

2023

Winter CSA

Handbook

Welcome to our farm family, or farmily as we sometimes call it!

We are looking forward to being your local food provider this winter! We are passionate about growing delicious vegetables for the people we care about. And we also love teaching you how to eat them!

We hope you will love eating our vegetables and become more connected to a local farmer and community.

This is our CSA Handbook. We created it as a "user manual" to help you understand how our CSA runs. Please skim this document to understand the Community Guidelines we abide by to keep this operation running like a well-oiled machine!



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OUR GROWING PRACTICES

- Using compost and natural fertilizers helps keep the soil healthy and productive.
- Hoeing and hand-weeding keep us busy and the land free of herbicides.
- Tending to bees and preserving the natural habitat around our farm is an integral part of maintaining a healthy ecosystem and our planet.
- Keeping our land healthy for generations and our role as stewards of the soil is our highest priority.
- We are happy to arrange a quick tour and want you to be more connected with your food.

ARE WE ORGANIC?

WE USE ORGANIC PRACTICES BUT ARE NOT CERTIFIED ORGANIC.

Side note: "Organic" is a term the U.S. government/USDA regulates.

Farmers must undergo costly inspections to meet specific rules and regulations to be certified organic. This program enables farms from around the globe to tell consumers they are organic and sell to your local grocery. Since we sell directly to you, we prefer to have conversations about how we grow food rather than relying on a label. Rebecca was educated at Michigan State University on the requirements of the National Organic Program and is happy to talk about it anytime!

DO WE EVER BUY IN PRODUCTS FROM OTHER FARMS?

In 2021, we began partnering with an Amish community less than 2 miles from the farm: Wilbur and Stephen Yoder of Catholic Church Road.

They use only certified organic products and methods and grow almost exclusively for our farm and CSA. Primarily, they have been growing things that are too cost-prohibitive for us to raise due to labor issues, mainly green beans and carrots. We also raise their starter plants in our greenhouse for other items like husk cherries.

Our farm considers this a beneficial partnership between farmers who maintain their land as we do. Occasionally we "buy in" vegetables from other farms, and when we do not know who they are, we try to purchase certified organic products.

Please note this exception to certified organic: much of the outsourced fruit and sweet corn is not organic. We try to label this clearly in the online store.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK OF CSA

As a member, you share in the abundance of our harvest and the risks of farming. We cannot stress this part enough! Although we have learned how to avoid or manage most problems, it is likely that EVERY year, Mother Nature will throw us a curveball, and we may lose a crop to drought, flooding, disease, bugs, hail, or other acts of her will.

Winter CSA is especially unpredictable when it comes to fresh items. If it is too cold, we cannot harvest, or if there's a snowstorm, we may have to delay CSA.

If this occurs, we will do our best to make up for the value of the share or may even buy produce from one of our Amish partners or other local farmers.

WHEN DO WE START?

We plan to start distributing shares on November 15.

The Sunday before the shares begin, we'll send out an email with any finalized details.

Winter Veggie Shares run from November-April, with 11, 6, or 5 distributions depending on your schedule. Group A starts on the first week, and Group B starts two weeks later.

Dates for 2023-24 Winter CSA:

Nov 15–18 (A)	Jan 17–20 (A)	Feb 28–Mar 2 (B)
Nov 29– Dec 2 (B)	Jan 31–Feb 3 (B)	Mar 13–16 (A)
Dec 13–16 (A)	Feb 14–17 (A)	April 3–6 (B)
Jan 3–6 (B)		April 17–20 (A)

OUR CONTACT INFO

Rebecca's cell: 517 910 3002 (text preferred)

Email: csa@titusfarms.com

Facebook: /TitusFarms

Private FB Group: [facebook.com/groups/TFCSA](https://www.facebook.com/groups/TFCSA)

Instagram: @titusfarmsmi

Address: 3765 Meridian Rd. Leslie, MI 49251

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

You choose your veggies online and receive your customized box of seasonal veggies, fruit, plants, or herbs. As the winter progresses, the types of veggies in the online store change. Some items are available for many weeks, and some only for a short time, as different veggies have different lifespans.

THE FARMER'S CHOICE

Every time you have a CSA box coming, you have two options:

1. Receive the Farmer's Choice box.
2. Log in to your account on Farmigo and customize your box.

If you forget to customize your box one week, no worries; the Farmer's Choice box is automatically yours!

