment. All subscribers are expected to return the empty CSA boxes to the farm packing room when they come to get the next week's harvest.

PARTIAL SHARES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR THE SUMMER BOXED-DELIVERED MEMBERS

This summer we also offer 3/4-sized shares, about 3/4 the weight of the traditional full share. Crop diversity will be slightly lower than in the main share, but when possible we shrink the portion (eg., a smaller cantaloupe, slightly fewer heirloom tomatoes, etc. relative to what we pack each week for the full-share). We use shallower boxes for members who choose the 3/4 share, and include 3/4 members' initials in each harvest email so no 3/4 member mistakenly takes a full share (taller) box. If you want this option, be sure to check it off on the registration form! Was previously a 3/5 share.

FREE RANGE EGGS AND THE CSA SUBSCRIPTIONS

The main produce share (\$468 for 12 pick-up weeks) does not include eggs. The optional yes-egg add-on is available each season on a first come, first served basis only for the regular boxed CSA. To receive a dozen of our great free-range eggs every delivery week, please make out a second check for \$78 (12 dozen x \$6.50). These delicious eggs will also often be available for the Farmers' Market Option members. What drives our pricing are predators: true free-range leads to happier and healthier chickens, but with periodic loss of some hens to hawks, eagles, coyotes, foxes, etc.

THE WEEKLY HARVEST EMAILS

As many of our crops are heirlooms, unique to this farm, and/or may cook differently from supermarket produce, our weekly CSA harvest emails and cookbooks are very useful. The emails give you storage advice and simple cooking suggestions for new items. In the cookbooks (available from Amazon), the recipes are well tested and straightforward: the farm owner/manager Brett was the chef in 11 restaurants and a cook in another 6 over a 20-year span before we began Even' Star in 1997. *The Farmers' Kitchen* cookbook has been extremely popular with our CSA patrons, and the 2016 edition, *The Farmers' Market Cookbook*, is beautifully done and has received excellent reviews. The produce storage chapters in both books are extraordinarily useful and have been reprinted by 2 publications.

THE WINTER SHARE: not detailed here, but a brief overview

As of 2024, our main Boxed-Delivered option, to 10 to 12 pick-up sites between our County, around the Beltway, and in DC itself. Our winter share is about the diverse bounty of choice crops rationally grown in the cool months. We do NOT try to grow truly out-of-season crops like hot-house tomatoes in winter; these would take a prodigious amount of fuel to keep the greenhouses that warm. Instead, we have routinely grown and harvested about 180 cases weekly of greens and savory root vegetables through most of every winter. We succeed at winter farming because a) many crops have good amounts of cold hardiness if properly managed;

b) since 1992, we have bred even more freeze tolerance into the winter crops, and we save and replant this seed, year after year; c) we have winter-cropped since 1984 in 4 different US states: a record of experience, accumulated knowledge, and skill that few can match; d) we have three large greenhouses for lettuces, salad mix, chard, and herbs, and these are food reserves even when snow or ice blanket the outside crops; and e) we dress *really* warmly. Winter farming is much nicer on us and on the crew than is working outdoors every day in the torrid heat waves of August. Winter farming is why we chose these 104 acres. Winter farming is our joy.

Unlike the few other winter CSAs on the Eastern seaboard, we do not buy goods from far away, repackage them, and then pretend that local agriculture is being supported. We grow and harvest our own foods and strictly these go to the CSA members, 12 months of every year. This guarantees both your safe and non-chemical eating and our own extreme standards for food quality.

SIMPLE REGISTRATION FORMS FOR BOTH OPTIONS ON NEXT PAGES:

**EVEN' STAR ORGANIC FARM CSA REGISTRATION FORM:
FARMERS' MARKET OPTION**

If you want to pick up a pre-packed box at one of our Thursday delivery sites, use the PREVIOUS registration form, not this one!

