

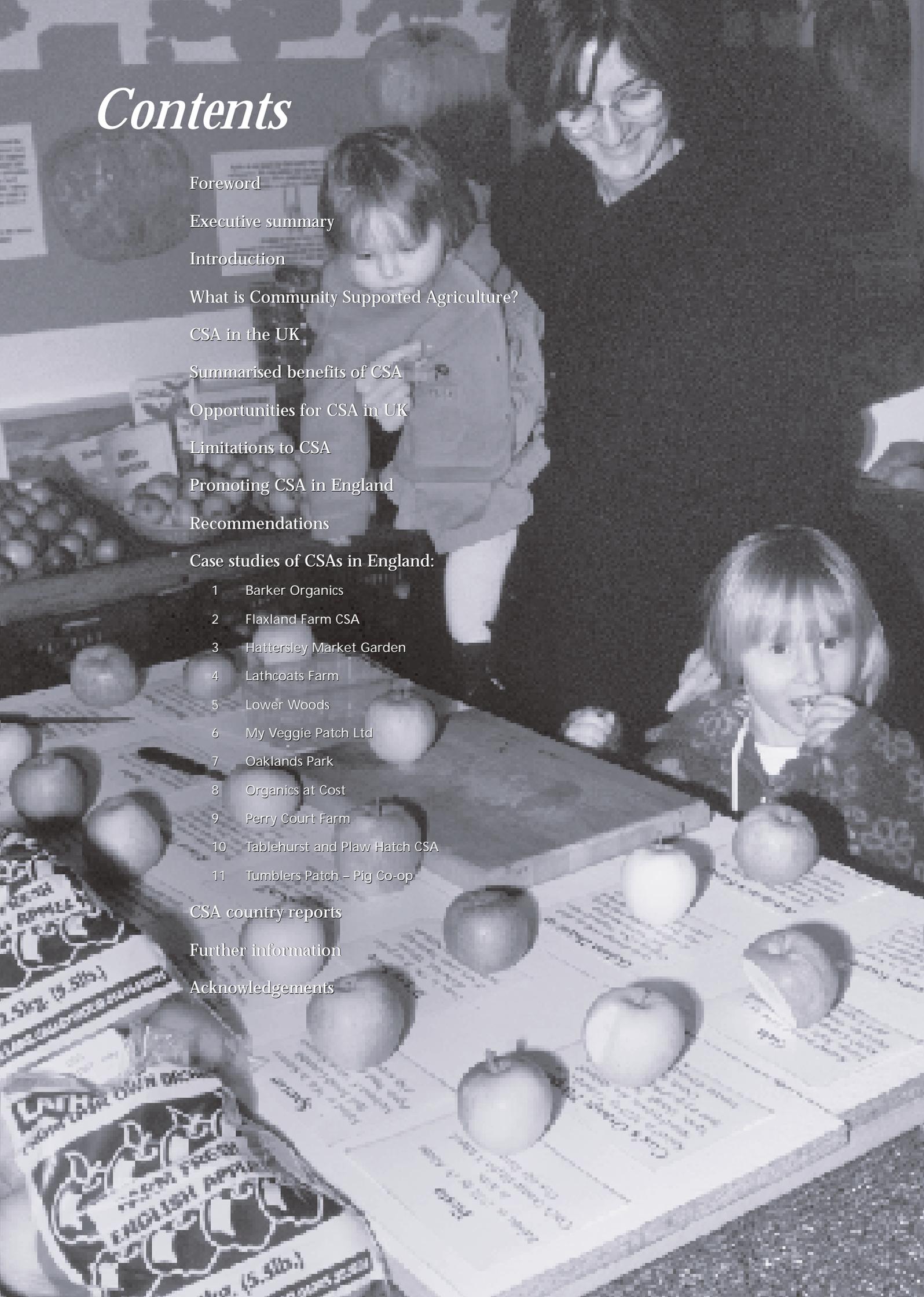


A Share in the Harvest

A feasibility study for **Community Supported Agriculture**
a participatory approach towards sustainable agriculture in England



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Foreword

For most of our time, the daily lives of humans have been played out close to the land. For a hundred thousand generations, we were hunters and gatherers. We have been farmers for five hundred generations, industrialised for eight to ten, and have had industrialised agriculture for just two. Yet at the turn of the 21st century, farming is now in crisis all over the industrialised world. How can this be? An industry showing extraordinary growth in productivity, sustained over decades, yet having lost public confidence owing to persistent environmental damage and growing food safety concerns. The food that is supposed to sustain us is now a source of ill-health for many, and the systems that produce that food damage the environment. This can no longer be right.

We should all now ask: what is farming for? Farming is unique as an economic sector. It is multipurpose and multifunctional, with many side-effects – both positive and negative. The negative ones are worrying. Modern farming has brought pesticide pollution, loss of rural biodiversity, removal of hedgerows, and harm to human health through BSE, pathogens and antibiotic overuse. It is our narrow thinking that has led us down this road to crisis. There is no going back. It is no longer enough to lightly green the edge of farming. The change in thinking and practice must now be radical.

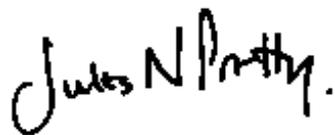
Yet it is the positive side-effects of farming that offer a new way forward. More sustainable farming is very good at producing public goods – things we can all enjoy and that contribute to the economy. This is the future for farming – as a multifunctional sector, building natural and social assets in the countryside, whilst providing us with wholesome food that is sourced from farms we all know and trust. There are many good things happening in farming – organic farmers employing large numbers of people, farmers' markets and box schemes to promote direct links between consumers and producers, responsible corporate practice for land stewardship, and careful protection of some of our jewels in the biodiversity crown. As this report shows, one of the best of the new ideas are CSAs – community supported agriculture partnerships.

Putting these all together shows that local food systems are a key way forward. Jack Kloppenberg coined the term 'foodshed' to give an area-based grounding to the production, movement and consumption of food. Foodsheds are defined as self-reliant, locally or regionally based food systems comprising diversified farms using sustainable practices to supply fresher, more nutritious food to small-scale processors and consumers to whom producers are linked by the bonds of community as well as economy'.

Interestingly, regionalised foodsheds tend to do two things: i) they shorten the chain from production to consumption – so eliminating some of the negative transport externalities; and ii) they tend to favour the production of positive externalities (environmental, social and health) over negative ones, leading to the accumulation of renewable assets throughout the food system.

More than 2200 years ago, Marcus Cato said this on the first page of his book *Di Agri Cultura*: *"And when our ancestors would praise a worthy person, their praise took this form: good husbandman, good farmer; one so praised was thought to have received the greatest commendation."*

It is time to re-establish the trust, and the praise. It will not be easy. But that time has come.



Professor Jules Pretty

University of Essex

Executive summary

This study explores the potential of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) for farm diversification and community development. We define CSA as:

A partnership between farmers and consumers where the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared.

The study investigates a range of CSA initiatives from around the world and concentrates on eleven case studies in England. The research found that CSA:

- Is a grassroots approach, developing local initiatives for local conditions.
- Encourages more sustainable forms of agricultural practice, often organic farming methods.
- Promotes links and greater understanding between rural and urban communities.
- Can be a tool in the transition to more sustainable and local forms of food production.
- Can provide greater accountability to the consumer and a secure and fair return for the producer.
- Is typically motivated by the service and lifestyle it provides rather than any profit it may generate.
- Increases social networks, facilitating co-operation.
- Is an initiative that falls within the context of current rural and social policy, where there is growing support for local food initiatives and the wider benefits that they bring.

The benefits of CSA include a more secure income and higher returns for farmers. Consumers have access to fresh food from an accountable source with an opportunity to reconnect with the land and influence the landscape they live in. CSA delivers environmental benefits of fewer food miles, less packaging and ecologically sensitive farming and sees the return of local distinctiveness and regional food production with higher employment, more local processing, local consumption and circulation of money in the community enhancing local economies.

CSAs, with their wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits, are ideally placed to help deliver government objectives in various policy areas, including agriculture, biodiversity, rural development, social regeneration, education and health.

Conditions required as a pre-requisite to CSA include:

- A capable producer willing to share responsibilities and choice with the public.
- A motivated and capable activist to initiate the scheme.
- Informed consumers.
- Accessible land.

There are five main areas of support required by developing CSAs

- Professional help for CSA groups.
- Access to start up grants and cheap finance.
- Access to appropriate professional advice: legal advice for social enterprise, food hygiene, health and safety.
- Improved communication and mutual support through partnership and networking.
- Co-ordinated promotion and marketing of CSA at national, regional and local levels.

Summary of recommendations to aid the development of CSA

- Government and local authority recognition and support for local food production in all local strategies.
- Increased spending on rural development and agri-environment schemes to help potential CSA schemes.
- The provision of professional facilitation to help establish CSA groups.
- The development of a co-ordinated national network.
- Guidelines for CSA development stating clear principles and recommended approaches for their development.
- Research into the wider benefits of CSA on public awareness of local food, the local economy, the local environment and the extent that CSA builds farm to farm co-operation.

Introduction

Background

In 1999 the Soil Association held a conference promoting the concept of CSA. The resulting coverage in the national media prompted a flood of enquiries from both consumers keen to invest in farms and farms looking for consumers to invest. However, because there has been little research into the opportunities for CSA in the UK, there was limited information and practical guidance available. This study is the next step on from the conference, and explores the feasibility of successfully establishing Community Supported Agriculture in England. We are grateful to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for supporting us in this work.

The Soil Association and local food

"If fresh food is necessary to health in man and beast, then that food must be provided not only from our own soil but as near as possible to the sources of consumption. If this involves fewer imports and consequent repercussions on exports then it is industry that must be readjusted to the needs of food."

Lady Eve Balfour, founder of the Soil Association.

The concept of 'local food for local people' has always been at the heart of the Soil Association's ideology. We have been actively promoting local food economies since the early 1990s when we embarked on a programme of local food link work, helping to develop the concept of vegetable box schemes. The Soil Association has been instrumental in:

- The promotion of farmers' markets and the establishment of the National Association of Farmers' Markets (in partnership with the NFU, The Farm Retail Association and Envolve).
- The Food Futures programme, a UK-wide partnership project facilitating the development of local food economies.
- The Organic Farms Network, demonstrating the principles of organic farming and local distribution.

Investigating the potential for Community Supported Agriculture is a natural progression in the Soil Association's work towards the development of sustainable local food economies.

Purpose of the study

This study considers whether CSA is a viable component in the development of local and sustainable food economies. It investigates community involvement in farming around the globe and a number of established and planned CSA initiatives in England. Case study analysis forms the basis of discussion, along with relevant policy recommendations and areas for future research. Based on the practical information in this study an action manual has been compiled to support those wishing to set up a CSA.

Scope of the study

The fact that CSAs are grassroots initiatives, creating local arrangements in response to local conditions, makes it difficult to identify and gather information about them. Our initial search for CSAs in the UK led to only the handful of well-known farms that classify themselves as CSAs. However, on broadening our definition of CSA to include all initiatives based on a producer-consumer partnership, we found a great number and variety of initiatives. This study gives as broad an overview of the current CSA climate as possible within the constraints of available time and resources. It is possible that many more initiatives exist, both in the UK and overseas, than we have identified in this study.

We began our research through the press, internet, publications and existing contacts. We visited eleven CSAs in England, representing a wide range of models, and case studies of these CSAs provide the background for this feasibility study. We also set up a working party (see acknowledgements) to guide and feed into this research and advise on future work.

What is Community Supported Agriculture?

Community Supported Agriculture is a generic term coined in the USA. It encompasses a broad range of partnerships between consumers and producers. The form each partnership takes depends largely on its particular set of circumstances. However, what is common to all CSAs is a mutual commitment between a farm and a community¹ of supportive consumers, where, in most cases, the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared. We encountered an array of definitions for CSA, and have based the following definition on them: 'a partnership² between farmers and consumers where the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared'.

CSA farms are directly accountable to their consumers and so strive to provide fresh, high-quality food and typically use organic or biodynamic farming methods. Generally more people are involved in the farming operation than on conventional farms. Some projects encourage consumer members to work on the farm in exchange for some of their membership costs. CSA is a shared commitment to a more local and equitable agricultural system that allows farmers to focus on land stewardship and still maintain productive and profitable farms:

*"...the main goal...of these community supported projects is to develop participating farms to their highest ecologic potential and to develop a network that will encourage and allow other farms to become involved."*³

What distinguishes CSA from other forms of direct marketing (box schemes, farm shops, farmers' markets) is that although these methods of distribution may also be employed, CSA is an understanding of mutual support. For example, consumer members may commit in advance, in cash or kind, to buying their food (or a farm product) directly from the CSA farm. In return they have the opportunity to influence the running of the CSA.

*"Members participating in the scheme really felt that they were taking responsibility for their food production, especially those members who accompanied the pigs on their final journey to the abattoir."*⁴

The social economy

The prevailing economic system measures success in terms of increased stocks of financial and physical capital. However, CSAs also provide services and benefits to society. They are part of the social economy, which lies somewhere between the private and the public sectors and is often referred to as the 'third way'.

Partnerships between producers and consumers, and between producers themselves provide greater security against the fluctuations of the market economy. This is not a new concept. Similar models first arose between 1200–1350 as the craft guilds. They emerged again between 1828–1928 as co-operatives and mutual/friendly societies and again in 1985 as the 'social economy'. Common to all of these arrangements is the principle of self-help for greater security. CSA arrangements where the business partners are also the consumers have great potential for business security.

The co-operative principles are also a good ideological basis for CSA and co-operative or Industrial and Provident Society legal structures are regarded as most appropriate for CSA initiatives emphasising the mutuality of the arrangement. Consumer food buying co-operatives, co-op shops and farmer co-operatives are all possible constituent elements of CSA.⁵

Who is involved in Community Supported Agriculture?

There are typically up to four groups involved in a CSA farm: the farmers, the community, a core/management group, and, occasionally, an agency promoting CSA. The relationships and responsibilities between these groups are diverse and unique to each individual CSA.

- The farmers do the day to day work, prepare farm plans, grow and harvest crops. Non-farmers should not interfere with how this work is done.
- The community of common interest supports the farm either financially or in kind, and consumes the produce.
- The core/management group includes farmers and community members. It organises the CSA. Responsibilities might include preparing the budget, collecting payments, paying the farmers, distributing the food, dealing with legal issues, organising events, recruiting and maintaining CSA members.
- Agencies use and help CSAs to promote various objectives, primarily health, training and education.

¹ This may be a geographic community or more often a community of common interest, usually the CSA itself.

² Partnership: a relationship based on mutual trust, openness, shared risk and shared rewards.

³ Robyn Van En, USA.

⁴ Tumblers Patch – Pig Co-op, see case study 11.

⁵ See Germany, CSA country reports.

Different models of CSA

An analysis of CSA in the USA⁶ broadly categorised the different enterprises according to the organisers, or the motivation behind them:

- **Subscription (or farmer-driven).** Organised by the farmer, the degree of consumer involvement in the farm varies between schemes but is generally not very great. This is probably the most common kind of CSA in the United States. The UK equivalent is a producer-run vegetable box scheme (see Barker Organics, case study 1).
- **Shareholder (or consumer-driven).** Consumers work closely with the farmer who produces varieties of food they want to eat. The degree of consumer involvement varies but is usually higher than under subscription farming. This was the model of CSA first introduced into the USA. In England, Tumblers Patch – Pig Co-op and Flaxland Farm CSA (See case studies) are based on this model, as are several CSAs currently in development (contact Soil Association for further information).
- **Farmer co-operative.** A farmer-driven CSA with two or more farms co-operating to supply the consumer members with a greater variety of produce. This model allows individual farms to specialise in the most appropriate farming for that holding, for example, larger farms concentrate on field scale production, smaller farms on specialist crops and upland farms on livestock. We see this in Japan and Germany (see CSA country reports).
- **Farmer-consumer co-operative.** As above, but with a greater commitment from the consumers. Consumers and farmers may co-own land and other resources and work together to produce and distribute food (see Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA case study 10).