The Farmers Choice box is a good mix of green, rooty, and fruity things and a mix of staple items and some more unusual ones. Overall the items featured in Farmer's Choice boxes are veggies that we have a lot of or are only in season for a short time. You are not obligated to select ANY of the Farmer's Choice items at any time.

WHAT WE GROW

So what exactly will be in the share this winter?

Check out our [What's In Season page](#) for everything we grow. But remember that concept of shared risk- there are no guarantees we will have all of these things.

Part of being in a CSA is learning how to eat with the seasons. For winter CSA, this often means getting creative with root veggies.

ABOUT ADD-ON SHARES

Your farm, Titus Farms, grows the veggies, flowers, and pork, plus keeps chickens for eggs, but we also partner with other great suppliers to bring you the best of Mid-Michigan!

These shares are called "Add-Ons" and help keep us well-fed and happy.

These are all "shares" you would've signed up for initially but can easily be added to your share anytime.

While we try to choose our partners carefully, please be aware that we cannot personally control the quality of these products. Please let us know immediately if you have any quality issues with these shares. By signing up for these shares from other producers, you agree to hold harmless Titus Farms and its employees for any product defect.

Each farm/type of share has a different agreement with TF. In rare circumstances, we may refund your money for add-on shares if we feel their service was improperly rendered and there is little to no financial burden to Titus Farms.

Not sure what you signed up for? You should have an email confirmation from us stating what you signed up for, or you can always log in to your account: <https://csa.farmigo.com/account/titusfarms>

HOW TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR SHARE

Every week you receive a share, and you have a window to customize your box. The store typically opens for customization on Sunday and is open until the following times (which are subject to change):

Wednesday Pickup: Sunday - Tuesday

Saturday Pickup: Tuesday- Thursday

Once you see the weekly newsletter reminding you to customize, head to the store: farmigo.com/store/titusfarms

- 1. Sign in.**
- 2. Make sure you're picking it up at the correct location.**
 - You cannot switch locations after you customize.
- 3. Add or remove items.**

4. Click "Confirm Order"

5. Receive a confirmation email with your choices.

Credits

Each item is given a credit amount in the store roughly equal to their value. Please see the newsletter for the number of credits allowed each week.

About the Store

When you log in, you'll see different categories of items. Each veggie, fruit, or herb should have a picture and, when clicked on, a description and a portion size 1 (bunch, bag, etc.).

Multiples of one item can also be added if we have enough to go around. Higher value or scarce items are often limited to 1 portion. If you feel something needs to be added to the store or the limit on an item needs to be corrected, please contact us immediately. We can often quickly add items, correct glitches (or human errors), and ensure that everyone in the CSA gets what they need!

You will NOT see your add-ons in the store or your cart. These shares are not customizable, so while they are included in your order, they won't be in your cart.

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN CUSTOMIZING

- You should receive a confirmation email with your choices immediately after. We only received your order **if you see it in a confirmation email.**
- If you delete something, the item may sell out or be allocated to someone else automatically, and you've lost that item. **Please use caution when deleting.**
- **Any new order completely replaces the old one.** Please ensure your final email confirmation has everything you need and is NOT a combination of your first and subsequent orders.
- Credits are \$1, so if you'd like to add extra items, please do so! You'll be charged for any extra items.

WHERE TO PICK UP YOUR SHARE

Winter CSA locations are limited, as there are limited places open for farmer's market in the colder months.

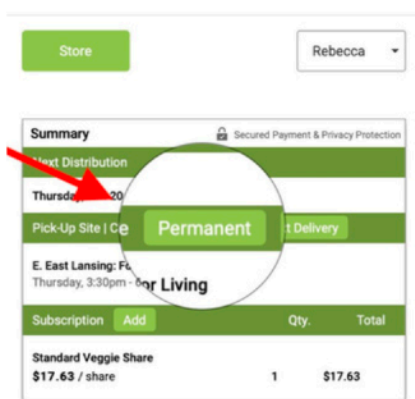
Our 2023-24 locations are:

- **Okemos @ Meridian Market**
 - Saturdays from 10:00 -1:30
 - Outside in November and then inside the Meridian Mall December-April.
- **Lansing @ Allen Farmer's Market**
 - Wednesdays from 3:00-6:00
 - Inside all season.
- **Mason**
 - A home on the East side of Mason, closer to Dansville. Saturday evenings or by arrangement.
- **Leslie**
 - The farm on Meridian Rd, between Dansville and Leslie, on Saturday evenings or by arrangement.

