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THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

Overview of COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE in Europe

European CSA Research Group

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in Europe

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Foreword

Trauger Groh

Trauger Groh is a pioneer in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) from Germany who worked and learned at the Buschberghof in Northern Germany and then established the CSA concept at the Temple-Wilton Community Farm, USA in the beginning of the 1980s. From there and from Indian Line Farm where Robyn Van En was active, the inspiration bounced back to Europe.

"The experiments in farming described in this book represent new social forms of agriculture which have arisen in recent years while traditional family farms have declined and industrial agriculture has increased. These new famers involve many local families directly in the decisions and labor which produce the vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat they eat. In that way they re-establish a link between the farm, the farmer, and the consumer. While this approach may not be the full answer to the questions posed by the modern agricultural dilemma, we believe it has much to offer.

"In simple terms, these efforts arise under the name Community Support Agriculture (CSA). A CSA is a community-based organization of growers and consumers. The consumer households live independently, but agree to provide direct, up-front support for the local growers who produce their food. The growers agree to do their best to provide a sufficient quantity and quality of food to meet the needs and expectations of the consumers. In this way the farms and families form a network of mutual support. Within this general framework there is wide latitudes for variation, depending on the resources and desires of the participants. No two community farms are entirely alike. […]

"As with many catch-all names, the term community supported agriculture or CSA is slightly misleading. It implies that the problem is special support for agriculture. Although it may seem a fine point, *the primary need is not for the farm to be supported by the community, but rather for the community to support itself through farming. This is an essential of existence, not a matter of convenience.* We have no choice about whether to farm or not, as we have a choice about whether to produce TV sets or not. So we have to either farm or to support farms, every one of us, at any cost. We cannot give it up because it is inconvenient or unprofitable. […]

"More and more people are coming to recognize this and they are becoming ready to share agricultural responsibilities with the active farmers. […]

"As we conceive of it—and as it is being practiced and developed at a great many farms—CSA is not just another new and cleaver approach to marketing for farmers, even thought some people have chosen to regard it that way. Rather, community farming is about the necessary renewal of agriculture through its healthy linkage with the human community that depends upon farms and farmers for survival. From experience, we also see the potential of community farming as the basis for a renewal of the human relationship with the earth."

This extract is from the introduction to the second book by Trauger Groh and Steven McFadden (emphasis added), *Farms of Tomorrow Revisited: Community Supported Farms – Farm Supported Communities* (Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, USA, 1998). Published with permission from Trauger's wife, Alice Groh.

Preface

Elizabeth Henderson

Elizabeth Henderson is a farmer at Peacework Organic CSA which, in 2016, was in its twenty-eighth year. She is Honorary President of Urgenci and author of *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture* (Chelsea Green, 2007).

Community Supported Agriculture is an idea – a tremendously flexible concept for a new consumer–farmer connection, an alternative system of distribution based on community values and solidarity. The economics of direct sales make this a win–win solution for farmers and consumers. The farmer gets a decent price and the consumer pays less since there is no middleman. For the farmer, the CSA offers the possibility of a broad support group of people who genuinely care about the farm's survival and who are willing to share the farmer's risks. Consumers have the opportunity to connect with the earth, know and trust the people who grow their food and support the local economy.

Each cultural group that adopts CSA shapes it differently to suit its own historical circumstances and each individual CSA is site-specific, modeled to fit the producers, their land, their beliefs, their customers and markets. The Nyéléni definition of Agroecology fits CSA:

"Agroecology is a way of life and the language of Nature that we learn as her children. It is not a mere set of technologies or production practices. It cannot be implemented the same way in all territories. Rather it is based on principles that, while they may be similar across the diversity of our territories, can and are practiced in many different ways, with each sector contributing their own colors of their local reality and culture, while always respecting Mother Earth and our common, shared values." (Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology, Nyéléni, Mali, 27 February 2015).

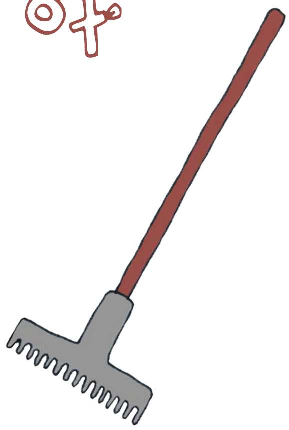
CSAs around the world share basic, underlying principles:

- Mutual assistance and solidarity – direct connections and shared risk between farmers and the people who eat their food
- Agroecological farming methods (sometimes requiring organic certification)
- Biodiversity and no Genetically Modified Organisms
- High quality, safe food that is accessible to as many people as possible with prices that are negotiated and fair to producer and consumer
- Popular education about the realities of farming
- Continual improvement.

Smallholder, family-scale farms in most countries share the same life or death economic struggles confronting the industrial, corporate-dominated global food system. Supermarkets, convenience, packaged processed foods entice modern consumers – and then undermine their health. Betrayed, many modern city dwellers crave an alternative that will reconnect them with the food traditions of their ancestors, the land and with producers they can trust. CSA provides this alternative.

This study reveals the fascinating similarities and differences in the 21 European countries where the farms of the future are creating new combinations of millennial peasant agriculture, the latest scientific discoveries in biological growing practices and hip communications.

Emergent networks of citizen-led research and innovation in Europe



Michel Pimbert

This remarkable report presents a critical analysis of the diverse forms of community-supported agriculture (CSA) that have emerged and are now spreading across Europe. Smallholder farmers and other citizens are organizing themselves to directly supply and consume food through these community-based forms of economic exchange. By choosing to be part of a CSA, citizens who consume farmers' produce are acting not only as co-producers of food but also as co-producers of farms, biodiversity, landscapes, culture, and new definitions of modernity. As Wendell Berry said so well, eating is an agricultural act (Berry, 1993). By involving citizen-consumers as active participants and co-producers, CSAs create new local market outlets for organic and agroecological products. CSA's increasingly serve to remunerate farmers as well as support and scale up agroecological models of production in rural, peri-urban, and urban spaces. CSAs which enable and support agoecological production also reflect a strong commitment to sustainable, territorially based development in Europe.

The collaborative research that has generated the information presented here is also particularly noteworthy. By working together, the contributors to this report have co-created new knowledge about CSAs and short food webs in Europe. And this has largely been a process of endogenous knowledge creation *by* and *with* the citizens involved. This decentralized and multi-sited approach has sought to strengthen citizen-led innovation and has successfully organized networks of knowledge holders on the basis of a more horizontal and egalitarian logic, working independently from the State and the Market. Established and newly emergent networks of citizen-led research and innovation have thus generated new knowledge and insights on farming practices, products, fields, landscapes, and the many 'living campuses' from where people derive their livelihoods and culture. By re-embedding citizens in the production and validation of knowledge, the process that has generated this report is an example of how research can be de-institutionalised for autonomous learning and action. As such, it offers insights into how horizontal networks of organized citizens can help democratize food and agricultural research for agroecology and food sovereignty (Pimbert, 2009).

This citizen-led and self-managed research on CSAs in Europe is perhaps best seen as part of a two-pronged approach to transforming knowledge and ways of knowing for food sovereignty. Self organizing and distributed forms of autonomous research complement other efforts that seek to democratize public sector agricultural research by enabling hitherto excluded farmers and citizens to decide on research priorities and oversee the governance of research (Pimbert, 2009).

The authors of this report recognize that there are gaps in knowledge and that more research is needed on the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of CSAs in Europe. They are also aware that not all of their findings are backed up by solid evidence. However, the quality and validity of the research outcomes presented here cannot be assessed from the narrow standpoint of positivist science alone. Criteria for validity and quality need to be much broader. One important criterion of quality is whether or not this social learning on CSAs has opened up new communicative spaces for democratic inquiry to take place. Another is whether it has contributed to the emergence of a wide community of inquiry among divergent actors. This collective research has clearly done well on both these criteria. Ultimately, final objective answers matter less than processes of emerging democratic engagement in the co-creation of knowledge on CSAs for food sovereignty.

