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MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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Freshest Gift Idea This Holiday Season? A Whole Year of Local Foods

NASHVILLE - Retail aisles, catalogs and cyberspace are stuffed with things to buy. Still, somehow, there often seems to be little of real substance to give. When you want your gift to be a true reflection of how much you care, it can be hard to find a stand-out present, one that really meets a need and will be appreciated all through the year.

For those who like to "live local," the perfect solution may be a gift certificate for a year of fresh produce and other local foods from a nearby Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm. Everyone eats, and everyone benefits from eating fresh produce. With a CSA gift certificate, both the person who receives fresh foods and the CSA farmer are better off.

In a CSA, a farmer contracts with other people in the community to provide them with a portion of the year's harvest. CSA customers pay the farmer before the produce season begins, allowing the farmer to buy necessary seed, fertilizer, fuel and other inputs necessary to farm for the year. When crops start coming in, the customer's fresh, local food is already bought and paid for. CSA members might go to the farm to pick up their shares or meet the farmer at a drop-off site in the community.

At Green Door Gourmet near Nashville, Sylvia Ganier says, "When you give the gift of a CSA share, you are choosing a multi faceted gem of a gift. You impart on the recipient a unique gift of taste and health, culinary adventure and an opportunity to learn more about the area where they live. You also help a farmer and boost the whole local economy, as well. A CSA is the very best way I can think of to give the gift of local."

For loved ones who want to be sure their produce is grown using organic, certified naturally grown or other methods, farms like Flying S Farm in Woodbury and Care of the Earth Community Farm in Corryton provide lucky recipients the chance to know their farmers and the farms where their food is grown. In addition to fruits and vegetables, customers may be able to request farm fresh eggs, milk and other local foods with their share.

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Freshest Gift Idea This Holiday Season

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“Your gift of healthy, locally grown food sends your love into their home every week,” Amy Tavalin, farmers market specialist with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture said. Tavalin says that a directory of Tennessee CSAs and farmers markets where CSA farms bring produce are listed at the Pick Tennessee Products website, www.picktnproducts.org.

“Website visitors can find CSA farms offering gift certificates from one end of the state to the other, from Oak Hill Farm in Stanton to Colvin Family Farm near Spring City,” says the marketing specialist. “Check the farm’s site for CSA start dates and more information about the farm.”

“It’s one gift which will definitely not find its way to a closet shelf.”

Find other farms, farm direct and artisan products and seasonal recipes at www.picktnproducts.org.

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