

# *CSA Action Manual*

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# 1 *Using this guide*

Community Supported Agriculture is a relatively new and evolving concept in the UK. The advice given in this manual is based on the experience of a few CSA initiatives in England, and draws on a body of experience from overseas, the USA in particular, where several good texts on how to establish CSA have been published<sup>1</sup>.

The Soil Association carried out a feasibility study for CSA in the UK, *A Share in the Harvest*, which provides background information about CSA, an account of CSA around the globe, how CSA meets current UK policy and recommendations for CSA development

This manual aims to provide support for anyone interested in developing a CSA scheme. It is a dynamic document providing a skeleton to build on as we explore the possibilities for CSA in the UK. It is intended not to be overly prescriptive and provides practical information and signposts to further help.

If you have additional information and advice to share or feel that any of the information is incorrect, then please contact:

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<sup>1</sup> *Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture*, Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn Van En. Published by Chelsea Green, 1999.  
*Community Supported Agriculture - Making the Connection*, University of California, 1995.

## 2 *What is Community Supported Agriculture?*

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is about taking responsibility for how our food is produced and how it gets to the table. It is a direct relationship between a farmer and the people who eat the food the farmer produces. The term Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) was coined in America and encompasses a broad range of partnerships between consumers and producers. Each of these CSA arrangements is unique, tailored by the circumstances they develop out of. We define CSA as:

**A partnership<sup>2</sup> between farmers and consumers where the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared.**

As CSA farms are directly accountable to their consumer members they strive to provide fresh, high-quality food and typically use **organic** or biodynamic farming methods. Generally there are more people working on CSA farms than on conventional farms, and some CSAs encourage members to work on the farm in exchange for a portion of their membership costs.

CSA is a shared commitment to building a more local and equitable agricultural system, one that allows farmers to focus on good farming practices and still maintain productive and profitable farms.

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

## 2.1 Models of CSA

CSAs reflect the culture of the communities they serve, the capabilities of the CSA land and the farmers who manage it. Therefore no two CSAs are likely to be the same and tend to be dynamic as the community's needs change over time. In England alone we have come across a variety of initiatives such as: whole farm CSAs, customer supported box schemes, conservation based initiatives, intentional communities<sup>3</sup>, rent or adopt schemes, urban food growing projects, community allotments and charitable projects. We have produced some case studies (go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on UK CSAs) to provide some examples of what can be achieved.

CSA therefore, does not describe an end product, CSA is more about **how** we achieve a new local food system. CSAs in the USA<sup>4</sup> have been categorised according to who organises them, or the motivation behind them. These are described below:

- **Subscription CSA (or farmer-driven).**  
Organised by the farmer, to whom the members financially subscribe, with little other involvement, but this obviously varies between schemes. This kind of CSA is probably the most common in the United States. In the UK this is equivalent to a producer-run vegetable box scheme (for a case study on Barker Organics go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on UK CSAs).
- **Shareholder CSA (or consumer-driven).**  
Consumers participate in the scheme working closely with the farmer who produces what they want. The degree of consumer involvement is variable but is usually higher than under subscription farming. It was this model of CSA that was first introduced into the USA. Stroud CSA and Tumblers Patch Pig Co-op scheme (for case studies on these and others go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on UK CSAs) are based on this model, as are several CSAs currently in development (contact the Soil Association for further information).
- **Farmer co-operative.**  
Farmer-driven CSA where two or more farms co-operate to supply its members with a greater variety of produce. This model allows individual farms to specialise in the most appropriate farming for that holding (larger farms may concentrate on field scale production, smaller farms on specialist crops and upland farms on rearing livestock). We see examples of this in Japan and Germany<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> People living in communal groups who 'intend' to achieve a better social system.

<sup>4</sup> Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), USA: [www.attra.org/attra-pub/csa.html#what](http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/csa.html#what)

<sup>5</sup> Soil Association CSA Feasibility Study, *Sharing the Risk, Sharing the Reward*

- **Farmer-consumer co-operative.**

As described above, farmers develop co-operative networks to access a variety of products but there is greater commitment by the consumers. Consumers may co-own land and other resources with the participating farmers and work together to produce and distribute food (to see case studies on Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on UK CSAs).

## 2.2 Is it for you?

CSA is an opportunity to participate in the development of a special initiative supporting your local food economy. But first ask yourself why do you want to be involved in a CSA?

Do you simply wish to produce or eat local food? In which case there are other options that might be more appropriate. Direct marketing methods such as box schemes<sup>6</sup>, farm shops<sup>7</sup>, and farmers' markets require less of a commitment than CSA. Although these methods of distribution may also be employed by CSA, CSA is also an understanding of mutual support between the farmer and members. For example, consumer members may commit in advance, in cash or kind, to buying their food (or a farm product) directly from the farm. In return they have the opportunity to influence how the CSA is run. If you are a farmer you may have to commit to supplying produce to the CSA members for a full season.

In short, CSA:

- Is a relationship of mutual support
- Requires commitment
- Can be hard work for the organisers
- Provides a secure but modest income
- Is about bringing local culture back into agriculture.

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<sup>6</sup> 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 will vary each week depending on the seasonal vegetables available (See Soil Association Technical Guide, *How to Set Up a Vegetable Box Scheme*)

<sup>7</sup> See *Success with Farm Shops, A Guide to Farm Retailing*, MAFF Publications

### **2.2.1 Finding a CSA to join if you don't want to start one**

It is possible that there are CSAs trying to establish themselves in your locality and looking for new members and growers. You can find out what is happening in your region by clicking on the **map** found on the home page of the Cultivating Communities **website** or by registering your interest in the **exchange area**.

#### **An example of how a CSA Farm might be organised**

CSA farms may provide their members with vegetables distributed on a weekly basis through a vegetable box scheme, delivered to the home or collected from a pick up point or from the farm. Once it has been agreed what the farm is capable of producing and members have indicated the range of produce they would like to receive, the farmer develops a crop plan and a budget for the season. This will incorporate all the production costs and fair wages for the farmers. The budget is then put to the members for approval, and the cost of an annual share calculated by dividing the total cost between the participating members.

# 3 *Developing your CSA*

Some initial questions you will have to consider:

- Why is there a need for a CSA?
- Who wants a CSA and why ?
- What are you really trying to achieve?
- What opportunities are available to you?
- What are the values on which the CSA will be based?
- How will you develop the vision for a CSA?
- What input is required from all participating members?
- What is most likely to make you fail?

## **3.1 Chicken or egg?**

Where do you start? For a CSA initiative there are four essential elements:

- Group or individual capable of motivating CSA members.
- A capable producer willing to share responsibilities and choice with the public.
- Informed consumers.
- Accessible land.

The first step therefore is to take stock of what you already have. This manual is designed to help you bring together the rest of the mix. However, whatever your starting point, the steps you have to take in the development of your CSA will be quite similar, what varies is the degree of member participation. In general there tend to be two approaches:

- 1) Consumer led schemes – with lots of member involvement.
- 2) Farmer led schemes – with less member involvement.



### 3.2 Getting started – things to consider

It is a good idea not to be too ambitious, start small and grow organically! If you are a farmer with land in production, it is a good idea to maintain a diversity of markets for your produce until the CSA is more established. Try and arrange a visit to an existing scheme and get a feel for how they do it. Contact the **Cultivating Communities** project as they may be able to help you arrange this.

Making the partnership between producers and consumers work for mutual benefit is what CSA is all about. This relationship takes time, with CSA planning and development taking place through a series of meetings. As handling large groups requires some experience, you may even consider having an experienced facilitator run the first meetings, as these will set the tone for future meetings.

Below we identify some points to make the most out of your meetings (to see Holding an Effective Meeting go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on Documents):

- Set clear and achievable objectives for each meeting
- Ask what sort of group people would like to work in and what rules of engagement they would like to set themselves
- Have methods for making decisions and dealing with conflict
- Acknowledge areas of shared interest and areas of different interest
- Give everyone a chance to speak on an issue. Break into small groups
- Take a non-critical stance
- Work with each other's strengths, weaknesses and differing perspectives
- Consider what people need to know in order to be able to make good decisions
- Be open about money
- Finally, there is no substitute for good listening!

#### Partnerships

The principles of partnership working are the essence of CSA, not only between consumers and the farmer, but also between the other parties involved. A partnership is different from buying in contract services as all parties involved take responsibility for the project, its development and ideally for the wellbeing of the other partners (see [www.localfoodworks.org.uk](http://www.localfoodworks.org.uk) Information Library for a document on partnership working). Consider whether it would help your CSA to form an informal or formal partnership, for example, with another farm or the village shop.

### 3.2.1 Ten steps to forming a CSA

Although the development of your CSA will be determined by your circumstances, the following steps serve as a guide, each of which could require separate, even several meetings:

1. **Exploration of CSA:**
  - Why eat local food?
  - What is CSA?
  - Why small farms need support?
  - What is the interest in starting a CSA?
  - CSA as an opportunity to shape the countryside for what you want.
2. **What do you want out of your CSA?**
  - Organic food?
  - Access to a farm?
  - Opportunities to work?
  - What does the group desire for the future?
  - What are the objectives of the CSA?
  - Who will plan and develop the CSA?
3. **Electing a core group:**
  - Do you need a core group?
  - What are the responsibilities of the core group? (See Core group in Section 4 CSA Members and Section 5 Making an organisation and legal issues)
4. **Finding land and someone to farm it:**
  - (See Section 7 Land, and 8 Production for CSA)
5. **What finances are available to you?**
  - What is special about your situation?
  - Setting up a CSA bank account.
  - Appointing a treasurer. (See Section 6 Financing CSA)
6. **Share costs and distribution:**
  - What is the farm going to produce?
  - What are the production costs?
  - How much will cost each member?
  - How are you going to get the produce to the members? (See Section 9 Managing the shares)

7. **Recruiting more members:**  
Writing a CSA proposal. (See Section 4 CSA members)
8. **Farm activities:**  
Starting the farming activities.  
Organising events and activities. (See Section 10 Farm activities)
9. **Legal structures:**  
What are the principles that guide your CSA?  
Who is responsible for what?  
Writing a constitution. (See Section 5 Making an organisation and legal issues)
10. **Keeping in touch**  
(See Section 4 CSA Members, Communication)

# 4 CSA members

How do you find people willing to commit to CSA and maintain that commitment? How many you have to recruit depends on the initiative you have in mind. It could be as few as 10-15 (see Tumblers Patch case study: go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on UK CSAs) usually between 50-100 for vegetable producing schemes (see Flaxlands and Perry Court case studies, as above) and even up to 1000 if you are considering purchasing a farm between you (see Organics at Cost case study, as above).