How a CSA farm might be organised

CSA farms may supply their members with vegetables distributed weekly through a box scheme, from a pick up point or collected from the farm. Once it has been agreed what the farm can produce and what members would like to receive, the farmer develops a crop plan and a budget for the season. This incorporates all the production costs and fair wages for the farmer. The members approve the budget, and calculate the cost of an annual share by dividing the total budget between them.

CSA: Where does it fit in the local food economy?

CSA is not in itself a marketing or distribution method; each enterprise chooses the method that is most suitable. It could be a box scheme, the most popular method in the USA and Japan (see CSA country reports), but farm shops, farm gate collection, pick your own, self help/honesty schemes and drop off points are also common.

In New York the organisation Just Food facilitates new CSAs, providing training and brokering partnerships between individuals, community groups and CSA farmers. Based on experience from the USA, CSA farms are generally advised to maintain a diversity of markets for their non-CSA produce and to sell directly to the consumer where possible. Below we give a little more detail about box schemes, farm shops and farmers' markets.

Box schemes⁷

On the whole, American and Japanese CSAs use box schemes for distribution. Boxes, or bulk produce from which members select their share, are delivered to drop off points. This method of distribution creates potential for more distant urban-rural links. In the USA, for example, there are an increasing number of CSA farms driving a weekly delivery of vegetables into inner cities. Drop off points provide a valuable social function as members and producers have an opportunity to meet.

When UK producers first adopted box schemes they were synonymous with CSA and could be categorised as a subscription CSA (see models of CSA). Producer-run box schemes generally have a closer relationship with their customers than companies selling produce bought in from different farms. However the motivation behind the box scheme is important. For consumers it could simply be an alternative to shopping at the greengrocer or supermarket and it could be a more secure and rewarding alternative for producers than selling to a wholesaler. If so, box schemes are simply a response to the market-oriented economy. However the producer and consumer may see themselves in a more closely connected relationship of mutual support. This would constitute CSA. The difference is that box schemes put greater emphasis on marketing, whereas in CSA consumers absorb some of this responsibility, giving the farmer more security and time to put into growing.

"The box scheme took over, we became box scheme operators trying to fit in some growing!"⁸

Box schemes have a far greater turnover of customers if they are recruited by remote means such as leafletting. Customers recruited by word of mouth – those within a social circle or community – are more likely to know what to expect from the scheme and therefore be more loyal customers.⁹

Farm shops

A farm shop requires good access¹⁰ with a large customer base and turnover for it to operate effectively and economically. As custom can be unpredictable there can be a great deal of wasted produce and staff time. However it does allow public access to the farm, with a greater consumer connection to the source of food. Less labour demanding alternatives, such as honesty schemes,

⁶ Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), USA: www.attra.org/attra-pub/csa.

⁷ A vegetable box scheme is a box (bag, sack or net), containing freshly picked, locally grown, organic produce, delivered weekly to your door, or to a local drop off point. The operator decides what vegetables go into the box, and this varies each week depending on the seasonal vegetables available.

⁸ David Barker, Barker Organics (see case study 1).

⁹ *How to Set Up a Vegetable Box Scheme*, Soil Association technical guide.

¹⁰ *Success with Farm Shops, a Guide to Farm Retailing*, MAFF Publications.

have been successful, and have less risk of theft if limited to a known community. Some English CSAs operate very successful farm shops (see Lathcoats and Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA, case studies 4 and 10).

Farmers' markets

Farmers' markets provide local producers and processors with a means to sell their produce direct to the public close to its source of origin, creating benefits for them, the environment and the local community. The selection of produce varies with each season and the markets location. The market is also an opportunity to forge relations with potential CSA members, and may serve as a drop off point. The staff and resources required to operate the stand are likely to be lower than those of a farm shop.

The rapid growth of farmers' markets (from one to 300 in three years) could be indicative of how UK consumers may embrace CSA. Consumers are increasingly interested in local food and in meeting the producers face to face. The National Farmers' Union estimates market sales are about £65 million per year. The National Association of Farmers' Markets (NAFM)¹¹ promotes and supports their development.

The development of the CSA model

The CSA concept is confined to the industrial world. It is the re-introduction of public participation in farming and access to locally and sustainably produced food. Although the economies of many developing countries are struggling, a walk through any African city or village reveals a thriving and highly productive local food economy. These communities have remained involved in agriculture because:

- The majority of people have access to land which has until recently been plentiful and traditionally passed on to future generations.
- There are few jobs in industry and commerce.
- In the absence of social security, working the land is often the only option for an income, food security and survival.

There appear to be three main reasons behind the development of community supported agriculture in the industrialised world:

- First and foremost CSA is a response from consumers to a society in which they are increasingly divorced from the land and concerned about the methods used to produce their food.
- Secondly, CSA is a direct local marketing opportunity pioneered by producers struggling to compete with global economies of scale.
- Thirdly, CSA can be a strategy for national food security.¹²

CSA is not a trend or a model spreading across the globe through imitation. It is a concept, adapted by consumers and producers in places where the prevailing system no longer addresses their needs. It has occurred in countries

where a section of the public concerned about food quality and production methods have had enough conviction to make lifestyle changes that benefit them and their food producers. In those countries where it has long been established there appears to be an evolution of the CSA model. For example, in Japan,¹³ a few pioneer projects provided a solution to an endemic problem. Their example subsequently evolved into a vast range of initiatives satisfying the needs of the society from which they grew. What begins as a consumer initiative is soon seen by farmers as a marketing opportunity. As the model matures, farms form networks to further satisfy consumer demand for a variety of food. Food co-operatives emerge, instigated by consumers, farmers and entrepreneurs. All tend to provide similar services with emphasis on known farmers sustainably producing local food.

CSA around the globe

(See CSA country reports pages 32–34)

CSA is thought to have evolved simultaneously in Japan¹⁴ and Europe (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) in the 1960s, stimulated by the rapid post-war industrialisation of food production. Since the mid-1990s a number of European countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden, have seen an increasing interest in CSA initiatives. Investigations for this study have not revealed CSA initiatives in Italy or France, possibly because both countries have a reputation for their love of food and appear to have retained robust local food cultures.

The CSA concept was introduced to North America from Switzerland in 1985 and by 2000 there were estimated to be over 1,000 CSAs. CSAs only recently appeared in Australia and are slightly more established in New Zealand. One of the limiting factors, certainly in Australia, is the great distance between farms and urban or consumer centres. In Cuba the 1989 collapse of the Soviet Union, its main trading partner, led to public involvement in food production as a matter of necessity in order to deal with hunger and malnutrition. Here CSA has been a practical approach in ensuring sustainable food production (see Cuba, CSA country reports).

The biodynamic movement

Biodynamic farming, an approach to agriculture based on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, is the inspiration behind many CSAs. The ideology of CSA is a practical interpretation of Steiner's anthroposophic philosophy, a spiritual science which forms the foundation of biodynamic principles. Many CSAs in Europe and the USA have been seeded via this route, with initiatives often developing in association with Steiner schools. Steiner teachings are also central to the Camphill¹⁶ philosophy (see Oaklands Park, case study 7).

¹¹ See further information; organisations.

¹² Cuba: see CSA country reports.

¹³ Japan: see CSA country reports.

¹⁴ Japan, country report for the First IFOAM Asian Conference, 19-22. August 1993.

¹⁵ Gwendal Bellocq, personal communication.

¹⁶ Established by an Austrian, Dr Karl Konig, to work with children, later extended to include adults with a mental handicap or learning disability. This is still Camphill's principal role today.

CSA in the UK

History

In the past communities were closely linked to the land on which their food was grown. Prior to the industrial revolution and the resulting urbanisation of the UK, the majority of the population lived in the rural areas, either working on the land or closely related to someone who did. Villages and market towns developed around local food and trade, limited by the speed of the horse and durability of the product. Households and communities were largely self-reliant in terms of food production. Since then, the population has shifted towards the towns and cities. In the 18th century some 40 per cent of the population worked on the land. In 1900 this number had fallen to eight per cent and today it is only 2.5 per cent.¹⁷ Indeed, the agricultural and horticultural census reveals a loss of 18,600 people from farming between June 1997 and June 1999. Today, most of us are four generations removed from someone involved in agriculture.

We can trace the roots of CSA in the UK back to the early 1990s, a period when farming incomes declined and interest in organic produce increased, despite the limited number of outlets. Local food became an issue and the CSA concept was introduced, based on the experience of Japan and the US. Organic producers took on the distribution and marketing aspect of CSA through box schemes, but as supermarkets began to stock more organic produce the impetus for CSA was lost. From the mid-1990s a deepening farming crisis combined with food scares (including BSE, salmonella, E coli and more recently the devastating effects of foot and mouth disease) have focused consumer attention on how their food is produced.

The impact of industrial farming on the environment, on landscapes and wildlife,¹⁸ on food quality and safety, and on the cultural fabric of the nation is all too apparent. Increasingly, people are looking for more sustainable alternatives to industrial farming and to re-establish their links with the land. This desire has manifested itself through the huge increase in demand for organic food and the popularity of farmers' markets. CSA is again on the agenda, a potential tool for farm diversification and community development.

CSA initiatives operating in the UK

Our research identified over 100 initiatives where producers work in partnership with consumers. These show a great diversity reflecting the unique circumstances from which they developed. Of these we visited and compiled case studies of eleven schemes, which illustrate the variety of

CSAs in England. It is difficult to establish the exact number of CSAs, due to the grass-root nature of such initiatives, and it is likely that many more exist than we account for. For example, many urban food growing projects and charitable projects centred on food production rely on the commitment of local communities. The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens¹⁹ represents 65 city farms in the UK largely run by volunteers. Of the 70 UK 'intentional communities'²⁰ described by Diggers and Dreamers²¹ 51 are described as rural. Most produce food for themselves and some also sell to their local community.

Analysis of CSA case studies

There is at least one case study for each type of CSA we have identified. Table 1, over the page, lists the case studies and their location.

To assess the feasibility for CSA in England we consider the case studies in terms of their impact on the social, economic and environmental aspects of the economy. Coupled with our knowledge of development in countries where CSA is well established, such as the USA and Japan, we can consider their potential as a means of promoting sustainable local food economies in England.

Social

Members

CSA members represent a cross section of society. They tend to include the educated and environmentally aware, families with young children and the elderly who want food that 'tastes like it used to'. They come from all income levels with access to healthy organic produce being a principal motive. Membership ranges from just 12²² to over 300²³ and potentially up to 1,000²⁴ individuals. In two instances the members already existed as a group for purposes other than CSA,²⁵ but in all other cases the CSA has created new networks and friendships. All the CSAs served to build links between urban communities and the countryside, and in almost every case events are organised for and by members around the site of production.

Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA provide a good illustration of the ethics behind CSA. Members receive no produce in return for their fees but instead can vote and influence the co-operative that owns the farm businesses. The community has embraced the ideology of CSA, prioritising the welfare of their local biodynamic farm and the livelihoods that depend on it. The social rewards of working together as a community to protect and develop a village asset are

17 Mingay, G.A., ed. *The Agricultural Revolution 1650–1880*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1977; Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development. *Agriculture and Economics*. Paris: OECD, 1965; Thomas, E. *Introduction to Agricultural Economics*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1956; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. *Agriculture in the UK*, 1995. London: MAFF, HMSO, 1995.

18 *The Biodiversity Benefits of Organic Farming*, Soil Association, 2000.

19 See Organisations, page 39.

20 People living in communal groups who 'intend' to achieve a better social system.

21 Diggers and Dreamers 00-01: *A Guide to Communal Living*, D&G Publications.

22 Tumblers Patch – Pig Co-op.

23 Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA.

24 Organics At Cost.

25 Tumblers Patch and Perry Court.

Table 1

TYPE OF CSA	MODELS OF CSA (see page 7)	NAME AND LOCATION
<i>Farm based CSAs</i>	Shareholder CSA Shareholder CSA Farmer-consumer co-operative	Flaxlands Farm CSA, Petham, Kent Perry Court CSA, Nr Canterbury, Kent Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA, Forest Row, East Sussex
<i>Customer supported box schemes</i>	Subscription CSA	Barker Organics, Wolterton Park, Norwich, Norfolk
<i>Conservation based initiatives</i>	Subscription CSA	Lower Woods, South Gloucestershire
<i>Intentional communities</i>	Shareholder CSA (community members working closely together to produce food for each other)	Oaklands Park (Camphill Community), Newnham-on-Severn, Gloucestershire
<i>Rent or adopt schemes</i>	Subscription CSA Shareholder CSA	Rent-an-Apple Tree, Lathcoats Farm, Chelmsford, Essex Pig Co-op -Tumblers Patch, Bath
<i>Urban food growing projects and charitable projects</i>	Shareholder CSA	Hattersley Market Garden, Hattersley, Tameside
<i>CSAs in development</i>	Subscription CSA Shareholder CSA/Farmer-consumer co-operative	My Veggie Patch Ltd, Suffolk (operating around London) Organics at Cost, Somerset

difficult to describe but the value in terms of identity and purpose to all involved is very apparent.

*"When I go to the supermarket I will do a week's shopping as fast as I can, but I can quite happily spend a couple of hours walking through the farm with my children to buy some sausages from the farm shop."*²⁶

Farmer motivation

Several producers feel that the CSA initiative has given them a different sense of purpose. Rather than labouring to meet the demands of the global market they are managing the land for the benefit of the local community. In the US, a survey reported that 79 per cent of farmers expressed increased job satisfaction from the CSA, and a considerable change in working practice. Seventy-nine per cent of US CSAs have been initiated by the farmers, many being new to farming.²⁷ CSA can also create opportunities for co-operation with other producers and processors.²⁸

Organisation

Initiatives have been started by farmers and growers, by community members and by third parties. Many are informal arrangements, based on trust and mutual commitment. Initiatives involving larger investments led to efforts to formalise the arrangement. These ranged from simply constituting the group and opening a bank account²⁹ to quite complex legal arrangements,³⁰ such as hybrid co-operative structures, requiring professional legal advice. Most of the initiatives were concerned about appropriate legal structures and needed more assistance in this area but found the cost of professional advice prohibitive. As a result, initiatives have tended to be quite dynamic in their development as they seek more satisfactory arrangements.

In some instances the administration required has been greater than expected, particularly in keeping members informed. Stephen Taylor of Lathcoats Farm said *"taking people's contact details and keeping them informed can*

²⁶ Chris Marshall, Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch co-operative chairman.

²⁷ Sharing the Harvest, Elizabeth Hendersen, see Books and Publications, p 38.

²⁸ Flaxlands Farm CSA, Lathcoats, Oaklands Park, Perry Court CSA, Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA.

²⁹ Barker Organics and Flaxlands Farm CSA.

³⁰ Hattersley Market Garden, My Veggie Patch LTD, Oaklands Park, Organics At Cost, Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA.

be time consuming, especially as they all have very different ideas". However, where members are more closely involved in helping with organisation the administrative burden is reduced.

Sustainability

It is difficult to assess the potential longevity of CSA initiatives and whether CSA is a long-term and sustainable approach. However it is widely recognised, supported by international experience, that initiatives developed from the 'bottom up' are more robust due to a greater sense of ownership and responsibility. The development of Hattersley Market Garden project has been predominantly agency led with insufficient participation by its beneficiaries. As a result the agency is finding it difficult to hand over ownership to the local community, has suffered losses through vandalism and theft and continues to rely on short-term grant support.

What is clear from all the initiatives is that no condition is permanent. CSAs are dynamic, constantly evolving to suit the needs of their members, as well as the businesses and the land supporting them. Even if individual CSAs fail, participants garner a greater awareness of the importance and mechanics of local food economies and can thus contribute to their future development.

Training and employment

Food production using low inputs tends to be more labour intensive and as such CSA offers work opportunities suiting all abilities. CSA initiatives often attract volunteers and apprentices on short and long-term arrangements³¹ by offering education and training³² and help for disadvantaged groups.³³

Farmers who rent land to a CSA venture, such as Perry Court's initial arrangement, often offer their knowledge of the land and growing to people who may be novices in production.