Full Name with Middle Initial of Primary CSA Shareholder: _____

Please list all household members who you authorize to choose farm foods instead of you:

Your Address _____

Phone # _____

Email address(es) _____

(Our own email address is evenstarfarm@evenstarfarm.org. **Call your farmer if urgent problems arise: (301) 481-6832**), and if leaving a phone message during the delivery season be sure to tell us your pick-up site address!

INITIAL VALUE LEVEL (circle one): \$200 \$300 \$400 \$500

Have you been a CSA member with us before? If so, where did you pick up?

COVID guarantee: If the pandemic returns full-force, and any government close down the Homegrown Farm Market, our St. Mary's farmers' market option CSA members will be given the choice of either a) staying an FMO member, but with pre-orders picking up on-farm, Fridays 4 pm-5:30. Or b) getting their shares converted at full value to the Boxed Delivered High Summer option. If WDC closes the Chevy Chase/Lafayette Farmers' Market (already open-air) due to pandemic resurgence, we would convert Beltway FMO memberships at full value to the Boxed Delivered High Summer option. Likely none of this come to pass.

By late August, Farmers' Market option CSA members may be notified by email of their updated credit balance. Members may also always check their balances at the weekly Farmers' Market. Members may add to their balance at any point, and will receive a 5% Market Bonus for any \$100+ balance additions. Balances not used up by Oct. 31, 2024 (November or December in St. Mary's County) may be donated as foods to the St. Mary's soup kitchen or may be rolled into the 2024 part of the Boxed-Delivered Winter CSA.

Please send this form, the following contract (signed) and a check for either \$200, \$300, \$400, OR \$500 to:

Brett Grohsgal, Even' Star Organic Farm, 48322 Far Cry Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653.
Checks need to be made out to Even' Star Organic Farm.

FARMERS' MARKET OPTION CSA CONTRACT: Terms and Conditions

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVEN' STAR ORGANIC FARM

The Farm will continue to prioritize getting the foods we grow to our CSA members above the general public or our wholesale accounts. We will provide you with goods strictly from our farm but chosen by you either at the Lafayette School/Chevy Chase Farmers' Market, WDC (Saturdays), or the Homegrown Farm Market in Lexington Park (Saturdays), and (when we have enough labor) via the customized pre-orders. The Farm will decide pre-order options. These goods may be vegetables, fruits, flowers, or other products of this farm. CSA members choosing this option also may choose any market days or pre-order pick-up days available to spend their credit, from late April through late October, 2024 (Chevy Chase) or late March/early April through mid-Nov. (St. Mary's County). Exact dates to be determined by April 1. Some crops in very limited quantities may be limited to one per CSA member per market day.

The Farm will remain fully committed to maintaining our COVID-safe workplace.

Initial cost of this option, decided by the CSA member, is \$200, \$300, \$400, or \$500. The Farm further credits each Farmers' Market CSA Member a bonus of 5% of the initial cost to their account, if first 2022 payment is \$200 or more. For example, a \$400 initial CSA check will be entered in our ledger and spreadsheets as worth \$420 of our goods. All Even' Star CSA members have equal rights and access to our market foods.

Even' Star Organic Farm can miss at most 6 farmers' markets per warm season, due to hurricanes, emergencies, or late June family time. Our average skipped since 2002 has only been 2 markets per warm season. Subscribers will be notified by email in advance of any skipped Saturdays. If a serious accident, disastrous weather event, or similar act of God prevents our harvests in the above time span, we may extend the subscription period, cancel the service altogether, offer bulk foods of equal value to the missed weeks, or refund the balance of the subscription fees, solely of our choosing.

By August all Farmers' Market Option CSA members may be notified by email of their up-to-date credit balance. Members may also check their balances at the weekly Farmers' Market. Members may add to their balance at any point, and will receive a 5% Market Bonus for any \$100+ balance additions. Balances of Beltway FMO members not used up by Oct. 31 2023 may be donated as food to the St. Mary's soup kitchen or may be rolled into the 2024 part of the Winter CSA (member's choice). St. Mary's County FMO members will have until mid-November to use up the summer's balances.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR SUBSCRIBERS

The cost of the 2024 summer season Farmers' Market Option is \$200, \$300, \$400, or \$500 (member's choice). Payment in full is due with submission of the registration form and this contract. Joining the Even' Star CSA (as formalized by your check and registration forms) also means that you agree to not sue the farm or the Farmers' Market, should you have an accident at the farm or at the market when choosing your foods.