There are three main reasons why people would want to join a CSA:

- 1) As a source of fresh, local organic food.
- 2) To support their local farmers.
- 3) To know who grows their food and how they produce it.

Other factors affecting peoples' decision to join a CSA have been identified as:

- Income – how much are members willing to pay?
- Family size – what quantity and variety of produce is needed to feed the whole family?
- Food tastes – is there a demand for unusual crops and varieties or should you stick to more common produce?
- Free time for preparing the food (as CSA membership will involve share collection, cleaning, storing and cooking the produce).
- Urban or rural member – these two groups have differing perspectives on food production.
- Distance to site of production – determines the members' relationship to the farm and methods of produce distribution.
- Awareness – Knowledge of CSA and concern for environmental issues.

## 4.1 Where do you find them?

CSA members will not all be exactly the same but there has to be a degree of commonality so that the CSA arrangement will satisfy all their needs. You probably have a fairly good idea of what member characteristics would work for your CSA and this will determine how to find them.

Recruiting members by word-of-mouth appears to be most effective and provides greater long-term stability. But this is really only an option for an

established CSA where contented members will naturally spread the word. Initially members will probably have to be contacted by more remote means such as circulating leaflets describing the proposed CSA or by giving a presentation. A presentation could be the basis of a first meeting (see Ten steps to forming a CSA, Section 3 Developing your CSA) and should describe what CSA is, what the benefits of CSA are, what members could achieve or expect from the CSA and how they can be involved.

The best place to start is amongst your immediate acquaintances, your friends, family and work colleagues. Start by arranging a point of contact through which people can consistently reach you.

If you then have to look for members further afield try contacting existing common interest groups. Farmers' markets could be an opportunity to establish links with potential CSA members. Other groups you can consider contacting:

- **Community groups:** Housing associations and neighbourhood groups, the Women's Institute (WI).
- **Consumer groups:** Food co-ops and food buying groups. Local Organic Support Groups (contact the Soil Association to find your local group).
- **Environmental groups:** Community composting groups, Friends of the Earth.
- **Community gardens, community orchards and city farms:** Operate with similar principles to CSAs. They tend to be smaller than rural farms and emphasise social and cultural benefits. They may be good sources of support and contacts, especially with activists, if you are seeking to set up a larger scale CSA. (See The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, Appendix 11.2)
- **Religious groups.** Use community notice-boards or put an article in the parish magazine.
- **Groups addressing food poverty:** School breakfast clubs, community cafes, community gardens, consumer co-ops, cooking clubs, fruit barras<sup>8</sup>, van schemes, meals on wheels, soup runs, healthy schools tuck shop projects. (See Food Poverty Network, Appendix 11.2) Special diet support groups, such as diabetes. The health promotion department at your local authority or health authority is a good place to start these investigations. They also often have small grant schemes and usually focus on disadvantaged communities.

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<sup>8</sup> Found in Scotland, a trolley that fits in high rise lifts and does door to door sales.

## **Agencies**

There may be agencies in your area that would like to support the development of a CSA. They will tend to have their own agenda, but may often be helpful. A CSA initiative is more likely to succeed if assisted by an agency rather than run by one, as it is unlikely that agency led schemes will find committed participants. There are some examples of successful agency run CSAs, for example, in the health sector where food growing projects have provided opportunities for exercise, nutritional education, community building and socialisation. Each area will have different needs and hence different priorities for agency support. (See Appendix 11.2 and the Cultivating Communities website regional information)

## **4.2 Core group or steering committee**

Like CSA the term 'core group' was also coined in the USA for an elected body, which performs member functions, allowing farmers to concentrate on growing. They tend to be responsible for everything beyond growing and harvesting produce.

### **Do you need a core group?**

Perhaps your CSA is small enough that most of its members have sufficient input into its running, or the CSA may be the initiative of an energetic individual able to cope with all the responsibilities. It is possible that farmers can manage to grow, pack, deliver and maintain very close customer/member links. However, in most cases, the core group forms the heart of the CSA.

Responsibilities could include:

- Member recruitment
- Communications
- Food distribution
- Finances
- Organising events

Essentially the core group runs the CSA. They ensure its goals are being met and within the principles agreed by its members. The core group works with the farmer to set the share price. The farmers often sit in the core group, but if not the core group act as mediator between farmers and consumers. They are usually a volunteer group, meeting regularly, more often as the CSA starts up and then reducing to monthly when things are running smoothly.

Consider who is to take on the various roles within the group and be explicit about what their powers are. Which people have authority and responsibility for which kind of issue?

### **4.3 Communication**

CSA members are not simply buying produce, they are participating in their food supply and want to be connected to a farm. Keeping people informed is the key to maintaining this relationship. Ideally CSA members should be encouraged to visit the farm as often as is practical. Alternatively, communication can be through regular updates:

- Weekly share notes
- Newsletters
- E-mail and websites

and more occasionally through:

- Member surveys: pre start, short term and long term
- Members' handbook
- General meetings

#### **4.3.1 Weekly share notes**

Including a short note with each delivery of produce is a simple way to keep members up-to-date. In these you could include:

- A list of items in the share
- New varieties of produce. Write up information about each one, this can provide interesting stories on its origins and uses
- Recipes. Include a couple of recipes for the seasonal produce in that week's share, especially suggestions for the more unusual items. Ask members to contribute their own recipes
- The latest farm news. Give members a glimpse of what was involved in getting them their share of produce (for an example go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on Documents).

#### **4.3.2 Newsletters**

Produced less frequently than share notes, maybe quarterly, newsletters are an opportunity to go into more detail. Here members can be informed about:

- The farm and its production methods
- Changes in produce distribution
- Members' recipe suggestions
- What to do with surplus produce – jams and pickles
- Forthcoming events
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Promotion of community activities – walks and fundraising
- Book reviews
- Features on topical food and countryside issues.

As newsletters require a little more time and thought it is a good idea to keep them simple, do not be overly ambitious. An occasional one-page letter may be all that a farmer may find time to do. Alternatively, a member may like to take on the role of journalist and responsibility for the (for an example go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on Documents).

#### **4.3.3 E-mail and websites**

With increasing access to the internet, e-mail and websites can also be considered as a means of communicating with members, although it should not be the sole means. Past newsletters and recipes could be posted on a website. Members can also be directed through links to a vast range of information about food and farming as well as receive support from similar groups and organisations. (see CSA Websites, Appendix 11.1)

#### **4.3.4 Members handbook**

An option is to produce a handbook for new members that addresses commonly asked questions:

- Distribution and collection methods
- What to do if collecting produce from the farm
- Description of unusual vegetables and what to do with them
- Safety on the farm, children
- Principles of organic farming
- Volunteering

#### **4.3.5 Surveys**

Surveys are a means of receiving feed back from the CSA members. Questions such as what type of produce should be grown, what quantities, how and when it should be distributed, in fact any opinions about the CSA. For example, you might want some feedback about an event the CSA hosted. Complete the communication loop by writing the results in your next newsletter and what action will be taken in the future.

A questionnaire could be used when recruiting members to determine initial production for the CSA. This could be followed up with another either mid-season or at the end of the season to further adjust the service to suit its members (for a sample questionnaire from a box scheme go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on Documents).

#### **4.3.6 General meetings**

General meetings are an opportunity to get all CSA members together. There will be occasions when decisions have to be made in consultation with the entire CSA membership and require more discussion than can be achieved through written communication. General meetings could be arranged in



conjunction with other events (see Section 10, Farm activities). Be clear about what you want to achieve. For tips on managing a good meeting see Section 3, Developing your CSA, and for Holding an Effective Meeting go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on Documents.

# 5 *Making an organisation and legal issues*

At some point in the development of your CSA you will have to consider the need for a formal structure or constitution, and what would be most appropriate. But be aware that it is not a prerequisite to running a successful CSA. All too often, local food projects falter around needless discussions about legal structures when they would be better concentrating on the practicalities of making their scheme function. It should become quite obvious when a more formal structure is really needed.

Enterprises working on an informal basis where the enterprise has no legal identity separate from its members are known as having an *unincorporated organisation*. Members are wholly liable for the debts of the enterprise. Adopting a formal legal structure requires that the organisation be *incorporated*. This will give the enterprise greater credibility as it will have identity recognised by external groups, it can own property, it can sue and be sued. The organisations 'laws' are written up as its *constitution*. One of the greatest benefits of incorporation is its *limited liability* - meaning that individual members liability for the organisation's debts are limited. Therefore should the enterprise go bankrupt members only owe to the value of their guarantee or to the value of their shares.

