

July 28, 2004

Editor

The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036-3959



Farm & Food Justice for All

To the Editor:

Your July 21, 2004 article “*Eat Your Vegetables: Easier Said Than Done*” left out an important development on the locally-grown vegetable scene: the growth of *community supported agriculture* (CSA) programs in NYC. Your paper referred to CSA in an article last year as a kind of “food buying club” – an arrangement between a neighborhood group and a local, rural farmer. Just Food has been helping communities throughout the City since 1996 to start-up and manage CSA programs. The program keeps growing; in 2000 NYC had 15 CSA market sites and now there are 31. Approximately 7,000-9,000 New York City folk are now getting their produce direct through CSA. The program, which usually supplies organic produce, is for everyone; food stamps are accepted at most sites and sliding scale payment plans and other methods help to make it affordable for all. Even if you pay the high end price, it’s still a bargain. Direct markets mean better access and better prices for consumers, and better profits for farmers. More than 30 farmers are in the program, some of them earning more than 80% of their family income through CSA in NYC.

We also run *The City Farms* program, where we coordinate an *urban* extension service to assist community gardeners to grow and market more food for their own neighborhoods. We’ve helped start 4 markets in neighborhoods that have few or no other places to buy vegetables. This program also provides additional markets for rural farmers.

More and more New Yorkers are recognizing that they need more fresh produce in their diets and that our local, urban and rural, small and medium sized farms are the best place to get it. In January, Just Food held our conference: *Food Justice and the Public Good: A NYC Summit on Farms and Food*. In the past, we drew about 200 people to this event; this year, it drew 500.

People should contact Just Food if they’d like us to help them start a market in their neighborhood.

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