**Why support our farmers market and local farmers?**

It’s about building relationships and knowing where your food comes from. It’s about running into your neighbor on a spring morning and comparing your market “finds” and recipes over a cup of coffee and a taco. It’s about breaking bread with friends, sharing a steaming plate of fresh, local, greens, verdant salads, vivid orange carrots and flaming peppers with your family, all grown by people you know. The market acts as an incubator for small business and keeps local money local. Besides these things, your food requires less fossil fuels and emissions to get to you, and you know that the people who grew what you eat are being paid fairly for their goods. Everyone wins!

**That’s the why and now here is the must**:

Small, family farming and ranching have not been lucrative (as far as money goes) lifestyles for some time now. It usually takes family land or small pieces of land put together piece by piece to make a decent living. And, don’t get them started on the taxes! But, the lifestyle it does provide is one that seems to be very satisfying …even with droughts and freezes, bugs and weeds, funguses and molds. These farmers have a fortitude that I thought was lost hundreds of years ago. After the freeze last week I was accused of thinking of the farmers as” poor and abused” because I was desperately trying to get some press on the issue of farmers losing their winter crops and that some could be without income until April or May. Here is what I heard: Carla, we’ll just replant and salvage what we can, we’re farmers and used to having to begin again. And, that was OK with them. The thrill of a beautiful strawberry or summer tomato must be really big for them to put up the weather we’ve had lately.

Please help me support these families as they support you and our market by offering whatever they have for you in the next weeks. One farmer came last week with only eggs and his boys to experience the positive warmth that our shoppers shared with them and to show support of this market. One came 200 miles with sweet potatoes and some cabbage for the same reason. Honestly, only 2 of our farmers didn’t make it last week because of crop damage.

These next few weeks will be tough; we must hang in there while they plant yet again.