An organisation can incorporate itself in three ways:

- As an **industrial and provident society**  
Structure and constitution are written as "rules".
- As a **limited company**, limited by guarantee or by shares.  
Members of a company limited by guarantee, guarantee to provide a pre-determined amount, if needed, when the enterprise is wound-up, which may be as low as £1. Charities, development trusts, social firms and community businesses frequently use this form of incorporation.
- As a **charity**  
Most social enterprises do not seek or qualify for charitable status. Some social firms whose purpose is the 'alleviation of poverty' (through employment) for disabled people are charities. Social enterprises that have a strong regeneration focus, such as development trusts, may be closely

linked with a charity. The charitable arm will be used for training and other community development activities. The business arm, potentially a subsidiary, will not have charitable status.

### **5.1 Informal agreements**

Many producer-consumer partnerships are based on an informal arrangement. This is an option for small projects where there is little risk to any of the parties involved, and for start up projects that have yet to learn about the particular set of circumstances in which they are striving to operate. To see case study examples for Tumblers Patch Pig co-op, Flaxlands CSA and Perry Court, go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on UK CSAs. A simple contract drawn up between CSA members and the producers may be all that is required: to see sample contracts and agreements go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on Documents).

### **5.2 Formal structures**

As a CSA increases in size and complexity, it is wise to have clearly defined rights and responsibilities - in legal terms these are written as memoranda and articles of association for companies and as rules for industrial and provident societies (see below) which are recognised in law. This will ensure accountability and the smooth running of the scheme. The most appropriate arrangement for your project will emerge as you consider the rights and responsibilities of each party involved (the stakeholders). These considerations are dealt with in more detail below.

### **5.3 Choosing a legal structure**

CSAs can operate within a variety of legal organisational structures. It is advisable to seek professional advice as these structures can be quite complex with the possibility of hybridising and adapting to suit individual circumstances. One of your members may have legal experience that could assist in this area. (See Co-operative Union, Plunkett Foundation and Co-Active in Appendix 11.2).

In practice the guiding principle should be **'structure follows strategy'**. Think carefully through the objectives of your enterprise, who are the different stakeholders, what are their concerns and interests in the scheme. When you are clear about this then you are ready to seek professional advice and in a good position to make the most of their time, and especially if any free or subsidised advice may be available to you.

## Issues to consider:

- **Who are the stakeholders?**  
Typically a CSA will involve: A landowner, farmers and growers, the consumer members, other farms, grant giving organisations. What do each of these groups want out of the partnership? What level of commitment? Does it need a written contract?
- **Who ultimately has control of the business decisions? How will the enterprise be managed?**  
Is it the farmer, or are they employed by the CSA? The investors? Consumer members? The landlord? Workers? An elected board? A combination?  
If consumers are to share the risks of farming, they should also have the opportunity to understand and influence the way that their food is produced. But do you want members to be able to vote on day to day issues such as when and where to plant carrots, or only when money has to be spent on a new planting machine? Are everybody's interests protected? Do you need to protect the enterprise from private interests, as in a charity? Will your structure protect the enterprise against militant and disruptive individuals who wish to take control? Consider not only who has power in theory but also who actually has power in practice, for example a landowner may have a single vote but the power to evict from their land.
- **What is the relationship with the landowner?**  
Do you own the land? If you allow others to work it will they gain rights to it? Will you be renting the land? Will you buy the land as a community group? Is the land to be held in trust? (see Land, Section 7)
- **How will the CSA get start up capital?**  
Start up capital will always be required but, in addition, money will be needed if you have to buy land or machinery which could amount to a large sum. Who will pay for the labour required to start up a CSA? Who will own the animals, the land and the machinery? If there are grants available, who ultimately owns the assets acquired with this money?
- **How will the CSA get working capital?**  
There will be times when CSAs want to expand, set up a farm shop, employ an extra worker to set up a box scheme or buy a polytunnel. Investors may want their money to earn interest. You may want to be able to sell shares, with or without voting rights.
- **Who will profit?**  
If the enterprise makes a profit, who gets it? Absent shareholders? The workers? Consumers? The landlord? Will it be reinvested in the business, put aside for a bad year or divided equally between the members?
- **Who will benefit from increases in value to the scheme?**  
A grower may put years of labour into a piece of land and its infrastructure.

What happens when they leave. Will they be remunerated for their ‘sweat equity’?

- **Will your structure accommodate change in the future?**  
What if your charismatic leader should leave? If you want to double the number of employees? Buy more land? Take on more charitable objectives, such as providing cheap produce to people on a low income?
- **What happens to assets if you should wind up the scheme?**
- **Who is liable should the business go bankrupt?**
- **Should you have a constitution?**

#### **5.4 What is different about CSA farm businesses?**

The success of a business is usually measured in terms of its increased stocks of money and physical assets. However, the CSAs priority should be the services and benefits it provides to its members, while still remaining viable as a business in economic terms. If considered in this way, CSAs can be classified as social enterprises. Social enterprises lie somewhere between the private and the public sectors and are often referred to as the ‘third way’.

The financial structure of a social enterprise is different from other businesses in that it does have access to social investment funds and in some cases is eligible for tax relief. As businesses they are self-sufficient, being viable trading concerns, making a surplus from trading. They can be either profit making or not-for-profit enterprises. However, their profits are shared among the business stakeholders or are used to benefit the community rather than as a return on share capital. This is what distinguishes social enterprises from voluntary sector organisations, which depend entirely on donations and grant aid.

The principles of co-operative organisations are a good ideological basis for CSA.

### **Co-operative principles**

The International Co-operative Alliance lays down the co-operative principles by which co-operatives put their values into practice. In summary these are:

#### **1. Voluntary and open membership**

Co-operatives are open to all persons without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

#### **2. Democratic member control**

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who set their policies and make decisions.

#### **3. Member economic participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited return, if any, on capital subscribed.

#### **4. Autonomy and independence**

Co-operatives are autonomous organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

#### **5. Education, training and information**

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

#### **6. Co-operation among co-operatives**

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

#### **7. Concern for community**

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.

## 5.5 Liability and insurance

If members of the public go onto a farm there are three types of insurance which need to be considered:

- **Public liability:** Even if members of the public cross the farm on a footpath, you will need public liability cover. Different cover is available according to needs. If you have a farm shop, for instance, you will need cover for every day of the year. If, however, the farm is only open for a specific event insurance can be arranged for that day.
- **Employer's liability:** Although CSA members are not technically employees, if they are to do any work on the farm they need to be insured against potential injury.
- **Product liability:** This is required if you intend to sell any farm produce for public consumption.

The NFU has specialist insurance services, but like any insurance it is worth shopping around - start by looking in the agricultural press (see Appendix 11.4) for specialist agricultural brokers.

## 5.6 Organic certification

To label agricultural produce as 'organic' or with reference to organic production methods, it must by law (EU Regulation 2092/91), be certified with an approved certification body. The Soil Association currently certifies over 70 per cent of UK organic producers and processors and is recognised as having the highest standards of food quality and production. Organic certification is the most rigorous of all systems of accountability for food production, thus consumers can be confident of the integrity of the food they eat. The certification process first requires that land goes through a two-year conversion period where it is managed organically, but crops and livestock may not be marketed as organic, only as organic 'in conversion'. CSA may be able to support a holding needs to get through the difficult conversion period before expanding into further markets later on. Organic farming principles emphasise the use of crop rotations and the use of animal manures to build and maintain natural soil fertility and control pests and diseases. Organic standards prohibit the use of genetically modified organisms, promote good livestock husbandry and encourage the development of a healthy environment that considers the landscape and its biodiversity.

### Why go for organic certification?

- It is a legal requirement if you wish to market produce as 'organic'
- You may wish to sell produce surplus to CSA requirements to other local markets, for example farmers' markets
- You will be producing to recognised standards and good practice
- Gives organic producers and processors credibility.

- Organic standards provide a clear line for when to say ‘yes’ and ‘no’. For example, if there is any debate about farming practice such as how to deal with slugs or invading docks. You will also have a case for rejecting non-organic inputs
- With Soil Association certification you have access to technical support through producer membership (see below).

However, as CSA initiatives are directly accountable to their consumer members, organic certification may not be necessary as they know the farmer, their production methods and can see it in practice. CSAs may also be quite small making the cost of certification prohibitive (see the listing for the Wholesome Food Association, Appendix 11.2).



# 6 *Financing CSA*

Like all aspects of CSA, the finances available to you will be determined by your particular circumstances. To ensure accountability it is advisable that one person is responsible for the CSA finances. A member of the core group (see CSA members, Section 4) could take on the role of treasurer.

## **Members**

The main source of income for a CSA is from its members. Members usually commit to buying farm produce for a full growing season and preferably pay for this in advance, thereby providing some working capital. In addition members may invest through shares, an investment by each member of £10 to £1000 or more, which can then be used to raise further capital.

## **Bank loans**

If you can demonstrate that you have the commitment of a group of people to a CSA, as letters of intent for example, this would strengthen a CSA business plan for a loan, mortgage or funding proposal.

Banks will provide loan funds to social enterprises on the same basis as they lend to the private sector. Some banks also have special programmes and products to support social enterprises. Several banks provide special packages to credit unions, while others offer special products for employee-owned businesses, particularly employee share ownership plans. Some banks also have staff that specialise in supporting community enterprises and co-operatives.

## **Social investment funds**

There are a number of funds available to social enterprises. Community finance initiatives provide loan finance to social enterprises and micro-enterprise which may require less security than banks.

## **Grants**

Some social enterprises, particularly those addressing social exclusion, receive start-up and capital grants. CSA initiatives are an opportunity to revive struggling rural businesses and communities and can also be linked to less advantaged urban communities. If you are seeking grant support, start by considering your local circumstances, are there any development needs that

may be aided by the establishment of a CSA? For example, will you be providing employment or training opportunities, improving the conservation management of a holding or providing fresh produce to a community that otherwise finds it difficult to acquire it? Your local Rural Community Council (RCC) may be able to help you identify local needs and sources of support. Contact ACRE or visit their website to find your local RCC office (see Appendix 11.2).

