

European
Handbook on



Community Supported Agriculture

Sharing experiences



Community Supported Agriculture for Europe



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Introduction

This publication is an outcome of the multinational partnership “Community Supported Agriculture for Europe” that has been formed in order to spread and strengthen the idea of community supported agriculture (CSA) all over Europe and build connections between countries where CSA is a tried and tested method of providing food and promoting sustainable agriculture in countries where it is (currently) relatively unknown. During the partnership many personal exchanges took place between farmers, co-farmers (consumers), students, activists etc. and many new relationships have been established among CSA supporters.

This publication seeks to describe the essential aspects of what CSA has been found to mean within the partnership and offers some basic tips on how to get started with it. This document is aimed at people who are aware of the problems of the contemporary food system and are willing to tackle it with an active, community and solidarity-based approach represented by the three letters C S A.

The CSA idea of course does not stand alone but it is closely linked to many other concepts that have been developing in the field of sustainable food system among civic society in recent years. It is embraced by the food sovereignty issue through its emphasis on the right to locally appropriate food. It builds upon innovative approaches to economics (known variously as the “gift economy”, “solidarity economy”, “economy for the common good” etc.) in that mutual commitment and the sharing of risks and rewards are its essential components. In terms of farming the CSA concept is strongly tied to the organic agriculture movement, although it generally doesn’t share the movement’s emphasis on formal procedures such as certification and labelling: informal, personal relationships are the foundation on which CSA arrangements are built. Last but not least the CSA concept seeks to build on the successes of existing alternative local food initiatives; it does not seek to replace these initiatives.

The partnership’s activities have been funded by, among other, the European Commission’s programme for life-long learning, Grundtvig. This publication has benefited greatly from access to the vast amount of information available in the UK Soil Association’s CSA database.

What is CSA?

Community Supported Agriculture is a partnership between a farm and consumers where the risks and rewards of farming are shared.

This rather minimalist but efficient definition opens up a large range of formal variations. Indeed, although their principles are similar, CSA farms and support groups in the various parts of Europe operate on the basis of various different models.

These variations are largely based on the social, agricultural and economic specificities of each country or region where they have developed.

According to the conclusions from the first international CSA Symposium, the different CSA movements seem however to recognise the following 4 fundamental principles as their common basis:

- **Partnership:** CSA is based on a partnership, usually formalised as an individual contract between each consumer and the producer, and characterised by a mutual commitment to supply one another (with money and food) over an extended period of time, beyond any single act of exchange. The contracts, oral or written, last for several months, a season or a year.
- **Local:** CSAs are part of an active approach to relocalising the economy. But local in the CSA movement is not restricted to a geographical meaning. The idea is that local producers should be well integrated into their surrounding areas: their work should benefit the communities which support them.
- **Solidarity:** CSAs are based on solidarity between producers and support groups and involve:
 - » Sharing both the risks and the benefits of an healthy production that is adapted to the natural rhythm of the

seasons and is respectful of the environment, natural and cultural heritage and health.

- » Paying a sufficient fair price up-front to enable farmers and their families to maintain their farms and live in a dignified manner.

- **The producer/consumer tandem:** is based on direct person-to-person contact and trust, with no intermediaries or hierarchy.

A survey is currently (Summer 2013) being conducted by Urgenci, the international CSA network organisation, to find out how many many partnerships are run according to this scheme. Currently, the figures for the European movement are as high as, roughly, 4,000 farms and 400,000 consumers.

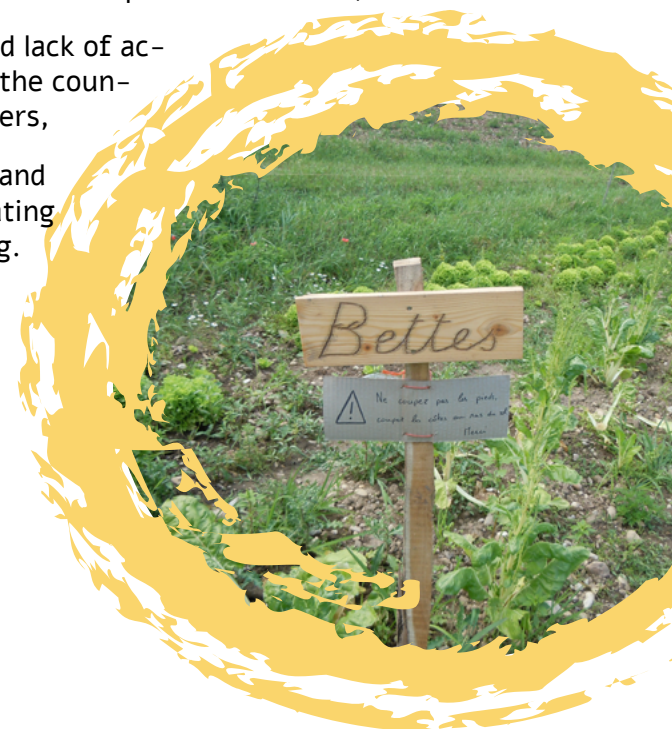


🍅🍆🥕 What problems does CSA seek to address?