Moreover, the decentralized and collaborative research that led to this report on CSA's in Europe not only helps us better understand how to transform our *ways of knowing* about economic exchanges in food systems. It also makes a modest but nevertheless important contribution to *transforming the knowledge* of the science of economics that underpins and legitimates policies for food and agriculture in Europe. For example, by emphasizing solidarity economics and the fair sharing of costs, benefits, and risks between CSA food producers and consumers, this co-inquiry contributes to de-colonizing our social imagination from neo-liberal economics and its dogmas (need for competition in markets, individualism and a sole focus on maximizing profits….). The many practical examples of CSAs given here show that other ways of organizing economic exchange are indeed possible in Europe.

This rethinking of economics *by, with,* and *for* citizens is an urgent priority today. Simply put, current knowledge and policies for growth in food and farming are leading to the economic genocide of unprecedented numbers of farmers and rural livelihoods throughout Europe and the rest of the world. The need to re-humanise and re-enchant economics has been well stated by Castoriadis (1996):

> *"What is needed is a new creation of the imagination that is of unprecedented importance..., a creation which would put at the centre of human life other meanings than the mere expansion of production and consumption, one which would offer goals in life that are recognized by other human beings as being worthwhile [....] This is the immense difficulty we are faced with. We should want a society in which economic values have ceased to be central (or the only ones), where the economy is put back in its place as a means for human life and not as its ultimate goal, and in which we therefore give up the mad race to consume more and more. This is not only necessary to avoid the final destruction of the planet's environment, but it is also and especially needed to rescue fellow human beings from psychological and moral misery".*

'Learning our way out' partly depends on more democratic and autonomous ways of knowing that build on local realities and different indicators of well-being, wealth and the 'good life'. As this citizens' report on European CSAs demonstrates, transforming knowledge and ways of organising economic life for food and agriculture are not only possible. This can also lead to more viable, socially just, convivial, and sustainable living for people and the land.

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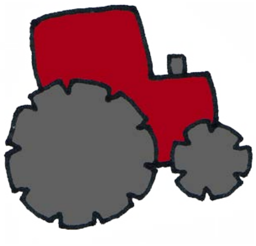


Introduction to Community Supported Agriculture in Europe

Philipp Weckenbrock (Agronauten), Peter Volz (Agronauten), Jocelyn Parot (Urgenci), Nicolas Cressot (GASAP)

Industrial agriculture is the dominant way in which agriculture is practiced throughout Europe and many other parts of the world. In industrial agriculture, an ever-decreasing number of farmers is locked in a competition about producing ever-more food ever-faster and cheaper. This system puts pressure on farmers, animals, plants and the environment. Highly mechanised and based on the application of chemicals, industrial agriculture is heavily dependent on fossil fuels. The losers in this system include the farmers, the consumers, the environment and society in general. The main beneficiaries of this system are a few huge and growing multinational enterprises of the industrial– agricultural sector.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) offers an alternative approach to agriculture based on solidarity, direct human relationships, mutual trust, small scale and respect for the environment.

In August 2015, representatives from twenty-two European countries came together in the Black Forest near Freiburg (Germany) to begin collaborative research on CSA in Europe.

During this meeting, the following working definition of CSA was developed:

> *"CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and producer(s) whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared through long-term agreements. Generally operating on a small and local scale, CSA aims at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way."*

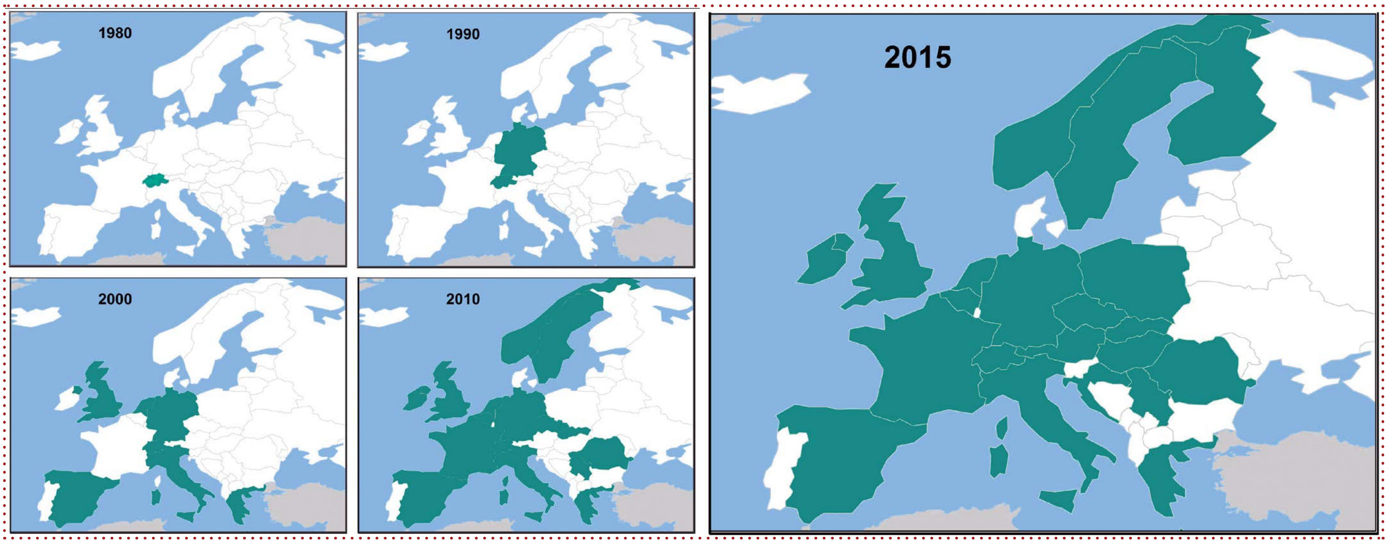
What is Community Supported Agriculture?

The main idea of CSA is simple: a group of consumers get together with a farm in their vicinity. Together, they share the costs of the farming season, including land rent, seeds, tools and the farmers' salaries. Likewise, they share the produce of the farm. This way:

- consumers get fresh food from a nearby farm, produced by farmers who they know;
- farmers get good working conditions and produce for people they know.

CSA Research Group, 26-27 August 2015.

While there are some important defining features of CSA, such as long-term agreements and a direct partnership, it has to be emphasised that every CSA initiative is unique: in some CSAs, all members work on the farm while in others, only the farmers do the actual farm work. Some CSAs produce only vegetables while others also offer honey, eggs, meat, cheese, etc. Some CSAs are small with only a handful of members while other CSAs unite thousands of members. The numerous possible legal forms of CSAs include that of an NGO, a cooperative or an association while other CSAs operate as informal groups. And so on. The individual country reports



EU1: Map showing the spread of CSAs throughout Europe 1978-2015.

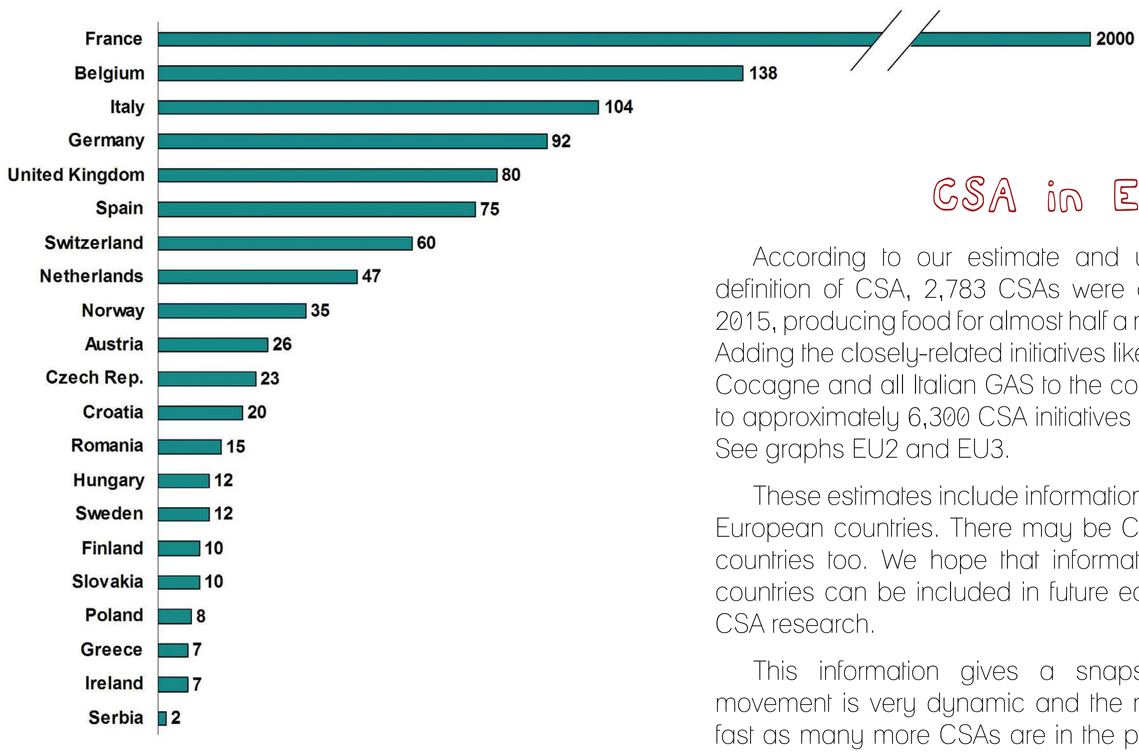
of this publication provide more in-depth information on the state of CSA in the European countries that were covered in the research. It should be understood that some of the values mentioned in the definition are continuums rather than absolute. For example, risk-sharing could be envisioned as a scale with different degrees rather than a predetermined principle with which a group complies or does not comply. The same remark could apply to the other commitments encompassed in the definition.