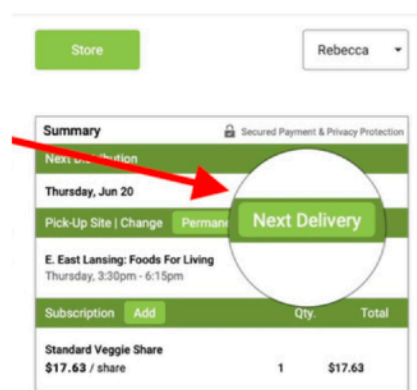
You can see specific location details in your account, including parking instructions, playground access, or bathrooms. Locations are subject to change.

CAN I SWITCH MY PICK-UP SITE?

Sure! In your online Farmigo account, it's easy to change your location. Unfortunately, you can't switch locations far in advance, only for your subsequent distribution.



If you want to change your site for the season, click "Permanent." Otherwise, select "Next Delivery."



If you select "Next Delivery," you will automatically be switched back to your previous location after that week.

CAN I SEND SOMEONE ELSE?

Sure! We only ask that they transfer the veggies out of the box so we don't have to worry about getting it back.

If you don't want them to receive your add-ons (chicken, mushrooms, eggs, etc.), please email us at csa@titusfarms.com, and we can try to hold those items for you.

WHAT ABOUT BAD WINTER WEATHER?

We define "bad weather" as severe thunderstorms, hail, tornado warnings, ice storms, or snow of 4" in an hour or more. If it's unsafe for you or us to drive to CSA, we will likely reschedule. Historically, this has very rarely happened.

WHAT IF I GO ON VACATION?

Access your account here: <https://csa.farmigo.com/account/titusfarms>

Our policy for Vacations/Scheduled Events:

1. Find a friend to pick up your share(s) for you.

- All they need is your name.
- They will receive the Farmer's Choice box unless you customize it for them.
- You DO NOT have to warn us about this switch unless you have a special request, e.g., "they can take the veggies, but save the chicken for when we return, please."

2. Switch Locations

- Farmigo allows you to switch locations/days for one delivery, then automatically switches you back.

3. Place a Delivery Hold on your share and get a Make-up automatically when you return.

- Place the hold as soon as you know you'll be gone, even **months in advance**.
 - Holds can only be placed if you don't have a standing order. Thus, a hold must be placed before your store closes that week.
- **Three times per season max**, please!
 - Farmigo will lock you out if you attempt more than that.
 - Each delivery missed is considered a missed time.
- **It is your responsibility to follow up regarding the Makeup Share.**
 - Sometimes Farmigo will do weird things, and your share is lost. Let us know if you think you're owed a share ASAP.
 - The share must be redeemed two weeks before or after the missed share. See below.

HOW TO PLACE A HOLD

1. Log into your account.
2. Navigate to the tab that says "Delivery Hold."
3. Select the dates you DO NOT want a share. Any date in that range, including the From and To date, is a day you are indicating you DO NOT want a share.
4. Save your changes.
5. Choose your make-up weeks when prompted.
6. We ask that the "make-up" be within two weeks of your return.
7. Hit Save.
8. You should receive an email with all the details.

The image contains two screenshots of the 'My Account' web interface. The left screenshot shows the 'Delivery hold' tab with a 'Save' button highlighted by a red arrow. The right screenshot shows the 'Make Up Dates' section with a calendar and a 'Save' button highlighted by a red arrow. Red arrows also point to the 'From' and 'To' date fields in both screenshots.

Please note that you will still **receive the Mailchimp newsletter** for a week without a box. Reminders from Farmigo about customizing your share or saying it's your day to pick up mean something has gone wrong.

HOW TO REDEEM YOUR DELIVERY HOLD: A MAKEUP SHARE

We don't literally hold your share for you since we want you to receive fresh stuff. A Make-Up Share means you receive double the credits on your selected date(s). Often, this will still fit in one box, but it's double the amount of food. If you usually get 30 credits, you receive 60 on your make-up week.

- The share can be redeemed at any time within the Winter Share period.
- If you'd like to pick up extra before the Delivery Hold, contact us, and we'll make it happen.
- You are responsible for ensuring the Makeup is made.

IF YOU MISS A BOX OR FORGET CSA

Rebecca will text you if there is time to see if you are coming. If you can get back to us or reach out via text or phone, we generally wait for you if you can make it there within 10-15 minutes after closing. We may leave the box for you to retrieve if you're okay with it. Generally, we only like to leave boxes if we have confirmed with you that it's okay.

Some locations are in conjunction with a market that stays open longer or is at someone's house, so each location differs.