- Control of food system by large corporations, who use the food system to increase shareholder profits. CSAs seek a food system controlled by communities to serve social well being and the environment,
- Loss of small farms and the infrastructure they need; eg small mills, small abattoirs, small wholesalers, small local retailers etc.,
- Loss of creative, meaningful and self directed work (eg family farms) as farm work is mechanised and controlled by large contractors, often using temporary migrant labour,
- Unpredictable (often very low) incomes of farmers who must compete in a volatile global market,
- Loss of culture, community and a sense of belonging in rural areas as rural and culinary traditions die,
- Loss of population in rural areas,
- Loss of food security as people become dependent on a small number of large oil hungry processes. These large systems lack diversity and may be more vulnerable to collapse in times of crisis,
- Loss of diversity in high streets, genetic material of seeds and farm animals, diet and culture,
- Environmental costs of transporting food,



- Damage to biodiversity caused by large scale 'efficient' non organic farming,
- Export of food away from countries where people go hungry to developed over fed countries,
- Diet related health problems caused by over processed food and loss of cooking skills,
- Lack of access to organic and local food by low income households,
- Lack of trust and understanding between consumers and farmers,
- Loss of farming skills and difficulty for new and young farmers to access land, skills, a market and capital investment,
- Depression in rural areas and high suicide rates amongst isolated failing farmers,
- Poor animal welfare in mass production farms,
- Lack of exercise and lack of access to nature and the countryside for consumers,
- Loss of trust, care and love in matters relating to food and farming.



Benefits of CSA

Benefits to local communities

- Consumers benefit from receiving fresh food from a known source,
- The environmental benefits of fewer 'food miles', less packaging and ecologically sensitive farming with improved animal welfare,
- A local economy enhanced by higher employment, more local processing, local consumption and a re-circulation of money through 'local spend',
- Educating people about varieties of food, it's production methods and costs,
- Having an influence over the local landscape and encouraging more sustainable farming.

Benefits to farmers

- A more secure income which improves business planning and time to concentrate on farming,
- A higher and fairer return for their products by selling direct to the public,
- Increased involvement in the local community; the opportunity to respond directly to consumers' needs,
- Receive help with labour and planning initiatives for the future.

Risks

Farming is a risky business. Farmers usually bear all the risks of farming. In CSAs, consumers sometimes share the risks of production with the farmer:

Farming risk	How can CSA consumer help?
Poor harvest (eg disease, weather)	Consumers take a share of the harvest, whether good or poor.
Unreliable market – cannot sell produce	Consumers commit in advance to having produce, eg by buying 6 eggs every week.
Unreliable price for produce	Consumers agree a price in advance eg at the start of the season.
Poor health of farmers, not protected by employment law	Provide sick pay / work on the farm when the farmer is on holiday/ employ farmer to grow food for fair wage.
Access to capital – damage to capital items, variable credit terms etc.	Contribute to capital assets via shares in the farm business, loans or money or assets, or gifts.



Current situation of CSA in selected countries

Austria

In 2011 the first CSA Farm started in Austria: The 'Gärtnerhof Ochsenherz' was founded near Vienna. Already in 2012 two more farms came up in Styria and Upper Austria. Currently (July 2013), there are already 9 established CSAs and some more projects are in the process of consolidating. Most of the groups felt motivated and confirmed by the information sharing events held across Austria as part of the CSA for Europe project. This growth within two years shows the big interest for CSA in Austria and is another indicator for that the common direct marketing schemes are not sufficient to meet the needs of many small farmers.

Most of the Austrian CSAs have been set up by existing farms so far, but there are also three couples who started up their new farm with the CSA model. While some were supported by active consumers from the beginning, others still try to involve more consumers into their process. Some of them use the term CSA, others GeLa (which stands for „Gemeinsam Landwirtschaften“, meaning „farming together“) and most of them call themselves „Solidarische Landwirtschaft“ – solidary agriculture – like in Germany. The majority of initiatives are producing vegetables, but there are now two farms in Styria and Carinthia, that are mainly dealing with meat and dairy products.

Until now, there is no charta of CSA-initiatives in Austria, but in 2012 the first meeting of Austrian CSAs took place in Vienna, which was attended by 50 people and the common sense was, that the creation of a network and regular meetings was welcomed. The Department of Organic Agriculture of the University for Applied Life Sciences in Vienna is also interested in CSA: a group of students created the austrian brochure on CSA to spread the idea to farmers and consumers and in summer 2013 two master thesis researchs on CSA in Austria were started.



Most of the people involved in austrian CSAs are connected through a mailing list and currently (summer 2013) the established CSA-farms, Attac Austria and the ÖBV – Via Campesina Austria are acting as first contact opportunities for people interested in CSA. The next step is to foster the implementation of a funded working group to support the growing network of CSA-farms in Austria.

Czech Republic

By the beginning of 2013 there were around 10 alternative food distribution schemes describing themselves as CSAs. All the schemes are based on solidarity, in other words risk and reward sharing between the farmers and consumers. A majority of them are farmer driven CSAs where the informal group of consumers is coupled with an already existing farm that is owned by the producer. Typically the informal consumer group pays in advance (month or a whole season) for the farmer's production and gets the harvest while taking responsibility for delivery, administration etc. Nonetheless there are few solely community owned farms based on the principle of shared ownership and social entrepreneurship. The majority of so far existing initiatives has been initiated by environmental NGOs in cities and they are geographically spread all over the country. The CSA movement is very much bound to the organic farming practices as majority of the farmers are certified organic or use organic practices.