Member involvement

Most CSAs encourage their members to work on the farm, possibly in conjunction with events and celebrations. However producers generally feel that members are not always reliable and are generally not capable of sustained physical work. Thus working on the farm creates a respect in members for the levels of work producers put in for little financial reward. Members can contribute by bringing their professional experience (such as legal, financial, architectural, construction and publishing) to the initiative. Depending on the scheme's organisation members may provide these services for the mutual benefit of all members, or in return for farm produce.

Communication

CSAs depend on the quality of the relationship between the consumers and producers and use a variety of means to maintain that connection. One initiative is almost entirely web-based³⁵ with two others having web sites. Although electronic communication was not common among other initiatives, both commercial ventures recognised its potential in the CSA approach. Newsletters, weekly share notes and personal contact are the more common methods of communication.

Economic impact

Financial security

"If the support group had not been formed, quite honestly we would not be in business now!"³⁶

Farmers led the development of almost half of the initiatives, as a way to surmount economic difficulties.³⁷ The various CSA schemes do not attract large profits³⁸ but provide business security and give greater satisfaction to the producers. Turnovers range from £1,000³⁹ to £250,000.⁴⁰ Many of the producers are in it for the lifestyle, and often new to agriculture. Other farms recognise the associated financial benefits. For example, the publicity for the rent-an-apple tree scheme at Lathcoats Farm resulted in a huge increase in people visiting the farm and improved business for the farm shop.

CSA costs and accounts

Annual share prices ranged from £110 to £800 in return for a weekly supply of vegetables through the growing season. When calculating the costs to produce for a CSA, prices are based on inherent costs with fair wages for the producer. In practice this may be calculated by just adding a sufficient mark-up on supermarket retail prices.⁴¹ In general, members are encouraged to pay for produce in advance to help cover pre-production costs such as purchasing new equipment, seed and labour. The more participatory initiatives tend to keep open accounts so that members can understand the work involved and the return for the farmer.

31 Oaklands Park, Perry Court CSA, Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA.

32 Flaxlands Farm CSA, Hattersley Market Garden, Lower Woods, Oaklands Park, Perry Court CSA, Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA.

33 Hattersley Market Garden, Oaklands Park, Perry Court CSA, Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA.

34 My Veggie Patch Ltd.

35 My Veggie Patch Ltd, Organics At Cost.

36 David Barker, Barker Organics.

37 Barker Organics, Lathcoats, Perry Court CSA, Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA.

38 Revenue in addition to production costs and fair wages for the producers.

39 Tumblers Patch – Pig Co-op.

40 Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA.

41 Barker Organics.

Raising finance

There is great potential for community investment in CSA farms, although appropriate legal structures protecting the interests of farmers and community members have to be developed. Several CSA growers were concerned about long-term security. Growers can invest a great deal of time improving the quality and infrastructure of land they do not own, yet on departure receive no remuneration for their efforts ('sweat equity'). This is of particular relevance for new entrants to agriculture who have few, if any, assets. Smaller schemes that incurred start up debt find maintaining repayments difficult. Capital grants would be extremely beneficial for the long-term survival and development of such cases.

Members have also raised the capital, through gifts, soft loans or shares, for farm infrastructure such as barns and costly machinery. Several CSAs have constructed barns and buildings with community labour and financial investment. Oaklands Park recently built a horticultural building with packing and storage areas, tool rooms, potting areas and a study area and will soon construct a dairy to make cheeses. Oaklands Park serves to illustrate another potential for CSA, in its shared use of buildings and resources by several community's enterprises. This co-operative model could be replicated in the conventional farm situation with appropriate legal arrangements allowing external investment (finance and labour) and the increased value of these assets being shared equitably.

Several initiatives are linked to Local Exchange Trading Schemes (LETS)⁴² however Flaxlands Farm CSA stopped accepting payment in LETS currency because found it difficult to find opportunities to spend it and needed real currency.

Added value

In all cases produce is marketed locally and where possible with value added by on farm processing.⁴³ Non-CSA produce is also marketed locally where possible. The most popular method for distributing produce amongst members is through vegetable box schemes,⁴⁴ usually from common collection points, which also serve a valuable social function. CSA also market their produce through farm shops,⁴⁵ farmers' markets, local shops and pick your own.

Environmental

Sustainable agriculture

The primary purpose of CSA initiatives is to grow food for local consumption. Many CSAs are based on quite small plots of land (up to 10ha)⁴⁶ although a few constitute whole farms supplying a hundred people or more.⁴⁷ Production is usually low input and intensive, predominantly certified organic or uncertified but following organic standards.⁴⁸ Smaller CSA initiatives find organic certification costs prohibitive but, as they are directly accountable to their members, lack of certification is acceptable to them.⁴⁹

Table 2: Sample CSA operating costs

	TUMBLERS PATCH Pig Co-op, 12 people, 9 pigs	FLAXLAND FARM CSA 30 weeks, 70 shares	PERRY COURT CSA 24 weeks, 100 shares
<i>Production costs</i>			
Rentals		£170	£1,060
Growing/feeding (inc. labour)	£648	£11,615	£6,823
Harvesting	£352		£1,580
Equipment		£500	£360
<i>Deliveries</i>		£300	
<i>Other costs</i> for example newsletters, insurance, meetings		£656	£847
<i>Total expenses</i>	£1,000	£13,241	£10,670
<i>Shares</i>	6 @ £105 6 @ £52.5	70 @ £195	100 @ £102 £10,200
<i>Other</i>	£55		£866
<i>Total income</i>	£1,000	£13,650	£11,066

42 Barker Organics, Flaxlands Farm CSA.

43 Lathcoats Farm, Oaklands Park, Perry Court CSA, Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch.

44 Barker Organics, Flaxlands Farm CSA, My Veggie Patch Ltd, Oaklands Park, Organics At Cost, Perry Court CSA.

45 Lathcoats Farm, Perry Court CSA, Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA.

46 Barker Organics, Perry Court CSA, Hattersley Market Garden, Tumblers Patch.

47 Oaklands Park, Organics at Cost, Hattersley Market Garden.

48 Flaxlands Farm CSA, Hattersley Market Garden, Organics at Cost.

49 Similar to the USA where most CSAs grow to organic standards, see *Sharing the Harvest, a Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*, Henderson and Van En, 1999.

Biodiversity

CSAs usually adopt organic farming methods. The biodiversity benefits of organic farming, which favour both species variety and numbers, are now widely accepted.⁵⁰ The Soil Association is further developing the conservation guidelines in its organic standards.

Rare breeds and local varieties often feature in CSA production and are selected to suit the local environmental and market conditions, again adding to the diversity of the holdings and enhancing local distinctiveness.

Lower Woods⁵¹ is a conservation initiative where local communities are involved in woodland management, restoring old coppice in return for the firewood and woodland products derived from their efforts. Participants are trained to use chainsaws and manage woodland. This model could easily be replicated on any holding with woodland. Communities can get involved in other conservation initiatives. Wildlife surveys and monitoring, habitat restoration and maintenance, and species promotion (for example bat and bird boxes) are all activities potentially involving the public on farms.

Conclusions

Our case studies show that in most cases the CSA initiatives build up the social, economic and environmental assets of their local economies. In particular CSA creates social capital ('the cohesiveness of people and societies').⁵² By using social capital it in turn builds on the other 'capital assets'⁵³ (trust, common rules and networks) of the local economy. This can be contrasted with the remote marketing of global food economies through which social capital has been increasingly drained over the last few decades. Increased social capital lowers the costs of working together, facilitating co-operation. People have confidence to invest in collective activities, knowing that others will also do so. One way to ensure the stability of social capital is for groups to work together by federating to influence district, regional or even national bodies.⁵⁴

Each CSA initiative is unique. However what they have in common is an attempt to create a mutual arrangement between consumers and producers. To this end a degree of consumer participation is essential, though the level varies. However, it is clear that increased participation brings a greater commitment and sense of responsibility with a greater likelihood of success and sustainability. There may be lessons to learn from the participatory approach to development work in the creation of new local food systems that promote local culture and distinctiveness.

Participation makes projects more effective and sustainable in a variety of ways. It helps to identify the social and economic requirements of local communities, reduces potential for conflict, promotes a transfer in knowledge and technology, and, most importantly, it encourages a culture of self help and a commitment among the people to the development of their own communities.

Stephen Taylor of Lathcoats Farm observed, *"The PYO scheme customers will reject fruit, throwing what they don't want onto the ground. With the rent-a-tree scheme they take it all home as they feel it is theirs."*

The case studies presented here are the result of visits to working CSAs. We have however identified one CSA that had disbanded. Springhill Farm, Aylesbury, ran into difficulties when its London customer base wanted greater farm access and established a more local initiative. With the loss of two thirds of its customers Springhill's business collapsed. The land and buildings were sold as separate lots. The now Sustainable Lifestyles Research Co-op Ltd (SLRC) bought the 70 acres of land in order to continue growing for an organic vegetable box scheme. The co-op members are now considering a self-build eco-housing project on the holding for on-site accommodation.

In a few instances we see people starting up CSAs with a great deal of enthusiasm, but losing that interest over time. This can be a problem when an individual or small number of activists start up the initiative, because if they leave, the drive behind the initiative can go with them. However CSA initiatives need not be a permanent solution in themselves, particularly as the needs of communities change with time. Short-term community support and investment may be all that is needed to assist producers through periods of insecurity and conversion of production.⁵⁵ CSA can therefore be considered as a tool for change with which to take advantage of the current food climate to encourage more sustainable production with greater accountability to the consumer and fair returns for producers.

50 *The Biodiversity Benefits of Organic Farming*, Soil Association, 2000.

51 See case study 5.

52 *Taking Back the Middle for Local Economies*, Jules Pretty.

53 *Taking Back the Middle for Local Economies*, Jules Pretty.

54 Social capital and the environment, Jules Pretty and Hugh Ward, *World Development*, Feb 2001, Vol. 29 (No2).

55 Barker Organics, Perry Court CSA.

Summarised benefits of CSA

Farmers

- Are 'guaranteed' a secure income paid in advance, giving financial security with room to plan, buy seed, invest in machinery and concentrate on farming.
- Receive a higher and fairer return for their products through cutting out the middle man.
- See their status elevated in the eyes of consumers through putting 'the farmer's face on food.'
- Receive direct feedback from consumers who in turn become more aware of the true cost of food.
- Communicate and co-operate more with other farmers.
- Get to socialise more with people they would not otherwise meet, this may be more appealing to younger farmers.
- Can raise working capital and share the burden of change to more sustainable systems.

Consumers

- Receive fresh food from an accountable source.
- Reconnect with the land and improve their knowledge of the seasonality of produce.
- Receive a sense of belonging to a community.
- Have access to a farm as a resource for education, work and leisure.
- Experience improved health through better diet, physical work and improved mental health through socialising and spending time in the countryside.
- Are introduced to new and traditional crop varieties.
- Get better value for money.
- Can influence the landscape they live in.

Society

- Enjoys the environmental benefits of fewer food miles, less packaging, ecologically sensitive farming.
- Sees the return of local distinctiveness, regional food production and stewardship of local land.
- Sees the local economy enhanced by higher employment, more local processing, local consumption and circulation of money in the community.⁵⁶
- Benefits from the promotion of social networks, social responsibility, the sense of community and trust.

Opportunities for CSA in UK

Over the past year consumers have shown an increasing interest in the food they buy and where it comes from. They are less and less confident about the safety and quality of their food and are demanding more diversity and higher quality. A series of food scares (including salmonella, E coli, BSE, swine fever, and most recently the devastating effect of foot and mouth on the livestock industry) is leading consumers and politicians alike to question the way we produce food in this country. There is now a call for a move towards more sustainable farming methods which respect both the environment and the people that work the land.

As the true costs of food production become apparent, consumer choice is based increasingly on value rather than costs. This is reflected in the increased sales of organic food. In 1999 37.2 per cent of UK households made an organic purchase, this rose to over 65 per cent in 2000, an increase of 6.6 million homes. Concerned about food safety, health and fitness, the environment and animal welfare, shoppers consistently claim they are prepared to pay more for organic foods.⁵⁷

CSA is an increasingly appealing opportunity for farmers in the UK. The increasing demand for organic food illustrates that consumers want food they can trust to come from an accountable source. The results of a survey of potential CSA members⁵⁸ at Bristol and Bath farmers' markets, indicated that 45 per cent of shoppers were interested in the CSA concept and seven per cent would seriously consider joining, if one was available.

CSA is an opportunity for the public to be directly involved in rebuilding the rural economy so that it can provide the produce and countryside they value.

A threat to the integrity of any market is its potential industrialisation. Niche markets can grow into mass markets. The organic sector is at this threshold and producers and processors are now vulnerable to competition and the compromises of industrialisation. However, producers with a dedicated customer base need not see other producers as their competitors. They are in a better position to collaborate rather than compete. In the minds of the consumer there is no substitute to 'their' producer, and this relationship will naturally limit the size of the operation if the relationship is to remain meaningful.

'the linking of unique productive capacities with unique sets of natural resources in serving the needs and wants of unique groups of customers creates a unique system of meeting human needs that cannot be industrialised'.⁵⁹

Consumers feel more secure and socially responsible when they support local and regional food systems; they want to

'know their farmer'. Similarly, farmers who produce in ecologically sound and socially responsible ways have much to gain from cultivating personal relationships with their customers. We now need to focus on building this relationship between farmers and consumers.

Community Supported Agriculture, government objectives and policy

CSAs, with their wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits, are ideally placed to help deliver government objectives in various policy areas, including agriculture, biodiversity, rural development, social regeneration, education and health.

The government objectives for agriculture

CSAs could make an important contribution to the government's current agricultural policy objectives (*A New Direction for Agriculture*, 1999) which seek to:

- Secure farming viability and incomes through diversification and added value.
- Encourage greater market orientation.
- Increase responsiveness to consumer wishes with respect to food quality and traceability.
- Integrate the rural economy.
- Improve sustainability.

The government's rural policy objectives⁶⁰

The government's vision for rural areas, as set out in the Rural White Paper (RWP) in December 2000, is one of a living, working, protected and vibrant countryside. In order to achieve this the government has set itself a number of rural policy objectives that aim to 'sustain and enhance the distinctive environment, economy and social fabric of the English countryside for the benefit of all'⁶¹ (see table 3 overleaf).

In particular the RWP emphasises

- The importance of community strength – 'prosperous, sustainable and inclusive rural communities.'
- Local partnerships.
- Community strategies.
- Increased co-operative working between farmers and others in the food chain.
- Placing environmental and social objectives closer to the heart of farming policy.
- Land-based businesses and local products as key to continued rural prosperity.

⁵⁷ *The Organic Food and Farming Report 2000*, Soil Association

⁵⁸ *Organics at Cost* (see Case Study 8)

⁵⁹ John Elkerd, University of Missouri, USA

⁶⁰ Source: Rural White Paper

⁶¹ p6, Rural White Paper

- Thriving economies in all rural areas which provide good quality employment opportunities and exploit the versatility, entrepreneurial tradition and, increasingly local, green business potential' (p73).
- Greater financial independence for local authorities and regions.

Table 3

Objectives

- 1 To facilitate the development of dynamic, competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside, tackling poverty in rural areas.
- 2 To maintain and stimulate communities and secure access to services which is equitable in all circumstances, for those who live or work in the countryside.
- 3 To conserve and enhance rural landscapes and the diversity and abundance of wildlife (including the habitats on which it depends).
- 4 To increase opportunities for people to get enjoyment from the countryside. To open up public access to mountain, moor, heath and down and registered common land by the end of 2005.
- 5 To promote government responsiveness to rural communities through better working together between central departments, local government, and government agencies and better co-operation with non-government bodies.

As has already been shown, CSAs, by their very nature, fulfil the majority of these aspirations. Increasing the policy emphasis and funding in these areas will create more opportunities to set up CSAs.

CSAs can also contribute to the government's health objectives. Research shows that eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day can help protect against coronary heart disease and some cancers. The government's strategy for public health, *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation*, sets targets for tackling these health issues, and recommends increasing fruit and vegetable consumption by 50 per cent as one way of reaching these targets. In addition the Food Standards Agency now has a remit to promote healthy eating and good nutrition at a local level. As part of their strategic framework they aim to 'develop appropriate means of enabling, motivating and informing the general population' and to 'identify and address barriers to changing dietary behaviour'. CSAs can help to achieve these objectives by making people more aware of the provenance of their food and how it has been grown. They also make

fresh, good quality fruit and vegetables more accessible and affordable.