The following two paragraphs present a summary of the development and scope of the European CSA movement based on the country reports.

Development of CSA in Europe

The first known CSA in Europe, *Les Jardins de Cocagne,* was founded in 1978 near Geneva, Switzerland. In the late 70s and through the 80s, only a few other CSA initiatives were started. Around the turn of the Millennium, however, the CSA movement gathered steam. Since then, new CSAs have been popping up every year in a growing number of countries.

This dynamic development is illustrated in the map, see EU1.



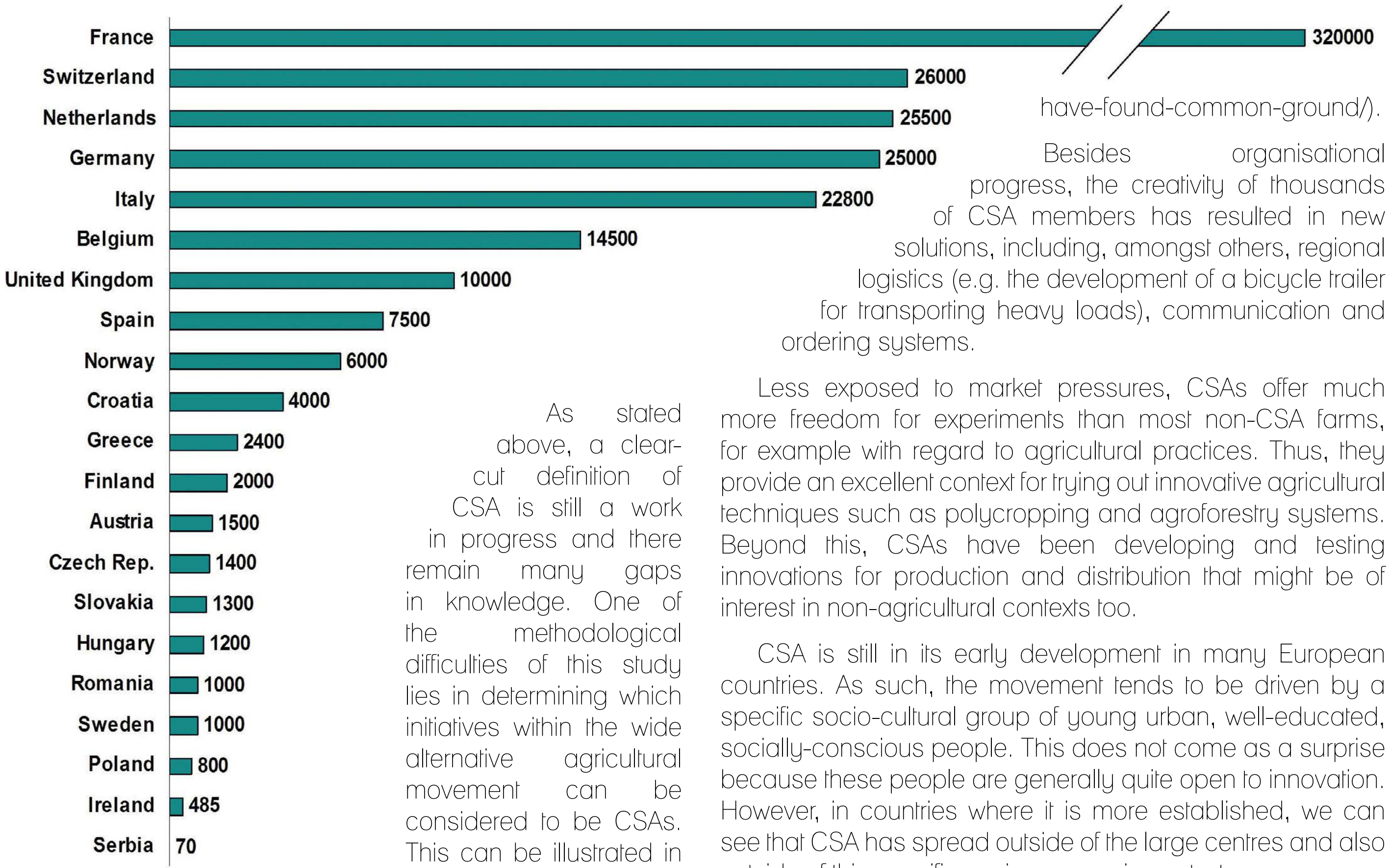
EU2. Estimated number of CSAs.

Scope of CSA in Europe

According to our estimate and using a rather narrow definition of CSA, 2,783 CSAs were operating in Europe in 2015, producing food for almost half a million (474,455) eaters! Adding the closely-related initiatives like the French Jardins de Cocagne and all Italian GAS to the count raises these figures to approximately 6,300 CSA initiatives and one million eaters! See graphs EU2 and EU3.

These estimates include information on CSAs in twenty-two European countries. There may be CSAs in other European countries too. We hope that information from all European countries can be included in future editions of the European CSA research.

This information gives a snapshot from 2015. The movement is very dynamic and the numbers are changing fast as many more CSAs are in the planning phase and will be up and running soon.



EU3: Estimated number of eaters in European CSAs.

As stated above, a clear-cut definition of CSA is still a work in progress and there remain many gaps in knowledge. One of the methodological difficulties of this study lies in determining which initiatives within the wide alternative agricultural movement can be considered to be CSAs. This can be illustrated in two examples: although they share many of the characteristics of CSA as given in the working definition, the French Jardins de Cocagne (Cocagne's Gardens, not to be confused with the first CSA in Switzerland) were not considered as CSAs in this study. According to the estimate of our Italian CSA experts, 5% of the Italian GAS (Gruppo di Acquisto Solidale – Solidarity Purchase Group) meet the criteria of the working definition of CSA presented above. All of this is subject to discussion. For the future, there is a need for more research differentiating between CSA and related concepts.

Outlook

As CSA continues to spread, several initiatives have been started to support the movement: trainings on how to set up a new CSA are now available and there is increasing communication and networking between CSAs and other social, environmental and agricultural actors such as the Nyéléni, and agroecology movement, the European access to land network, permaculture, producers of open-pollinated seeds, etc.

Embracing the diversity of the CSA landscape, there is ongoing work to define the movement's common ground. Examples of this include projects coordinated by Urgenci, the international CSA network, with collaboration on a common European CSA Charter and a CSA definition (urgenci.net/we-have-found-common-ground/).

Besides organisational progress, the creativity of thousands of CSA members has resulted in new solutions, including, amongst others, regional logistics (e.g. the development of a bicycle trailer for transporting heavy loads), communication and ordering systems.

Less exposed to market pressures, CSAs offer much more freedom for experiments than most non-CSA farms, for example with regard to agricultural practices. Thus, they provide an excellent context for trying out innovative agricultural techniques such as polycropping and agroforestry systems. Beyond this, CSAs have been developing and testing innovations for production and distribution that might be of interest in non-agricultural contexts too.