Of particular relevance to CSAs is the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), introduced in October 2000. This provides a framework of new schemes that supports rural enterprise and diversification. The programme includes marketing, training, skills, as well as additional resources for 'green' farming schemes. The Rural Enterprise Scheme, and the Vocational Training Scheme are particularly significant since they are not restricted to farmers but are open to anyone involved in rural enterprise. The ERDP processing and marketing scheme is appropriate for CSA. (See below)

## **6.1 Potential sources of grants and loans**

### **Agricultural Mortgage Corporation**

Specialises in finance for the agricultural sector.

T: 01264 334747 W: [www.amconline.co.uk](http://www.amconline.co.uk)

### **Charitable Trusts**

Grant-giving trusts are listed in *The Directory for Social Change*. Libraries usually have a copy of this or it can be purchased for £16.95. You can also search for appropriate trusts using the Fund Finder CD-Rom.

T: 020 7209 5151

### **Community Food Initiative Fund**

A limited number of grants are available for community food initiatives in Wales with funding of up to £5000 a project available.

The National Assembly for Wales, Health Promotion Division, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ,

T: 029 2082 6293

### **Community Fund**

(Formerly National Lottery Charities Board)

Gives grants to groups that help meet the needs of those at greatest disadvantage in society and improve the quality of life in the community.

Contact for an application pack and regional contact addresses.

T: 0845 791 9191 W: [www.community-fund.org.uk](http://www.community-fund.org.uk)

### **Ecology Building Society**

The Ecology is a mutual building society dedicated to improving the environment by promoting sustainable housing and sustainable communities.

18 Station Road, Cross Hills, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 7EH

T: 0845 674 5566 F: 01535 636166 E: [info@ecology.co.uk](mailto:info@ecology.co.uk) W: [www.ecology.co.uk](http://www.ecology.co.uk)

### **LEADER +**

The Leader + scheme provides funds to assist 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 is an EC-funded initiative and aims to complement the England Rural Development Plan.

Contact DEFRA or see [www.defra.gov.uk/erdp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp) for further details.

### **Local Investment Fund**

LIF provide loan finance to not-for-profit community organisations.

123 Minorities, London EC3N 1NT

T: 020 7680 1028 E: [information@lif.org.uk](mailto:information@lif.org.uk) W: [www.lif.org.uk](http://www.lif.org.uk)

### **Local Enterprise Agencies**

These are companies limited by guarantee, typically set up as partnerships between the private and public sectors. Your local Business Link should have details of your Local Enterprise Agency. The main role of the Enterprise Agencies is to help establish small businesses, and to encourage the growth of existing businesses within their particular area by being able to quickly identify and respond to the needs of their local business community. They can advise on topics such as: new business start-ups, business planning, financial planning as well as advise on the day to day running of your business. Local Enterprise Agencies can arrange for a free legal consultation (45 minutes) for your business.

### **The Phoenix Fund**

Aimed at helping promote enterprise in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and administered by the Small Business Service. The fund invites applications from both new and existing Community Finance Initiatives. These tend to be locally run, non-profit organisations, which lend smaller amounts to businesses which banks consider too risky for reasons such as a lack of business experience or bad credit ratings.

Small Business Service: Kingsgate House, 66-74 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6SW

T: 0845 600 9 006 W: [www.sbs.gov.uk](http://www.sbs.gov.uk)

### **The Farm Business Advice Service**

The Service has been developed by DEFRA in conjunction with the SBS, an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, with input from farming industry representatives. The service is being delivered by local Business Links. It provides up to three days free consultancy to farmers wishing to reassess their businesses.

T: 08456 009006

### **England Rural Development Programme**

ERDP promotes rural development through 10 schemes, which are 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. Contact DEFRA for further details.

W: [www.defra.gov.uk/erdp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp)

**SEED** The Social, Economic and Environmental Development Programme has £125 million available through the lottery New Opportunities Fund green spaces and sustainable communities programme. The fund, administered by the **Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC)**, is aimed at projects designed to help urban and rural communities throughout 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.

**RSNC**, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1WT

T: 0870 0361 000 E: [seed@rsnc.cix.co.uk](mailto:seed@rsnc.cix.co.uk)

### **Shell Better Britain Campaign**

The SBBC 'Community Projects Fund' awards grants of up to £2000 for projects that benefit communities and the environment.

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

T: 0121 248 5902 E: [enquiries@sbbc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@sbbc.co.uk) W: [www.sbbc.co.uk](http://www.sbbc.co.uk)

### **Single Regeneration Budget**

Central government funds administered by regional partners according to local priorities. Contact your local authority for further details.

### **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.

W: [www.defra.gov.uk/erdp](http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp)

# 7 Land

A CSA cannot exist without land. There are a variety of ways you may gain use of land but it can be difficult to arrange long term agreements. CSA members are more likely to invest time and money in land if they are sure they will also appreciate the long-term benefits. It also takes time to become familiar with the capabilities of a piece of land and build up its fertility.

Think carefully about the future needs of the CSA when considering your land requirements. What do you need in terms of accessibility? Do you need buildings for packing, meetings or accommodation? Are there any planning restrictions?

## 7.1 How much land will you need?

This will depend on how many members you intend to provide for and how you intend to farm the land. If your own holding is to supply all the produce packed (for a vegetable box scheme) it would be realistic to expect to manage about 60 boxes per hectare per week<sup>9</sup>. This requires fairly intensive production such as raised beds and a lot of hand labour! Expect much less through field scale production. Growing for 100 weekly vegetable boxes would provide a suitable income for one person (with seasonal help), but this requires great skill, managing between 30-50 crops and using protected cropping techniques.

You can look for land in the farming press (see Appendix 11.4). Contact your local firm of land agents to find out if there is any land for sale or rent in your area. Try advertising in the farming press or local paper. You may even be able to encourage a reporter to do a feature about the idea.

## 7.2 Buying

Buying land or a farm has the benefit of long-term security, as long as it can be managed as a viable business! A successful CSA initiative can provide the security a small farm needs. Commitment by CSA members allows for long-term business planning which is essential when seeking a loan.

CSA members can be asked to invest in a non-profit making share, the capital from which may be used to secure a loan. Members wishing to leave the CSA

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<sup>9</sup> Soil Association Technical Guide, Setting Up a Vegetable Box Scheme

can then recoup the value of their share. This could even be repaid in farm produce!

Most high street banks would consider providing loans against a good business plan, and a few even have specialist agricultural advisers. The Agricultural Mortgage Corporation specialises in finance for the agricultural sector. Triodos Bank and The Ecology Building Society are ethical banks that will look favourably on enterprises with social and environmental benefits. Triodos also has assets specifically targeted at the organic sector. But you will still have to demonstrate that you have the capability and produce a convincing, viable plan.

### **7.3 Land trusts**

Land trusts fit in well with the CSA concept. The purpose of a land trust is to purchase land and remove it from the market thus protecting its integrity for a specific purpose. For example, the National Trust was set up to “*act as a guardian for the nation in the acquisition and protection of threatened coastline, countryside and buildings*”.

Land trusts can acquire land and ensure its use for the production of food, by sustainable means in perpetuity. Land held in trust can protect it from undesirable development, as an asset to a community producing food for them. As the purchase is a collective responsibility, or even given in donation, the farming business would not necessarily have to accommodate a large mortgage or rent. As described above, capital can be raised through non-profit making shares that can be redeemed if leaving the locality. The shareholders themselves could be made responsible for selling on their own shares.

The Land Heritage Trust (see Appendix 11.2) acquires land, and makes tenancies available to families committed to organic husbandry.

### **7.4 Renting land**

For those new to farming or wishing to trial a CSA initiative, renting land seems a sensible option. Renting land on an existing farm with a willing farmer may be of benefit as they can offer their expertise and experience of the land, and use of machinery. A CSA established in this way may bring benefits to the farm and an opportunity to market non-CSA produce.

The disadvantage of renting is that there is less scope for long-term projects, and there may be little recompense at the end of the tenancy for any increased value, such as, improved fertility, organic status or improved infrastructure. Some tenancy agreements also forbid the involvement of third parties, which could restrict rentals from tenant farmers or the inclusion of investing CSA

members. Look carefully at the legal arrangement (see Section 5, Making an organisation and legal issues)

### **7.5 Farm tenancies**

County councils own farms as part of their estate which are leased out to tenant farmers for approximately ten years. When farms become available they are usually advertised in local and regional press, although larger 'flagship' farms will also be publicised in the national press, for example *Farmers Weekly* (see Appendix 11.4 for this and other publications). There is a statutory requirement of at least five years farming experience, but three of these can be time spent in education. Potential tenants have to submit three things in a tender:

1. A formal tender of rent.
2. A financial statement demonstrating that you have the assets to purchase the required stock and machinery, to take on the previous tenants fixtures (their improvements) and have sufficient funds to complete the first year of trading.
3. A description of how you plan to farm the holding with an account of your farming experience and history. This can be as little as one page stating a continuation of current approach, or it can be quite a detailed business plan. A proposed CSA, although possibly giving some financial reassurance, is a less than traditional farming arrangement and it would need a clear description with forecast budgets.

Private land owners have similar requirements and advertise in the same way.

### **7.6 Allotments and other options**

If you are new to growing, an allotment is an excellent opportunity to trial your skills before taking on a larger commitment. They can cost anything between £15 and £50 a year. Your Local Authority should be able to advise you.