As we have seen, a sense of community is a central plank of CSAs and the key to their success. Community capacity building and support for community self-help are central elements of the government's New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal for the most deprived neighbourhoods and the Rural White Paper. In particular the government aims to encourage more people to get actively involved in their communities and to enable them to determine their own needs and aims locally in order to improve their quality of life. Developing the concept of 'quality town or parish councils' from theory to practice is planned as a way of achieving this objective in rural areas. CSAs are a good example of how local partnerships and community-led working can benefit all involved.

The government's Welfare to Work strategy aims to close the gap between the skills employers want and the skills people can offer. Its New Deal programme gives employers subsidies and grants to take on and train apprentices. CSAs can play a role here by providing people with training in valuable horticultural skills.

Available support for Community Supported Agriculture in England

A number of government schemes and initiatives are already up and running which are either applicable to CSAs or could be tailored to benefit CSAs. Of particular relevance is the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), introduced in England in October 2000. ERDP provides a framework of new schemes that support rural enterprise and diversification including through marketing and training skills and additional resources for green farming schemes. The Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES) and the Vocational Training Scheme (VTS) are particularly significant since they are not restricted to farmers but are open to anyone involved in rural enterprise. However, still only 10 per cent of support for the agricultural industry will be spent on rural development and green farming schemes by 2006. The proportion of this spent on the RES and VTS remains small – only £174 million of a total ERDP budget of £1.6 billion (or 10.6 per cent).

The Countryside Agency 's recently launched 'Toolkit' helps market towns to identify their economic, social and environmental strengths and weaknesses, and those of the surrounding countryside. The Toolkit also contains practical guidance for communities to set up local partnerships, and draw up a market town action plan for the future prosperity of their area. Setting up CSAs could form part of this action plan. 'Eat The View' is another initiative by the Countryside Agency aimed at closing the gap between consumers and producers. The Soil Association will contribute to this programme through network development and information

provision to further develop the local food sector.

The Farm Business Advice Service (developed by MAFF in conjunction with the Small Business Service, see organisations, page 39) could also be useful in giving free basic business advice to farmers and growers. In order to be eligible, however, the farmer or grower must have a county parish holding number and must spend at least 75 per cent of their working time on the farm.

Limitations to CSA

While CSA benefits farmers, local communities, rural regeneration and the environment, initiatives can face a number of problems. These include:

Consumer trends (demand)

- Members can lose their commitment and enthusiasm.
- Lack of discrete communities and common interest groups.
- Initiatives are economically motivated with a tendency to grow too large and lose sight of founding principles.
- Funding-led activity distracts from productive community-led activity.
- The perception of opposing interests between rural farmer and urban consumer.
- A trend towards convenience meals, the loss of cooking skills and little public understanding of the food chain.

Agricultural climate (supply)

- Decreasing number of smallholdings, with production directed towards large farms producing for global markets.
- Short length of tenancy agreements and cost of renegotiating agreements leading to lack of incentive to plan for the long-term.
- Farmers are accustomed to being independent and solitary.
- High average age of farmers and little appeal or hope for next generation of farmers.
- Inflated cost of land and rural housing combined with restrictive planning regulations.
- Bankrupt farms likely to be purchased by large farming companies.
- Change in production for new markets requires capital most farmers do not have.

Skill shortages

- Few people have the skills to produce the sustained quantity and variety of crops required for CSA.
- Or the skills of facilitation, community development, project management, farming, marketing and financing, and will work for a low wage.
- Complicated nature of legal structures and high cost of gaining professional legal advice.
- Little support for groups setting up new CSA initiatives.
- The lack of awareness of the CSA concept makes it difficult to market.

Policy arena

- Short length of tenancy agreements, restrictive covenants and cost of renegotiating agreements leading to lack of incentive to plan for the long-term.⁶²
- Schemes that could offer financial assistance for initial start-up costs are under-funded.
- Lack of awareness of CSAs and the benefits they bring to the general public and policy makers.

When is CSA appropriate?

Many of the factors limiting CSA development can be overcome. However it is clear that CSA cannot be considered in all circumstances. Conditions required as a pre-requisite to CSA include:⁶³

- A capable producer willing to share responsibilities and choice with the public.
- A motivated and capable activist to initiate the scheme.
- Informed consumers.
- Accessible land.

There are many examples of producers taking on the role of activist and establishing CSAs. CSA does require a particular motivation in both the producers and consumers, qualities somewhat lacking in society today. Realistically opportunities will be limited, however, promotion of CSA when these opportunities arise will benefit farms and local communities through increased awareness and co-operation.

⁶² Success with Farm Shops, a Guide to Farm Retailing, MAFF Publications.

⁶³ See, Who is involved in Community Supported Agriculture, page 6.

Promoting CSA in England

Reconnecting consumers with producers may be the most important single strategy for breaking away from industrial agriculture and moving towards more sustainable farming that meets the needs of both consumers and producers. Realising the value in people (increasing social capital) over purely material goods is the key to a sustainable future. CSA therefore has a valuable role to play in redeveloping these connections. This report now considers how to promote this relationship, without being over prescriptive and stifling local creativity, yet providing adequate support and guidance.

There are five main areas of support required by developing CSAs:

- Professional help for CSA groups.
- Access to start up grants and cheap finance.
- Access to appropriate professional advice: legal advice for social enterprise, food hygiene, health and safety.
- Improved communication and mutual support through partnership and networking.
- Co-ordinated promotion and marketing of CSA at national, regional and local levels.

The Soil Association's CSA programme

The Soil Association is currently undertaking the following activities:

- Promotion of CSA at national, regional and local events and through the media.
- The publication of an action manual for CSA, a dynamic document, regularly updated, based on the experience of emerging CSAs. Includes guidelines for CSA development stating clear principles and recommended approaches for their development.
- Provision of professional facilitation for CSA groups, developing activities to include in the CSA action manual.
- Maintenance of a CSA resource database.
- Development of CSA support networks.
- Production of a briefing sheet describing CSA which 'signposts' the action manual and feasibility study.

Recommendations for government and statutory agencies

In order to encourage more CSAs and to enable those that already exist to continue to thrive, the government needs to:

- Ensure that all regional and local strategies include the development of local food economies.
- Improve market conditions for products produced from systems of sustainable land management.
- Raise public awareness of diet, where food comes from and its true cost by promoting the environmental, social, community and economic benefits of CSAs and farming more generally.
- Continue to push for a shift of Common Agricultural Policy funding from production subsidies towards sustainability, food quality and rural development. This will allow ERDP resources for such schemes to be increased.
- Facilitate and encourage local partnership working.
- Encourage parish and rural community councils to promote CSAs as part of a community strategy and see them as a way of addressing problems locally.
- Use the school curriculum to promote healthy eating and nutrition.
- Establish an integrated source of information on all funding opportunities and advice available to community projects and small businesses.
- Ensure that all organisations giving advice on grants (such as the Rural Development Service and Small Business Service) are aware of the CSA concept, its benefits and its suitability for funding.
- Encourage training opportunities for growers.
- Recognise the education and training value CSAs can offer schoolchildren the unemployed and special needs groups.
- Encourage local authorities, statutory agencies and central government to recognise the opportunities that CSAs present for promoting local food, local distinctiveness, healthy eating and tackling social, economic and environmental issues at a local and community level.
- Give CSAs free business advice through the Small Business Service even if they do not have a county parish holding number or spend 75 per cent of working time on the farm.
- Revise policy in order to ease access to land with living accommodation for new entrants to agriculture.

Recommendations

Many organisations⁶⁴ already promote local food and community participation. Their potential to do so is best achieved through improved co-operation and partnership working. Some are represented on the CSA working party, forming the basis for future partnerships in the promotion and development of CSA in the UK. They can:

- Work in partnership to advise government and influence the development of policy and support measures.
- Promote the environmental, social, community and economic benefits of CSAs and farming more generally in order to heighten public awareness of diet, where food comes from and its true costs.
- Increase resources for rural development schemes within the ERDP such as Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES) and Vocational Training Scheme.
- Facilitate and encourage local partnership working and community participation in the development of local food initiatives.
- Make use of and build on existing networks, for example, retirement groups, health clubs, the Women's Institute, religious groups (whose meeting places may be used as drop off sites for produce), parish and town councils.
- Allow organisations such as Willing Workers On Organic Farms (WWOOF) to co-ordinate a CSA volunteer programme.
- Develop CSAs within existing community food initiatives, particularly in respect to healthy eating. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of local community allotment sites supplying fresh vegetables to other community food initiatives eg lunch/breakfast clubs, food co-ops.
- Encourage NGOs that own land, such as RSPB and the National Trust, to consider CSA for their holdings.

Future research

- The wider effects of CSA on public awareness of local food, the local economy, and the extent to which it promotes farmer co-operation.
- The extent to which CSA can provide farmers with a more secure income.
- Localised feasibility studies of CSA as part of a local food network partnership involving local authorities, independent agencies and the public.
- Measuring the effectiveness of networks such as those of a CSA farm or initiatives supporting their development.

⁶⁴ see organisations, page 39.



Case Studies of CSA's in the UK

CASE STUDY 1

Barker Organics – Norwich, Norfolk

Summary

A producer-run box scheme with an approximate turnover of £40,000 a year. Customers have formed themselves into an independent Organic Produce Support Group and support the Barker family's organic production by raising funds for capital investments and offering their skills and contacts.

"If the support group had not been formed, quite honestly we would not be in business now!" (David Barker).

History

When the wholesale organic market collapsed at the end of the 1980s, the Barkers moved their production to a box scheme system. It was launched in 1993 on a 4ha site with 15 customers. The Barkers increased their custom to 120 households within 18 months by word of mouth and leaflet distribution. To help them through a difficult period in the mid 1990s the customers formed a constituted support group. The scheme has since been scaled down as David felt 'the box scheme took over, we became box scheme operators trying to fit in some growing!'

Organisation

The Organic Produce Support Group includes all box scheme members and has a written constitution, elected steering group and bank account. The group's executive committee has between five and seven members, including David and Jane Barker. Its objects are:

To support Jane and David Barker in their production and supply of organic produce in any way appropriate and acceptable to them in order to keep the box scheme in operation, and, with them, to promote and educate people about the principles of organic horticulture and production.

Finance

Vegetable boxes cost between £3.50-£20.00, a small box usually contains six items. The cost of labour and growing the produce is never calculated and boxes are based on a 30 per cent mark up on wholesale prices. The turnover for 200 boxes employing five people on the initial 4ha Old Hall Farm site was £70-80,000. Now at the new 2ha Wolterton Park site, three people produce for 140 boxes with a turnover of £40,000. The support group's bank account receives money from fund raising, donations and loans. In the year 1997-1998 £1,623 was handed over to the Barkers for production activities. Of this money £955 was donated in addition to the time and effort given by the members themselves.

Activities

The box scheme has a range of box sizes to suit individual preferences. Some produce is bought in but the aim is to grow as much as possible to reduce costs. The number of customers has been reduced so that the Barkers can spend more time growing. Money raised by the support group has helped finance rabbit netting, a new well and extra chicken sheds. Volunteers helped with the labour. Group members are also invited to work in the garden. Now the box scheme is financially stable the support group helps out with events such as the garden open day. The establishment of a Local Exchange Trading System (LETS scheme) proved popular and although it operates quite independently of the box scheme, many of its customers subscribe to both.

Future plans

These include restoring the walled garden and greenhouses to increase productivity, especially during the 'hungry gap'. There are plans to convert a building into an information centre to promote organics and CSA. The garden will be open to the general public as well as customers.

The support group takes a back seat these days, as the business is on a secure footing.

Flaxland Farm CSA – Canterbury, Kent

Summary

This 1ha CSA garden uses biodynamic methods to grow vegetables for its members. They are delivered through a weekly box scheme. The turnover is between £10,000–£13,500. Recently box numbers have dwindled to 55, blamed mainly on the increased availability of organic vegetables in local supermarkets and insufficient publicity by Flaxlands. However a healthy community has developed around the farm and the social and spiritual rewards make up for the grower's small financial returns.

History

Jon Taylor set up Flaxland Farm CSA 1995 and a budget was drawn up based on four part-time growers supplying vegetables to 70 members over six months. As nearby Perry Court CSA (see case study 9) was oversubscribed, it was fairly easy to recruit members through leaflets and word of mouth (primarily through the LETS Scheme). In response to feedback, the scheme lengthened its growing season to nine months and reduced its membership to 55.

Organisation

The members set up a multi-signature bank account and appointed a club chairperson, treasurer and secretary. Meetings were minuted, providing the growers with a sense of equal partnership. Although there is no formal agreement made with the members they sign an agreement recognising that the producers cannot guarantee the amount of produce, which may be 'more or less than anticipated'. Membership includes the educated and environmentally aware, families with young children and the elderly who want food that 'tastes like it used to'. Most members live within three or four miles of the farm, and there is a drop off point at a whole-food shop in Canterbury.

Finance

The part-time growers are paid £5 an hour (only if all shares are sold). All extra work is voluntary. In 2000 members' subscriptions were £6.50 a week or £210 a year. To guarantee their commitment they are encouraged to pay at least one quarter up front and the remainder as post-dated cheques. The growers invested £1000 in rabbit fencing for the site, which was erected with voluntary labour.

All mechanical cultivations are contracted at a cost of £200–£300 per year. The land is rented for £200 a year on a two year lease, plus £300 every other year in legal fees to draw up a new agreement. The growers are dissatisfied with the short leases, which do not give long-term stability, or an incentive to invest in the site. Jon Taylor feels that the

budget tolerance is too fine because it requires that all shares are sold in order to meet the operating costs. "There is little contingency or funds to enable capital projects to be undertaken, and a dilemma has emerged between keeping the box prices reasonable and investing in the project's future." In this respect it would have been helpful if a start up grant or funds were available for infrastructure such as tools, propagation tunnels, secure tool storage and storage barns.

Activities

The CSA has an open door policy to secure faith in the integrity of the growers and their production. Most of the box contents are grown on site with three medium sized polytunnels used to extend the season. Members can work towards the cost of their box, 50 hours work equates to full membership. To reduce the amount of co-ordination, voluntary days are restricted to Tuesday and Thursday (harvest day) and an informal contract clarifies the amount of work expected. A questionnaire is circulated to help improve the scheme and the growers receive continual feedback throughout the growing season.

Members participate with many events organised at the farm including open days and festivals. Many members wanted to learn more about organic growing and the growers have developed a range of practical courses including topics such as an introduction to biodynamic growing, ecological design and growing without digging.

Future plans

To alleviate the financial and physical burden of a few individuals, the core team would like to see the development of a community growing project where members take on a share of the practical responsibilities in a non-commercial enterprise. Members would be allocated a task for the year, for example, tending one or two crops, watering the greenhouses or maintaining the grass verges. A formal legal structure would be agreed upon (possibly an Industrial and Provident Society) with more non-growers on the management committee to encourage greater commitment and to introduce fresh perspectives.

Hattersley Market Garden – Stalybridge, Cheshire

Summary

A 1ha market garden developed as a community business to provide employment and training for local residents. The initiative is driven by Groundwork Tameside in collaboration with local authorities and seeks to involve the local community, particularly the youth, in a non-confrontational project promoting literacy and numeracy. The local community is not yet completely involved or aware of the opportunities of the project, possibly because there was insufficient participation in its development.

History

Groundwork is an environmental regeneration charity working in partnership with local people, local authorities and business. The charity promotes economic and social regeneration by improving the local environment. This CSA initiative is one of a number of projects in the Hattersley area (a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) area) under the banner of Community Agriculture.

The initial physical works (ground clearance, drainage and perimeter fence) were carried out by contractors and completed by September 1999. Since then Groundwork has continued the work, installing basic infrastructure such as polytunnels and irrigation systems and has initiated several community growing projects. A newsletter was published and circulated to households in the area to raise Groundwork's profile and promote interest in their projects. The garden's stock and business have been formally handed over to a charity, Acorn+ (see below) to give the community ownership and responsibility for the market garden.