CSA is still in its early development in many European countries. As such, the movement tends to be driven by a specific socio-cultural group of young urban, well-educated, socially-conscious people. This does not come as a surprise because these people are generally quite open to innovation. However, in countries where it is more established, we can see that CSA has spread outside of the large centres and also outside of this specific socio-economic context.

While, so far, most CSAs are based on vegetable production, a wide range of other agricultural produce is increasingly being covered. In this context, it is interesting to note that there are initiatives that have set up Community Supported Beekeeping, Community Supported Bakeries and Community Supported Fisheries.

Agriculture is the basis of our economy in general. Reforming this basis, CSA can become a model for a much-needed shift towards a truly sustainable economy on a human scale.

Austria

Anneke Engel, Stephan Pabst, Elisabeth Steigberger, Lena Wellmann

Native name

- Solidarische Landwirtschaft – SoLawi (solidarity agriculture)
- Gemeinschaftsgestützte Landwirtschaft – Gelawi (community based agriculture)
- miteinander landwirtschaften – MiLan (farming together)

Country Context

Population: 8.6 million (January 2015)

Area: 83,878,99km²

The agricultural structure in Austria compared to other European countries is relatively small-scaled. Nevertheless, there has been a shift to intensification, rationalisation and specialisation of production through greater mechanisation and use of agro-chemical inputs (TNI, 2013: 85).

Farm structure

The average farm size (18.9ha) has doubled since 1951 and structural change has led to a greater concentration of land ownership (TNI, 2013: 85). Most farms that shut down between 1995 and 1999 were between 2ha and 5ha (TNI, 2013: 85). There is a tendency towards larger businesses, a tendency which has been continued since then in European agricultural policy. The number of farms with 50–100ha has almost doubled between the 1980s and the year 2010. More than a third (37.3%) of Austrian agriculturalists run their farm as professional farming, more than one half (55%) are part-time farmers. Around 35% of farms are run by women. The working population in agriculture decreased from 11% in the 1960s to 5.5% in 2009. The total number of farms in Austria is declining; since 1951 when there were 432,848 farms, the number has almost halved to 167,500 farms in 2013. These farms are mostly family-owned. 94% of the total farming area is private land and 4.7 % is leasehold.

Agricultural land and production

In Austria, more than 60% of the farmland is referred to as unfavourable (disadvantaged) mountainous regions (TNI, 2013: 87) which leads to great competition on the use of the land. Since 1951, Austria hast lost one third of its arable land. While ever-more products are imported, the most fertile soils in Austria are sealed (TNI, 2013: 87). In 2013, the total agricultural area used 2,728,558ha whereof almost half is permanent grassland and the other half is used as arable farmland. Around 60,500ha are used for viticulture and fruit growing.

The main production-type in Austria is animal husbandry. Apart from that, Austria has a high degree of self-sufficiency in meat and dairy (more than 100%) while the self-sufficiency in vegetables is only 59% with an increasing vegetable consumption (currently 111.2kg per capita). Also in fruit, self-sufficiency at 51% is rather low.

Direct marketing

In the 1980s and 1990s many farms began direct marketing as an important part of the farm income, bypassing retail channels and receiving higher prices via farmers' markets, box-schemes and farm shops. In the last two decades, the direct-marketing-farms are decreasing. This is often seen as the result of the concentration in the retail sector and due to strict obligations like hygenic regulations for small farmers and raised taxes on a guaranteed income from direct marketing. Obligations, which raise the costs for direct marketing, for example, the current obligation to have a cash register, reduce the willingness of farmers to begin direct marketing.

History and Characteristics of CSA

The CSA movement can be seen as the third wave of the Organic Movement in Austria, which started quite early compared to other European countries. We start with an overview of the three waves of the organic movement in Austria and then the CSA-movement is characterised.

Three waves of the organic movement in Austria

When considering the biological cultivation method, it can be said that Austria has the highest share of organically cultivated area worldwide. Since 2010 the number of businesses is decreasing although the ecologically cultivated area (20%) in relation to the whole agricultural area has increased. The first organic farms were founded in 1930. In 2014, 17% of total farms are organic as is 20% of the agricultural land. The first wave of organic farming was initiated by the German-speaking organic pioneers Rudolf Steiner, the Müller couple and Hans-Peter Rusch. Many farmers started to apply organic methods and consumers started informal networks to have access to the "health food products". The first formalised consumer–producer networks were created in

Factbox Austria

Number of CSAs?	Approx. 26
Since when?	2011: the first CSA farm, Gela Ochsenherz, started
National umbrella organisation?	There is an informal network, coordinated by a working group who organises two meetings per year for experience-sharing
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	Currently around 27 farms with 1,500 eaters

the early 1980s. Consumers played a more active role at the beginning but soon the farmers found themselves running the shops cooperatively and the consumers became inactive.

The second wave came with the so-called Bio-Boom in 1990. Supermarkets began selling organic brands and, due to European Organic Regulation, third party certification became obligatory. The various self-organised farmer–to–farmer certification bodies were finally pushed to form a unified body called Bio Austria in 2005 and only the Demeter and the Orbi association remained autonomous. This concentration in organic certification bodies is accompanied by the concentration in food retailers. Currently more than 85% of food retail is controlled by three companies (Spar, Hofer (Aldi) and the Rewe group) who are determining the prices for producers in general and for organic producers specifically.

To conclude this section, there is a third wave of organic agriculture movement which aims to address the concentration of the organic retail and production sector; the Nyeléni movement, aiming at Food Sovereignty, gives various examples of how to tackle these issues in practice. Food cooperatives (Solidarity Purchasing Groups), consumer–producer networks (Nets) and Community Supported Agriculture try to bypass and tackle the corporate food regime and build new ways of cooperation between consumer and producer (Schermer, 2015). On the producer side, the concentration of land and labour is tackled by the movement in a way that young farmers start new initiatives to make a living as peasant farmers and address the land concentration issue by squatting on land or building land trusts to cooperatively own land.

Dynamics of the Austrian CSA movement

The CSA movement in Austria has many roots. The film screening of *Farmer John* and an invitation from Wolfgang Stränz, treasurer of the first german CSA farm community, the Buschberghof, brought together several people who were looking for new ways of food production and consumption. Wolfgang Stränz was invited to the Organic Farmers' Days in 2010 and again by Peter and Lilli of the market-gardener farm Ochsenherz which is close to Vienna. After one year of intensive workgroup meetings between consumers and producers, with support from the AgrarAttac group, the first CSA in Austria was born. In the following year, two more farms took a chance and started new farm businesses following the CSA model: Kleine Farm and Gemüsefreude. At the same time, a European exchange project ('CSA for Europe') allowed farmers to travel and see different CSA farms in eight European countries. The 'CSA for Europe' project was lead by the International CSA network, Urgenci, and coordinated by AgrarAttac in Austria. The project inspired new thoughts and strengthened the will of those who wanted to start a new CSA farm.

From 2013 to 2015 around 24 farms started a CSA, and a growing group of them met each other twice a year at farmers' meetings; active non-farmer members were also present. These meetings were facilitated by a small networking group which is still organised informally on a voluntary basis.

The results of The Census have shown that 14 CSAs have around 1,000 members, therefore the estimated number of members of the 27 CSA farms in Austria is at least 1,500–2,000. The 14 farms that participated in The Census are all vegetable growers, six of whom grow fruit. There are only two known CSAs that have dairy and one has meat, which are the most common farm products in Austria. There is one CSA that supplies eggs and three that bake bread for their members.

The ideal...

The ideal of what CSA means in Austria is formulated in a charter that was finalised in 2015 as part of a common process:

> *"Gemeinschaftsgestützte Landwirtschaft (CSA, Community Supported Agriculture) means a direct partnership, which is contractually defined for a certain period between one or several producers and a group of consumers. The peasants provide food for the consumers, who allow the peasants decent working conditions and earnings. As well the risk as the yield of the production are shared. price and product are being decoupled. The harvest-sharers or members of a CSA don't buy several products, but they contribute with their regular payments and other contributions to a common agriculture. The ones who directly work in the farm don't produce for an unsecure, anonymous market, but provide food for people with names and faces. CSA peasants and members aim at being most independent from the conventional market."*

...in practice

Consumer-members pick up their food at a distribution point. The distribution point can be at the farm or – sometimes self-organised – near the members' homes. The modes of picking up and paying vary between two extremes: all members either pick up a fixed amount of food declared by the producer, or, they estimate the amount of food they can pick up according to their needs and what is currently harvested; regarding payment, either the members all pay an amount of money which is fixed by the producer at the beginning of the year/season, or, the members themselves fix the amount of money on the basis of the farmer's budget proposal and the ability of the members. Only two farms work on the basis of an informal agreement, the others have written contracts.