Many local authorities have allotments to rent, and some allotments are privately owned. They are affordable and usually let on one-year agreements. It is possible to run a small scheme to CSA principles on allotments. Informally, you can share a single plot of course. Increasingly community groups are running community gardens or orchards on allotments and some local authorities see this as a way of regenerating run down sites. Some sites are run by allotment associations. They may collect rent and undertake maintenance and support, sometimes on behalf of the landlord. For urban groups such an arrangement could meet their CSA aspirations. Allotment tenants may also be good recruiting grounds for farm CSAs.

The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (see Appendix 11.2) provide free advice to Affiliated Members in connection with all horticultural and gardening matters including interpretation of legislation. A good practice guide, *Growing in the Community*, explains how to ensure a secure future for allotments (see Appendix 11.3).

There are all sorts of opportunities for growing food in the urban environment; even things like bee keeping are possible from a moderate sized garden. Sustain (see Appendix 11.2) has produced several reports on the potentials for urban production (see Appendix 11.3). The National Federation City Farms and Community Gardens (see Appendix 11.2), exists to promote, support and represent groups engaged in community led development of open space through locally managed farming and gardening. They are in discussion with government and local authorities looking at providing greater opportunities for local involvement in food growing projects.



# 8 *Production for CSA*

To provide an interesting variety, for as long as possible throughout the year, and to co-ordinate this with the longer term plan of crop rotations is quite a challenge for any grower! In the following section we illustrate some considerations when growing for CSA.

## **8.1 What is to be grown for the CSA and by whom?**

The capabilities of the land available to you and the skills and experience of the farmer will determine largely what can be produced. The next step is to establish what the members want and then translating this into a working crop plan. There are two approaches to this. A farmer-driven CSA, with land already available to them, will know what they can and want to grow. A consumer driven CSA can decide what they would like produced for them before approaching a farmer with or without land. What has to be stressed to potential CSA members is the seasonality of production. Be clear what members can realistically expect to receive and when.

A CSA can provide nearly anything that can be produced on the farm. Fresh vegetables tend to be central to CSA production. But eggs, milk, meat and firewood can all be provided through CSA arrangements, although appropriate storage and distribution has to be considered. To keep organisation simple it is easier to treat each product separately, allowing members to buy into a share for the season. For example, one member may choose to receive a weekly egg share with their vegetables others may like milk.

## **8.2 Crop planning**

How long is your growing season, how many people are you providing for and what are you going to provide? These all have to be answered in developing a cropping plan.

### **How much of each crop do your members eat?**

Issuing a questionnaire to CSA members is a good way of establishing people's likes and dislikes, you may even get some measure of the quantities required. Growers already producing for vegetable box schemes (contact the Soil Association for training events) are a good source of advice. The book *Sharing the Harvest* (see Appendix 11.3) also has figures for quantities required for a share, but consider cultural and dietary differences. For example, some box scheme producers have noted a reduction in demand for potatoes, possibly because we are increasingly eating starch in other forms such as rice and pasta. In addition we are also eating more fresh salad crops.

An approximate mix of vegetables can then be designed for each week throughout the season; quantities and planting times are then calculated retrospectively. A crop-planning chart is a useful tool to visualise the harvest periods for each crop and to design a balanced combination for the growing season. To maintain interest and provide for a healthy and balanced diet, you should strive to have between 9-15 different crops available for harvesting throughout the season.

There are several good references which can assist your planning (see Appendix 11.3). The HDRA *Cooks Garden Planner* is a useful wall chart, and you can find tools for crop planning at The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association website (see Appendix 11.2)

### **8.3 Extending the season**

Staggered planting times, using different varieties, protected cropping and crop storage are all means to extend the growing season. Staggering your planting will extend the harvest period for a particular crop reducing potential gluts. Certain varieties will do better at different times of the year. Choose early and late varieties to extend the season. Protected cropping methods such as fleeces and polytunnels allow early planting and some varieties can even be grown throughout the winter, such as Japanese salad crops. Some crops are also suitable for storage, in particular the root crops, potatoes, onions and carrots. Pumpkins and other squashes also store well, and if chilled storage is available dense vegetables, such as cabbages, can be stored.

### **8.4 Co-operating with other farms**

CSA is a perfect opportunity to develop links with other local farms to supply the variety of produce that CSA members would like. For example, you may concentrate on vegetable production, but offer to supply dairy products from a nearby dairy farm. Or it might be that your neighbour is a large farm with the land and machinery to grow field scale crops whilst you concentrate on providing higher value varieties. Your CSA may act as a central hub for the distribution of all sorts of local and regional produce, but this will require

much more time to organise and administer. There are instances where experienced organic growers with large vegetable box schemes have co-operated with other local farmers, helping them in their conversion to organic production, sharing specialist machinery and planning crop rotations between the farms.

## 8.5 Labour

Who is going to do the work?

### Farmer or grower

If you need to recruit a suitable farmer or grower, place an advert in the appropriate farming press (see Appendix 11.4) or approach farming and horticulture training colleges. Contact other CSAs or producers growing for vegetable box schemes, and they may be able to put you in touch with some suitable candidates. They should have good organisational skills and be self-motivated yet willing to share control. During the height of the growing season extra help might also have to be brought in. Other qualities to look for in a producer for a CSA include:

- What previous farming experience do they have?
- Do they have experience of organic or biodynamic farming methods?
- Do they work well with other people?
- Are they willing and capable of passing on their skills?

### Members

Members could be given the opportunity to work in the production of their own food. This could be on a completely voluntary basis or towards the cost of their CSA share. It is not wise to count on members voluntary help for crucial farming operations, consider their efforts as a bonus. As members will require some time from the grower or farmer in supervision it is advisable to set specific times or days as work days, and have some work ideas prepared - be organised!

Alternative currencies such as LETS and 'time banking' could be used as a means for exchanging people's time and skills through the CSA. LETS schemes (Local Exchange Trading Schemes) enable people to decide the local unit of 'currency' and trade their skills in this. In time banking schemes - new from the US - the currency is the hours spent volunteering, so that babysitting or shopping for elderly people becomes an alternative form of 'money'.

More information and software for managing these schemes can be found at the New Economics Foundation website: (see Appendix 11.2)

### **Volunteers and apprentices**

There are many people who would like the opportunity to embark on a more sustainable and satisfying lifestyle. CSA is an opportunity for new entrants to farming to gain access to land and have the close support of an informed community. CSA initiatives provide an opportunity to gain valuable experience in practical growing and farming in a social environment. Volunteers and apprentices seem to be a feature of almost all CSAs encountered.

Volunteers tend to be short term and will therefore need fairly close supervision. Providing board and lodging seems a fair exchange for voluntary labour, but it might not be unreasonable to charge a boarding fee if you can give volunteers sound experience.

WWOOF (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) is an international network which co-ordinates voluntary placements on organic farms. (See Appendix 11.2). You can also advertise for volunteers in appropriate press (see Appendix 11.4). You will probably find that once you have established yourself, and with a good reference from previous volunteers, they will be contacting you.

# 9 *Managing the shares*

The term 'share' is really only appropriate in a CSA shareholder arrangement (see Section 2.1, Models of CSA) where members each receive a share of the total harvest, however, it is a convenient description for the regular supply of farm produce to CSA members. Here we consider how to price shares, and the post harvest handling of shares, which includes washing, packing and distribution. There are three different parties that can take on responsibility for handling the CSA shares, the farmers, the members or somebody from outside the CSA.

## 9.1 Pricing the shares

Under-pricing CSA shares is the most common reason for CSA failure! The cost of a share should reflect the full production costs and includes a fair wage for the farmer or grower. There are two common approaches to pricing CSA shares. The simplest is to establish approximately what a household would normally spend on produce each week and provide the equivalent in CSA produce at market prices. This method is commonly used by producer run box schemes, but only with experience can a grower know if they can produce profitably at these prices. For new CSAs it is probably more reliable to at least attempt to calculate the costs, this will also provide greater accountability for CSA members. In arrangements where members agree to take on greater responsibility (shareholder CSA), a record of the actual costs should be kept, and at the end of the season shortfalls can be charged for or leftover funds returned or kept for the following season. (To see sample budgets go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on Documents).

### 9.1.1 Members on a low income

What if consumers do not have the resources to pay for food months before it is grown or even pay for food at all? Below are some ideas that allow consumers with a range of incomes to participate in a CSA:

- Accepting payments on a long-term instalment plan
- Offering a sliding scale share fee
- Having a revolving loan fund
- Offering free shares, which are usually paid for by members or organisations who donate a share or by members who agree to pay more

for their share, with the proviso that the extra funds will go towards the free shares

- Allowing members to work for some or all of a share, either through farm labour or through administrative and distribution work.
- Savings groups
- Include in your budget a number of shares which are free or subsidised
- Get better off members to pay for one or more harvest shares for low-income members.

## 9.2 How to distribute produce?

Getting food from the farm and into consumers homes in an environmentally responsible way that is also convenient for the members, is a major factor in the success of a CSA. This transaction is also the main opportunity for interaction between members and farmers. The way you do this will be determined by your own set of circumstances, such as the location of the farm, available transport and the degree of member participation. A CSA is likely to be more robust if members feel they are involved and taking on some responsibility for the way they acquire their food - try and strive for this but incorporate as much flexibility as possible to allow for limits in members' time and lifestyles.

### Collection from the farm

For the farmers, the easiest method is to have members collect their produce directly from the farm. Produce does not even have to be individually apportioned. Some CSAs will list the items for that week's share on a board, and the quantity that each member is to receive alongside. Members then help themselves from bulk lots of freshly harvested produce. This spreads packing time among all the members, and gives a degree of choice. If slightly more produce is harvested than required, then even the last member to collect can pick and choose. To allow further choice, you can put out a swap box with a selection of each item, members can then exchange one of their own items with one from the box or swap with each other. Or simply have a 'gift box' where people can leave and take what they want. Maybe to include produce from their own allotments and gardens?