The subscription is not refundable except at the sole discretion of Even' Star Organic Farm. You may fully transfer your share to someone outside of your family or household by coordinating with the Farm.

Each person sending in this registration form and contract becomes the Primary CSA Member. This Primary CSA Member should designate on the registration form and by name which (if any) other household members or family may also choose foods and spend the member's credit at the farm or at the Market.

Subscribers have no obligation to work at or for Even' Star Organic Farm.

Subscribers need to respect the hours of the Lafayette/Chevy Chase Farmers' Market, the Homegrown Farm Market, and any pre-order pick-up windows on-farm.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2024 by _____ Printed Name: _____.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2024 by _____ . Printed Name: Brett Grohsgal.

**EVEN' STAR ORGANIC FARM CSA REGISTRATION FORM:
BOXED THURSDAY PICK-UPS**

If you want to use the high-choice "Farmers' Market Option", use the SECOND registration form, not this one! And if splitting a share with a friend, please supply both emails on this one form

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Email address(es) _____

(Our own email address is evenstarfarm@evenstarfarm.org. Call Brett's cell if urgent problems arise: (301) 481-6832, and if leaving a phone message after signing up be sure to tell us your pick-up site address!

Sole summer 2024 pick-up site: St. Mary's County (the farm itself, between Lexington Park and Dameron)

Circle your choice:

TRADITIONAL FULL SHARE (@ \$468) or the 3/4 SHARE (@ \$351)?

No-Egg membership or Yes-Egg Membership (enclose a second check for \$78)

Have you been a winter or summer subscriber with us before? Precisely where did you pick up? _____

Farm use: Payment received?

Please return this form, the following contract (signed) and a check for \$468 (full share) or \$351 (¾ share) made out to Even' Star Organic Farm, to Even' Star Organic Farm, 48322 Far Cry Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653.

DELIVERED BOX SUBSCRIPTION CONTRACT: Terms and Conditions

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVEN' STAR ORGANIC FARM

We will provide you with weekly goods averaging \$39. These goods will be vegetables, fruits, flowers, and/or other products of this farm. We will provide you with an assortment of goods in each box. These are of our choosing and we cannot substitute foods for individual subscribers.

The subscription period likely runs from **July 12 through Sept. 27 (12 weeks of pick-ups)**; into October is a hurricane causes a skipped week. If a serious accident, disastrous weather event, or similar act of God prevents 12 harvest/delivery weeks in the above time span, we may extend the subscription period past early October, 2024, cancel the service, offer bulk foods of equal value to the missed weeks, or refund the balance of the subscription fees, solely of our choosing.

Summer pick-ups will be on the farm only, from Fridays 2 pm to 7 pm to Saturdays during the day (members choice). If hurricanes or other adverse conditions prevent pick-ups, we will prepare your foods for a different day and will email subscribers of the change as soon as possible. Subscribers have until Saturday evening to pick up.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR SUBSCRIBERS

The total cost of the 2024 boxed-delivered full-share summer season is \$468. The cost of the 3/4 share is \$351. Payment in full is due with submission of the registration form and this contract, before pick-ups begin. Joining the Even' Star CSA (as formalized by your check and registration forms) also means that you agree to not sue the farm, should you have an accident on this property when picking up your box. The subscription is not refundable except at the sole discretion of Even' Star Organic Farm. You may transfer your share to someone else by notifying the Farm, and the new subscriber must accept the terms of the CSA contract.

Subscribers never have any obligation to work at or for Even' Star Organic Farm.