Organisation

There are many partners and donors involved. The land is owned by the local Tameside County Council and leased for a peppercorn rent for a period of 99 years. The Groundwork Trust owns the infrastructure, but the business and stock is owned and managed by Acorn+, a charity set up with a trading arm and to be owned by the Hattersley community. A full-time project manager based on the site will develop a strategy for the business and oversee its implementation and a training supervisor will be employed to co-ordinate training programmes including New Deal, Growing Yourself and Young Diggers Club.

Finance

To date the project has relied entirely on external funding, initially from English Partnerships' Community Investment fund and thereafter SRB funds of approximately £35,000 a year. Under the Community Economic Development Action Plan for Hattersley the market garden and the garden centre were awarded additional funding. The National lottery, Landfill Tax and private companies have also donated funds and materials.

Activities

Currently, the market garden is used by ten New Deal trainees. In association with Manchester Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), Groundwork is an approved training provider (accredited by the Edexcel BTEC Awarding Body) giving practical training towards NVQ level 2 qualifications in horticulture and intensive cropping, and landscaping and ecosystems. Gardening workshops have been held and plants grown on the site have been sold to local residents at cost price. Groundwork has also been co-ordinating a 'tool library' from the market garden where for £1 membership inhabitants of Hattersley can hire gardening equipment at very low rates.

Future plans

Groundwork is establishing two projects at the market garden. Growing Yourself, aimed at disadvantaged adults, will use horticulture to improve literacy and numeracy, and the Young Diggers Club is an after school club. The future of the project depends on a greater input from the local community. If developed on site this could provide a further training opportunity for local people. The activities of the various participating groups will have to be co-ordinated to maximise production, otherwise Groundwork is unlikely to be viable as a stand alone business and will continue to require external support.

Lathcoats Farm – Chelmsford, Essex

Summary

A commercial fruit farm of 55ha with a large farm shop and pick your own (PYO) scheme. In 2000 the farm trialled a rent-a-tree scheme hiring out apple trees in return for their yield. Scheme organiser Philip Taylor has decided to continue the scheme, because although it did not generate a great deal of direct income, it provided valuable publicity for the farm and the farm shop. However he did not expect the amount of administration involved. He said *“taking people’s contact details and keeping them informed can be time consuming, especially as they all have very different ideas.”*

History

Opened in 1970, the farm shop has found it increasingly difficult to compete with supermarkets selling foreign apples, and so local direct marketing has become all the more important. Lathcoats borrowed the idea of renting out apple trees from a vineyard that rented out vines and produced wine for its customers. It was thought that such a scheme would increase the profile of the farm shop, and the idea was successfully trialled in the 2000 season.

Organisation

In its first year, the rent-a-tree scheme was based on an informal and flexible arrangement between farm and customers. In return for a £10 fee the customers received details of the location and variety of the tree. Each customer was guaranteed 13 kg of apples equating to 77p/kg – good value compared with supermarket prices. There was no risk because if the rented tree failed, the quota was made up from another tree. Most of the customers lived within 15 miles, although a few came from as far as 35 miles away. Generally customers were young families with children or elderly couples who enjoyed reminiscing about how things used to be.

Finance

Each of the 47 subscribers paid £10 for the season’s fruit from their tree. Although the rent-a-tree scheme only raised a tiny fraction of the farm’s direct income, it is difficult to put a value on the shop and PYO sales generated through the rent-a-tree publicity.

Activities

The scheme provided a great deal of publicity, largely through local newspapers and radio. Customers were encouraged to visit the farm and their trees throughout the year. The majority only came on harvest day, but those who watched their fruit develop tended to be more tolerant of imperfections. Lathcoat’s Stephen Taylor compared the farm customers *“the PYO scheme customers will reject fruit throwing what they don’t want onto the ground, with the rent-a-tree scheme they take it all home as they feel it is theirs.”*

Lathcoat hosts a mini farmers’ market to celebrate Apple Day (a national event organised by the charity Common Ground – see organisations, page 39), with stalls, rare breeds from neighbouring farms and games. The centre of attention however is the tasting of 30 varieties of apple. In 2000 the market attracted up to 1,200 people. The greatest limitation for the farm’s activities is the lack of car parking space.

Future plans

The variety in yield of the rented trees will have to be allowed for in future years. They will either be priced according to anticipated yields or the scheme will be limited to trees of comparable yields. Stephen said *“Some customers were so embarrassed at how much they got from their trees that they sent a cash donation to a charity in Lathcoats’ name.”* In 2001 Lathcoats hopes to advertise the scheme more widely and the farm shop is already selling certificates as gifts.

Lower Woods – Wickwar, South Gloucestershire

Summary

The Badminton Estate gift of Lower Woods to the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust in 1996 more than doubled the area of land owned and managed by the Trust. This gave the Trust a chance to demonstrate how to manage a woodland for wildlife and people and produce an income through woodland produce such as timber and coppice materials. A local community scheme to restore the abandoned coppice, based on a traditional arrangement, was initiated. Commoners living next to the woods manage sections or coupes of the woodland and keep firewood and other woodland products as their reward. The coppice management improves habitat for woodland species and contracted work provides employment and re-skilling in traditional woodland management.

History

The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust has managed a reserve in the middle of Lower Woods since 1967 and in 1996 was kindly given the whole 284 ha woodland from the Badminton Estate. Local tradition was to buy a local 'coupe' (40x40 paces) to coppice with the products (firewood, poles etc) going to the individual. The majority of the trees are oak or ash. Wide grassy rides run throughout the reserve and two substantial commons border the woods. The rides contain typical unimproved grassland flora and more than 50 species of bird have been recorded in the reserve.

Organisation

On receipt of the reserve the Trust appointed a project manager supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. A management committee, which includes ecological experts and local residents, advises on management issues in the woods. The manager can seek further advice on the management of common land from the Commons Steering Group. A management plan for the reserve includes substantial work to woodland and grassland restoration. Fourteen local people each manage coupes of approximately 1ha under an annual contract identifying their coupe and stipulating health and safety procedures.

Finance

The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded the trust £100,000, allowing it to enhance other areas of the woodland. Each coppicer pays a £30 annual fee, and it is hoped that at the end of the grant funding period this steady income will be the basis for a demonstrable example of sustainable woodland management.

Activities

Several types of coppice products, including charcoal, hazel poles, thatching spars and specialist items generate a small but easily obtained income. Other sales include logs, fencing materials, pulp wood and occasional hardwood sales. Each volunteer receives training in chainsaw use with a recognised certificate of competence meeting health and safety regulations. Guided walks and a children's educational group all help maintain the close community ties felt to be essential in the progression towards a sustainable woodland.

Future plans

Participants will be able to request additional training in the broader aspects of coppicing and management of Lower Woods. Survey and research work has already identified past human activities and evidence of changing woodland cover. Key species populations continue to be monitored.

My Veggie Patch Ltd – Stowmarket, Suffolk

Summary

My Veggie Patch (MVP) is a recently established internet-based opportunity for people to have vegetables grown for them on their own plot. They can see how their vegetables are doing by looking at the weekly photographs and narratives on their individual pages of the company web site (alternatively a postal or fax service is available). During the harvest season their produce is delivered each week to their door. If the crops fail then customers have to accept the loss as though they were doing the work themselves, however, as Jon Reade the main driving force behind the scheme says *"we try to select the most suitable varieties, so hopefully you won't lose a whole crop. But like any gardener, you take the good years with the bad."* This novel approach within the theme of Community Supported Agriculture may have a great deal of public appeal.

History

The concept of My Veggie Patch is to provide an opportunity for those who do not have the time, space or are not physically able, to maintain a vegetable plot. The team developed the website themselves to keep costs to a minimum, although they had to pay for legal expertise. The initial target area is approximately a 50-mile radius around London and customers include a broad range of people – young professionals, the disabled wishing to have a garden, inner city dwellers with no access to allotments and the elderly no longer able to tend their own gardens. By November 2000 they had 30 customers.

Organisation

The management team consists of an accountant, an information technology manager and a farmer. My Veggie Patch Ltd has drawn up legal contracts with individual customers and potential contracted growers.

Finance

The My Veggie Patch team have kept costs down by doing most of the work themselves using equipment they already own. They estimate that an equivalent website would cost approximately £12,000 to develop. The computer equipment and digital camera have been costed at £4,500. Although the farmer had most of the necessary machinery, MVP has bought a £2,500 rotovator and further expense will be needed for polytunnels and irrigation. A farmer can expect up to make £2,400 per ha for growing the vegetables under contract to MVP. There are eight different types of plot ranging from £495 to £995 a year, depending on growing methods and consumer choice. The average cost is £745 a year.

Activities

Just over 2ha of the 40ha farm are used for production. As well as doing all the sowing, hoeing and digging, the My Veggie Patch staff will provide regular updates on conditions, the progress of produce and advice on managing individual crops. The vegetables will be harvested weekly and delivered the same evening to the customers' doorsteps. Customers can choose from a wide range of crops. Some options include added 'specialities' of up to five items. These crops either require protected cultivation or may have to be bought in. MVP estimates that the plots should be productive for approximately 30 weeks of the year during which time customers can visit and even work on their plot.

Future plans

My Veggie Patch would like to offer a nationwide service by franchising out to small farmers. *"It's a great way for beginners to make their first foray into vegetable growing"* says Jon Reade who estimates that 100 customers dedicated to a farm would make it viable. To keep the service more personal My Veggie Patch wants to recruit growers to cater for customers within a 30 mile radius. In this arrangement the contract or franchise growers will tend their plots and co-ordinate deliveries but will send the weekly reports to My Veggie Patch who will post them on the personal web sites.

Oaklands Park – Newnham-on-Severn, Gloucester

Summary

A Camphill community⁶⁵ with around 100 resident members on a 65ha site. The community's total turnover is £900,000 with much of the income from state support to care for community members with special needs. The most profitable activity within the site is the farm and garden, which have a combined turnover of £140,000. The garden supplies a local vegetable box scheme through which the community hopes to engage a wider community in the life and work of Oaklands Park.

History

The Camphill Trust bought the Oaklands Park estate in 1976. Members envisaged establishing a farm to provide for the Camphill community's needs and working the land was to become the focus of the community. The burden of maintaining the large house on community finances re-enforced a decision to accept state support for community members requiring care although this conflicted with Camphill ideology. All Camphill production is based on biodynamic principles based on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. Oaklands has a 1.5ha horticultural garden, half of which is within the original walled garden with a greenhouse. They also have almost 3ha of field scale vegetables and potatoes.

Organisation

The Camphill Village Trust Limited (a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital) was formed in October 1954. The Memorandum of Association for the trust states its aims as to 'establish and maintain villages (according to stated principles) for the development of working communities for mentally handicapped persons from school leaving age upwards.'

Residents live as an extended family in households. Each is headed by adult co-workers who may have children of their own, plus between three and six adults with special needs (villagers), a young co-worker and an apprentice (usually studying biodynamic production). The community has a hierarchy of decision making and all residents can be involved. Long-term co-workers make up the membership of work groups, including the land group and finance group, where they discuss matters pertaining to running the business. All community members can ask to be invited to meetings as guests. There are now 11 Camphill villages in Britain, homes to 560 adults with learning disabilities.

Finance

For Camphill community members the concepts of work and income are quite separate. The community pools all the money it makes. A budget drawn up annually from a common purse considers each person's needs as well as those of the various enterprises. Members receive a personal weekly allowance. Because no one in the community has secretarial skills, they employ a secretary for half a day a week.

Activities

The primary aim of Camphill is to provide for the well being of individuals with special needs as fully integrated members of the community. The land-based activities are the main focus of the community, providing work to suit most abilities and aptitudes. The community itself uses 40 per cent of the vegetables produced. The remaining 60 per cent is sold wholesale, including to a local box scheme, which supplies 80-100 households, and to a food co-op with 35 members. Each of the community's households collects vegetables as required and pays for them each month. The community also produces its own milk, beef, lamb, eggs and honey.

The community also runs a two-year biodynamic training apprenticeship, a woodworking shop and does wool spinning, dyeing and weaving. The whole community lends a hand at busy times such as hay making, fruit picking, harvest and tree planting, and these community land working days are often arranged to coincide with festivals. Oaklands aims to get its local box scheme members to help out on these days to foster the consumer/producer relationship.

Future plans

The community would like to reach out to more people and the box scheme and open days are an opportunity to expose the life and work of Oaklands Park. However to be truly part of the Oaklands 'family' requires total commitment, as there is no scope for earning an income externally. The community is soon to begin building a new creamery to make cheese largely for their own consumption.

⁶⁵ See the biodynamic movement, page 8.

Organics at Cost Ltd – Holford, Somerset

Summary

Organics At Cost Ltd (OAC) was formed in 1999 to market and promote the concept of farming clubs. The aim is to gather together between 1,000 and 1,250 people. Together they will buy a farm and control its management to produce organic food for them at cost price. The plan is to produce a wide range of food including fruit, vegetables and meat, and keep food costs down by cutting dealers and retailers out of the chain. OAC will also develop networks with other organic farms to widen the range of food available. In time these may come under the same umbrella.

History

Inspired by the American CSA model, OAC's Richard Prince did some market research to gauge public interest in a farm club scheme. He first surveyed 75 people at farmers' markets, 45 per cent of whom were interested in the project. About seven per cent of these would have committed to the scheme there and then. The second step was to conduct a telephone survey of people chosen randomly from a database of 10,000 names. Each person was aged between 30 and 60, with a minimum combined family income of £35,000, and an interest in green issues. OAC followed up each phone call with a letter, and the response rate matched that of the first survey.

Organisation

The club will contract OAC for three years to guide its establishment and ensure the integrity of the concept. If the club is successful, it will be replicated as a business enterprise. One of the initial tasks was to provide a satisfactory legal framework for the club and to ensure its financial mechanisms were transparent. A deed of trust links Organics At Cost with Family Farm Organics, the club's limited company through which it will carry out its day-to-day activities and business. The club members will influence the management of the farm through an elected committee, which in turn will elect the directors of Family Farm Organics. The company will employ a professional farm manager and staff to raise crops, tend to livestock, harvest, pack and deliver produce to club members.

Finance

The purchase of the farm will be equally divided between the club members. An estimated price of £1.65m, divided equally among 1250 members amounts to a one off membership fee of £1,335. Of this an amount of £175 will go to Organics At Cost Ltd to pay the investing partners, cover development costs and promote further farm clubs. Membership can either be paid in full or in installments with an option to withdraw prior to purchase.

The members will then pay a weekly subscription for their share of the produce. The farm will market any surplus produce through alternative outlets, with the profits used to help in the farm's running costs. Members will either collect produce from the farm, or pay an extra fee for delivery. The club members will be able to influence the amount of the subscription fee in order to accommodate different family requirements. A large family may pay a higher subscription for more than the standard share of the week's harvest, while an individual may pay less for a fraction of a full share.

Activities

Members will be encouraged to get involved in farm activities. Professional bodies such as the RSPB and Wildlife Trusts will be consulted in the development of whole farm conservation plans with guidance for specific activities such as habitat restoration, hedge and tree planting and the placement and monitoring of bird nest boxes. Social activities will be arranged by the club members themselves.

Future plans

OAC aims to launch and market the Family Farm Club concept as soon as the legal structures, club rules and regulations, promotional information and administration resources are available. Marketing will be through press releases, leaflets, and advertising in the local press. If the model is successful OAC will set up more Family Farm Clubs. The progress of this ambitious project will test the UK climate for community supported agriculture. The market research indicates a viable degree of interest but it remains to be seen if members of a large family farm club will contribute enough time and resources to the development of their farm.

Perry Court CSA – Canterbury, Kent

Summary

Perry Court Farm is an 81ha mixed biodynamic farm.⁶⁶ Its CSA vegetable box scheme supplies 60 members from 0.75ha. The annual turnover is approximately £8,000. The secure market provided by the box scheme has allowed the farm to increase its own horticultural production.

