



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION

**GROWING A NEW GENERATION  
OF ILLINOIS FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FARMERS**

# COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant  
July 2015



# Objectives

- Increased knowledge of the history of CSAs
- Increased knowledge of the models and characteristics of CSAs
- Increased awareness of resources and organizations that provide CSA information and support

# What We'll Cover

- What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- History of CSAs
- How CSAs work
- Models and characteristics of CSAs
- Resources and organizations

# What is Community Supported Agriculture?

- “Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.”

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml>





# Common Characteristics of CSAs

- Emphasis on community and/or local produce
- Shares/subscriptions that are sold prior to the season's beginning
- Weekly deliveries to members/subscribers



Organic Pastures Meat CSA, Eureka, IL

Photo by Terra Brockman

# History of CSAs



Photo by Clemens Kalischer

Robyn Van En, was the co-founder and original owner of Indian Line Farm and is widely recognized as one of the true pioneers of the CSA movement.



<http://www.indianlinefarm.com/>

*The History of Community Supported Agriculture, Part I Community Farms in the 21st Century:  
Poised for Another Wave of Growth? By Steven McFadden In The New Farm, The Rodale Institute*  
<http://newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/features/0104/csa-history/part1.shtml>



# History of CSAs



<http://www.twcfarm.com/>

- “The Temple-Wilton Community Farm has been "Growing Food in Community since 1986," which makes us the oldest continuously operating CSA in the United States. Our diversified farm of 130+ acres grows and produces everything from raw milk and cheeses to biodynamically-grown vegetables, pastured-raised meat chickens, pastured pigs, laying hens and grass-fed beef and veal.”

*The History of Community Supported Agriculture, Part I Community Farms in the 21st Century:  
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# How do CSAs work?



Sally's Fields CSA, Chatham, IL

Photo by Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant



# CSA Models

- **Producer-Initiated CSAs**
  - the majority of CSAs are started by farmers interested in alternative marketing and strengthening their connection to consumers
- **Member-Initiated CSAs**
  - a group of interested consumers works together to find a local farmer to produce their food
- **Multiple-Producer CSAs**
  - several farmers band together to provide consumers with a wide variety of products
- **Organization-Initiated CSAs**
  - organizations such as businesses, churches, schools, etc. offer an existing community of consumers that forms a CSA

# Characteristics of CSAs

- Community
- Shares/Subscriptions
- Delivery
- Pricing Shares
- Waiting Lists
- Consistency
- Communication

Ernst, Matt, and Tim Woods. "Community Supported Agriculture."  
*Cooperative Extension Service University of Kentucky Agriculture.*  
University of Kentucky, Aug. 2009. Web. 16 June 2015.  
[www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/marketing/csa.pdf](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/marketing/csa.pdf)



# Community



# Shares/Subscriptions



<http://sustainableflatbush.org/2009/03/03/flatbush-farm-share-csa/>



# Delivery

- Distributed at a central location, e.g., at a farmers market, church, or a member's home where other members pick up their boxes
- Distributed at the farm
- Delivered directly to the member's home



<http://redtri.com/chicago/farm-fresh-5-csas-to-try-now/>

# Pricing Shares



- **Full Share: \$415**

20 to 22 weeks of participation (depending on weather), from June through October, consisting of two to three (or four) grocery bags full of produce, which should be enough for three or four people.

- **Half Share: \$210**

20 to 22 weeks of participation (depending on weather), from June through October, containing half the quantity of a 'whole' share. Each pickup will be one to two grocery bags full of produce, which should be enough for one or two people.

CSA Shares for 2015, from Sally's Fields, Chatham, IL

# Pricing Shares

- A recommended method for pricing CSA shares is as follows:
  - Estimate what the production expenses will be for the CSA season
  - Estimate the number of labor hours you will use (or hire) to produce for the CSA
  - Estimate the hourly wage rate that you would like to earn from your CSA production

# Pricing Shares

- Contracts



<http://pixshark.com/contact.html>



Model CSA Member Agreement

<https://farmcommons.org/resources/model-csa-member-agreement>

Put Your CSA On Strong Legal Footing Webinar

<https://farmcommons.org/put-your-csa-strong-legal-footing-0>



# Pricing Shares

- If choosing to offer a payment plan for your CSA, be sure to:
  - Have initial payments that will adequately cover your earliest-season expenses
  - Have contingency plans for people that may not complete their installment payments

- Payment Plans



<http://myzone.com/ticket-payment-plan>

# Waiting Lists

Waiting List Sign-Up | Chicago - \*

chicagopatchworkfarms.com/csa/waiting-list-sign-up/

CSA Waiting lists Illinois

HOME ABOUT US CSA SUPPORT US CONTACT US PHOTOS HOW TO BUY

## WAITING LIST SIGN-UP

### Chicago Patchwork Farms CSA Sign Up

Our Humboldt Park CSA is currently full, but we still have some room in our CSA at The Plant (in the Back of the Yards neighborhood). Please fill out this form if you are interested in signing up. For more information about pricing and pickups, check out the CSA tab on our website.

