

Community Supported Agriculture

Goals: To promote the **PARTNERSHIP** between farmers and community members by working together to create a local food system. This differs from direct marketing because members share in the risk of production, allowing for producers to concentrate on growing food and caring for the land. Community Supported Agriculture sites are a popular way to buy **LOCAL, SEASONAL FOOD** directly from farmers. Consumers receive ultra-fresh, and often times, unique produce and recipes for cooking. It also allows for consumers to visit farms and learn about different growing styles. CSAs operate under a shared commitment to build a more local and **EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEM**, where producers can focus on land stewardship and still maintain productive and profitable small farms; allowing for the highest Ecological potential possible.

Benefits:

- Know where your food comes from
- Support local + regional production
- Opportunities for work share: hands on + educational experience
- Community involvement
- Eliminates middle man
- Direct-farm sales
- Creation of multi-scaled agriculture
- Farm diversification
- Typically sustainable practices
- New employment opportunities
- Conserve energy: low processing, packaging + travel
- Opportunity to learn about new produce and cooking techniques



Veggielution Community Farm: San Jose, California
<http://veggielution.org/blog1/2014/6/19/new-greenhouse-irrigation-system>



The Homestead CSA: Innovative Solutions for Autism, Altoona, Iowa
<http://www.thehomestead.org/shopping/naturally-grown-produce/>

Community Impact:

- Eating healthy: (74 percent) Community members showed an increase in the variety of produce eaten, and (58 percent) had an increase in the quantity of vegetables eaten
- Direct economic benefit for consumer: consumers can save up to 39 percent by purchasing from CSAs vs. supermarkets
- Build economic potential: education, training and volunteering – 77 percent of CSAs provide education

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Case Study + Literature Review

THE HOMESTEAD: Pleasant Hill, Iowa: A unique certified, naturally grown CSA, that employs persons with autism. Individuals with autism live and work on the farm which then benefits the local community with chemical free produce and ornamental plants.

EBERSOLE CATTLE CO.: Kellerton, Iowa: A small family ranch in southern Iowa that raise Maine-Anjou Cattle and Quarter horses on an Animal Welfare Approved Ranch. All cattle are raised from birth on the farm and offered three ways: pastured, grass-fed, and corn-finished

VEGGIELUTION: San Jose, California: Founded in 2008 as a community project that brings neighbors people together. It focuses on vegetables and herbs; in 2013, they offered 80 shares to families each week, 30 of which are provided to low-income.



Ebersole Cattle Co.: Kellerton, Iowa
<http://ebersolecattle.com/about/>

Best Management Practices:

- Seasonal supply of fresh produce + unique products (dairy, meat, etc.)
- Direct relationship between farm + consumer
- Educational handouts and farm visits
- Community-building opportunities
- Distribution sites: on-farm pick up, drop off site, home delivery, farmer's market pick up
- Unique branding and advertising
- Varying rates for shares/quantity
- Option for work share



Photo from Modern Farmer: Courtesy of Good Eggs, Hudson, New York
<http://modernfarmer.com/2013/06/state-of-the-csa/>

How to Support Local CSA's

- Offer csa drop off points at businesses and public spaces
- Allow for additional farmland
- Become a member of a csa
- Volunteer for workdays
- Create a community csa tour
- Community or business pays upfront for membership and get reimbursed in installments/discount shares

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Pilot Case Study

BASS FAMILY FARMS: Mt. Vernon

Offers fresh vegetables to Cedar Rapids and Iowa City communities and educates on the community benefits of eating fresh produce. The farm has been running for over 25 years without the use of chemicals.

Bass also offers a CSA, agricultural tours, and a market with sauce, jams and jellies and honey. Through the CSA program you can order a half share, a full share, or a corporate share.



Bass Farms: Mt. Vernon, Iowa
<http://www.bassfarms.org/>

G IT'S FRESH: Ridgeway

Offers certified organic produce to the northeast region of Iowa. The farm was started in 2008 and offers certified organic produce. The goal of G It's Fresh is to supply sustainably raised and healthy food to their customers. They offer diverse vegetables, fruits and herbs from basil to kale to watermelon that are supported both from growing outdoors and an indoor greenhouse system.



G It's Fresh: Calmar Courier, Calmar, Iowa
<http://calmarcourier.com/content/g-it%E2%80%99s-fresh-keeping-it-local>

WABI SABI FARM: Granger

Wabi Sabi grows tasty, nutritious, Certified Organic (Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship) fruits, vegetables, herbs and garden transplants in an environmental, physical and economical sustainable way. Wabi Sabi Farm recognizes the beauty in the imperfect profundity of nature; and believes in the seasonality of eating within the natural cycles of growth/decay.

Wabi Sabi Farm's bounty is harvested mainly for a CSA, but can also be found occasionally at the Iowa Food Cooperative and as ingredients in dishes prepared at local restaurants.



Wabi Sabi Farm: Granger, Iowa
<http://www.wabisabi-farm.com/gallery>

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