If you can't make it that day:

If you can reach us via text within 30 minutes of the CSA site closing, we can hold your share(s) for another pickup day that week (Tue-Sunday).

If we don't hear from you within 24 hours of your normal distribution, we will assume the share is abandoned, and it will be donated.

EMERGENCIES

Please contact us after everything has settled down, and we will treat each share on a case-by-case basis. Always contact us sooner than later when possible, but we ultimately want to be flexible.

HOW WE STAY IN TOUCH

Via EMAIL: We do all our primary communication via email - usually on Sunday evenings. Please be sure to "whitelist" our emails so we don't end up in your SPAM folder. (For Gmail, drag one of our emails into your primary tab. For other email providers, add our address to your address book).

Via Facebook Private Member Group: We post our weekly newsletters there and give advice and tips for making the most of your box.

Social Media:

Facebook: Follow us at <http://www.facebook.com/TitusFarms>

Private Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TFCSA>

Instagram: @titusfarmsmi

PAYMENT POLICY

Signing up reserves your shares, while payment confirms your membership. Due to credit card and ACH processor changes, we only accept physical checks, PayPal and Venmo for Winter CSA.

A 50% deposit must be received before you pick up. Payment must be made in full by January 1.

WHERE TO SEND YOUR CSA BALANCE PAYMENT

If paying in installments with a physical check, both checks can be sent simultaneously. One check is dated with your signup date, and the other should be dated as January 1.

If you need to send a payment otherwise, our address is **3765 Meridian Rd. Leslie, MI 49251. Checks should be made out to Titus Farms.**

CHECK DISCOUNT

Thus, we offer a **3% discount on physical checks** for FULL PAYMENTS ONLY.

During signup, Farmigo allows you to select an incorrect payment method after you've indicated you want the discount for paying by check. *It's a glitch they can't fix.*

If you pay with PayPal or Venmo and you say you'll pay by check, your discount will be removed later, and your account will be flagged. Please pay with a check if you've indicated you want the discount.

PRIVACY/SECURITY

We, Titus Farms, do not store any of your personal financial information on our website. Farmigo runs our order site, and your data is stored securely by Authorize.net, CheckCommerce, and Paypal, respectively.

We do not sell, rent or ever give our customer information to anyone. Your contact information is only shared upon your approval or within Titus Farms.

OUR CANCELLATION POLICY

Not clicking with our CSA? No worries! We offer a money-back guarantee*. If you change your mind anytime before CSA starts, we'll refund your payment *minus any transaction fees. No questions asked.

If you need to move, have a changed financial situation, or decide it isn't a good fit after the CSA starts, we will pro-rate your refund for the weeks you have yet to use (again, minus those sneaky transaction fees).

For store items purchased during CSA (jam, honey, extra fruit, etc.):

All sales are final. All items are subject to availability, and we reserve the right to cancel your order but always hope to fulfill it later if the situation allows.

AFTER CSA: ISSUES WITH YOUR SHARE

If you get home and find your box has missing, damaged, or items otherwise not up to your specifications, please let us know! We definitely make mistakes!

You can always email us if something is wrong, but we have created a form especially if you want to remain anonymous. **See our Share Feedback form for 2023 here:** <https://forms.gle/V5dBzubAwhpZfA5p6>

In this form, you can also leave your email address to receive a replacement item.

Please know that we pack based on the slip of paper in the box and the label on the outside. Farmigo has been known to glitch and cause problems, so we **may not be able to offer replacements in every case.**

Often, we take some time to consult our records and get back to you. We will try to notify you if a replacement item is included, but it will often just appear in your box.

The quality of items is critical to us as farmers. Working hard to ensure you receive the highest quality is vital to the future of our farm, but we can't eat every carrot or tomato, so we really appreciate this feedback!

AFTER CSA PICK UP: STORING YOUR PRODUCE

Keeping your vegetables fresh for an entire week takes effort. Part of that is our responsibility. We are cautious about when we harvest your produce, ensuring that we pick it at its peak of ripeness and in ideal harvesting weather conditions to keep it lasting as long as possible. *But part of it is your responsibility as well.*

If you want to extend the life of your produce, it is **imperative that you get your vegetables and fruits into a warm or cool situation as soon as possible.** Leaving your box in a freezing cold or scorching hot car will not help it last longer.

Here are some suggestions for protecting your share's life from the Pick Up site to your kitchen:

1. Purchase Debbie Meyer Green Bags from Amazon. These are around 50 cents each and are made of a special polymer that absorbs ethylene gas (emitted by vegetables causing them to spoil faster). They are reusable up to 10 times each.