History

When Perry Court farm shop closed a group of customers was offered a plot of land to rent and grow vegetables. In 1992 they produced for 30 boxes at a cost of £100 per year for each member, and thus the Perry Court CSA was born. The scheme reached 100 members at its peak. There are now 60, but the CSA hopes to stabilise at 75 members. The farm now grows field scale crops such as carrots and potatoes, which it sells to the box scheme and other wholesale markets. This is a good example of how a local community has supported a farm through difficult times, to the benefit of both parties.

Organisation

Perry Court CSA is based on trust and goodwill with no legally binding contracts. Its 60 members live within 15 miles of the farm. Only about six of them are active in the CSA, the rest simply pay for their share of the produce. The core group is a voluntary body with a chairman, treasurer, secretary and other interested individuals. It meets monthly to decide what crops to grow and how to distribute them. They also organise member events and activities. The farm is contracted to do machine work and grows field scale root crops for the CSA, providing consistency at no risk to the members and extra income for the farm.

The CSA has observed that members are keen to help with the work in the early days of their association with the farm, but that this labour cannot be relied on at critical times. The farm then has to take responsibility. The growers work full time with volunteer help at the height of the season (September-March). The packing is done largely by volunteers from the core group and other members. Most members collect their boxes from the farm, but one member delivers some boxes, primarily to a drop off point. Local shops buy some of the crop surpluses.

Finance

In 1999 the CSA packed 95 boxes per week between mid September and mid March. The annual fee was £120, or £5 a week. However, because members have been volunteering less time, the price has increased to £130 to pay for more labour. The CSA members helped the farm build a new barn with a £2,000 donation, and an £8,000 interest free loan to be repaid over four years. The farm contributed a further £2,000. For a time, the CSA generated one third of the farm's income despite being based on about one per cent of the land area.

Activities

Vegetable production takes place on various locations on the farm to fit with the rotation. The CSA co-ordinates the packing and delivery of vegetable boxes. Originally the scheme was organised around the school term and stopped over the summer, but in 2000 the CSA produced vegetables for two extra months. It is now considering continuing the scheme throughout the year. Using its Steiner connections, the farm recruits volunteers of various abilities in exchange for board and lodgings for periods from one week to four months. Members can learn about biodynamic agriculture and make biodynamic preparations for the farm through a monthly study group. There are organised farm walks and harvest supper where members each contribute to the feast.

Future plans

In future the farm will grow all the CSA vegetables but the CSA members will retain the responsibility for grading, packing and distribution. The farm is considering re-opening its farm shop, the closure of which was the catalyst for the CSA. If this happens the box scheme may be more appropriate for selling produce further afield. A Steiner school borne out of the farm itself is located in the middle of the land and runs as an independent charity. It has little involvement in farm activities, but the CSA core group would like to encourage the school to source its supplies directly from the farm. It is planning a school canteen with vegetables supplied by the CSA. As a first step the farm supplied the school with jacket potatoes. It now also provides vegetable soup once a week.

⁶⁶ See the biodynamic movement, page 8.

Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch CSA – Forest Row, East Sussex

Summary

A 100ha biodynamic farm with an annual turnover of £250,000 previously owned by Emerson College, which trains Steiner teachers. A co-operative owns the farm business, with shares owned largely by the local community. The business runs an extremely successful farm shop, employing a full-time butcher to cut and process the meat – lamb, pork, beef, chickens, and turkeys and geese at Christmas. A variety of on-site activities add value to the products. There is a flour mill and a flock of milking sheep. Tablehurst is trying to incorporate nearby Plaw Hatch Farm, which also has close community links, to the same land trust.

History

Emerson College used the farm for teaching biodynamic agriculture, but as profits from agriculture declined, the college found it increasingly difficult to farm it economically. In 1994, Peter and Brigitte Brown approached the college with an idea to develop it into a community farm, which would allow local people to take responsibility for their food production. Tablehurst Farm Ltd was set up as a business in 1996 and the local community established itself as a co-operative in September 1996.

Organisation

Emerson College holds the land in trust, but this will soon be transferred to a more focused land trust to ensure it is farmed biodynamically in perpetuity. The farm business is owned and managed separately by the community co-operative named Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farm Ltd, an Industrial and Provident Society. There are around 300 members, each paying a £100 single share. This share is a gift and does not buy any produce. It does however entitle members to vote and influence the co-operative's activities. Between 10 and 12 members are elected to the management committee. It meets quarterly to deal with issues such as fund raising and the production of newsletters. Peter Brown manages the farm, and has two full-time staff.

Finance

The establishment of the co-op raised £166,000, which secured the future of the farm business, purchased the assets from the college and made improvements to the infrastructure, such as the milking parlour and chicken houses. The farm received an environmental grant to reinstate a large pond, and an irrigation lake was paid for half by farm finances and half by a local resident. The recent renovation of the farm shop cost £15,000, and new processing equipment cost a further £7,000. Co-op members donate their professional services to the farm.

Activities

All livestock is slaughtered locally, processed by the resident butcher and sold through the farm shop. Wheat is milled for flour and oats grown for livestock feed. Potatoes and leeks are grown on a field scale and sold wholesale to shops, local vegetable box schemes and also through the farm shop. A beekeeper tends a number of hives and the honey is sold through the farm shop with profits after costs going to Tablehurst Farm. A couple who recently joined the community planted an apple orchard. They work two and a half days a week on the farm in exchange for board and lodging and land rental. When the trees fruit in about five years, the couple will pay 10 per cent of the gross income to the farm.

Up to six apprentices work with Tablehurst in return for board and lodgings, a weekly allowance of £25, and weekly lectures on biodynamic farming by guest speakers. The farm receives a local authority allowance for three adults with learning difficulties who live and work alongside the farm staff. The supporters get together for a harvest barn dance, annual open day and regular farm walks. The farmers encourage the co-operative members to get involved in organising these events, which are also open to the wider community.

Future plans

The farm is considering reducing its vegetable growing, which requires substantial hand labour, as the land does not suit mechanisation. Efforts are under way to integrate Plaw Hatch CSA, a complementary farm with a dairy and producing vegetables, into a greater CSA structure. To do this they have to raise £80,000 by September 2001. The appeal, which began in January 2001, raised an astounding £62,000 by mid February. Current members donated some of this sum, but the scheme has to date attracted an additional 100 members, largely from the local community.

Tumblers Patch Pig Co-op – Lower Weston, Bath

Summary

A small co-operative of organic enthusiasts rearing pigs collectively for their own consumption. The scheme has operated for one year rearing nine pigs on a 0.25ha plot. The £1,000 cost, excluding members' time, works out at approximately £1.58 per kilogramme of meat. Tim Baines, the co-op organiser, said *"Members really felt that they were taking responsibility for their food production, especially those who accompanied the pigs on their final journey to the abattoir."*

History

Meat-eating members of Bath Organic Group (BOG) spawned the idea of rearing pigs as a co-operative venture. Tumblers Patch, a 2ha holding, could support 10 pigs. The BOG carnivores drew up an estimated budget to purchase, feed, slaughter and butcher the pigs. They advertised the idea in the BOG newsletter and 12 people committed to the scheme. The pig co-op bought a litter of ten piglets as weaners, nine of which survived. They took the fattened pigs to a local organic approved abattoir and a local butcher jointed and packed the meat into half pig boxes. Six members took whole pigs and six took half pigs.

Organisation

The group recognised themselves as a co-operative farming venture through an informal agreement. One member took on the responsibility of organising the scheme but all shared equally the daily check and feeding. None of the members had ever kept pigs but they drew on their collective knowledge of organic food production.

Finance

The pig co-op estimated that a full pig would cost £90 and a half pig £45. Each member paid their share in full on entering the scheme. This commitment from the start ensured that the responsibility and risk was shared and not left to one member. It was agreed that if members did not wish to join the feeding rota they would pay each time they missed their turn. In practice, no one defaulted on their feeding duties. The total contribution at the start of the scheme was £810 leaving a deficit of £190. Each member paid a further supplement of £15 per pig (£7.50 per half pig) with the remainder paid by the scheme organiser. The total carcass weight of the nine pigs came to 634kg (1395.5lbs). Thus the scheme produced organic pork at approximately £1.58/kg. This does not account for the cost of labour. If that was costed at £5 a day for six months, it would have resulted in an additional cost of approximately £900, equivalent to £3.23/kg.

Activities

Members were involved in every aspect of the scheme, from its conception to the day the pigs were slaughtered. Each day the pigs were fed, watered and checked, which took about half an hour. The pigs were given a daily supplementary ration of organic pig pellets and any organic leftovers from the group's homes. The co-op drew up the feeding rota in advance. On average each member visited Tumblers Patch 12 times.

Future plans

The group was generally very satisfied with the scheme as it provided home reared pork at a very reasonable cost. However, because the pigs varied in size from 35kg to 60kg, the members feel that in future it would be fairer to pay for the meat by weight, as a proportion of the total costs. They also plan to rear the pigs on to a larger size (85kg), so that some members can cure hams and smoke bacon. As the first year costs were under-estimated, in future the members will pay a deposit and the balance on delivery of the meat. A contingency would be included into the budget to cover unforeseen costs – new government abattoir licensing laws doubled the cost of slaughter during the first year, and the co-op originally costed feed on bulk prices but then bought it in bags at a higher price. They are considering investing in an electric fencing system and researching into the laws governing the retail and transport of livestock.

CSA country reports

Australia

The Australian Biodynamic Association (ABA) knows of three CSAs. There appears to be growing interest in the concept, although creating more initiatives may be hindered by the great distance from the cities to the farms.⁶⁷ Farmers' markets have become a popular method to sell produce and farmers often combine going to market with delivering pre-orders. Most of the major cities have regular farmers' markets and there has been a huge growth in the organic and biodynamic food market. The Organic Federation is setting up an online directory service to improve contact with farmers.

Although CSA initiatives receive no government or non-government assistance their numbers are slowly growing. The ABA would like to develop an apprentice training programme, as practised in the USA, to improve opportunities for young people wishing to have access to land to grow. Representatives of Japanese organic food distribution companies often try and source Australian contacts and growers to satisfy the increasing demand in Japan.

Cuba

After the communist revolution in Cuba, the country changed to a system of intensive mechanised agriculture, which mirrored that of its main trading partner,⁶⁸ the Soviet Union. However, when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, Cuba lost 80 per cent of its trade within a year. For the first time since the revolution Cubans faced hunger and malnutrition.

The country has tackled the problem head on by changing the structure of its agricultural system. The government has worked closely with its people, parcelling out state-owned farms to co-operatives and individual farmers. This has given farmers more security and control over their resources, making them more efficient. Productive farmers are rewarded with further land.⁶⁹ In the cities, citizens have been allowed to cultivate unused land creating a vast system of organic urban gardens. There are more than 8,000 gardens in Havana alone. In 1998 they produced 541,000 tons of food, supplying as much as 30 per cent of the nutritional needs of certain areas.⁷⁰

Each neighbourhood has an appointed agricultural advisor and producers have organised themselves into horticulture groups. The small 2–3ha plots are usually privately owned and worked with family labour. The majority of the crops are sold to local families with the surplus sold to state markets. Urban producers receive very good salaries and the

government offers tax incentives to promote the sector. On average workers earn 250 pesos a month, which compares well with a professor's salary of 300 pesos. At the top end a producer can earn up to 800 pesos a month (\$US40). Because all institutions are obliged to be self sufficient in food, companies have plots or fields around the city growing food for their canteens. Urban agriculture is based on intensively cropped raised beds of organic material – organoponics. The law prohibits the use of all chemicals in urban agriculture.

Japan

Fresh produce delivery schemes have been a common part of Japanese culture for over 30 years. They began when agriculture intensified and relied increasingly on the use of agro-chemicals. A number of neighbourhood groups, largely run by women, sought alternative ways to procure safe food. The result were called teikei groups – a 'tie-up' or 'agreement' between farmers and consumers or philosophically translated as 'food with a farmer's face on it'. The Japanese Organic Agriculture Association (JOAA) was founded in the early 1970s. One of its main objectives was to foster teikei groups based on ten sustainable principles.⁷¹

Members of a teikei group pay a weekly fee for a box of fresh produce accepting whatever quality and quantity delivered. They know the farmers personally, help with farm and teikei activities and can influence the choice of crops grown. The Group for Producing and Consuming Safe Food is one of the most well-known teikei groups in Japan. Through it 30 farmers from Myioshi village, one hour's drive from Tokyo, supply 1,300 Tokyo households. The members organise themselves into groups for ordering and distributing the food. Like CSAs, they stay in touch through newsletters, festivals and meetings.

Many teikei groups have grown or merged to form larger sanchoku delivery schemes. These can be divided into food buying co-operatives, and commercial distribution schemes, collectively known as Organic Food Distribution Schemes (OFDS).⁷² These schemes are the most popular way of acquiring organic and 'low input' food. It is estimated⁷³ that one in four Japanese households belong to an OFDS. Some sources quote about 21 million co-op members in Japan, with the Tokyo co-op alone having 700,000 members.⁷⁴

There is also a large movement in Japan called Yamagishiism, a kind of kibbutz whose emphasis is

67 Peter Kenyon (Primrose Hill Farm CSA, N.S.W., Australia), personal communication.

68 An organic testbed, *Food Magazine* 51 October/December 2000.

69 Dr. Fernando Funes Aguilar (Ministry of Agriculture, Cuba), personal communication.

70 High Input – High Output: The case of organoponics in urban Cuba, J. Miedema & M. Trinks.

71 The "Teikei" System, a Producer-Consumer Co-partnership and the Movement of the Japan Organic Agriculture Association. A Country Report for the First IFOAM Asian Conference, 19–22. Aug. 1993 in Hanno, Saitama, Japan.

72 *Food Magazine*, the Food Commission, Ed 46, Jul/Sept 1999.

73 Mary Murata, personal communication.

74 Yoshi Oyama, personal communication.

on organically grown foods and community life. Yamagishi was founded 40 years ago on the idea of 'harmonisation between civilisation and nature'. There are now more than 50 Yamagishi communities in Japan, and a further seven outside. The largest communal group in Japan has 1,400 members and runs an organic farming business with annual sales of about £50 million.⁷⁵

The key issues for Japanese rural policy are the sharp fall in the national food self-sufficiency rate and the decline of remoter regions. The former dropped from 79 per cent in 1969 to 41 per cent in 1998 (calorie base)⁷⁶. The introduction of the Basic Law for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas in 1999 is the latest attempt to reverse the downward trend. The law emphasises increased collaboration between farmers and consumers and introduced direct payments for farmers in disadvantaged regions in return for their work in conserving environmental and cultural resources.

USA

The number of CSA farms in the US has grown rapidly from three in 1985 to an estimated 1,000 in 2001. The CSA Center based at Wilson College recently conducted a CSA census and look at several issues concerning CSA. Their results should soon be available on their website.⁷⁷

Farmers in the US did not begin to adopt the CSA model until 1985 although many were thinking along those lines as they struggled with the financial realities of market gardening. An example of an initiative that predates the first CSAs in the US is a form of subscription farm known in the early 1980s as a clientele membership club. According to this plan, promoted by Booker Whatley in his book *How to make \$1,000,000 Farming 25 Acres*, Rodale, 1987, a grower could maintain small profits by selling low cost membership to customers who harvested the crops themselves at below-market prices.

In 1985 the first three CSAs were established. The swiss Jan Vander Tuin started one in Massachusetts. Robyn Van En set one up at her Indian Line Farm, Great Barrington. Trauger Groh used his experience in setting up a CSA farm in North Germany to help start the Temple-Wilton Community Farm, New Hampshire. However, it was the core group and organisers of Robyn Van En's India Line Farm that thought up the term 'community supported agriculture'.

The models of CSA in the USA vary according to local requirements although all have some basic features, which enable classification (see models of CSA, page 7). The first CSAs were established in the North East and tended to adopt the shareholder, consumer driven model. These were participatory projects where farmers and consumers shared responsibilities from the outset, and this still tends to be the norm for this region. However there are an increasing number of subscription CSAs, particularly those serving

cities. This is the most common arrangement in California and the western states. In subscription CSAs farmers still have a degree of financial security although the consumers tend to be less involved. We have found that CSA is a response to increasing consumer distance from food production. Nowhere is this distance as great as in the USA, so it is not surprising to see such an advanced movement there, with a great number of alternative forms of direct food marketing. As a result there is also a great deal of information available in support of CSA.