Gela Ochsenherz, first Austrian CSA farm. Austria.

Risk sharing is one of the main reasons to do CSA in Austria, because that is the element which is different to any other type of direct marketing. The CSA members declare at the beginning of the season that they are members for the whole season and pay their share costs in advance or on a monthly basis and receive weekly or bi-weekly shares of the harvest.

- Risk Sharing in Practice 1: Solako Oswald started with 100 members in 2015 and as early as May a big hailstorm destroyed a large part of the harvest. The members were informed about this by the monthly newsletter which showed pictures of the destroyed fields. The members continued to pay their share of the costs and the farm-family did their best to produce as much as possible.
- Risk Sharing in Practice 2: The CSA Biohof Mogg aims to have 300 members and has reached almost 150 but after a bad summer, which was cold and wet, the harvest was poor and so the produce could only be delivered every two weeks (instead of weekly). As a result, many members did not renew their contracts in the following year and the farmers had to find new members and spend a lot of time on marketing their farm and the CSA idea.

In the Austrian ideal, understanding a key point beyond risk-sharing is the sharing of responsibility. In this regard, the Austrian CSA charter mentions collective and self-organised structures as characteristics of CSA. The Census and our personal experiences show that decision-making is not a collective process in all Austrian CSAs.

The size of the Austrian CSA communities varies greatly: three CSAs consist of less than 10 members, while another three CSAs provide for more than 300 members. The other CSAs have mostly less than 100 members. Currently there is no evidence for assessing the connection between the size of the community and the intensity of the community life or the capability of sharing responsibility.

Legal setup

There are no legal structures explicitly for CSAs, but some of them have founded associations as a legal base for the co-working members. There are two associations that rent land from a farmer and grow food as a CSA. Most CSA farms are taxed at a flat rate as businesses or partnership-businesses whose income comes from the members directly.

Interaction with public bodies

Together with the Vienna Institute for Organic Agriculture, a project on CSA has been conducted with students who designed a booklet (*CSA-Broschüre*) to promote the idea of CSA widely. Between 2011 and 2014 more than 3,000 copies of the booklet have been spread across the country. www.ernährungssouveränität.at/es-wiki/images/3/32/CSA-Broschuere_AT_Kons.pdf

Since 2014 there is cooperation between the organic farmers' association, Bio-Austria, and the federal government of upper Austria to actively inform farmers and consumers about alternative food networks like foodcoops and CSAs. www.bio-austria.at/aaz

The role of the producer

In CSAs which are run by collective and self-organised structures, we observe that these structures are founded on the engagement of a few members and on the producer's distinct idealism. The producer's role is very relevant, as demonstrated in The Census by these two factors: (1) the CSA land is generally in the possession of, or rented by, the producer; (2) the majority of Austrian CSAs have been initiated by the producer.

Many of the producers are currently entrusted with a task that is, per the ideal CSA, not necessarily their duty: they are taking on the job of integrating the members into their farm, aiming at sharing responsibility. This job involves above all the transparent declaration of the budget of the farm, which requires proper business management skills. If we consider that it is only in very rare cases that the wages of the producers are over fifty percent of the CSA financial expenditures, and that only part of the farm produces for the CSA, we realise that the producers are doubly burdened. On the one hand, they must try to manage this social and communicative task, while on the other hand, they have to market those products which are not delivered via the CSA members.

Organic certification

The marketing by the farms of their non-CSA products could be one reason why most CSAs are organically certified, even if certifying would not be necessary for the CSA.

Agroecological practices

The general concept of the Austrian CSA has the following aspects in common with the Nyeléni Agroecology declaration:

- The production practices are based on ecological principles.
- Collective rights and access to the commons (or rather to healthy food) are fundamental.
- The re-shaping of markets is required so that they are based on the principles of solidarity economy and the ethics of responsible production and consumption. Direct and fair short distribution chains are promoted. A transparent relationship between producers and consumers is implied and is based on the solidarity of shared risks and benefits.
- CSAs want to change the political and economic conditions to make possible an ecological, social and small-scale agriculture and alimentation for all. We need to put the control of seeds, biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture and the commons in the hands of the peoples who feed the world.

There is a variety of idealistic backgrounds within the Austrian CSAs on matters concerning the human–nature relationship. Some are influenced by biodynamic ideals, others by religion or by science, and there are Marxist elements as well as permaculturalist approaches. There isn't a common view within the Austrian CSA movement of a spiritual idea, which, in fact, may be of benefit to the movement.

Outlook

The public consciousness for organic food is mainly dominated by supermarket chains. Instead of the romanticised pictures supermarkets paint in their advertisments, CSAs give consumers the chance to build a direct relationship with the land and the farmers. It will be an important task for the future of the Austrian CSA movement to show consumers and interested farmers that the CSA concept is not another way of consuming but a way of co-farming. When CSA members do not see their CSA producer as an anonymous entrepreneur providing a service for them but more like a food-providing colleague, all potential benefits of CSA can be caught: formal restrictions become unnecessary and consumers as co-farmers can be multiplicators for an understanding of the peasants' struggles.

Ways of co-farming are now being pushed forward by a bunch of idealistic farmers and a few members. This vision of co-farming, where risks, rewards and responsibilities are shared can have the following limitations from our point of view: there is a limit to the capacity of CSA producers to take care of integrating the members into their farm as well as to the capacity of the members to consciously take over responsibilities.

From our point of view, the further development of CSA stands at a crossroads: either the CSA movement successfully organises itself to overcome its limitations through an institutionalised or informal network, or, the power of community is hijacked and transformed by profit-oriented players and, having failed to tackle dominant market structures, CSA is subsumed into the morass of lifestyle products.

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Note: All Figures from Grüner Bericht 2015 unless another source is given.

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Belgium

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Native name

Flanders: "CSA" is commonly used, but sometimes the term Zelfplukboerderij is applied, describing the activity of picking your own vegetables or fruit at the farm.

Wallonia: the term CSA refers to: various identified systems of local and solidarity partnership between producers and consumers (like the GASAP in Brussels, the AMAP in Louvain-la-Neuve, Les Grosses Légumes in Belgian Luxembourg, or certain buying groups in other parts of Wallonia) or to the equivalent in Flanders, or to qualify other sui generis food systems sharing common ground with the first two categories at some level.

Preliminary Note

Since Belgium is trilingual and is a federal country with agricultural policy falling under regional jurisdiction, the CSA movement has different characteristics and dynamics in Flanders, in Wallonia and in Brussels. In order to assess this slightly complex situation, analysis was carried out separately on the situation in Flanders and Wallonia/Brussels.

In Wallonia/Brussels, it is only the Brussels province which has a structured network per se, Le Réseau des GASAP, whereas CSAs in the rest of Wallonia mostly work on an autonomous basis and remain isolated. This will be reflected in this report, mainly focused on the GASAP-type of CSAs. GASAP is an acronym for Groupe Solidaire de l'Agriculture Paysanne and is a registered trademark of Le Réseau des GASAP asbl; the association ensures its members meet certain criteria. Finally, an unknown proportion of groups which could be considered as CSAs may be out there but they could not be reached either because we have no knowledge of their existence or because they have no wish to get in touch with others.

Important: The data from The Census originating from the Wallonia side of Belgium appears quite incomplete for various reasons, for example: the tight schedule of the The Census survey happened to conflict with other demands from GASAP; The Census was sent electronically by Le Réseau des GASAP, an organisation which remains unknown in some parts of Wallonia; a lot of the groups might not have perceived the importance of the inquiry; many groups wish to go along with their activities and feel no desire to connect to others; probably also some confidentiality issues may have interfered with the success of the initiative; the current lack of a feeling of belonging to a common cause or of the need for collaboration through Wallonia and Belgium.

