



## Troggs Hollow

Troggs Hollow, in Poplar Grove, is a market farm specializing in Community Shared Agriculture (CSA). This means Chris and Marcy Prchal, and their 4 children, sell shares of their produce to consumers, or members. Buying a share gets you a box of seasonal produce every week throughout the growing season. “They are investing in us, and trusting us to grow their food in the way that we say we are going to do it,” said Marcy.

This process offers benefits for both the consumers and the producer. Besides receiving payments earlier in the season, the farmer also is available to spend more than just the growing season on marketing. Consumers gain a list of benefits. Most importantly, they have face to face contact and are able to build relationships with their producers.

Traditional CSA programs offer weekly boxes 18-20 weeks in the summer, which is peak growing season. The Prchals run their operation in a very unique way. They had 25 weekly sustainable shareholders this past year. The customers in this program receive a box every week of three to four different harvestable produce plus greens. These boxes are available year round. The Prchal’s also offer what they call “session shares”. This means that customers receive boxes for shorter periods of time instead of year round.



The most intriguing aspect of Troggs Hollow is that the customers are involved in the production of their food. “People are involved in different ways,” said Marcy. “Some people just pay money and get their food, others come out and volunteer, and we also host events on the farm that are open for our customers.” The Prchals focus on getting the community back to the farm. According to Marcy, their customers have truly become like family.

The Prchal’s CSA boxes include greens, turnips, radishes, carrots, beets, potatoes, peas, beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash, winter squash, peppers, kale, cabbage, broccoli, Brussel

sprouts, okra, onions, garlic, asparagus, ground cherries, herbs, and more seasonal produce. Add-on shares, produce included in the boxes from other local producers, include pastured eggs, local raw honey, grass fed meat, Berkshire pork, ancient grains and beans, line caught salmon, chemical free raspberries, organic blueberries, organic apples, organic strawberries, and local maple syrup. Due to new growing technology, including tunnels, there is produce growing on their farm every day of the year.

They have to grow a large variety of crops in order to fill the boxes. “It is difficult,” said Marcy, “but, we do our best to put in as many things as we can in case we have a failure in one crop, we have other things to fill the box with.”

The Prchal’s are not organic certified and do not identify as organic or conventional farmers. Their production methods are simply chemical free. This means they do not use any sort of pesticides or any other chemicals, including organic chemicals. The only inputs they use are organic cow-manure based compost from a farmer in Wisconsin and manure from their own barn, which holds poultry, goats, and pigs, as well as green manure (plant waste). They have several acres of purposefully planted green manure that is to be tilled back into the soil.

The Prchals have a goal to educate the public about their local food options. They focus greatly on land conservation and soil health. In the four years they have been on their eleven acres, they have seen a dramatic increase of biodiversity. The environmental impact and the social impact the CSA program has brought to their farm is significant. I believe the Prchals are a great representation of our local farmers in their efforts of giving back to the community and being a part of the local economy. You can learn more about Troggs Hollow at [www.trogghollow.com](http://www.trogghollow.com) (Published February 10, 2017)