France

CSAs in France are called AMAP, which stands for Association pour le Maintien de l'Agriculture Paysanne (Association for Maintaining Small-Scale and Family Farming). The first AMAP was created in Aubagne (in Southern France) in April 2001, at the initiative of a couple of farmers and an Attac group. Since then, AMAPs have had a considerable success all around the country.

Consumers gather in an association, which organizes the partnership between consumers and a farmer. In most cases the farmer involved will supply





vegetables. Then, other farmers supply this group of consumers with other food products such as meat, cheese, eggs, bread... with as many contracts as producers. The average size of an AMAP is around 70 consumers (from 15 to 150 consumers), partnering with one to 10 farmers.

Today, there are more than 1600 AMAP in France. However, if the figures collected in regions where AMAP are gathered in regional networks are reliable, it is clear that the ones we have from other regions where there is no organisation are probably fragmentary and maybe the number of groups are higher than estimated. This represents more than 50 000 families and nearly 200 000 customers.

Since 2003 the AMAP movement has based its practice on a Charter, elaborated by the AMAP network from South-Eastern France, Alliance Provence. This charter defines 18 principles relative to the commitment of both consumers and farmers. It is a framework each AMAP has to comply with. It is being currently revised by a MIRA-MAP (Inter-Regional AMAP movement, national network officially set up in February 2010) working group; this work will continue up to December 2013.

Germany

At the time of writing (May 2013) there are 35+ CSAs in Germany, with at least as many initiatives currently at the germination stage. The German “slogan” for the CSA movement is “Solidarische Landwirtschaft: Sich die Ernte teilen”: “Solidarity-based agriculture: Sharing the harvest”. The “solidarity” refers to a two-way relationship of support and trust between farmers and their “co-farmers” (an alternative term to “consumers”, used to emphasize the integral connection between the two groups). In many cases, “solidarity” also refers to the financial arrangement that exists within the group of co-farmers, with higher-income people paying a larger contribution (always on a voluntary basis) than lower-income people in order to cover the farm’s production costs.

Although the first CSA in Germany (Buschberghof, near Hamburg) was set up as long ago as 1988, many more have sprung up over the last three to four years especially, and this trend looks set to continue. The majority of the farms use organic (or biodynamic) production methods, and care is generally taken to minimise the environmental impacts of transporting the produce.

With the rapid growth of CSAs in Germany, a national network was set up in 2011 to facilitate the flow of information and mutual support within the movement as well as to handle inquiries from the media and research institutions. Efforts are currently underway to establish a sustainable financial foundation for the large amount of work being done, particularly by the network’s Office team.

Greece

Crisis in Greece has forced people to try and find alternative paths for the food distribution chain. During the last year (2012–2013) there has been a surge in solidarity movements of mutual cooperation. The so-called potato movement has grown and has diversified the distributed products. It has now become transformed into a “without intermediaries” movement that is still spreading across Greece. The formation and the organization of these initiatives vary in accordance to the people’s needs.



The ideas and practices of the CSA movement can be adopted easily by newformed initiatives. The activities undertaken by DIO in the context of the Grundtvig project “CSA for Europe” helped significantly in this way, as people who have participated in this activities have contributed to the establishment of new initiatives that follow the ideas of the CSA movement.

During the last year we have monitored the formation of solidarity groups that have adopted partly the CSA practices. We are aware of four such initiatives, two in Attiki (Athens) region and two in the region of Peloponnesus. There are also some other groups that are still in the process of setting up a type of a CSA.

What has been accomplished up to now shows that there is a lot of potential but there are a lot of uncertainties also. This can be seen by the facts that, in all of the schemes we are aware of, the farmers give a percentage of their total yields to the consumers and that, up to now, there has not been established a scheme where the consumers pay in advance for their products. Therefore the commitment has not yet been established. What is needed is more persuaded people with clear vision, who could “drag” others with them and of course technical knowledge to show that a fully CSA farm is sustainable. The actions of the project “CSA for Europe” have already helped in both directions but more efforts need to be taken.

Hungary

In Hungary there are about eight community supported farms and about six buying groups at the moment, but the numbers are increasing continuously. The Association of Conscious Consumers (ACC) mainly promotes the idea of community supported farms, because the network of buying groups is already well-functioning.

The CSA concept was introduced to Hungary in 1998, but the three farms which were influenced by the English CSA concept gave up the model. The reasons for the failure were really diverse: 1) the costs were not properly calculated, 2) the concept was new for the consumers and 3) the consumption habits were not “ready” for the non-negotiated content of the vegetable boxes.

In 2010 three new CSA farms started to take shape, owing to the French AMAP visits. The French influence is still determinative among the eight existing farms (many of them using the translated AMAP charter), but new functional forms also have appeared, e.g. a social cooperative or a non-profit Ltd. Most of the initiatives are farmer-driven and dependant on consumers from cities. In Hungary, CSA is strongly connected to organic agriculture, all of the initiatives are certified organic or produce without chemicals.

ACC is promoting the idea of CSA in Hungary – publishing information about the national and international best practices and organising trainings for local communities.



Slovakia

Various community supported, direct food systems started in Slovakia before 2010 focused mostly on organic or non-pesticides production e.g. in Bratislava (Agrokruh), Trenčín (BioPapa) etc.