Europe

Belgium⁷⁸

In the Flemish region of Belgium a rapidly growing movement known as Food Teams aims to get the public more involved in agriculture. The first Food Team was started in Hageland in the autumn of 1996. By early 2001 there were approximately 90 Food Teams each made up of 15-20 households. Food Team members collectively purchase produce from local farms. They receive weekly boxes of locally sourced seasonal vegetables, dairy produce, fruit and meat. On average 35 per cent of the produce is organic and the remainder produced through other sustainable systems.

Households commit to a year's membership of a Food Team. This is an informal agreement but there is a moral obligation to remain within the scheme for the full term. Food Teams receive no direct government support, but farmers adopting the model receive indirect support in the form of training through three non-governmental agencies. One organisation in each of the eight Flemish provinces promotes Food Teams. A number of these are adult education centres. These organisations arrange meetings to introduce the idea of Food Teams and discuss the practicalities of establishing a team. The establishment process usually involves three to four meetings with consumer groups and the farms they have been married up with.

All the organisations promoting Food Teams hope to come together under the umbrella of a national co-ordinating body, for which they are seeking government support. This will continue to identify farmers and consumers interested in entering the Food Team arrangement and mediating the relationship.

Denmark

We have identified five CSA farms in Denmark:⁷⁹ Three are biodynamic farms. The fourth, known as Gule Reer, is a project run by people from the Vesterbro district of Copenhagen. There are 26 members who all help to cultivate a 6ha permaculture plot and share the produce.

The fifth, called Landbrugslauget, is still being developed. The vision of Landbrugslauget⁸⁰ is to bring farmers and

75 Diggers and Dreamers 00/01.

76 Agriculture and Rural Development in Japan, Yoshihiko Oyama, Deputy Director, The Japan Centre, The University of Birmingham, UK.

77 www.csacenter.org

78 Lieve Vercauteren (Food Teams, Belgium), personal communication.

79 Christian Coff, personal communication.

80 www.landbrugslauget.dk

consumers closer together by focusing on their common interests: healthy food, local food production, animal welfare and sustainable agriculture. It is striving for fair prices for agricultural products – prices that the farmers can live on and the consumers live with. Landbrugslauget aims to attract about 500 members, each paying around DK5,000 (£500), to raise a total of DK2.5 million. The remaining DK9 million needed to buy a farm will be borrowed. Landbrugslauget plans to use the legal structure used for shared housing in Denmark for over 100 years. Once this structure is transcribed for use in their CSA, Landbrugslauget it could be appropriate for establishing CSA in other countries. There will be direct sales from the farm, from three to four shops in the centre of Copenhagen and a box scheme.

The Danish government is very supportive of community-based initiatives, and the Landbrugslauget project has received some funding. Generally there are no organisations supporting CSA in Denmark, but the Biodynamic Association and permaculture groups are very interested in promoting the concept.

Germany

Community supported agriculture is well established in Germany, but its extent is difficult to establish as there is no network or compilation of statistics. Many of the farm-based initiatives are biodynamic farms⁸¹ (see Oaklands Park case study 7). However, by far the most widespread of the farm direct marketing initiatives is the Erzeuger-Verbraucher-Gemeinschaft (EVG). EVG translates as producer-consumer associations and are also called food co-ops. EVGs sprang up between 1979-81 in Austria and Germany as a means of acquiring good quality, affordable food from known producers.⁸² EVGs typically have a membership of between 20-100. They organise and run the co-operative between themselves, buying local and regional organic produce, and usually distribute it from a single shop or warehouse.

The popularity and rapid success of this system has contributed to its downfall. EVGs, especially in the larger cities, became so large so quickly, that the members couldn't organise them anymore. The communal management was time consuming and failed to develop a sense of responsibility. Hence they either became commercial or collapsed – the 'grow or go' syndrome.⁸³ The early and middle 1990s saw the dissolution of many EVGs. It is estimated that there are now about 500 EVGs in Germany, with annual turnover of about DM9 million and about 15,000 members.⁸⁴ EVGs receive some support from state governments for marketing and publicity if they are organised through schemes such as farmers' co-operatives.

With increasing demand for value and convenience, home delivery schemes are increasing their market share. These can be divided into two systems: box schemes, usually organised by farmers or farm co-ops, and vegetable bags,

driven largely by fruit and vegetable wholesalers.⁸⁵ There are over 200 box schemes in Germany, delivering from 20 to up to 3,000 boxes weekly. The bag schemes, apparently an idea from the Netherlands, only supply fruits and vegetables ordered weekly. They usually offer a choice of small or large bags and tend to operate through drop off points. Both aim to source produce locally.

The Netherlands⁸⁶

The CSA model is just catching on in the Netherlands, with the first established in 1996. In early 2001 there were four CSA farms with a total membership of 500, and a further six farms in the making. These distinguished themselves from box schemes by operating with open accounts and giving members some influence in the farm's long-term management. These farms have drawn from their experience and developed a more prescribed model now known as Pergola Associations. It is hoped that the Pergola model will ease the way for CSA creation. Strohhalm, an organisation promoting the social economy, is pioneering the model and assisting would-be Pergola farmers.

Strohhalm is also working on another scheme, a CSA for farmers who only sell their products through farm shops or at markets. This has been given the working name of Green Guilders. The system is very simple: each member gives the farmer a down payment of 1,000 guilders. Each time the member purchases something the costs are subtracted from their credit. In return for this financial commitment the member receives extras such as recipes, special offers, and a newsletter. The idea is being trialled with a few farmers and a shop. It is thought that Green Guilders could be more successful than CSA in the Netherlands because people can buy their choice of vegetables when they want to. With subscription farming and CSA, there is no choice in delivery time or variety of vegetables delivered.

There are about 100 producer-run box schemes (subscription farms). Most sell vegetables and a few sell dairy products.

Switzerland

CSAs do exist in Switzerland but there are very few.⁸⁷ The model is not known by any generic term but is generally understood as 'producer-consumer co-operatives'. These enterprises receive no government support as they do not fit within any criteria for available agricultural support. There is however a growing trend towards the direct marketing of farm produce and in particular in supplying restaurants.

As the concept for CSA arrived in the USA with the swiss Jan Van Tuin, one would have expected a thriving network of these farms in Switzerland. It appears however that the greatest influence in central Europe is actually Germany where producer-consumer associations were very popular in the 1970s and 1980s. It is also quite likely, as we have already said, that many of these initiatives go unnoticed.

81 Cornelia Roeckl (Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft, Germany), personal communication.

82 Kai Kreuzer (Germany), personal communication.

83 Florian Schöne (NABU, Germany), personal communication.

84 Florian Schöne (NABU, Germany), personal communication.

85 Kai Kreuzer (Germany), personal communication.

86 Leidy Breet (Pergola, Netherlands), personal communication.

87 Christof Dietler, Bio Swisse, personal communication.

Further information

CSA around the globe

Australia: The Organic Federation of Australia

www.ofa.org.au

For statistics on organic food production in Australia.

Cuba: The Cuba Organic Support Group (COSG)

58 Brad Lane, Coventry, CV5 7AF

T: 024 7667 3491

E: cosg@supanet.com

Cuba: Grupo de Agricultura Organica

Tulipan 1011, E/Loma y 47 Apdo. Postal 6236C, Codigo Postal 10600, Nuevo Vedado Ciudad da la Habana, Cuba
T&F: 00 53 7 845387

E: actaf@minag.gov.cu

Cuba: Food First (Institute for Food and Development Policy)

www.foodfirst.org

Highlights root causes and value-based solutions to hunger and poverty around the world. The website provides several detailed documents relating to Cuba's second agricultural revolution, and its conversion to organic and sustainable production methods.

Japan: The Japanese Organic Agriculture Association

www.jca.apc.org/joaa

USA: The Robyn Van En Center

www.csacenter.org

Clearing house for CSAs and principal non-governmental source of assistance to CSA in the USA.

USA: Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)

www.attra.org/attra-pub/csa

This website is an excellent starting point for anyone interested in CSA. It gives in-depth, accurate information and is very easy to navigate. Each publication starts with a hyper-linked index, taking you directly to that section. It lists contacts and resources available (including software for CSA cropping plans) and has links to other useful websites.

USA: The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association

www.biodynamics.com/csa

Provides an Introduction to CSA and Farm Supported Communities. The Biodynamic Association has supported CSA since the first projects started in the USA in the 1980s. The Association publishes books about CSA, underwrites training for CSA growers, maintains a database of CSA and biodynamic farms and gardens in North America, and supports the community funding of CSA. Lots of information to be found here including practical tips on crop planning and budgeting.

USA: Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE)

www.sare.org/csa/index

This United States Department of Agriculture website gives a fairly basic description of CSA but has links to other organisations with additional information. It has a comprehensive state-by-state list of CSA farms.

USA: The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC)

www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC_pubs/at93-02

This site is published by the National Agricultural Library (NAL). It begins with a good description of CSA (although the statistics are out of date) and goes on to provide a comprehensive list of books, journals and articles.

USA: Just Food

www.justfood.org

Nonprofit organisation co-ordinating a CSA programme in New York City. The programme is designed to bridge the rural-urban gap in order to help farmers and CSA members of all income levels build lasting relationships based on trust and shared interests.

USA: Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN)

www.igc.org/foodfirst/fian/csa

A website by an international human rights organisation, founded in 1986 in Germany. Gives a few tips on what to look out for when choosing a CSA to join.

USA: Iowa State University

www.agron.iastate.edu

Clear uncluttered site centered on members' objectives, as can be expected from a project intended to further the participants' experience.

USA: University of Massachusetts

www.umass.edu/umext/csa

The site includes support for CSA with some general background information and an extensive resource list.

USA: CSA-L@prairienet.org

A free email discussion list, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for networking on CSA topics. About 250 subscribers. To join send an e-mail message to listproc@prairienet.org and write 'subscribe CSA-L' with your first name and last name in the message.

USA: Prairieland Community Supported Agriculture (PCSA)

www.prairienet.org/pcsa/pcsa

A well organised CSA with a shareholders contract available online to sign up to vegetable and egg shares. The site includes a fact sheet on CSA, photographs of a typical share of the produce and frequently asked questions.

USA: Featherstone Fruits and Vegetables

www.featherstonefarm.com

An 8ha organic produce farm in Minnesota. A well-designed and practical farm website.

USA: Libby Creek

www.libbycreek.com/whatscsa

A small farm-based company that started in the late 1980s selling fine handcrafted gifts. In the early 1990s production moved away from traditional corn and soybeans toward vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs. They have an excellent website with links to the most rated US CSA websites.

USA: Michaela Farm

www.birch.palni.edu/~mkruse/michaela

Serves as a centre for organic food production, environmental education and spiritual renewal.

USA: Fearless Foods

www.fearlessfoods.com/index

Provides farmers with software systems that facilitate direct farm-to-consumer distribution and more socially sustainable farming. A very good article on CSA can be found here entitled Organics at the crossroad: future for runaway industry is community level systems.

CSA around Europe

Belgium: For information about Food Teams

E: Lieve.vercauteren@vredeseilanden-coopibo.ngonet.be

Denmark: Landbrugslauget.

www.landbrugslauget.dk

A newly formed CSA serving Copenhagen.

Germany: (Federal Association of EVGs)

www.foodcoops.de

Food co-ops are organised in the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Lebensmittelcooperativen
E: info@lebensmittelkooperativen.de
The Website has links to some of the food co-ops.

Germany: Erzeuger-Verbraucher-Genossenschaft Bremen.

www.bremer-evg.de/charta

A good example of an EVG

T: 00 49 421 3499077

Germany: Tagwerk

www.Tagwerk.net

Another successful EVG north-east of Munich. It has eight shops, market stands, a box scheme and about 20 farm gate stores. Contact: Inge Asendorf, Tagwerk Frderverein, Siemensstr.2, 84405 Dorfen, EVG
T: 00 49 937950 937955
E: Tagwerk-Zentrum@t-online.de

Germany: www.allesbio.de

A number of websites act as directories for sourcing local and organic produce, including these delivery schemes. One of the better ones can be found at www.allesbio.de

Netherlands: Pergola

www.strohalm.nl/bookmarks/alles

De Komende Dag D. van der Molen
Meermuidenseweg 5 (2000) (flowers)
7391 TD Twello
T: 0571 27 69 09

UK: AlterEco

www.scotweb.co.uk/environment/climate/AlterEco/csa

Lists all the current online information on CSA in the UK. This page has been produced by a subsidiary project of European Youth Forest Action (EYFA), a Europe-wide grassroots network of environmental youth organisations and individuals. Alter Eco organises seminars, and publishes information on and helps set up LETs, community supported agriculture, credit unions, food co-ops and housing co-ops.

UK: Brickhurst Permaculture Group

www.keme.co.uk/~joe-d/brickhurst

Details of their integrated permaculture project. An aspect of the project is the development of a permaculture-based CSA. The site is under development and is dominated by photographs of the evolving project.

Caledonia: Centre for Sustainable Development

www.caledonia.org.uk/socialland/earthsa

One of eight case studies from the highlands and islands of Scotland, under the theme of social land ownership. It is a detailed account of the history, principles, legal structure, finances and plans for the future of EarthShare – Moray's first CSA. Lots of practical information for those considering CSA in the UK.

UK: Foundation for Local Food Initiatives (FFLFI)

www.localfood.org.uk/projects

An appraisal of one FFLFI project: Luton Community Supported Agriculture for the Health Action Zone. Looks at the potential of community agriculture and food co-ops to build health and a sense of community in disadvantaged areas.

UK: Global Ideas Bank

www.globalideasbank.org

A summary of an article on CSA by Helena Norberg-Hodge entitled 'From Catastrophe to Community' published in *Resurgence* magazine July '95. This page is from a huge website promoting socially innovative non-technological ideas and projects.

UK: Soil Association

www.soilassociation.org

The Soil Association CSA briefing sheet can be found on our website under 'Local Food Links'.

UK: Shell Better Britain Campaign

www.sbbc.co.uk/resources/is/is_169

This online information sheet is part of a series published by Shell Better Britain Campaign (SBBC), an initiative to promote and support community action on environmental issues. The website includes details of SBBC grants, up to £2,000, for projects that show both community and environmental benefits.

UK: University of Essex

www.essex.ac.uk/ces

The site for the Centre for Environment and Society, which promotes a multi-disciplined approach to sustainable development. Some interesting texts on sustainable agriculture and community participation.

UK: Wye University

www.wye.ac.uk/FoodLink/commag

Last updated 18 December 1997. Introduces the CSA concept using Flaxlands Farm CSA in Kent, UK and examples from Japan.

Books and publications

All available through Soil Association.

Call 0117 914 2446 or buy online:

www.soilassociation.org

Sharing the Harvest –

A guide to community-supported agriculture

Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn Van En.

(Chelsea Green, 1999. ISBN 0-890132-23-3)

The basic tenets of CSA, plus useful information for farmers and consumers on starting and running a successful community farm. Describes hundreds of strategies that have worked (or not) for CSAs from Alaska to Florida.

Farms of Tomorrow Revisited – Community supported farms, farm supported communities

Steven McFadden, Trauger M. Groh.

(The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Inc.,

ISBN: 0-938250-13-2)

From philosophy to examples, *Farms of Tomorrow Revisited* shows us the potential and limitations of the CSA concept. Illustrates how CSA is a practical application of the biodynamic ideology.

The Living Land – Agriculture, food and community regeneration in rural Europe

Jules Pretty. (Earthscan, 1998, ISBN: 1 85383 516 1)

Eloquently summarises the problems of our current food systems and demonstrates practical ways in which improvements can be made. The result of careful research into sustainable agriculture, food systems and rural communities, the book argues that a large 'sustainability dividend' could become available to create more jobs, more wealth and better lives. Essential reading for everyone interested in countryside issues.

Living Lightly – Travels in post-consumer society

Walter and Dorothy Schwarz (John Carpenter Pub. 1998.