Common definition

The Flemish CSA network uses the following definition: Community Supported Agriculture is a concept in which farmer and consumer join forces and, in collaboration, search for – and work on – solutions for our food chain which are economical, ecological and socially sustainable.

In Wallonia, Le Réseau des GASAP uses the following criteria to consider new applications to the network membership:

- A direct sale from producer to consumers, or the absence of middle men;
- A collective, self-organised collaboration between producers and consumers;
- A "solidarity contract" including the commitment of consumers in the long-term (generally a full season), production-risk-sharing, and a direct human relationship based on mutual trust;
- An agora (gathering place) dedicated to exchange, thinking and ongoing education.

Country context

General information

Belgium is the ninth largest country by population in the EU. With 11.2 million inhabitants and a land area of 3.05 million hectares, it has a population density of 366 people per km^2 (p/km^2). Belgium has a complex political landscape. It is divided into different regions and language communities. There are strong regional differences regarding population density, Flanders has 477p/km^2 and Wallonia 213p/km^2. According to world urbanisation prospects, 97.5% of Belgians are living in an urban area and 20% of Belgium is taken up by buildings and related infrastructure.[1]

Close to 13% of the family budget is spent on food and non-alcoholic beverages[2]. With a share of 76.4%, supermarkets are the place where most Belgians buy their fresh food. The sale of organic produce is on the rise as 65.7% of the people eat organic products and 18% of Belgians eat an organic product every day[3].

Factbox Belgium

Number of CSAs?	47 CSAs were inventoried in Flanders for The Census; official government reports listed 19 CSAs in 2014 90 GASAP in Brussels were listed by Le Réseau des GASAP by the end of this year, out of which 28 provided input to The Census; 1 AMAP in Louvain-la-Neuve; the number of buying groups is unknown
Since when?	The first CSA farm in Flanders started in 2007 In Wallonia, the oldest CSA on record dates back to 2005, although one farm with consumer groups was organised as early as 1994
National umbrella organisation?	In Flanders: CSA Netwerk (www.csa-netwerk.be), 34 CSAs are members of the network In Wallonia: Le Réseau des GASAP asbl was formally constituted in 2011 to federate the GASAP-like groups, and claims today some 65+ member groups; Les Grosses Légumes gathers around 20 producers and over 300 consumers (http://grosses.legumes.over-blog.com)
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	In Flanders: approx. 7,500 people In Wallonia: although GASAP respondents to The Census amount to some 1,100+ shares, their last internal survey reported a total of 1,214 boxes, i.e. approx. 3,500 shares. The Belgian AMAP accounts for approx. 450 eaters. The consumers of Les Grosses Légumes or other buying groups did not respond to The Census. Taking the above points into consideration, a reasonable estimate would thus be 5,000–7,000 people fed by CSAs in Wallonia.

Although Belgian farmers were at the top of economic performance in Europe[4], farmers' income in some sectors is heavily under stress. Flemish farmer's income on average was 19% lower in 2014 compared to 2013[5]. The share of agriculture in gross domestic product (GDP) is getting lower every year and now represents 0.6% of GDP.

Agricultural information

Belgium has 44% of its land area devoted to agriculture or 1.34 million hectares. There are 37,761 farms employing 74,500 people or 1.5% of the working population. The average farm size is 25.5ha in Flanders and 55.4ha in Wallonia. Farms are getting larger and on average there is a decrease of 3.3% in the number of farms every year. Extensive farmers in Belgium mainly produce feed crops and grains. While a large part of the agricultural area is taken up by permanent grasslands. Belgian agriculture is specialised in intensive livestock-keeping and vegetable-growing[6].

Water availability is low in Flanders and Brussels, around 1,150–1,700m³ water per capita depending on the method used. This is the water available for all activities in the country. Belgium is ranked sixth lowest on the OECD water stress ranking (Flanders and Brussels are fourth lowest).

The share of organic agriculture production in Belgium is low, especially in relation to the amount of organic products consumed. There are big differences between Flanders and Wallonia in the share of organic in total agricultural area. In Flanders 0.8% of the area is certified organic, with a yearly increase of 8% and 319 farms in 2014. Wallonia on the other hand has 8% of its area under organic production and 1,195 organic farms[7].

History and characteristics of CSA

- Out of 45 CSAs contacted in Flanders, 35 responded, resulting in a 78% response rate.
- Of 90 GASAP, 1 AMAP and an unknown number of other CSAs, 28 GASAP and 1 AMAP responded, resulting in a low 35% response rate for the GASAP. Some possible explanations for this are given in the premlinary note.

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

Flanders

The first CSA in Flanders, Het Open Veld, started in 2007. Inspiration was found in The Netherlands and the USA. The second CSA was founded in 2009 after which the Flemish CSA network was created. The last couple of years the Flemish CSA movement got a lot of media attention and farmer unions and governmental authorities have shown an increased attention for CSA farms and the new model they represent. One of the main reasons why CSA farms emerged in Flanders probably is the high pressure on agricultural land. This results in many difficulties for new farmers to get access to farmland.

The first CSAs showed that economical viable farming was possible on a limited cultivation area. Initially, the increase in new farms was slow, but in 2014 (+9) and 2015 (+9) there was a substantial increase in the number of CSA farms. On the other hand, a limited amount of farms had to stop or look for an alternative location.

Specific to the Flemish situation, 75% of responding CSAs are initiated by the farmer, the other farms are either created in cooperation between farmer and community (8.5%) or by community members alone (11.4%). CSAs in Flanders have an average size of 2.08ha and range between 5ha and 100 acres. Together the responding CSAs have 68.5ha in use, of which 48.8ha are actually used for production. Concerning the ownership of farmland, 46% of responding CSAs are renting the land, while 28% of farms own the land they cultivate. The remaining farms are able to cooperate with local authorities or with a recently established land trust organisation called De Landgenoten.

On average, the number of members per CSA is 176. For the responding CSAs the total number is 5,989 members. Extrapolation to the 43 active inventoried CSAs results in close to 7,500 members.

Wallonia

In 2006, two young agronomists working for Le début des haricots, an NGO in Brussels, inspired by the French AMAP system, created the very first GASAP in collaboration with an organic-but-not-certified farm. This is the pioneer "local and solidarity partnership between producers and consumers". Similar groups then rapidly blossomed and expanded in the various municipalities of Brussels. The growth curve is so sharp that the need for keeping in touch with the pace and facilitating the communication between all these initiatives led to the constitution of a network, based on a common Charter of Principles[8] drafted in 2007 (amended in 2010 and currently under review). The main principles at the core of the founding were:

(1) Supporting a peasant agriculture

(2) Short circuit or no intermediary distribution

(3) Solidarity between Producers and Consumers

(4) Self-organisation and convivialité (strong interpersonal relationships within the group members)

Right from the start, the network's (Le Réseau des GASAP) role was not intended as an intruder between producers and consumers of the GASAP, but rather as a support to their development, a facilitator of collaboration between all parties, a media channel to promote a collective conscience about the kind of agricultural model they chose to support.

Le Réseau des GASAP then committed to provide tools (interactive maps, creation kits, producers listings etc.) and services (dedicated assistance teams, information meetings etc.) to further enhance the creation of new groups. Simultaneously, a new complimentary kind of GASAP emerged. While a producer involved in the first GASAP was mostly providing vegetables and fruit to 10–25 members on average, several farmers and value-adding-producers in the "Super-GASAP" offered a wider variety of produce (fruit and vegetables excluded), from bread to meat to eggs to dairy products to honey etc.

Another critical action undertaken by Le Réseau des GASAP consisted in stimulating dialogue between the groups, with a view to sharing experiences and solving the most common problems and confronting the identified weaknesses of the GASAP system (the lack of choice regarding the produce, the frequent bewilderment at discovering unknown species and how to prepare them, the frequently loose relationship between eaters and producers, and the resulting important turnover of consumers) to turn them into strengths. This strategy contributed to forging a feeling of common identity and bringing about a political consciousness about their role in society beyond the simple act of enjoying tastier and healthier food.

Hence the GASAP became a front-of-house interlocutor more and more often solicited by politicians, universities and the media insofar as the thematics relating to agriculture, food and citizenship are concerned.

