

My MN Farmer

Our Family Blessed
To Feed Yours

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Fighting Food Waste vs. Picture Perfect Produce

At My Minnesota Farmer, we are opposed to food waste. We don't throw away delicious, organically-grown produce just because it's not picture perfect. You may find a zucchini with a scar on the side or a funny shaped pepper or tomato in your share box. In the traditional grocery food chain, that tomato or pepper would probably not make the cut for the grocery store shelf, and instead would be discarded.

A third to a half of all produce grown in the United States ends up thrown away, most often because it's not cosmetically perfect. We believe this is a terrible waste. You can read more about food waste on these two websites: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jul/13/us-food-waste-ugly-fruit-vegetables-perfect> and <http://www.uglyproduceisbeautiful.com/ugly-produce-problem.html>.

At My Minnesota Farmer, we make every effort to utilize a high percentage of the produce we grow. But each week, as we prepare your shares, we do end up with a number of bins of produce that we've culled from our harvest. Much of that produce gets set aside as "seconds," and can be purchased at a discount by CSA members or farmers market customers who want to make tomato sauce, soup or salsa, or freeze peppers, pumpkin or zucchini. We also sell bulk "firsts" when we have an overabundance of crops, though not at as deep a discount as seconds.

Other plant matter, including onion tops, beet greens and overripe produce are fed to our livestock to supplement their regular diet. And believe me, you've never seen such happy cows, pigs and chickens as when our kids pull up in the Gator and dump the bins of plant matter into their enclosures. **Cue the happy, snuffling pigs and the cows trotting over to the fence to greet the kiddos.**



Because it is asymmetrical, this pepper probably wouldn't earn a spot on your local grocery store shelf. But we know it is just as nutritious and delicious as a perfect looking pepper.

Farmer Jean on the News!

Farmer Jean and Farmer Lucas (age 11) were vendors at a special downtown Mankato Farmers Market last week.

As this was a new market opportunity for the city of Mankato, the local news crew from KEYC visited and interviewed Farmer Jean.

If you'd like to watch the television news report, visit <http://www.keyc.com/story/38844150/mankato-farmers-market-visits-downtown>.

In your share box this week

❖ **Cucumbers** - Enjoy these in your favorite cucumber salad, refrigerator pickles or cucumber sandwich! Or dress up your salad with fresh cucumber chunks.



❖ **Summer Squash or Zucchini** - Slice and saute with onion for a quick, easy side dish. Or eat raw, sliced into rods with salt, hummus or ranch dressing. Or cut them up in chunks for a salad. Or bake them in casseroles or spaghetti.



❖ **White Potatoes** - White potatoes are high in starch, which makes them light and fluffy, perfect mashed or baked, but can be used in all



your favorite potato recipes.

❖ **Yellow Onions** - Great for sautees, burgers, in salads, casseroles or side dishes.



❖ **Tomatoes** - So many possibilities for these summer treats! Add to your favorite recipe or slice and eat with a bit of salt or sugar.



❖ **Peppers** - Slice these up for your relish dish, grill with potatoes and onions, or incorporate into your Denver omelette. Yum!



❖ **Beets** - Our favorite way to eat these is to chop off the tops, boil them until tender, douse them in cold water to slip off the skins and then eat with butter, salt and pepper.



❖ **Green Kohlrabi** - Kohlrabi is a tasty, healthy choice when you're looking for that yummy crunch! Cut off the outside and slice to eat fresh. Can also be grilled or added to salads.



Recipe Round-up It's a great zucchini year, so you may find some in your box each week for a while. I recently found a link for zucchini pizza crust that looks AMAZING! Follow this link for photos, recipe and tips for this yummy way to use zucchini: <https://www.myhumblekitchen.com/2013/09/best-zucchini-recipe-ever-zucchini-crust-pizza/>.

Please practice drop site etiquette

We are so happy to have you as part of our community! We are looking forward to a great year. As this may be new to some of you, here are a few tips to make everything go smoothly when you pick up your box:

- Check the list of names at your pickup site. Verify you are on the list, and see exactly what items you ordered. Pick up the items you ordered and sign behind your name so we know you've received them.
- **Half or Whole Share?** Please double check that you are taking the right size share. The majority of the calls I receive about drop site issues are because someone orders a half or whole share box and only the other size is there when they get to the drop. **Black boxes are half shares** and **white boxes are whole shares**. Thank you for being considerate to your fellow members by double checking you are picking your produce out of the correct sized box.
- Please bring your own container to transfer your produce into for the trip home.
- Stack the boxes in the shed - one pile of half share black boxes, one pile of whole share white boxes and one pile of lids. This will help keep the shed clean for people coming after you.
- Go home and enjoy your fresh goodies!
- Please call or text with any questions. I try to always have my phone with me. **612-245-6271**. Thanks!