The first purely CSA-like scheme of which we are aware, started in 2010 after the first URGENCI mission in Zvolen. The Local food community has since then been the only CSA-like initiative in the country operating on a no-box, but rather an ordering scheme basis, however involving community into the scheme operation. In 2012, after the CSA4Europe information tour to the country a second CSA scheme started in Bratislava. CSA issue in Slovakia touches mostly young people interested in local, seasonal food without pesticides, food sovereignty, fair prices, creating the community focused on such food. Most of CSA-like systems in Slovakia as far as we know were initiated by consumers looking for local, seasonal and healthy food.

United Kingdom

The last time CSA research was undertaken was 2011*. There were 80 trading then and about 80 more in development. This was at the end of an intensive period of support for CSAs which has since stopped. It is likely that the number of CSA has grown since 2011 but this is not researched. The definition of CSA in the UK is broad and the models are diverse. Some are farmer led others are community led. The UK is a ‘developed’ country in this project and the main purpose was to share what we have found out.

The project has not significantly changed the CSA situation in the UK but the people that have travelled and met visitors have been influenced and this influence has spread beyond the individual participants. The project has set a context for the UK movement, helped it mature, helped it realise how far it has come. Several people met AMAP during the project and as a result work to set up a UK CSA network has strengthened.

* Available on: http://bit.ly/SA_survey_2011.



CSA models description

CSA farms in Europe take a variety of forms. To identify the most common models, the following parameters have been selected:

- numbers of farms/producers involved,
- degree of participation of members
- degree of economic trust

Number of Farms involved

➤ **One Farm CSAs**

Often used in the context of community owned farms operated by the community members and producing the majority of the food the members need.

➤ **Two or more Farm CSAs**

Scheme used within majority of French AMAP initiatives. Usually the agreement is concluded between each farmer and each consumer individually. Thus the farmers are not formally coupled.

Degree of Participation of Members

In a CSA, the relationship between consumer and farmer is closer than simply buying and selling. More than food and money is exchanged.

In some cases the consumers make a small contribution to the farm, which runs as a normal farm business. In other cases the consumers have a very close relationship with the farm.

Here are some arrangements for deepening the relationship between farmers and consumers:

Farms involved **How it works in practice**

The initiative Agronaftes in the Attiki region of Greece is a one farm CSA. It was created from the side of the consumers, who were looking for a farmer to provide them with food. The number of members fluctuates between 7 and 25 people.

The CSA Mogg in Herzogenburg, Austria, is a collaboration between three farms (vegetables; potatoes and onions; apples) and one bee keeper. They form one common CSA, providing food for around 300 households.

The AMAP Vert de Terre near Grenoble, France, consists of eight producers, of which four are at the same time consumers. Also, most of the producers sell to several AMAPs at the same time. Vert de Terre provides food for 36 households.

- Farmers allow consumers to come to the land and use it for social events,
- Farmers promise to consumers to work in a particular way, eg sign up to a charter, not using chemicals, caring for wildlife,
- Consumers volunteer farm work,
- Consumers contract to provide farm work or other help eg marketing or distribution. Some consumers work in exchange for food,
- Farmers teach consumers or children,
- A group of consumers organises itself and makes a partnership with a farm. The consumers group makes wholesale orders for bulk amounts of food,
- Consumers commit in advance to having food eg to having a weekly veg box for a whole season,
- Consumers pay in advance, eg pay in January for a whole year of food,
- Consumers contribute to capital costs of the farm eg by lending or donating money or assets or by buying shares in the farm business or land. Interest can be paid in food,
- Consumers rent land and employ farmers on a wage to grow food for them,
- Consumers take the risk of a poor harvest eg committing to taking a hundredth of the crop each, whether good or poor,
- Farmers allow consumers to influence pricing in exchange for some benefit,
- Consumers commit to sharing the



cost of running the farm between them and are given the food,

- Farmer supports consumers in growing their own food, eg in providing land, expertise and machine work in exchange for money,
- Consumers improve farmers employment conditions eg by providing sick pay, health insurance, or working on the farm so the farmer can go on holiday,
- Consumers can rent a fruit tree with care provided by the farmer and collect the fruit,
- Consumers can share the costs of raising a litter of pigs, including the farmers time, and share the meat,
- Consumers have a genuine loving relationship with the farmer, not defined by contract. For example, in Stroud CSA (UK) when the farmer became disabled, the consumers spontaneously bought her an off road electric wheelchair so she could work.

Members involvement **How it works in practice**

German CSAs mainly depict a financial agreement between producers and consumers. Besides financial support, the members are helping out by lending a hand in the field. Furthermore, there are regular meetings and members have a say in how the enterprise operates. Nevertheless, contributions of consumers remain mainly financial.

In the CSA of Évkerék Ökotanya, Hungary, the farmers are mainly responsible for all of the tasks which are related to the initiative. However, they would like to strengthen the member's voluntary commitment. This year they were able to hand over the management of the waiting list to one of the members. Also, one member will be responsible for finding recipes.

Degree of Economic Trust

The CSA schemes throughout Europe have different approaches when it comes to deciding how much money a consumer member will pay over what period of time to support the farmer(s). In many of the schemes the farmers ask for a fixed share/box price, which covers their costs. These prices are often the same or a little higher than prices on the organic market. There are also some initiatives, where the price, or contribution, is different for people with low, medium or high income. Other initiatives don't even ask for a price, but make their costs transparent and everybody gives what they want and can. The latter are projects with a high level of trust in each other.