In brief, the dynamics of the development of GASAP may be summarised in 3 steps:

(1) the proliferation of groups created on their own with no relation to one another

(2) the creation and organisation of the association as a link between them and the implementation of appropriate tools to support the development of a network

(3) the move towards the building of a community which was conscious of its power and duty to bring about a better future.

Responses to The Census show that 40% of the farms providing food to CSAs in Wallonia own the land while 27% are rented by the farmers. 17% are part-rented and part-owned by the farmers. 41.54ha are cultivated by farmers involved in CSAs in total, out of which 14.4ha are used for CSA needs. But due to the low response rate and the limited knowledge of consumer respondents about their farms, these figures likely don't represent the big picture in the field.

What is understood by CSA?

Flanders

According to the regional Flemish CSA network, the definition of CSA has the following elements:

- Farming supported by a community
- Up front contribution to the operating costs of the farm and farmer income
- Share in farming risks
- Shared responsibility
- Ecological agriculture, with care for soil and environment; organic certification
- Care for our health and that of future generations
- A healthy North-South relation

For Flanders, 31 out of 35 respondents confirmed membership of the regional CSA network, while 3 had no network affiliation. None of the Flemish CSAs are a member of the Urgenci network.

Wallonia

- According to the principles laid out in the Charter of Le Réseau de GASAP, the definition of CSA requires acceptance of the following principles:
- A direct sale from producer to consumers, or the absence of middle men;
- A collective, self-organised collaboration between producers and consumers;
- A "solidarity contract" including the commitment of consumers in the long-term (generally a full season), production-risk-sharing, and a direct human relationship based on mutual trust;
- An agora (gathering place) dedicated to exchange, thinking and ongoing education.

Respondents were asked to select CSA characteristics which apply to their farm. Table BE1 shows the results for Flanders and Wallonia:

BE1: General CSA characteristics which apply to CSAs in Flanders and Wallonia

CSA characteristic	Flanders	Wallonia	Aggregated
Direct partnership	88.6%	93.3%	89.4%
Shared risks	85.7%	63.3%	75.8%
Shared responsibilities	65.7%	20%	43.9%
Shared rewards	60%	16.7%	39.4%
Long-term agreement	68.6%	90%	77.3%
Formal or informal contract	82.9%	70%	75.8%
Aiming at providing high quality food	100%	83.3%	92.4%
Production in an agroecological manner	97.1%	80%	87.9%

Organic Certification

In Flanders, 68% of CSAs are certified organic, while an additional 17% of respondents are in the process of becoming certified.

In Wallonia, 46% of CSAs are certified organic (out of which 3% are certified biodynamic), while another 43% enjoy produce not certified organic but grown organically. The rest of the produce is either waiting for certification or consists of brand new producers just starting their farm. It is important to note that if there is a consensus in Wallonia about growing "natural" food (without the use of synthetic chemical inputs), the community of farmers is divided on the principle of certification, for philosophical, political or economic reasons.

Are there different types of CSA?

1. A farmer works together with a group of members who pays a harvest share at the beginning of the season. Members either pick the produce themselves or packages are made by the farmer. This type of CSA is the focus of The Census in Flanders.

2. Several local member groups work together with several farms and producers to provide a full supply of food. The largest organisation in Flanders is Voedselteams, a non-commercial organisation which facilitates interaction between 170 farmers and processors, and 175 member groups of consumers. They started in 1996 and found inspiration in the principles of the Japanese Seikatsu-club. Voedselteams' general assembly is compromised of producers and members. Orders are placed through a web platform and deliveries are made by farmers and social enterprises. Regarding the definition, applied in The Census, Voedselteams is strong on some points, but lacks other characteristics. Members of one of the 175 depots are free to order or not. This means that many participating farmers don't have secure revenue from the Voedselteams. Other principles are strongly supported by Voedselteams, like empowering short food chains and putting food sovereignty on the agenda. On average, 20 families are member of a depot. This adds up to 3,500 families being a member of Voedselteams, or 8,000 people (average Flemish household size 2.3). The turnover in this circuit is around €2 million annually.

3. In Wallonia, groups of consumers agree with a vegetable – and sometimes fruit – producer to deliver a box every week or every two weeks at the group's collection point, in exchange for a single wire payment for the whole group in advance for a period of 3 to 6 months. The contract duration is at least a season (9–12 months), during which period the consumer group commits to maintaining a stable number of shares so that the producer rests assured the same part of his production is pre-sold. On average, the groups consist of 20 households and the produce is the same for every household at each delivery, only the quantity might differ. This is the typical, most common GASAP model. Le Réseau des GASAP counts about 90 such groups, totalling around 4,000 people, with a considerable turnover rate.

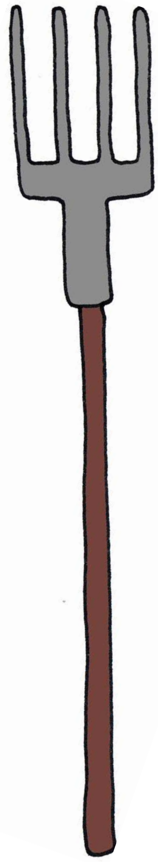
4. A more recent kind of GASAP emerged over the last few years, offering complimentary products to the GASAP groups (meat, bread, dairy products etc.). These are called Super-GASAP, as they generally gather more participants (producers and consumers). There are currently 4 of these Super-GASAP in Brussels, totalling above 350 people, and a few more might come into existence soon. Most often their members are also part of regular GASAP.

5. There is one AMAP in Louvain-la-Neuve, Wallonia, created on the same model as its French counterpart. The 450 members negotiated with one producer to buy his whole production, they determined his income and production plan, and closely collaborate with him to solve any issue that might arise. This is the most integrated form of CSA partnership.

6. Lastly, there are buying groups (or GAC) spread throughout Wallonia that might be considered as CSA. Most of the groups which were contacted did not provide their input to The Census, for various reasons, mainly because of the short timeline and because of their being asked to respond by an interlocutor unknown to them. This is the grey area of The Census. For all we know at this stage, they work on a weekly/ bi-weekly group-purchase basis with different producers/ produce through an online purchase platform. Some might have a regular purchase obligation, whereas some might be totally free to purchase when and what they want. The number of people fed in this category remains unknown.

Type of produce

In addition, CSAs can be distinguished by the type of products they produce. Table BE2 shows the percentage of different types of produce which CSA farms in Flanders and Wallonia produce. Both for Flanders and Wallonia, the main produce are vegetables and fruit, while meat or dairy are not widely produced. In addition, several CSAs mentioned the production of herbs at the farm (17%).



BE2: Type of produce (%)

Product	Flanders	Wallonia	Aggregated
Fruit	51.4%	63.3%	57.6%
Vegetables	97.1%	83.3%	90.9%
Meat	14.3%	16.7%	15.2%
Dairy	5.7%	20%	12.1%
Eggs	20.0%	40%	28.8%
Bread	0%	26.7%	12.1%
Honey	2.9%	16.7%	9.1%

BE3: Distribution methods (%)

Means of distribution	Flanders	Wallonia	Aggregated
Home delivery	5.7%	0%	3%
Pick up at farm	34.3%	3.3%	19.7%
Collection points	20%	86.7%	50%
Self-harvesting	85.7%	3.3%	48.5%

Distribution method

Table BE3 shows the distribution methods used. Many CSAs use a combination of methods, but the main way of distribution in Flanders with 85% is clearly self-harvesting, while the most common in Wallonia is pick up at CSA's collection points.

Legal setup

No specific input from Flanders

In Wallonia, most of the CSAs are unregistered entities (or de facto associations): only 2 GASAP have the de jure association status.

See also under paragraph 'Commitment of the eaters' regarding informal agreements or written contracts.