### Drop off points

If CSA members don't live close to the farm, produce can be delivered to a more convenient drop off point. This could be one of the member's homes, if they have sufficient space such as a garage, a church or community centre or even at a farmers' market stand where the CSA could also do some trading. Produce can again be delivered in bulk or already divided into individual shares. Drop off points can provide a valuable social function as a place where members can meet each other and the farmer; although not entirely necessary it is a good opportunity to maintain the connection with the farm.

### **Home delivery**

This is a method that has been used successfully by many vegetable producers. Pre-packed boxes of vegetables are delivered. It requires the least in terms of member participation, which is both its advantage and disadvantage. As it is the connection between consumers and producers that is the essence of CSA a box scheme which has little or no consumer participation probably falls outside what we should consider as CSA. (See Appendix 11.3 and the Soil Association technical paper, *How to Set Up a Vegetable Box Scheme*).

# 10 *Farm activities*

CSA is about fostering links between the producers and consumers of food, and members should be encouraged to visit the holding. However, in practice, it is wise to stick to agreed visiting times, such as when they can collect produce from the farm, or when an event is organised. This means that someone can be around to supervise, this may simplify insurance requirements.

## 10.1 Open days, festivals and celebrations

There are plenty of opportunities around which to organise a get together on the farm, such as:

- The seasons: first day of spring, midsummer's eve and so on.
- The agricultural calendar: lambing days, apple day, organic week (October) and pumpkin day.
- Traditional and religious festivals: Easter, May Day, Halloween, Guy Fawkes night, the equinoxes and solstices.
- Organised events: Barn dances, BBQs, work parties.

Try and divide the responsibility of event organisation, as they require more time and thought than first imagined. This is an area of responsibility ideally suited to a CSA core group even if this is their only purpose!

## 10.2 Workshops

Access to a farm and its resources is an attraction to CSA. It is also an opportunity to further develop the skills of CSA members to better appreciate the arrangement. You might consider organising a cooking demonstration for some of the more unusual produce, or get together to process and preserve some of the more abundant produce, pickling or cider making for example!

A members motivation for joining a CSA is because they want to understand and take on some responsibility for their food production. Organic growing and permaculture workshops might be popular among CSA members, especially those considering putting some labour into CSA production.



### **10.3 Conservation work**

Members can be encouraged to carry out various conservation projects around the farm. Creating new wildlife habitats - tree planting, pond digging – or maintaining existing habitat - coppicing woodland or learning to lay hedges. We have even come across an initiative (to see a case study on Lower Woods go to [www.cuco.org.uk/exchange](http://www.cuco.org.uk/exchange) and click on UK CSAs) where local people pay to manage an area of woodland in exchange for its yield in firewood. This can be combined with relevant training (for example, chainsaw use, charcoal making). Your local Wildlife Trust and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (see Appendix 11.2) should be able to provide advice and suggestions for good conservation practice on farms.

### **10.4 Visitors on the farm**

A farm is a wonderful place for children to explore and learn about plants and animals and where and how their food is produced. But farms are not without their dangers, and it is advisable to draw up some guidelines for members. Try to keep visitors away from hazards such as machinery, slurry pits and livestock. It is also vital that good washing facilities are provided and that visitors and farm staff are aware of the risks.

Facilities to occupy children on pick up days and during farm activities may increase the incentive to join.

# 11 Appendices

## 11.1 CSA Websites

A web search ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com) is a good search engine) under Community Supported Agriculture will reveal a multitude of CSA related websites. Below we list a few of the key sites, mostly from the USA, which also have links to other information:

### USA CSA websites

#### **The Robyn Van En Center**

[www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org)  
CSA clearing house and principal non-governmental source of assistance to CSA in the USA.

#### **Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas**

[www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)  
This website is an excellent starting point for anyone interested in CSA. The website appears in-depth, accurate 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.

#### **The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association**

[www.biodynamics.com/csa.html](http://www.biodynamics.com/csa.html)  
Provides an 'Introduction to CSA and Farm Supported Communities'. The Biodynamic Association has been supportive of Community Supported Agriculture since the first CSA projects in the USA were begun 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.

#### **Cornell University**

[www.cals.cornell.edu/agfoodcommunity/](http://www.cals.cornell.edu/agfoodcommunity/)  
At this site you can learn about about projects and organizations within New York State, regionally, and nationally that are working to promote communities with sustainable food and agriculture systems.

#### **Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE)**

[www.sare.org/csa](http://www.sare.org/csa)  
This United States Department of Agriculture website gives a fairly basic description of CSA but has links to other organisations which have additional information about CSA. It has a comprehensive state-by-state listing of CSA farms throughout the USA.

### **The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center**

[www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa)

This site is published by the National Agricultural Library. 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 about CSA.

### **Just Food**

[www.justfood.org](http://www.justfood.org)

Non-profit 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.

### **Iowa State University**

[www.agron.iastate.edu](http://www.agron.iastate.edu)

Clear uncluttered site centred on members' objectives as can be expected from a project intended for the furtherment of the participants experience.

### **University of Massachusetts**

[www.umass.edu/umext/csa](http://www.umass.edu/umext/csa)

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

### **CSA-L@prairienet.org**

CSA-L is a free public service, offered by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is an e-mail discussion list for networking on CSA topics. To join this discussion group (which has about 250 subscribers), send an e-mail message to [listproc@prairienet.org](mailto:listproc@prairienet.org) with subscribe CSA-L Firstname Lastname in the message.

### **Prairieland Community Supported Agriculture (PCSA):**

[www.prairienet.org/pcsa/pcsa.htm](http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa/pcsa.htm)

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 what shares look like and answers some frequently asked questions.

### **Featherstone Fruits and Vegetables**

[www.featherstonefarm.com/](http://www.featherstonefarm.com/)

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

### **Libby Creek**

[www.libbycreek.com/whatscsa.htm](http://www.libbycreek.com/whatscsa.htm)

A small farm-based company that was started in the late 1980s with fine handcrafted gift items as the product line. In the early '90s small farm production progressed away from traditional corn and soybeans toward diversified cropping of vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs. They have an excellent website with links to the most rated US CSA websites.

### **Michaela Farm**

[www.globaleduc.org/michaela.htm](http://www.globaleduc.org/michaela.htm)

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

### **Fearless Foods**

[www.fearlessfoods.com/index.html](http://www.fearlessfoods.com/index.html)

Provides farmers with software systems that facilitate direct farm-to-consumer distribution and more socially sustainable farming.

## UK CSA websites

This lists all the information currently available online describing CSA in the UK context.

### Brickhurst Permaculture Group

[www.keme.co.uk/~joe-d/brickhurst](http://www.keme.co.uk/~joe-d/brickhurst)

Contains 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/earthsha.htm](http://www.caledonia.org.uk/socialland/earthsha.htm)

This page is one of eight case studies from the highlands and islands of Scotland, under the theme of social land ownership, and is an in depth look at **EarthShare** - Moray's First Community Supported Agriculture Scheme. Lots of practical information supporting community land ownership.

### Cultivating Communities

[www.cuco.org.uk](http://www.cuco.org.uk)

A Soil Association project promoting and supporting the development of novel initiatives linking consumers and producers in a relationship of mutual support. The heart of this site is the Community Supported Agriculture Action Manual.

### Foundation for Local Food Initiatives

[www.localfood.org.uk/projects.shtml](http://www.localfood.org.uk/projects.shtml)

This describes one of their projects: *Luton Community Supported Agriculture*, an appraisal for the Health Action Zone of the potential to support community agriculture and food co-

ops as a tool to develop community and build health in disadvantaged communities.

### Global Ideas Bank

[www.globalideasbank.org/BI/BI-147.HTML](http://www.globalideasbank.org/BI/BI-147.HTML)

A summary of an article on CSA by Helena Norberg-Hodge entitled 'From catastrophe to community' published in *Resurgence* magazine July 1995. The aim of the Global Ideas Bank is to promote socially innovative non-technological ideas and projects.

### Soil Association

[www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)

Information about CSA can be found on the website under 'Local Food' with a link to the Cultivating Communities website.

### Wye University

[www.wye.ac.uk/FoodLink/commag](http://www.wye.ac.uk/FoodLink/commag)

A website describing Flaxlands Farm CSA in Kent, UK and examples from Japan it introduces the concept of CSA (last updated in 1997).

### France CSA websites

#### Alliance Paysans Ecologistes

#### Consommateurs

[www.alliancepec.org/webamap/amap.htm](http://www.alliancepec.org/webamap/amap.htm)

Non-profit organisation which supports the development of CSA (called AMAP – Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne) in France. The first AMAP was created in 2001. There are now more than 25 AMAPs in the south of France and 10 further projects in other regions of France.

## 11.2 Organisations

### **Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)**

Somerford Court, Somerford Road,  
Cirencester, Glos, GL7 1TW  
T: 01285 653477, E: [acre@acre.org.uk](mailto:acre@acre.org.uk)  
W: [www.acre.org.uk](http://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.

### **BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)**

36 St Mary's Street, Wallingford,  
Oxfordshire OX10 0EU  
T: 01491 839766  
E: [Information@btcv.org.uk](mailto:Information@btcv.org.uk)  
W: [www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org)

Promotes and creates volunteering opportunities for individuals and communities. Their aim is to undertake practical and sustainable environmental action. Have small grants to help start up local groups.

### **Community Action Network**

The CAN Centre, The Mezzanine  
Floor, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road,  
London SE1 7NQ  
T: 020 7401 5310  
E: [canhq@can-online.org.uk](mailto:canhq@can-online.org.uk)  
W: [www.can-online.org.uk](http://www.can-online.org.uk)

CAN is a mutual learning and support network for social entrepreneurs.