Subscribers have to return their empty delivery boxes to the farm when picking up the following week's delivery. Subscribers need to respect the window for share pick-ups: 7 am to 7 pm, Fridays and Saturdays.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2024 by _____ Printed Name: _____.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2024 by _____. Printed Name: Brett Grohsgal.

THE HISTORY OF EVEN' STAR ORGANIC FARM

Our farm is in St. Mary's County, Maryland, about 70 miles south of Washington, DC. We bought these 104 acres in 1996 and immediately began working towards becoming organically certified. In 1999, we attained full organic certification for 15 acres of prime cropland and 50 acres of woods. Since 2009, 28 acres of our cropped land and 50 acres of forest are certified organic; the rest is conventional hay acreage, leased to another farmer.

Our market niche is defined by the importance that both wholesale and retail customers place on eating locally grown, superbly flavored, and very safe foods. We grow predominantly great-tasting heirloom tomatoes or tomatoes we've bred ourselves for flavor. Our berries and melons are picked at peak ripeness. We grow our greens and root vegetables primarily in the cold months, not in the summer; frequent frost and the icy winds of winter add great depth and sweetness to greens' flavors. We grow our crops slowly, with minimal certified organic fertilizers or sprays, in order to avoid unhealthy meals for our family and our customers. Our farming ethic is based on a deep respect for the land and an equal respect for the time-proven farming tradition that focuses on crop diversity. These ancient approaches -and not government subsidies, crop insurance policies, or intensive pesticide use-- are how we avoid both the extreme risks and the solvency crisis that have destroyed so many farms in America. We manage our soil and water resources respectfully, such that through torrid drought or soggy flood or frigid winter, these fields always produce.

When people buy from us, they are supporting these time-honored practices as well as getting foods greatly superior to the junk in the supermarkets.

Since COVID, we have also been leaders in the farm community in workplace safety and inclusion. We believe in our diverse co-workers, and fiercely strive to keep all healthy and protected. All family members and paid employees are fully vaccinated and boosted, we routinely bleach harvesting vessels and packaging tables, and once COVID really started, masking in our workplaces was mandatory even before the CDC recommended it. Masking-up by our workers will again be mandatory should the pandemic resume. Your safety level benefits from our vigilance.

HOW TYPICAL COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE FARMS (CSAs) WORK

Farm subscriptions and CSAs are relatively new ideas in the US. They are based on our need to know and trust the people that grow and harvest our food. Most foods are grown and handled in unknown places. Corporations and mega-farms rarely tell the public about their pesticide use or labor conditions; their realities would hurt sales. **Delivery services, whether Amazon or PeaPod or distant farm cooperatives, that claim "fresh from the farm!" but do not have a farm you can visit and see for yourself are no better than a supermarket.** Producer-only CSA farms are much better and fix these problems. Our health matters, as does the fair treatment of our fellow workers.

In many CSA's, the consumers are expected to periodically work on the farm. Not ours. In many CSA's, the members/consumers also share some of the risks of farming: if horrible droughts, floods, or other disasters hit the farm and yields plummet to zero, the consumer gets neither their food nor money back. Not ours. We do not ask that CSA members work on the farm at all, and we also do not like that last crutch of shared risk and exclude it from the Even' Star Organic Farm Subscription Service. We are professional farmers and manage our business risks very differently (please "HOW WE DIVIDE . . ."). Barring a tornado, huge hurricane, accurate lightning strike, or major injury or death, our CSA customers will reliably receive the lion's share of the diverse, lovely, in-season produce that we grow. You deserve such dependability. And we value your loyalty beyond measure.

That said, a negative part of all CSAs that we must emphasize is that weather variability force all CSA farms into *averaging*. This means that not all delivery weeks are created equal, nor do the harvests equal each other in value per week. In some weeks our subscribers get less than we'd like, and other weeks are super-bountiful. Our farm keeps track of these "light weeks" vs. "heavy weeks", and per subscription season our CSA members have always received a very large amount of diverse foods. But accepting averaging before the season starts will help you adapt to the weather glitches and delayed harvests that frequently occur in the farm world. At Even' Star Organic Farm, we are proud that we have always met or surpassed the value of the shares when added up over the course of an entire season. We also **never** secretly buy someone else's vegetables or fruits to cover for laziness or disastrous weather. Secret buying and re-packaging is a scary trend among many delivery services and CSAs and often leads to heavily sprayed foods being re-packed for an "organic" CSA. We adamantly reject produce buying and re-selling for our customers.