2. Remove any green tops (from beets, carrots, radishes, etc.). They become limp with the tops on if not stored correctly.
3. Most things do well when washed and placed in a plastic bag or wrapped in a wet paper towel in the fridge. Preserving moisture is key! Note that if you choose a paper towel, you must rewet it when dry.
4. We will be teaching you where to store your produce too! Read those emails or stay in touch on Facebook.
5. [Download our A to Z Storage Guide](#), which defines where everything should be stored. It also includes pictures of every item. Use this to help you identify and master each vegetable.

EDUCATION/COOKING TIPS

How do I know what to do with the veggies you give me?

Each week we feature a few recipes in our newsletter to help you use your share, along with storage tips.

We also love it when you reach out in our private Facebook group for help from other members or to show off what you've made!

If you'd like to help other members figure out their share, and earn some money, too, reach out to Rebecca (rebecca@titusfarms.com) with the subject "CSA Coach."

We are looking for a talented home cook or social media lover to help encourage our members with weekly posts and tidbits about how they used their share!

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU

1. DON'T SHOW UP TOO EARLY.

Leaving as late as possible from the farm helps keep your veggies warm.

2. COMMUNICATE

Please help us improve the CSA by communicating any problems promptly. Or, share your joys in the Facebook group. We eat our veggies but can't eat every single one, so you are our final quality control!

Also, we always appreciate a text if you're running late or can't make it.

3. BE PREPARED TO TAKE YOUR FOOD HOME PROMPTLY

Take your food home promptly, especially if you have meat or eggs. If you are out for 1 hour, consider bringing a cooler.

Transferring your share from our box is a-okay by us, but please bring reusable bags if this is your plan.

4. TRADE YOUR BOX AND EGG CARTONS

Leave a clean, folded box with us each week if you took one the week before. Boxes are community property, so please be respectful.

Egg cartons and other packaging, including rubber bands, bags, and twisties, are also gladly returnable.

PACKAGING

One of our most significant expenses will be boxes and packaging (ick!). We want to use as little packaging as possible to be as environmentally responsible as possible. But we also want you to receive things that are still in good condition and need to be able to package your share efficiently.

If you don't like how we pack the shares, please select "MORE PACKAGING PLEASE" in the store, and more of your items (but not all) should be in individual bags.

WHAT CAN BE RETURNED, AND HOW

- Egg cartons (ours or others)
- Dry pulp quarts, containers in your box, or similar containers from other farms.
- Rubber bands.
- Plastic lining bags.
- Plastic produce bags (if clean)
- Exchange your Flower vase if you have a flower share.



We do not usually accept:

Other recyclables that are not from our farm. Please remember that we do not have access to recycling as a rural family. Typically we take a trip to the MSU Surplus Center to recycle our household items (a 30+ minute drive) on a very limited basis.

OUR BOXES

Please exchange your box each week, clean and collapsed. Or, bring a reusable bag to unpack your share if you want to avoid that responsibility. Boxes are community property, so please be respectful.

We are currently deciding if we should switch to re-useable containers that you are responsible for sanitizing. We may conduct a few trials in 2023 after collecting an additional deposit for the container.



COLLAPSING YOUR BOX

The top flap folds, as do the bottom flaps.

1 Open the top by sliding the long narrow side up and out. (It folds in the middle).

2 Flip the empty box over.



3 On the narrow sides, slide the two small flaps up and out (they fold in the middle).

4 The box should fold flat now. Give to your farmers when you see them next.



VISITING THE FARM

Can I come out to help you harvest sometime? Volunteering is not required as part of your CSA membership. We would greatly appreciate it if you'd like to come to the farm to help pack boxes! This is done on Tuesdays and Fridays. Email Rebecca: rebecca@titusfarms.com

If coming to the Farm for pickup or otherwise:

We do our best to minimize risks to you and your family; however, we are a working farm, and it is impossible to eliminate all hazards. Please supervise any children or pets. Our dogs will not like your dogs, as they guard the chickens.

We only allow visitors if approved beforehand or at an approved event.

HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE

By accepting this member agreement, the member hereby releases, indemnifies, and agrees to hold harmless Titus Farms/Titus Farms CSA, its agents, and employees from any claims and/or liability from being on the farm property, being at any of the CSA pickup locations, from the purchase of a CSA membership or the use or consumption of food provided by the farm.

Titus Farms reserves the right to change parts of this Agreement/Handbook. We will contact our members via email to notify them in advance of any changes to the agreement.