\* Required

Name \*

Email Address \*

Please check the CSA(s) you are interested in \*

☐ Veggie CSA

☐ Egg CSA

Please let us know at which farm(s) you interested in picking up.

Please note: our Humboldt Park CSA is very often full due to our Plant Back of the Yards location.

SEARCH

#### PATCHWORK FARMS

2625 W. Chicago Ave  
Chicago, IL 60622  
[Map](#)

Farm Stand Hours, starting mid-May  
Wednesday 11am - 1pm  
Saturday 1pm - 5pm

1400 W 46th St  
Chicago, IL 60622  
[Map](#)

Farm Stand Hours, starting early May  
Saturdays 1pm - 5pm  
Tuesdays 1pm - 5pm

(773) 772-4142  
[ChicagoPatchworkFarms@gmail.com](mailto:ChicagoPatchworkFarms@gmail.com)  
<http://chicagopatchworkfarms.com>

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<http://chicagopatchworkfarms.com/csa/waiting-list-sign-up/>



# Consistency



Photo by Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant

# Communication



Chad Wallace of Oak Tree Organics, Ashland, IL

- Newsletters
- email
- Internet
- Social media

## Social Media Starter Kits

<http://thelandconnection.org/farmers/marketing-workshops-and-resources/social-media-starter-kit-information>

## Social Media Marketing for Farmers Webinar

<http://thelandconnection.org/farmers/social-media-marketing-resources/social-media-marketing-webinars>





# Organizations and Resources



# Robyn Van En Center

- A national resource center about Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) for people across the nation and around the world. The center provides outreach and works to gain publicity about CSA farms in order to benefit community farmers and communities everywhere.

Robyn Van En Center CSA Farm Database  
<http://www2.wilson.edu/CsaSearch/>



# CSA Solutions Hub



<http://www.memberassembler.com/hub>



# Finding a CSA



<http://www.buyfreshbuylocalcentralillinois.org>



## LocalHarvest

<http://www.localharvest.org/csa>



# Band of Farmers



- Band of Farmers is made up of CSA farms and supporters of CSA farms (other farms, individuals, and organizations).

<https://boftccc.wildapricot.org/>



# Finding a CSA

- Band of Farmers CSA Directory

<https://boftccc.wildapricot.org/CSA-Directory>

- Buy Fresh Buy Local Central Illinois

<http://www.buyfreshbuylocalcentralillinois.org/>

- Local Harvest

<http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>

- Wilson College, Robyn Van En Center CSA Farm Database

<http://www2.wilson.edu/CsaSearch/>



# Resources

- Community Supported Agriculture (ATTRA, 2006)  
<https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/summaries/summary.php?pub=262>
- Community Supported Agriculture (Local Harvest)  
<http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>
- Community Supported Agriculture (USDA)  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa>
- CSA Resources for Farmers (USDA, 2011)  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml>

# Resources

- Community Supported Agriculture (University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service)  
[www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/marketing/csa.pdf](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/marketing/csa.pdf)
- Local Harvest: A Multifarm CSA Handbook (SARE, 2010)  
<http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Project-Products/Northeast-SARE-Project-Products/Local-Harvest>
- Robyn Van En Center (Wilson College)  
<http://www.wilson.edu/about-wilson-college/fulton/robyn-van-en-center/index.aspx>
- *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*  
<http://www.chelseagreen.com/sharingtheharvest2>





# Summary

## CSA Benefits for Farmers

- Get to spend time marketing the food early in the year, before field work begins
- Receive payment early in the season, which helps with the farm's cash flow
- Have an opportunity to get to know the people who eat the food they grow

## CSA Benefits for Consumers

- Eat ultra-fresh food, with all the flavor and vitamin benefits
- Get exposed to new vegetables and new ways of cooking
- Usually get to visit the farm at least once a season
- Find that kids typically favor food from "their" farm even veggies they've never been known to eat
- Develop a relationship with the farmer who grows their food and learn more about how food is grown

*“As we know from its beginnings, CSA is not just a clever, new approach to marketing. Community farming is about the necessary renewal of agriculture through its healthy linkage with the human community that depends upon farming for survival.”*

Steven McFadden

Journalist Steven McFadden co-authored *"Farms of Tomorrow: Community Supported Farms, Farm Supported Communities"* (1990), and *"Farms of Tomorrow Revisited"* (1998) with Trauger Groh. Steven is the director of Chiron Communications in Santa Fe, NM <http://www.chiron-communications.com>

*The History of Community Supported Agriculture, Part II CSA's World Of Possibilities, By Steven McFadden*  
In *The New Farm*, The Rodale Institute  
<http://www.newfarm.org/features/0204/csa2/part2.shtml>



# To reach us

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