Degree of Economic Trust **How it works in practice**

In German CSAs the contribution paid by each household is based on a guide value, which is calculated by dividing the farm's annual budget by the number of households involved. At the Buschberghof the guide value is 50 percent more than this average amount. Each household decides for itself how much it can and would like to contribute and gives the treasurer their signed declaration before or at the annual general meeting. The process of ensuring that the farm's budget for the coming year is covered occurs at this meeting.

The AMAP La Courgette Solidaire, in the area of Paris, France, created a "AMAP for all" share, to allow low income families to join the CSA by paying half price. The AMAP is accepting meal vouchers as well as the complementary currency SOL. The AMAP is furthermore receiving public grants which are used to provide the "solidarity boxes".

CSA therefore, does not describe an end product, CSA is more about how to develop a new local food system. However CSAs can be categorised according to who organises them or the motivation behind them. These are described below:

➤ Farmer-driven

Organised by the farmer, to whom the members financially subscribe, with little other involvement, but this obviously varies between schemes. This kind of CSA is probably the most common in the United States. In the UK this is equivalent to a producer-run vegetable box scheme often with activities bringing customers to the farm.

➤ Community/consumer-driven

Consumers participate in or may even run the scheme working closely with the farmer who produces what they want. The degree of consumer involvement is variable. It was this model of CSA that was first introduced into the USA.

➤ Farmer co-operative

Farmer-driven CSA where two or more farms co-operate to supply its members with a greater variety of produce. This model allows individual farms to specialise in the most appropriate farming for that holding (larger farms may concentrate on field scale production, smaller farms on specialist crops and upland farms on rearing livestock). There are several examples of this in France.

➤ Farmer-consumer co-operative

As described above, farmers develop co-operative networks to access a variety of products but there is greater commitment by the consumers. Consumers may co-own land and other resources with the participating farmers and work together to produce and distribute food. Stroud Food Hub is a pioneering model where the co-op is jointly owned by both producer and consumer members.

How it works in practice Farmer vs. consumer-led

The Mogg CSA in Herzogenburg, Austria, is a typical farmer led CSA. It was initiated by the farmers, trying to transform their former box system into a CSA. The cultivation plan was done by the farmers and so is most of the work. Share prices were also determined by the farmers. All this is planned to be changed, however, in the second year.

The CSA KomPot, Czech Republic, is owned and run by a civic association formed by the members. The association employs the farmer (so far on a part-time job on 10 months a year) and rents the land to farm. Members share all the responsibilities and have agreed on risk and rewards sharing. Members are bound to work minimum four days during the season in favor of the association, but in practice they work a lot more either on farm itself or in organization and administration of the association.

🍅🍇🍌 Legal position of CSAs in selected European countries

Austria

In Austria CSA is not a legal status. Presently, the best way to handle a CSA seems to be founding a non-profit association (german: Verein) where the members pay a certain membership fee to cover the costs and have the possibility to work voluntarily on the farm. The association can be the owner of the farm and also the employer of the farmer.

The main difference between CSA and conventional direct-marketing schemes lies in the level of trust and commitment. The place where the food is delivered are not shops or marketplaces and there's no transaction of money taking place. In most CSAs the mutual commitment is expressed through a signed document, which is not in every case legally binding. This is sufficient as long as there's a good way of communication between farmers and consumers, the farmers have the resources to produce and the consumers receive their shares.

Like in other direct marketing models the farmers are facing high levels of hygienic standards in the production and processing of their products. This is especially the case for meat and dairy products. Maybe CSA can become a possibility to overcome the present system of arbitrary control and sanctioning and build up a new foodsystem, which is based on trust and solidarity.

Czech Republic

Majority of CSA schemes in the country represent informal consumer groups where each individual member makes an agreement (oral or written) with the individual farmer, nonetheless the whole group acts as one body. Some groups are formed as civic associations, operating according to the law.

All the farms that deliver to CSA schemes in the country meet the applicable legal provisions and can sell their produce (even the animal) on farm-yard. In terms of distribution, the question of hygiene and food security regulation is usually on the edge of legal provisions as the purchase itself is usually agreed to take place on farm (though in practice it takes place at an outlet spot) and the distribution is then considered a private agreement between the members. Thus the distribution needs not to meet the hygiene and food security standards, as it is not a distribution point in a legal sense.

France

AMAP delivery point is not classified as a collective selling point (in French: *points de ventecollectifs*, which is the legal way to characterise the farm shops and the producers' cooperative shops); the consumers are committed on an individual basis to their producer, through a contract that obeys the common law on contracts. The AMAP delivery is planned well in advance with all the contracting consumers. The products are not stored for a long time. They are delivered personally to the consumers, who already paid for them.

The AMAP group of consumers does not have any commercial activity, nor any production or processing activity. Thus, an AMAP is not an intermediary.

Furthermore, within an AMAP, the commercial activity is effective only through a contract between a producer and each consumer. The rules are set well in advance in the frame of a contract, and there is no money transfer on the drop-off point. It is this contract only, which determines the commercial link. And each AMAP producer is thus responsible on an individual basis for the food items delivered to the consumers. She/he should work in accordance with the European hygiene legislation, including during the delivery sessions.