ISBN: 1 897766 440))

The authors spent three years travelling and gathering first-hand evidence of the effects of, and resistance to, the emerging new global order. They record many examples of common humanity and consideration for others that fly in the face of the effects of globalisation. The message of the book is that the values of co-operation, compassion and the richness of culture are alive and well.

Digger and Dreamers

2000/01(D&G Publications, ISBN: 0 9514945 5 4).

The current edition of the guide to communal living, including an up-to-date directory.

Organics at the Crossroads – Future for runaway industry is community level systems

Peter C. Reynolds PhD. (Fearless Publications, can be read on their website, see Fearless Foods above).

An account of how CSA farms are a solution for sustainable food production. It provides a vision for a model of CSA that is attractive to a broader base of consumers.

Small is Beautiful –

A study of economics as if people mattered

E.F. Schumacher, (Vintage, 1973, This edition 1993.
ISBN: 0 09 922561 1).

Written by a former president of the Soil Association, this influential book takes a critical look at the economic system that is forcing the world into environmental chaos and offers small solutions to this the largest of problems.

The Killing of the Countryside

Graham Harvey (Jonathan Cape 1997)

An account of the devastating effects of post-war farming policy.

Biodynamic Agriculture

W Schilthuis (Floris Books, 1994. ISBN: 086315 178 7)

A concise, fully illustrated introduction to the principles and practice of biodynamic agriculture.

Organic Food and Farming Report 2000

(Soil Association 2001)

The third annual report on the state of the organic market in the UK. Includes figures on land conversion, market sectors and growth, along with consumer reaction to organic food. Invaluable to those needing to quantify opportunities and demand for organic food.

Local Food For Local People –

A guide to local food links

(Soil Association 1998)

This 47-page guide shows how local food schemes link together to build sustainable local food economies. It introduces the many types of schemes – box schemes, subscription farming, farmers' markets, community-owned farms, community gardens and orchards. It also shows how to set one up and who to contact to find out more.

How to Set up a Vegetable Box Scheme

a Soil Association technical guide highlights the considerations to be made when setting up a vegetable box scheme from start-up finances, finding customers to delivery.

The Biodiversity Benefits of Organic Farming,

(Soil Association May 2000)

This report draws together research comparing biodiversity on organic and non-organic holdings and provides conclusive evidence on the benefits to biodiversity of organic farming.

Potential sources of grants and advice

Charitable trusts

Grant giving trusts are listed in the *Directory for Social Change*, T: 020 7209 5151. You can also search for appropriate trusts using Fund Finder CD Rom.

Community Fund

(formerly the National Lottery Charities Board) T: 0845 791 9191 for an application pack and regional contact addresses. www.nlcb.org.uk

Gives grants of £500-£500,000 to groups that help meet the needs of the most disadvantaged in society and improve the quality of life in the community.

England Rural Development Programme (ERDP)

Administered by Rural Development Service. Contact Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA, see page 40)

E: rural.development@defra.gsi.gov.uk

www.defra.gov.uk

Promotes rural development through 10 schemes divided into land-based and project-based schemes. Project-based schemes include the Rural Enterprise Scheme, Processing and Marketing Grant, Vocational Training and an Energy Crops Scheme.

Farm Business Advice Service

T: 08456 045678

The service has been developed by MAFF in conjunction with the Small Business Service, an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, with input from the farming industry. Delivered by Local Business Links, the service provides three days free consultancy to farmers wishing to reassess their businesses (see Phoenix Fund, below).

LEADER +

Assists rural development by supporting experimental, integrated local area-based development strategies, which in turn will encourage the development and testing of new approaches to sustainable rural development. The programme aims to complement the England Rural Development Plan. Contact DEFRA, see page 40)

Phoenix Fund

Promoting enterprise in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and administered by the Small Business Service (see Farm Business Advice Service (see above). The fund invites applications from new and existing Community Finance Initiatives (CFIs). These tend to be locally run, non-profit organisations, which lend small amounts to businesses which banks consider too risky.

Shell Better Britain Campaign

(SBBC) King Edward House, 135a New Street,
Birmingham, B2 4QJ

T: 0121 248 5902 F: 0121 248 5901

E: enquiries@sbbc.co.uk • www.sbbc.co.uk

The SBBC Community Projects Fund awards grants of up to £2,000 for projects that benefit communities and the environment.

Single Regeneration Budget: Central government funds administered by regional partners according to local priorities. Contact your local authority.

Structural Funds: The EU Structural Funds exist to help areas of Europe which, for one reason or another are suffering difficulties. These are administered according to Objectives 1,2 and 3. For further information contact your local authority or DEFRA.

Social, Economic and Environmental Development Programme (SEED) RSNC,

The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Notts, NG24 1WT T: 0870 0361 000 F: 0870 036 0101 E:

seed@rsnc.cix.co.uk

A £125 million fund available through the National Lottery New Opportunities Fund (NOF) green spaces and sustainable communities programme. The fund is administered by the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC). It is aimed at projects designed to help urban and rural communities in the UK understand, improve or care for their natural environment, focusing on disadvantage. Community-based local food enterprises fall within their criteria with grants ranging between £500-£100,000.

Organisations

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

ACRE, Somerford Court, Somerford Road,

Cirencester GL7 1TW

T: 01285 653477 F: 01285 654537

E: acre@acre.org.uk • www.acre.org.uk

ACRE is the national association of Rural Community Councils whose shared purpose is to improve the quality of life of local communities, and particularly of disadvantaged people in rural England.

Common Ground

PO Box 25309, London NW5 1ZA

T/F: 020 7267 2144

www.commonground.org.uk

Champions of local distinctiveness, focusing on art and local tradition. Run a project supporting community orchards.

Community Composting Network

67 Alexandra Road, Sheffield S2 3EE

T/F: 0114 258 0483 E: ccn@gn.apc.org

Provides advice and support to existing and would-be community composting projects across the UK.

Community Food Security Coalition

P.O. Box 209 Venice, CA 90294, USA T: 00 1 310 822 5410, www.foodsecurity.org

An American organisation promoting community based solutions to hunger, poor nutrition, and the globalisation of the food system. Their website has a comprehensive set of links to organisations and groups promoting sustainable food production.

Community Recycling Network

Trelawny House, Surrey Street, Bristol BS2 8PS

T: 0117 942 0142 F: 0117 942 0164.

E: info@crn.org.uk • www.crn.org.uk

CRN exists to promote community waste management in the UK – both as an effective way of tackling Britain's growing waste problem and as a way to build the social economy.

Council For the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)

Warwick House, 25 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 0PP

T: 020 7976 6433 F: 020 7976 6373

E: info@cpre.org.uk • www.cpre.org.uk

A national charity which helps people protect, enhance and keep the countryside beautiful, productive and enjoyable for everyone.

Countryside Agency

John Dower, House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham GL50 3RA

T: 01242 521381 • www.countryside.gov.uk

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working to: conserve and enhance the countryside; promote social equity and economic opportunity for the people who live there; help everyone, wherever they live, to enjoy this national asset.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR
T: 020 7238 6000 (switchboard) F: 020 7238 6591
E: helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk • www.defra.gov.uk
DEFRA is a new ministry incorporating MAFF, The Environment Protection Agency and the Wildlife and Countryside Directorate, with the aim of making it more efficient in light of the foot and mouth epidemic. Their aims are:

- A better environment.
- Thriving rural economies and communities.
- Diversity and abundance of wildlife resources.
- A countryside for all to enjoy.
- Sustainable and diverse farming and food industries that work together to meet the needs of consumers.

Development Trusts Association (DTA)

20 Conduit Place, London W2 1HS
T: 020 7706 4951 F: 020 7706 8447
www.dta.org.uk

The DTA aims to enable sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural regeneration by supporting the efficiency, effectiveness and growth of development trusts throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Elm Farm Research Centre (EFRC)

Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 0HR
T: 01488 658 298 F: 01488 658 503
E: elmfarm@efrc.com • www.efrc.com

EFRC was founded in 1980 as an educational charity. Their aim is the development and promotion of organic agriculture. They co-ordinate the Organic Advisory Service providing specialist advice on organic farming and conversion.

Employers' Organisation

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5QU
T: 020 7296 6600
Formerly the Local Government Management Board, the EO provides national support to local authorities as employers.

F3 – Foundation for Local Food Initiatives

P.O. Box 1234, Bristol
T: 0845 458 9525 E: mail@localfood.org.uk
www.localfood.org.uk

A co-operative enterprise whose aim is to support the growth of healthy local food economies as a key part of sustainable development. F3 also lead the FLAIR (Food & Local Agriculture Information Resource) project, a national directory and database of local food enterprises and projects.

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

The Green House, Hereford Street,
Bedminster, Bristol BS3 4NA
T: 0117 923 1800 F: 0117 923 1900
www.farmgarden.org.uk

Promotes, supports and represents groups engaged in community-led development of open space through locally managed farming and gardening.

Food For Health Network

The Cottage, Little Gringley,
Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 0DU
T: 01777 706880 F: 01777 706880
E: kathy.cowbrough@virgin.net

The network helps people in the UK improve their health through food.

Friends of the Earth

26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ
T: 020 7490 1555 F: 020 7490 0881
www.foe.co.uk

One of the leading environmental pressure groups in the UK, FoE campaigns for sustainable farming.

Good Gardeners Association

The Pinetum, Churcham, Gloucester GL2 8AD
T/F: 01452 750402 Registered charity for gardeners.

Healthy Education Authority

Trevelyan House, 30 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW
T: 020 7413 1832

HDRA

The Organic Organisation, Ryton Organic Gardens,
Coventry CV8 3LG
T: 024 7630 3517 F: 024 7663 9229
E: enquiry@hdra.org.uk • www.hdra.org.uk
HDRA provides information and advice on growing fruit and vegetables organically. It carries out research, runs events and courses, maintains the Heritage Seed Library and supports a network of local groups.

Industrial Common Ownership Movement (ICOM)

Vassalli House, 20 Central Road, Leeds LS1 6DE
T: 0113 246 1737/8 F: 0113 244 0002
E: icom@icom.org.uk
A non-profit membership organisation promoting and representing democratic employee owned businesses throughout the UK.

Land Heritage

Pound Corner, Whitestone, Exeter EX4 2HP
T: 01647 61099 F: 01647 61134
E: enquiries@landheritage.co.uk
www.landheritage.org.uk/intro
Land Heritage acquires land and makes tenancies available to families committed to organic husbandry.

LETS Link UK

54 Campbell Rd, Southsea P05 1RW
T: 01705 730639 E: lets@letslinkuk.org
www.letslinkuk.org

A non-profit voluntary agency with charitable objectives, dedicated to testing, researching and developing sustainable models for local and community-based LETS (Local Exchange Trading Schemes) and complementary currencies.

National Association of Farmers' Markets

South Vaults, Green Park Station, Green Park Road,
Bath BA1 1JB
T: 01225 787914 F: 01225 460840
E: nafm@farmersmarkets.net • www.farmersmarkets.net
NAFM promote, support and certify farmers' markets.

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners

O'Dell House, Hunters Road, Corby NN17 5JE
T: 01536 266576 F: 01536 264509
www.nsalg.demon.co.uk

New Economics Foundation

Cinnamon House, 6-8 Cole Street, London SE1 4YH
T: 020 7407 7447 F: 020 7407 6473
E: info@neweconomics.org • www.neweconomics.org
Promotes practical and creative approaches for a just and sustainable economy that puts people and the environment first. Drawing on expertise from a range of disciplines, it represents the best of new thinking on how new economics will work in practice.

National Federation of Credit Unions

Units 1.1 and 1.2, Howard House, Commercial Centre,
Howard Street, North Shields NE30 1AR
T: 0191 257 2219 F: 0191 259 1884
Provides advice and support for community groups wishing to set up credit unions, with emphasis on self-help and community development, especially in areas of economic disadvantage.

National Food Alliance

94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
F: 020 7837 1141
E: nationalfoodalliance@compuserve.com
www.oneworld.org/qp-static/fpn/National.htm
Represents national public interest organisations including voluntary, professional, health, consumer and environmental bodies working at international, national, regional and community level. Also aims to enable the people of the United Kingdom to fulfil their potential through food policies and practices that enhance public health, improve the working and living environment and enrich society.

Plunkett Foundation

23 Hanborough Business Park, Long Hanborough,
Oxford OX8 8LH
T: 01993 883636 F: 01993 883576
E: Plunkett@gn.apc.org
www.coop.org/ica/members/plunkett.html

Promotes, supports and improves the effectiveness of enterprises which mainly benefit the users or providers of their services. Can provide information, expertise and up-to-date knowledge relevant to co-operatives and other models of people centred business.

Radical Routes

16 Sholebroke Avenue, Chapeltown, Leeds LS7 3HB
T: 0113 262 9365 • www.radicalroutes.org.uk
Can provide practical advice in setting up housing and worker co-operatives.

Small Business Service (SBS)

T: 020 7215 5363
www.businessadviceonline.org
Launched in April 2000 to provide a single government organisation dedicated to helping small firms and representing them within government. Its mission is to build an enterprise society in which small firms of all kinds thrive.

SUSTAIN

94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
T: 020 7837 1228 F: 020 7837 1141
E: sustain@sustainweb.org • www.sustainweb.org
Advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. Represents over 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

Scottish Community Diet Project

Scottish Consumer Council, Royal Exchange House,
100 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3DN
T: 0141 226 5261 • www.dietproject.org.uk

Soil Association

Bristol House, 40–56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY
T: 0117 929 0661 F: 0117 925 2504
E: info@soilassociation.org • www.soilassociation.org
The UK's leading campaigning and certification body for organic food and farming. Researches, develops and promotes sustainable relationships between the soil, plants, animals and the biosphere, in order to produce healthy food and other products while protecting and enhancing the environment.

Thrive

The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill Reading RG7 2AT

T: 0118 988 5688 F: 0118 988 5677

E: info@thrive.org.uk • www.thrive.org.uk/index

Enables disadvantaged, disabled and older people to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. A national charity supporting a network of specialist projects that run programmes of horticultural activity for training and employment, therapy and health.

Triodos Bank

Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3NN

T: 0117 973 9339 F: 0117 973 9303

E: mail@triodos.co.uk • www.triodos.co.uk

One of Europe's leading ethical banks. Founded in 1980 in the Netherlands to finance a new generation of enterprises creating social added value and caring for the environment, and to give people new ways to save and invest ethically.

UK Social Investment Forum (UKSIF):

Holywell Centre, 1 Phipp Street, London EC2A 4PS

T: 020 7749 4880 F: 020 7749 4881

E: info@uksif.org • www.uksif.org

Promotes and encourages socially responsible investment in the UK, including ethical investment, green investment, shareholder activism, social banking and community finance.

WI Country Markets Ltd

183a Oxford Road, Reading RG17XA

Tel: 0118 939 4646 Fax: 0118 939 4747

www.wimarkets.co.uk

A non-profit organisation promoting and supporting Women's Institute Markets.

Women's Environmental Network

Postal address: PO Box 30626, London E1 1TZ

Physical address: 4 Pinchin London E1 1SA

T: 020 7481 9004 F: 020 7481 9144

E: info@wen.org.uk • www.wen.org.uk

WWOOF (Willing Workers On Organic Farms)

PO Box 2675 Lewes BN7 1RB • www.woof.org

Provides opportunities for people to volunteer on organic farms, through a network of member farms and regional organisers. It benefits both farmers, who have a useful source of labour, and the volunteers, who gain much from their experience.

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The Soil Association

The Soil Association is an educational membership organisation which promotes sustainable relationships between the soil, plants, animals, people and the environment. It is the UK's foremost charity campaigning for organic food and farming and sustainable forestry, and works to raise awareness of the benefits of organic agriculture. It trains and advises organic farmers and its trading arm is the leading inspection and certification body in the organic marketplace.

A Share in the Harvest

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E info@soilassociation.org

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*“Promoting links between
producers and consumers will not
only give us healthier food and a
cleaner environment, but will breathe
new life into our communities this
is not just about agriculture – it is
about the very fabric of our future”*

Helena Norberg-Hodge

Director, International Society for Ecology and Culture