THE ROLE OF LIVESTOCK ON OUR FARM

We are primarily a vegetable, fruit, and flower farm. We raise free-ranging hens because we and many CSA members need great eggs. We always free-range our laying chickens. We believe that humane treatment of farm animals is the best moral path for people in our profession, and argue that factory livestock production is wrong and should not even be called "farming". We are much closer in ethics to the animal rights advocates than to those farmers and politicians who defend concentrated animal feedlot operations. But we also strongly respect the ancient agricultural tradition of integrating livestock with many acres of pasture and vegetable production. Our hens eat all the crops that aren't pretty enough or fresh enough for our human customers. Our hens supply small amounts of manure that we spread in the winter to help the next season's tomato plants thrive. Our hens eat lots of insects and grubs, many of which would otherwise eventually find the crops. And our hens provide eggs of the highest quality to our family and to many customers.

WILL I GET BETTER FOOD OR SAVE MONEY BY JOINING A CSA?

If you are a skilled home gardener with no history of crop failures, you may do a better job at growing diverse summer foods that exactly fit your needs than can any farm, including Even' Star. Experienced home gardeners bring time and focus to small plots of land and can out-produce any but the most chemical of professional growers. Farmers tend to be harried managers: we struggle to deal with hordes of insect pests that often alight from neighboring farms, we are often too busy getting the most out of ourselves and our fields to intensively commit to any one crop, and we must often harvest foods a full day before the customers get them. All these things reduce farmers' ability to surpass the top 2% of home growers. Experienced home gardeners can nurture each tomato plant, hand-pick and remove any bad insects that gobble the leaves, and then bring that sun-drenched tomato instantaneously from the field into their kitchen. No commercial farm can do this.

It would be great if there were a huge increase in home gardening in the US, and we urge experienced gardeners to stay away from CSAs. But **unless you or a close friend or family member intensively and always successfully gardens, Even' Star is likely a superior solution.** We can bring you some of the best foods you'll get anywhere. Our professional quality level is among the highest anywhere. Our crop failures are extremely infrequent when compared to the rest of the farm community. Since 1996, we have brought the passion of the home gardener and our graduate training in agricultural and environmental sciences to these hundred acres, and both we and our workers love growing such delicious and safe foods.

If you don't really care whether your food is organically grown or not, maybe you should not subscribe with us. Conventional growers have an array of different chemicals which permit success with even the most pest-vulnerable crops, and usually add fungicides to the vegetables and fruits that prolong shelf life. Our

adherence to the stringent US organic regulations sometimes leads some of our vegetables to be more blemished or irregularly shaped than supermarket stuff. These are stewardship and safety choices we make. On average, though, our produce always tastes far better and often looks much better than you'll find in supermarkets.

We price our CSA foods at the same level as we do our farmers' market foods, item by item and volume by volume. We price our foods lower than do many conventional farmers and most certified organic farmers that sell at DC area farmers' markets, and we consistently charge less than do the supermarket chains Giant or Whole Foods, even comparing our certified organic foods against their conventionally grown. And we pay our workers an above-average wage compared to most retail stores and farms. But if you only buy conventional produce, or if you always shop at cheaper grocery stores, or if you live in a rural area dominated by large chemical farms, you may not save money by subscribing with us. The cost of labor and land and the lower yields that come from our not spraying all drive our pricing. The positive aspect of this is that our land grows some crops ---cherry tomatoes, sweet potatoes, blackberries, cucumbers, herbs, winter greens, etc.--- wonderfully, and with great efficiency. We price these at below market, year in and year out. And when US market prices climb, we stick to our original pricing to treat our customers better.