Aims:

- To strengthen communities and attack deprivation in the UK.
- To increase the number of social entrepreneurs, raise their profile and to help improve the quality of their work.
- To train social entrepreneurs to use state of the art network

communications to learn from and support each other.

- To help social entrepreneurs develop partnerships in the public, private and 'third' sectors.

### **Common Ground**

Gold Hill House, 21 High Street,  
Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JE  
T: 01747 850820  
W: [www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk)  
Champions of local distinctiveness especially using art and local tradition. Run a project supporting community orchards.

### **Community Composting Network**

67 Alexandra Road, Sheffield S2 3EE  
T: 0114 258 0483 E: [ccn@gn.apc.org](mailto:ccn@gn.apc.org)  
W: [www.othas.org.uk/ccn](http://www.othas.org.uk/ccn)  
Providing advice and support to existing and would-be community composting projects across the UK.

### **Council For the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)**

Warwick House, 25 Buckingham  
Palace Road, London SW1W 0PP  
T: 020 7976 6433 E: [info@cpre.org.uk](mailto:info@cpre.org.uk)  
W: [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)  
A national charity which helps people to protect, enhance, and to keep the countryside beautiful, productive and enjoyable for everyone.

### **Community Recycling Network**

Trelawny House, Surrey Street, Bristol  
BS2 8PS  
T: 0117 942 0142 E: [info@crn.org.uk](mailto:info@crn.org.uk)  
W: [www.crn.org.uk](http://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.

### **Countryside Agency**

John Dower, House, Crescent Place,  
Cheltenham, Glos GL50 3RA  
T: 01242 521381

W: [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk)

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working:

- To conserve and enhance the countryside
- To promote social equity and economic opportunity for the people who live there
- To help everyone, wherever they live, to enjoy this national asset.

### **Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

Nobel House, 17 Smith Square,  
London SW1P 3HX

T: 020 7238 6000

E: [helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk),

W: [www.defra.gov.uk](http://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. Its 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)**

2-8 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4RT

T: 0845 458 8336 E: [info@dta.org.uk](mailto:info@dta.org.uk)

W: [www.dta.org.uk](http://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.

### **Employers' Organisation**

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street,  
London EC1M 5LG

T: 020 7296 6600

Formerly the Local Government Management Board, the EO provides national support to local authorities as employers.

### **Farm Retail Association**

PO Box 575, Southampton SO15 7ZB

T: 023 8036 2150

E: [fra@farmshopping.com](mailto:fra@farmshopping.com)

### **Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)**

National Agricultural Centre,  
Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire  
CV8 2RX

T: 024 7669 6699 E: [info@fwag.org.uk](mailto:info@fwag.org.uk)

W: [www.fwag.org.uk](http://www.fwag.org.uk)

FWAG provides farmers and landowners with practical advice on making adjustments to farm operations and enhancing farm features in order to support wildlife, landscape, archaeology, access and other conservation issues.

### **Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens**

The Green House, Hereford Street,  
Bedminster, Bristol BS3 4NA

T: 0117 923 1800

W: [www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens exists to promote, support and represent groups engaged in community-led development of open space through locally managed farming and gardening.

**Food Poverty Network**

94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF  
T: 020 7837 1228 F: 020 7837 1141  
[www.sustainweb.org/poverty\\_index.shtm](http://www.sustainweb.org/poverty_index.shtm)  
The Food Poverty Network provides a forum, information, advice and a database for project workers, researchers and campaign groups tackling food poverty.

**Friends of the Earth**

26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ  
T: 020 7490 1555 W: [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk)  
One of the leading environmental pressure groups in the UK and campaigns for sustainable farming.

**Good Gardeners Association**

4 Lisle Place, Wooton-Under-Edge, Gloucestershire  
Registered charity for gardeners.  
T: 01455 520322.

**Groundwork**

85-87 Cornwall Street, Birmingham B3 3BY  
T: 0121 236 8565  
W: [www.groundwork.org.uk](http://www.groundwork.org.uk)  
An environmental regeneration charity. Their network of over 40 local Trusts works in partnership with local people, local authorities and business to promote economic, social and environmental regeneration.

**Health Development Agency**

Holborn Gate, 330 High Holborn, London WC1V 7BA  
T: 020 7430 0850  
W: [www.hda-online.org.uk](http://www.hda-online.org.uk)

**HDRA – The Organic Organisation**

Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry CV8 3LG  
T: 024 7630 3517  
E: [enquiry@hdra.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@hdra.org.uk)  
W: [www.hdra.org.uk](http://www.hdra.org.uk)

HDRA provides information and advice on how to grow fruit and vegetables organically, HDRA carries out research, runs events and courses, maintains the heritage seed library and supports a network of local groups.

**Industrial Common Ownership Movement**

The Co-operative Union incorporating ICOM, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 0AS  
T: 0161 246 2900 F: 0161 831 7684  
E: [icom@icom.org.uk](mailto:icom@icom.org.uk)  
W: [www.co-opunion.coop/icom.htm](http://www.co-opunion.coop/icom.htm)  
A non profit membership organisation promoting and representing democratic employee owned businesses throughout the UK.

**Land Heritage Trust**

Summerhill Farm, Hittisleigh, Devon EX6 6LP  
T: 01647 24511  
E: [enquiries@landheritage.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@landheritage.org.uk)  
W: [www.landheritage.org.uk](http://www.landheritage.org.uk)  
The Trust acquires land, and makes tenancies available to families committed to organic husbandry.

**The Law Society**

T: 020 7405 9075  
W: [www.lfby.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lfby.lawsociety.org.uk)  
Many solicitors throughout the UK participate in the “Lawyers for Your Business” scheme. This scheme offers a free legal consultation (about 30 minutes) or legal “health-check” to existing businesses, or to those about to set up a business.

**LETS Link UK**

W: [www.letslinkuk.org](http://www.letslinkuk.org)  
A non-profit voluntary agency with charitable objectives, which has been dedicated to testing, researching and developing sustainable models for local and community-based Local

Exchange Trading Schemes and complementary currencies.

### **National Federation of Credit Unions**

Units 1.1 and 1.2, Howard House,  
Commercial Centre, Howard Street,  
North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE30  
1AR. T: 0191 257 2219

The Federation 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.

### **The National Association of Farmers' Markets**

PO BOX 575

Southampton

SO15 7BZ

Tel: 0845 230 2150

W: [www.farmersmarkets.net](http://www.farmersmarkets.net)

NAFM promote and support farmers' markets and have developed an accreditation scheme for the markets.

### **National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners**

O'Dell House, Hunters Road, Corby,  
Northants NN17 5JE

T: 01536 266576

W: [www.nsalg.demon.co.uk](http://www.nsalg.demon.co.uk)

### **New Economics Foundation**

Cinnamon House, 6-8 Cole Street,  
London SE1 4YH

T: 020 7407 7447

E: [info@neweconomics.org](mailto:info@neweconomics.org)

W: [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)

NEF promotes practical and creative approaches for a just and sustainable economy.

### **National Farmers Union**

164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London  
WC2H 8HL

T: 020 7331 7200 E: [NFU@nfu.org.uk](mailto:NFU@nfu.org.uk)

W: [www.nfu.org.uk](http://www.nfu.org.uk)

The NFU is the largest union representing farmers in the UK. It has a range of services in support of the sector.

### **Permaculture Association**

London WC1N 3XX, T: 070 4139 0170

W: [www.permaculture.org.uk](http://www.permaculture.org.uk)

The Permaculture Association supports people and projects through training, networking and research, using the ethics and principles of permaculture.

### **Plunkett Foundation**

23 Hanborough Business Park, Long  
Hanborough, Oxford OX29 8SG

T: 01993 883636

W: [www.coop.org/ica/members/plunkett.html](http://www.coop.org/ica/members/plunkett.html)

The overall purpose of the Plunkett Foundation is to promote, support and improve the effectiveness of enterprises which have as their main beneficiaries the users or providers of their services. They 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

W: [www.radicalroutes.org.uk](http://www.radicalroutes.org.uk)

Can provide practical advice in setting up housing and worker co-operatives.

### **Small Business Service**

T: 0845 600 9 006 W: [www.sbs.gov.uk](http://www.sbs.gov.uk)

The Small Business Service was launched in April 2000 to provide a single organisation in government 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 and achieve their potential.



**Sustain**

94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF  
T: 020 7837 1228

E: [sustain@sustainweb.org](mailto:sustain@sustainweb.org)

W: [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)

Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming 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. They represent 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

W: [www.dietproject.org.uk](http://www.dietproject.org.uk)

Exists "to promote and focus dietary initiatives within low-income communities and to bring these within a strategic framework."

**Soil Association**

Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY T: 0117 929 0661

E: [info@soilassociation.org](mailto:info@soilassociation.org)

W: [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)

The Soil Association exists 'to research, develop and promote 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

E: [info@thrive.org.uk](mailto:info@thrive.org.uk)

W: [www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk)

Thrive is the national horticultural charity enabling disadvantaged,

disabled and older people to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community.

Thrive supports 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

W: [www.triodos.co.uk](http://www.triodos.co.uk)

Triodos Bank is one of Europe's leading ethical banks. They have funds specifically targeted at supporting organic food and farming enterprises.

**UK Social Investment Forum**

Unit 203, Hatton Square Business Centre, 16 Baldwin Gardens, London EC1N 7RJ

T: 0207 4050040

E: [info@uksif.org](mailto:info@uksif.org) W: [www.uksif.org](http://www.uksif.org)

UKSIF promotes and encourages socially responsible investment in the UK. Socially responsible investment includes ethical investment, green investment, shareholder activism, social banking and community finance.