The AMAPs, which are neither sellers nor resellers, and their consumers, cannot be targeted as such by the anti-fraud controllers. Only the producers can be controlled. Only the producers have the duty to present satisfactory information regarding hygiene conditions of their products/sites of production.



Germany

CSAs in Germany may take various forms in legal terms. The type of form chosen by each initiative will generally have to do with the ownership of the farm business, the role of the co-farmers in the farm business, the practicalities of transferring money transparently between the bank accounts of those involved, and so on. In most cases, a not-for-profit form of organisation is chosen, given that the aim is to satisfy the needs of the farmers and the co-farmers rather than to generate monetary profit. The agreements entered into by farmers and co-farmers are based on a voluntary mutual commitment and therefore on trust. Although members may be asked to sign a document to symbolise this commitment, in many cases this document is not legally binding.

Greece

Although a CSA in Greece may be legally recognized under the status of a "social cooperative enterprise", as described by the national law 4019 of 2011, the already formed csa's have no legal status so far. This law is new and not well advertised, even to people from solidarity movements. On the other hand, it poses very strict guidelines that go against the intrinsic flexibility of each CSA, as the structure of each CSA may vary accordingly to its members needs. We foresee that if the law 4019/2011 will not be positively altered, it may even prevent some CSA groups of trying to get a legal status.

Hungary

The legislation in Hungary differs according to the operational form of the CSA.

Buying groups: They have different forms (informal, association and even shop).

CSA farms: Hungarian farmers should have a special administrative category which determines their operational possibilities, taxation etc. The majority of



CSA farmers are licensed traditional small-scale producer or small-scale producers, but there are some examples which have other legal identity (Ltd., Non-profit Ltd. or Social Cooperative). All of the farms keeps the regulations – hygienic, administrative and financial. For example they put invoices or receipt in the boxes.

The delivery can be only organised on private premises (e.g. gardens, farms, school grounds). The high tax is a serious problem for the Hungarian farmers. The VAT is 27% for food, additionally they should also pay the income tax and the labor costs.

Slovakia

CSA in Slovakia is not legally recognised and it operates mostly as an informal group of citizens buying food on the formally individual basis. In 2009 the first legislation allowing official sales of farm products from the farmyard in small amounts was adopted. The food security and hygiene regulations along with legal limitations regarding small quantities make it difficult to sustainably produce food for some of the local community on family farms. In addition, economic and taxation rules make it complicated for CSAs to legalize their position.

United Kingdom

In England, CSA is not legally recognised. CSAs are treated in the law the same as other farms and food enterprises. CSA enterprises organise as charities, co-ops etc like any other enterprise.

The definition of CSA is broad and CSA farms are diverse in size and organisation. However there is a self appointed network of CSAs to be found on web (see Links chapter). Direct sale does not get any special subsidies or tax breaks, however, there is sometimes support from the voluntary sector or grant funders. Presently there are paid workers to help CSA in Wales but little in England or Scotland.

How to get a CSA started

To begin a CSA you will need

- » Land,
- » A skilled farmer,
- » Organised consumers,
- » A vision and motivation,
- » A process and plan to bring people and resources together.

Some CSAs are started by consumers, some by landowners and some by farmers. Usually there are one or two enthusiastic people who work hard and get things started. No two CSAs are the same and each develops differently.

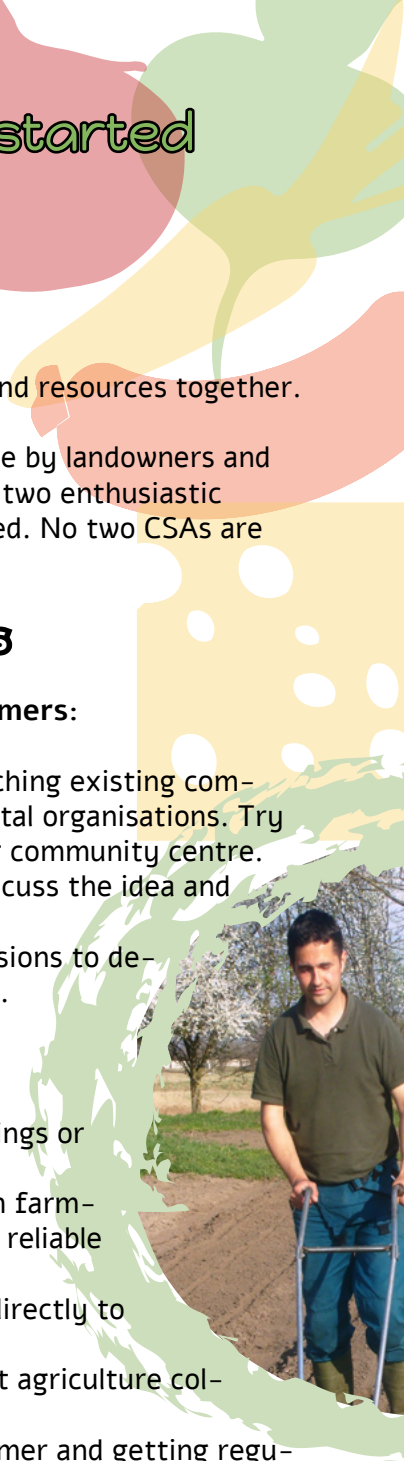
Near the beginning, key activities

➤ **Finding or forming a group of consumers:**

- » If the CSA is farmer-led try approaching existing community groups and local environmental organisations. Try finding a partner such as a school or community centre.
- » Hold a friendly public meeting to discuss the idea and get support
- » Organise social meetings and discussions to develop a group of people and the idea.

