Group 9 - Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a recent food movement utilizing locally grown agriculture rather than mass-produced industrialized farms. Community members invest in a local farm at the beginning of the season, with the expectation of receiving shares of the produce throughout the harvest. People who do not take part in the growing or financing of the farm are still able to benefit CSA farms; we will explain these community wide benefits throughout this entry. CSA programs help support small farms as well as large ones, and they provide fresh food throughout the communities.

We divided this topic into six subtopics that include: an overview, the history, supporting groups, social impacts and organizations, the economic impact, and a first hand experience. This allows us to provide essential information regarding CSA, while also permitting us to compare the effects of CSA, analyze the actions of various supporting groups, and detail a first hand experience. Links to these sections are found at the bottom of this page, below the References Cited section.

Figure 1: A division of shares from a local CSA producer. These shares will be picked up by local consumers after the piles have been appropriately divided based upon what each customer ordered.

(http://tuscaroraenvironment.com/tcsa.aspx)

SUMMARY

In summary, community supported agriculture, or CSA, is a relatively new concept that originated in Japan in the 1960’s when homemakers decided to take action against the industrialization and alienation from the production process that was occurring. It only recently has spread in the United States, where most CSA farms have been in business for less than 15 years. In community supported agriculture small, typically organic farms distribute their produce to a group of “subscribers”. The subscribers pay a fee ranging from $100-$600 at the beginning of the year, and in turn receive a ration of the crops throughout the growing season. The food is distributed by home delivery, on-location pick up, or sometimes pick up from a central location. The farmers typically grow a large variety of crops on small plots of land to help maintain biodiversity and traditional rural aesthetics. Environmentally, CSAs are proving to be a sustainable source of produce, as opposed to industrial farms that are degrading the environment to such an extent not only environmentalists, but average people with no specialized knowledge of the environmental effects are taking notice. Most CSAs are found in the Northeast, Northern Central states, and near the West Coast, close to urban areas. The goals of most CSAs consist of raising environmental consciousness, educate people about where their food is coming from and how it is produced, and to provide a clean, safe, and local means of getting fresh, healthy food. Most people join CSAs to support local farms, receive fresh and affordable produce, reduce their environmental impact, and for the sense of community that it provides. The CSA system was found to help not only provide inexpensive, healthy food, but to also improve social integration and benefited human capital. A group member who grew up in the CSA system has helped to raise animals, grow crops, and produce dairy products and maple syrup, and has first-hand experience with both the sense of community and the closeness to the food so often mentioned in studies. Overall, CSA is a bottom-up program that is proving beneficial to all, with the exception of big-business, and has the potential to grow rapidly in popularity as knowledge is spread.
Scholarly and Peer-Reviewed Works Cited:

good list of source and the annotations for many are helpful

Cook, Jack.

This article provides the basics of CSA, its history, and the philosophy behind it.

Cone, Cynthia Abbott, Andrea Myhre

This article discusses the CSA movement in the Twin Cities region of Minnesota. The authors researched the CSA movement and discussed benefits and the negative aspects of being a part of the CSA farms with shareholders.

DeLind, Laura B.

This chapter explains what CSA is, but primarily focuses on the community aspect of CSA, and how in many current CSAs it is lacking due to economic factors as well as limited interest.

DeLind, Laura B, and Anne B. Ferguson

This article discusses the social aspects of CSA, specifically the role of women in CSA projects.

Feagan, Robert, Amanda Henderson

This article is a general overview of CSA, beginning with the creation of CSA in Japan, to its adaptation to the North American markets. It describes the founding principles of community and support of the CSA movement. It then moves to a research study of the CSA program in Devon Acres southwest of Toronto, Canada.

Follett, Jeffrey


Goldsmith, Edward, and Jerry Mander

1996 The case against the global economy: and for a turn toward the local. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco.
This book focuses on how many things are becoming more global and there should be a change towards more local methods.

Henderson, Elizabeth, and Robyn Van En

This article discusses how CSAs are structured, the food on the CSAs as well as the many different models of CSAs.

Janssen, Brandi

2010 Local Food, Local Engagement: Community-Supported Agriculture in Eastern Iowa. Culture & Agriculture 32(1): 4-16
This article compares and contrasts three CSA's located in Iowa. It also mentions how CSA's bring together communities.

Kittredge, Jack

This chapter explores what Community Supported Agriculture is, and why it is beneficial to communities. It also discusses some of the history and origins of community supported agriculture.

Lang, K. Brandon

This article focuses on data and interviews of members of a CSA group called From the Ground Up, located in Maryland.

Macias, Thomas
This article discusses some of the social aspects of community-supported agriculture. For example, food equity, social integration, and natural human capital were the main points on which the author based how effective the CSA's were. The community supported agriculture groups were compared to community gardens and organic market farms, which were supposed to have a good social impact as well.

Mair, Heather, Erin Nelson, Jennifer Sumner

This article examines the history of the CSA movement. It also discusses the social affects a CSA program can have on a community including: fostering civic engagement, building community relationships and celebrating local foods.

Martinez, Steve

This article focuses on local foods in general and the governments interaction with them.

McLaughlin, Patrick, Christopher D. Merret, and Heather McIlvaine-Newsad
2004 Direct From Farm to Table: Community Supported Agriculture in Western Illinois. *Culture & Agriculture* 26(1&2): 149-163

This article gives an overview of where CSA's came from. It also describes two different CSA's in Illinois.

McIlvaine-Newsad, Heather and Christopher Merrett, William Maakestad, Patrick McLaughlin

O'Hara, Sabine and Sigrid Stagl

Pretty, Jules

Russell, Willow Saranna and Lydia Zepeda

This article offers insight into a CSA called Troy Community Farms and gives multiple statistics about members and growers.

Schnell, Steven M.

This article discusses the CSA movement from its inception in Japan to its current productivity in the United States. It details the growth of CSA farms in the United States.

Stagl, Sigrid