**Wholesome Food Association**

T: 01803 840427

This is a UK-wide food labelling scheme designed to encourage smaller-scale food growers and producers.

**The Wildlife Trusts**

W: [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

The Trusts partnership is the UK's leading conservation charity exclusively dedicated to wildlife. They lobby for better protection of the UK's natural heritage and are dedicated to protecting wildlife for the future.

**WI Country Markets Ltd**

183a Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire  
RG17XA

T: 0118 939 4646

W: [www.wimarkets.co.uk](http://www.wimarkets.co.uk)

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

**Womens Environmental Network**

PO Box 30626, London E1 1TZ

T: 020 7481 9004

E: [info@wen.org.uk](mailto:info@wen.org.uk)

W: [www.wen.org.uk](http://www.wen.org.uk)

**Womens Food and Farming Union**

National Rural Enterprise Centre,  
NAC, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire  
CV8 2LZ

T: 02476 693171 E: [admin@wfu.org.uk](mailto:admin@wfu.org.uk)

W: [www.wfu.org.uk](http://www.wfu.org.uk)

A voluntary organisation promoting an  
understanding of and confidence in all  
aspects of quality British produce.

The WFU believes that by representing  
the best interests of consumers and  
producers, both the health and  
economy of the nation will benefit.

**WWOOF**

PO Box 2675, Lewes, East Sussex  
BN7 1RB

W: [www.woof.org](http://www.woof.org)

WWOOF provides opportunities for  
people to work voluntarily on organic  
farms, through a network of member  
farms and regional organisers,  
benefiting both farmers, who have a  
useful source of labour, and the  
volunteers themselves, who gain much  
from their experience.

### 11.3 Books and publications

(\* Available through Soil Association)

#### *Bio-Dynamic Agriculture*

W Schilthuis (Floris Books, 1994.

ISBN: 086315 178 7)

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

#### *The Boxing Clever Cookbook*

Jacqui Jones & Joan Wilmot (J & J Publishing 2002, ISBN: 09543891-0-7)

Put together by two members of EarthShare CSA. More than just a cookbook, it promotes a new food culture that involves learning what grows best locally and how to turn it into delicious, healthy and innovative meals.

#### *City Harvest*

(Sustain. ISBN: 1 903060 00 1)

(see organisations in appendix 10.5)

Report on the feasibility of food production in cities. Taking London as its example, it is relevant to all urban areas. It assesses how, and to what extent, urban food growing could make a contribution to social, economic, environmental health, and community and educational development. It covers urban food systems and an overview of existing food growing activities. With examples and case studies, the report presents a conclusion and detailed recommendations.

#### *City Harvest - A Summary of the Feasibility of Growing More Food in London*

(Sustain, ISBN: 1 903060 06 0)

A twelve page summary of the City Harvest report covering the issues and recommendations.

*\*Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): A Farmers Manual. How to start up and run a CSA.*

Matthew Hayes, Milánkovics Kinga (Gödöllo, 2001 ISBN: 963 00 8292 6)

Based on four years experience of establishing and running a CSA. A very useful reference.

*Community Start Up. How to start a community group and keep it going*

Caroline Pinder (National Extension College and Community Matters, 1995, ISBN: 1 85356 598 9)

Practical, accessible and illustrated with real life examples. A valuable resource for community building.

*Community Supported Agriculture - Making the Connection:*

*A 1995 Handbook for Producers*

University of California, Cooperative Extension, Placer County. Auburn CA; Davis, CA: University of California Cooperative Extension, Placer County; Small Farm Center, University of California, 1995. Available from: UC Cooperative Extension, Attn: CSA Handbook, 11477 E Avenue, Auburn CA 95603, T: (001) 530 889 7385 E: ceplacer@ucdavis.edu

*Diggers and Dreamers 2002-03*

(D&D Publications

ISBN:0 9514945 6 2)

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

*Farms of Tomorrow Revisited: Community Supported Farms, Farm Supported Communities*

Steven McFadden, Trauger M. Groh.

(The Biodynamic farming and Gardening Association,

ISBN: 0-938250-13-2). From

philosophy to examples, *Farms of*

*Tomorrow Revisited* shows us where the

CSA concept could take society, and its limitations. Illustrates how CSA is a practical application of the biodynamic ideology.

*Grassroots Marketing: Getting Noticed in a Noisy World*

Shel Horowitz,  
(Chelsea Green Publishing Company;  
ISBN: 1890132683)

*Green Cuisine*

Anna Ross (Green Peppercorn;  
ISBN: 095364460X)

Over 130 recipe ideas for everyday cooking with organic ingredients. And some ideas for what to do with that strange knobby thing; whether it's from the shops, an organic box or home-grown.

*Growing Food In Cities*

(Sustain, ISBN: 1 900670 56 9) Report on the benefits of urban food growing contains 38 case studies from across the UK and beyond, showing how to take action yourself, and what government can do to help.

*Growing in the Community*

David Crouch & Joe Sempik  
(ISBN: 1 84049 204 X)

A guide to good practice for local authorities and allotment associations. It strives to promote a more secure future for allotments by promoting the social and environmental benefits allotments can provide.

*Living Lightly - Travels in Post-Consumer Society*

Walter and Dorothy Schwarz  
(John Carpenter Pub. 1998.  
ISBN: 1-897766-440)

The authors of this inspiring book have 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 dispiriting effects of globalisation. The uplifting message of the book is that the values of co-operation, compassion and the richness of culture are alive and well. Recommended.

*Organics at the Crossroads*

Future for runaway industry is community level systems, *Fearless Publications, Peter C. Reynolds, Ph.D.* An excellent account of how CSA farms are a solution for sustainable food production and provides vision for a model of CSA that is attractive to a broader base of consumers. Can be read on their website (see Fearless Foods above).

*Plastic and Vegetables: A Guide to Organic Growing in Polytunnels*

David Storey (IOFGA; ISBN:  
1897926030)

This booklet gives sound advice on how to set up polytunnels, how to irrigate them and instructions on the cultivation of a number of suitable crops.

*Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture*

Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn VanEn. (Chelsea Green, 1999,  
ISBN 0-890132-23-3)

The authors lay out the basic tenets of CSA, provide useful information for both farmers and consumers on starting and running a successful community farm project, and describe hundreds of useful strategies that have worked (or not) for CSAs from Alaska to Florida.

*Small is Beautiful - A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*

E.F. Schumacher (Vintage 1973. This edn. 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. A classic book whose title and concept have long ago entered common use.

*The Killing of the Countryside*

Graham Harvey (Jonathan Cape 1997, ISBN: 0-09-973661-6)

A powerful and moving account of the devastating effects of post-war farming policy. A compulsive book, beautifully written. Winner of the 1997 BP natural world book award.

*The Living Land - Agriculture, Food and Community Regeneration in Rural Europe,*

Jules Pretty (Earthscan 1998, ISBN: I 85383-516-I)

This very impressive book 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.

*The New Organic Grower: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener.*

Eliot Coleman, (Chelsea Green Pub Co, 1998; ISBN: 093003175X)

The information in this book is useful to growers on any scale.

Covers soil, farm economics and labour, crop planning, equipment, green manures, tillage, organic fertilisers, pests, and livestock.

*The Seed Saver's Handbook*

Jeremy Cherfas et al (Grover Books, 1996, ISBN 1-899233-01-6)

An invaluable guide to seed collecting. What to save, when and how to collect seed, varieties to look out for. Eighty varieties of vegetables and herbs covered.

## Soil Association publications

*\*A Share in the Harvest – A feasibility study for Community Supported Agriculture.* (Soil Association 2001 ISBN: 0 905 200 82 9)

A report by the Soil Association which investigates community involvement in farming around the globe and whether CSA is a viable component in the development of local and sustainable food economies in England.

*\*How to Set up a Vegetable Box Scheme, A Soil Association technical guide* (Soil Association, Autumn 2001)

Highlights the considerations to be made when setting up a vegetable box scheme from start up finances, finding customers to delivery.

*\*Local Food For Local People - A Guide to Local Food Links*

Soil Association, August 1998

This 47-page guide shows how local food schemes link together to build sustainable local food economies and introduces the many types of scheme, how you can set one up and who to contact to find out more. Essential reading for anyone interested in box schemes, subscription farming, farmers' markets, community owned

farms, community gardens and orchards

*\*Marketing Information for Organic Growers (Horticultural Crops) Fact Sheet*  
Soil Association, 2001

This fact sheet is designed to assist growers in marketing their produce, through the provision of information on marketing options and ideas, and contact details for accessing useful services, supplies and support.

*\*Organic Food and Farming Report 2000*,  
Soil Association

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.

*\*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.



## 11.4 Farming Press

### **Farmers Weekly**

Quadrant Office, The Quadrant, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5AS

Classifieds T: 020 8652 3222

E: farmers.weekly@rbi.co.uk

### **Organic Farming**

Soil Association, Bristol House,

40-56 Victoria Street,

Bristol BS1 6BY

Classifieds T: 0117 914 2440

E: padams@soilassociation.org

### **Living Earth**

Soil Association, Bristol House,

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E: padams@soilassociation.org

### **Permaculture Magazine**

Hyden House Ltd, The Sustainability Centre, East Meon, Hampshire GU32 1HR

T: 0845 458 4150

W: www.permaculture.co.uk

### **Smallholder**

3 Falmouth Business Park, Bickland Water Road, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4SZ

T: 01326 213333

W: www.smallholder.co.uk

### **Country Smallholding**

Archant Devon, Exeter Airport Business Park, Clyst Honiton, Exeter EX5 2UL

T: 01392 888481

E: editorial.csh@archant.co.uk

W: www.countrysmallholding.co.uk

### **Farmers Guardian**

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