➤ **Finding a willing farmer:**

- » Approach existing agricultural meetings or networks of farmers.
- » Explain how your idea helps them, in farmers' language eg in providing a more reliable market.
- » Approach farmers who already sell directly to the public.
- » Look for young or new farmers eg at agriculture colleges.
- » Consider accepting an apprentice farmer and getting regu-



lar support for them from an experienced farmer outside the CSA.

➔ Making a clear and sensible plan:

- » Find someone with skills to include everyone and get on with making clear decisions. They might have consultation meetings and run discussions.
- » Make a structure for the group. Allocate roles. You might break into work groups with specialist tasks eg finding land/ holding community events/ business planning etc.
- » Identify each stakeholders' needs. Eg the farmer needs more labour, cash at the start of the season and a reliable market. The consumers need play space for their children and affordable organic food. The funders need evidence of environmental benefit. Etc
- » Draw up a statement about your values. Find values you can all agree to and ensure these values drive the plans – rather than one person's need for cash or one person's concern.
- » Research different CSA models and bring examples to the group. When you know what needs you are trying to meet and what values you have, choose or adapt the model that fits best.
- » Set some objectives and goals and agree who needs to do what to make them happen.



➔ Find land:

- » First be clear what you are trying to achieve and therefore what land you really need. Is it important to be certified organic? Do you need to be near a town? Will you have animals?
- » Be inventive and persistent. There are CSAs on land owned by schools, local government, churches, railways, gardens, parks, universities and farms. There are CSAs on roofs, in car parks, on squatted land and there are CSAs that buy their own land.

➔ Advertise for land:

- » Present your group in a way that will impress landowners. Understand what landowners want.
- » Some landowners do not trust new groups without experience. Start small and prove you are effective.

➔ Get support:

- » Be clear what your message is. Exactly what do you want people to do to help? What is great about your proposal?
- » Find a volunteer who is keen on marketing.
- » Spend money and time on publicity.
- » Get out and talk to as many different groups as possible, not just your friends.
- » Engage people who come forward. Talk to them, understand what they want and give them a welcome and a role immediately. Keep in touch with them regularly, even if they do not like coming to meetings.
- » It might take a long time to set up a new CSA. Keep people motivated by organising practical small projects quickly, even if you don't yet have a farm to work on – eg a tree planting day, a soup making day, a children's experience day.
- » Notice what people contribute and say thank you.

➔ Review, evaluate, celebrate and make improved plans:

- » After a while, there will have been frustrations, surprises, many opinions, disappointments and some arguments. Some people will have become tired others newly enthused. Some structures will have become outdated and some visions will now seem unrealistic. New opportunities will have appeared.
- » Hold a review to identify and acknowledge what has happened.
- » Get people together and ask what has gone well? What has not gone well? What to do now?



How much land is needed

If you already have a working farm, you can base your estimates on yields you already know. But if you start a new project, some rough estimates might be useful.

When considering how much land you will need, it is crucial to define what products you will supply. There is a huge difference in seasonal and whole year production and if you wish to have meat or dairy production that is very demanding in terms of land need. Vegetarian or vegan food supply for a whole year can be produced on approx. 700 square metres. Whereas typical European omnivorous diet requires 5 times more land.

The amount of land you will need for a CSA varies significantly according to the site-specific conditions, mainly:

- » type of culture and microclimate conditions
- » soil fertility
- » diversity of produce
- » method of cultivation/animal housing and feeding

However, to grasp the first idea let's make some simplifications regarding the land need at different production.

➤ Vegetables

Usually it is said that 1 person can be fed (in terms of vegetables solely) from 100 square metres of intensively cultivated land with moderate fertility. It is useful to calculate according to the known yields in your region.

To this one most add some land for:

- » manipulation 5%

- » green manure – at least 20%
- » low/no yield areas

Overall 1 person land need is approximated to 120 to 150 square metres.*

➤ Cereals

Cereals are a foundation of the typical diet, however they are quite demanding in terms of machinery for sowing and harvesting (often a neighbour farmer may help). How to calculate the land necessary for cereal production:

Typical cereal (wheat) yield in European organic farming is: 1 ha = 4,5 tonnes (wheat); 100 sq. m = 45 kg.

Typical cereal consumption per person is 100 – 150 kg/year

Thus to feed one person with cereals all year round you need 300 sq. metres of land for cereal cultivation.

➤ Meat production

Animal breeding demands knowledge, time and land. On the other hand, it has a number of benefits such as environmental (value of manure for soil, pastures rich with biodiversity etc.) and social aspects (CSA members, esp. kids). If we agree that a sustainable farm has to have a closed nutrient cycle, then some animals are necessary.

For good welfare and environment it is recommended to have about 2 SU/ha (SU – stock unit = 500 kg of live animal)

* Nice crop planning tool for vegetables is available here: <http://bit.ly/CSA-crop-planner>.



