

Community Supported Agriculture

An Introduction to an Alternative
Food Supply/Farming Concept

Startling Reality!



- People who actually grow food don't get paid enough to keep on doing it!

Organized Eaters, a.k.a., Community Supported Agriculture

- Farmers supported
 - Volunteer communities of eaters
 - Direct payment
 - Fresh local produce
 - Reasonable/fair prices



Enough is Enough!

Wake up and smell the carrots!



- Eating requires farmers
- Who keeps farmers in business
 - Ordinary citizens
 - Policy-makers

A More Sensible Route: the CSA Concept

- Hopeful alternative
 - Brings people producing the food
 - Closer to people eating the food
 - And, the eaters closer to the land



Goal of a CSA

- Local food for local people at a fair price to them and a fair wage to the growers
 - Members' annually commit to pay their share of the production costs
 - In many cases, share the risk
 - As well as share the bounty

Is CSA very common?

- Spring 1996
 - 600 CSAs
 - 100,000 members in USA & Canada
- January 1999
 - > 1000 CSA farms across USA & Canada
- Currently, a farmer in Nashville area
 - 200 members

Where did CSA originate?

- Japan, 1965
 - TEIKEI movement
 - Partnership/cooperation
 - “Food with the farmer’s face on it”
- Adapted in Europe
- USA, 1985
 - Indian Line Farm, MA

Range of criteria for CSA

- Sharers do some work as part of their share payment
 - Subscriptions
 - Farm crew does all work
 - Members just receive box of produce each week
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Some decisions to make for CSA

Work required or not	Core group or not	Mechanized or not
By hand or horse	Weekly delivery or pick up	Subscription program or community farm
Members volunteer for special workdays on farm	Members help with distribution	Members defray part of their payment with “working” shares

Possible objectives for CSA

- Successful farming business
- Implement ecological farming techniques
- Educate
- Revive ethics
- Renew human health
- And, renew local culture, economy and social life



Education in Forming a CSA: Helps Avoid a Stormy Front

- Steps to forming a CSA
 - Money, Management
 - Decision-making
 - Members, and
 - Distribution
- Choosing a farmer
- Choosing customers



Money, Management...

- Core Group
- Budget
 - Divided by number of CSA members
 - Determines cost per share of the harvest
- One Share
 - Weekly vegetables
 - Family of four
 - Late spring – early fall
- Not just veggies!



Zantedeschia 'Pink Persuasion'





...Members

- Payment
 - One lump sum before seeds are sown
 - Installments throughout growing season
- Membership
 - High-income
 - Low-income
 - Senior citizens
 - Homeless
 - Differently-abled individuals

Distribution for a CSA

- Daily
 - Harvest
 - Weigh
 - Divide into shares
 - Surplus table for items exchange



Summary: The Value of a CSA

- Direct marketing
 - Fairest return on grower's products
- Regional food production
 - Food \$ local
- Encourages farmers
- Guaranteed market
 - Invest time farming
 - ...not 'buyer shopping'



(cont.) Summary...CSA

- Preservation of small farms
 - Biodiversity
 - Wide variety of crops
- Sense of local land stewardship
- Farmer's face on food
 - Farmer/consumer relationship
 - Increasing understanding



Resource Recognition

- Elizabeth Henderson, et.al., *Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture*
- Liz Manes, CO State U Cooperative Extension
- Cathy Roth, U of MA Extension Agroecology Program
- Heather Friedrich, Organic Cooperative Specialist, U of AR

QUESTIONS?