Typical meat yield per animal (very much depends on breed) is:

- » 1 cow = 550-700 kg of living animal, 60-80% utilization
- » 1 pig = 80 - 100 kg of meat
- » 1 lamb = 17-30 kg of meat
- » 1 chicken = 1,5 kg of meat

Typical annual meat consumption per person (EU average) is 77 kg

- » Beef = 16 kg
- » Pork = 41 kg
- » Lamb & goat = 3 kg
- » Poultry = 17 kg

From these you can easily calculate that from 2 hectares of land you can feed roughly 4 people with their all-year-round meat consumption.

➔ Dairy production

The easiest way to utilize the animal husbandry is to breed combined breeds, meat and milk as well. To calculate the potential efficiency of milk production you can bear in mind the following:

- » Average consumption of milk/year in EU 80-100 l per person
- » Average annual milk production (specialized milk cow varieties) = 7 800 l cow/year
- » 1 cow needs on average 2 hectares of land to be fed for a whole year
- » Thus you can estimate that from 2 hectares you can meet the needs of 97 people for their all-year-round milk consumption.

How to finance a CSA fairly

Fair financing can be achieved in a number of different ways, including the following:

➔ Market price

Find out the price that people are usually paying at veggie box schemes and compose the share based on price of individual items (at Farmers markets or similar distribution channels) until you reach the approximate price of the whole share.

Example: You've found out that people are willing to pay 10 € for a weekly delivery, then compound the share:

Item	Quantity	Unit	FM price/unit (€)	Total price (€)
Onion	0,5	kg	1	0,5
Peppers	0,5	kg	3,2	1,6
Potatoes	1	kg	0,48	0,48
Apples	1,5	kg	0,8	1,2
Plums	1	kg	1,4	1,4
Squash	2,5	kg	0,6	1,5
Zucchini	0,5	kg	0,6	0,3
Tomatoes	1	kg	2	2
Red beet	0,5	kg	1,2	0,6
Kohlrabi	1	kg	0,4	0,4
Total delivery price				9,98 €

➔ Market value pricing

Estimate your annual costs for season production (income you want to get for season) - A. Estimate how much people usually spend on vegs per season - B. Divide A with B and you get number of shares

Example:

- » Annual farming cost – 4000 €
- » Typical spending on vegs – 200 €
- » Number of shares to meet budget – $4000/200 = 20$

➤ Real costs of farming based on community commitment

Set out your total budget. Most often:

- » Cost of production (ie. seeds, seedlings, tools, etc.)
- » Employee's costs
- » Machinery depreciation
- » Investments
- » Advisory services
- » Overheads

Divide the total number with no. of current or potential members. Ie. budget for the season is 4 000 € you have 20 members, thus the member share must be 200 €.

➤ Deliberate contributions

You can even have the members decide what amount they would like to contribute (i.e. how much they can afford to pay to enable the total farm budget costs to be covered). This method supports creativity, freedom, solidarity and inclusion of low income members. However it is demanding on community cohesion, trust, etc. Steps:

- » Present the total budget (see above) to the community
- » Let the members (usually secretly) write their bids
- » If all bids meet the budget = OK
- » If not next round of bids is done until the budget is met.



➤ Similar models pricing

Very simply find a similar CSA (in terms of production, membership, acreage, altitude, etc.) to one you want to start and ask, what is their share price. If it sounds reasonable for you, just use it!

Different approaches to payment and delivery

➤ Payment frequency

Decide what is the most convenient and practical with the farmer and consumers

- » Weekly payment – least commitment to the farmer, very complicated, unreliable
- » Monthly payment – gives better security for the farmer, but does not provide necessary funding for the beginning of the year, probably most convenient for consumers
- » Season payment – high commitment to the farmer, easy for administration; payment can be divided into installments
- » Annual payment – the highest commitment to the farmer, because after all, he needs to pay the rent in the winter time to...

➤ Payment method

- » Cash – most complicated, highest risk, but the two (producer-consumer) must meet at least once...
- » Bank transfer – easiest, however can have extra costs (good to find a cooperative savings bank)
- » Cheques – often used in France, farmer has a security of being paid for produce, however the money is released to his bank account only at specified time (ie. monthly, weekly, etc.).



Deciding on a method of distribution

How is the produce distributed?

- » The farmer prepares individual boxes and drives them to the outlet – each consumer gets a standardized box with their share already weighed – time consuming for the farmer.
- » Farmer drives all shares to outlet and individual boxes are prepared at the pick-up point – every week a different member weighs the shares of members to come – involves coordination of members.
- » Farmer drives all shares to outlet and each consumer picks their share on themselves – each consumer coming to the pick-up point collects their share from the delivered crates of particular vegs and fruits.
- » Consumers collect shares on farm individually (if farm is in the village) or collectively (if it involves transportation) to the outlet in the city.
- » And any other option you can imagine...



CSA in a word



Links and other information

Austria

CSA in Austria: <http://attac.at/csa>

First CSA in Austria: www.ochsenherz.at/csa.html

Czech Republic

CSA in CZ: www.kpzinfo.cz

France

CSA in France: www.reseau-amap.org

Germany

CSA network in Germany: www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org

Greece

DIO organization: www.dionet.gr

Hungary

CSA in Hungary: <http://tudatosvasarlo.hu/csa>

Buying groups: <http://szatyorbolt.hu/index.php?route=common/home>

Slovakia

CSA in Slovakia: www.cepta.sk

United Kingdom

CSA in UK: www.soilassociation.org/csa.aspx

International network

www.urgenci.net

Project website

www.urgenci.net/csa4europe



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