BE4: Members' involvement in the CSA

Membership involvement	Flanders	Wallonia	Aggregated
Buying shares	74.3%	83.3%	77.3%
Helping to grow produce	62.9%	10%	37.9%
Helping to pack/deliver produce	5.7%	20%	12.1%
Administration/organisation	17.1%	63.3%	37.9%
Decision-making	71.4%	56.7%	65.2%
Attending open days/social events	85.7%	43.3%	66.7%
Exchanging recipes	88.6%	43.3%	68.2%
Investing money in the farm	14.3%	3.3%	9.1%

Interaction with public bodies

No specific input from Flanders

In Wallonia, the CSAs themselves rarely interact with public bodies outside of reaching out to their municipalities to find a place to store their boxes and use as a dispatching place upon delivery days. On the other hand, Le Réseau des GASAP relies on EU, Ministries, provincial, and environment administrations to get subsidies to budget its paid workforce. It is also consulted on a regular basis by university researchers on a variety of topics related to food sustainability, agriculture, etc. The Belgian food security administration is also on the agenda of the network, as some of the network producers are frequently confronted with this regulatory body and wish Le Réseau des GASAP to act as an ombudsman. Finally, a volunteer team has been created to work as a think-tank and produce notes to assist Le Réseau with defining its advocacy positioning.

Commitment of the eaters

There are different degrees of member's commitment.

In Flanders, 57% of responding CSAs have a written contract, while the 43% remaining CSAs use a more informal agreement between farmer and CSA member.

Figures in Wallonia are 50% and 40% respectively.

Involvement of the eaters

Membership involvement for Flanders and Wallonia is shown in table BE4.

Labour and income

Flanders

Work at most CSA farms in Flanders is done by the farmer and his family or a collective of farmers. Most farmers are self-employed (54%) while 34% have a contract from the CSA. The remaining farmers are working part-time. While 46% of the responding farmers receive all their income from the CSA, 37% of CSA farmers have an additional job. Subsidies don't have an impact on farmer's income, since most farms are too small to receive subsidies. Of the responding Flemish CSAs, 51% of them have member working days throughout the year. An additional important source of labour is the enrolment of trainees. In 25% of farms, they have trainees or target group employees working at the farm.

Wallonia

In Wallonia most of the work is done by the farmer and his family (56%), with the help of full-time workers in only 12% of the CSAs. Seasonal workers account for 27% of the workforce in the responding CSAs, along with a few wwoofers in 4% of the respondents' CSAs. The producer is almost never a salaryman from its CSAs, with the exception of the one AMAP. Nevertheless, these figures need to be handled with care: only 30 CSAs responded out of more than a 100.

Agroecological practices

The main driver for consumers choosing the CSA model of farming is the growing undercurrent of well-informed and conscious citizens who want to buy healthy food from a known origin, produced with respect for the environment[9]. Members of the Flemish and Wallonian CSA networks agree to respect some common principles and the members work together to increase knowledge, support new farmers and to spread the word to a broader public. Agroecological practices are promoted and farms are encouraged to be organically certified. Local economies are created by the CSA farms and by sharing costs and responsibilities, communities are able to arise around a new local food system.

15 February 2008, AG GASAP. Belgium.

Outlook

Several evolutions put increased tension on the agricultural sector in Belgium. The remaining open space is contested and access to land is a key issue for new farmers. Land access reforms are therefore urgently needed. In addition, every year there are fewer farms and farmers, most active farmers are over fifty years old and most don't have a successor. The agricultural crisis in 2015 hit hard in Belgium whose agricultural sector is specialised in dairy products and pork. These sectors are also responsible for the main detrimental environmental effects of agriculture in Belgium. Structural changes are not to be expected from current politics, but the existence of a strong alternative farmer movement has been able to show an alternative path.

As mentioned before, CSAs meet the need for an alternative to the agro-industrial complex and the need of people to reconnect to farming and food production. Every year more and more new farmers are trying to start. A new generation of people, mostly outside of traditional agricultural communities, are inspired by a holistic view on agriculture and food. The undercurrent of alternative farming and food initiatives has been able to capture attention. The success of CSAs both in Flanders and in Wallonia can be greatly attributed to the strong CSA networks. As a consequence, the CSA movement and its business model are known by agricultural administrations but still needs more public attention to be able to spread and enable new CSA farms to emerge.

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Croatia

Danijel Balaban

Native name

Grupe Solidarne Razmjene (groups of solidarity exchange)

Solidarne Ekološke Grupe (organic solidarity groups)

Common definition

Croatia has three CSA streams (GSR,SEG, RIS) which differ slightly in their modes of working but the overall definition says that solidarity groups are informal citizen groups that exchange products and services based on transparency, trust and solidarity.

Country context

General information

Croatia occupies the largest area of the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea which, as a part of the Mediterranean Sea, penetrates deep into the European continent. The narrow Dinara Mountain Range separates the country's Mediterranean region from its central European continental section which spans from the easterly edges of the Alps in the northwest to the shores of the Danube in the east, encompassing the southern part of the fertile Pannonian lowlands.

The service sector dominates Croatia's economy, followed by the industrial sector and agriculture. Tourism is a significant source of revenue during the summer, with Croatia ranked the eighteenth most popular tourist destination in the world. Croatia has a high income economy where International Monetary Fund data shows that Croatian nominal GDP stood at $57,371 billion – $13,401 per capita – in 2013, while purchasing power parity GDP was $86,570 billion – $20,221 per capita.

Real GDP growth in 2007 was 6%. The average net salary of a Croatian worker in March 2013 was 5,516kuna ($988) per month. As of June 2015, registered unemployment rate in Croatia was 16.1%.

In 2010, economic output was dominated by the service sector which accounted for 66% of GDP, followed by the industrial sector with 27.2% and agriculture accounting for 6.8% of GDP. According to 2004 data, 2.7% of the workforce were employed in agriculture, 32.8% by industry and 64.5% in services.

Agricultural information

Farms in Croatia can be characterised as being relatively small with an average size of 5.6ha per holding in 2010 which is considerably less than the average of 14.4ha per holding across the whole of the EU-27. About one half (52.5%) of all holdings in Croatia were less than 2ha in size, with the vast majority (89.4%) being less than 10ha. It is noticeable that a majority of farms are not actually commercial farms, but rather grow agricultural products for household consumption or non-commercial trade activities. It is also worth noting that the number of organic farms is growing rapidly in Croatia – from 130 in 2003 to 1,449 in 2011.

A little over two thirds (68%) of the land used for farming (the utilised agricultural area) in Croatia was classed as arable land. Of the 895,220ha of arable land in 2010 about two thirds (65%) was given over to cereals, of which a majority (310,450ha) was land under grain maize production.

According to the EU's labour force survey, agriculture, forestry and fishing employed 229,200 people aged over fifteen in Croatia in 2010, the equivalent of 14.9% of the total workforce over fifteen years old. This was one of the highest rates among EU member states; the EU-27 average was 5.2%.

The farm structure survey carried out in 2010 suggests that a high number of people worked regularly in the Croatian agricultural industry (513,680 people). Many of these people were family helping out on the farm but having their main employment elsewhere. Farming in Croatia is very much a family affair; on average 90.7% of the labour input for agriculture (measured in annual work units) was carried out by the farmer and/or a member of his/her family in 2010. This was a much higher proportion than the average for the EU-27 (76.4%).

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

The first initiatives related to establishing CSA groups in Croatia were launched at the end of 2012 when the organisation ZMAG ran a project called 'Fine Threads of Local Development'. The project supported local food production and the creation of cooperative groups for the purchase of locally produced food and the promotion of the preservation of old seed varieties and the concept of food sovereignty. Within the project, various workshops were held on a national level where administrative teams were formed and CSA principles were agreed upon to bring about a movement with solidarity being the most important.

We can say that CSA movement in Croatia started on the likes of similar worldwide movements – Community Supported Agriculture and Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne – in order to solve the problem of overpriced organic food in our country and the salvation of small-scale, local food production.

What is understood by CSA?

Although the farms that supply Community Supported Agriculture in Croatia display small variations in size, organisational and production structure, their common characteristic is a tendency towards bypassing middlemen

Factbox Croatia

Number of CSAs?	7 based on The Census and probably 20 in the country
Since when?	2012
National umbrella organisation?	Informal umbrella of solidarity groups
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	The Census counted 1,460 which encompases only 7 CSA groups out of roughly 20, therefore, we could estimate that the total number of people fed by CSA in Croatia is 3,000 people

and ensuring fair wages for growers. In our context, we can find a much more common form which can be called "subscription", where farmers guarantee a certain amount of farm produce for an agreed sum. The overarching definition states that solidarity groups are informal citizen groups which exchange products and services based on transparency, trust and solidarity.

Are there different types of CSA?

Groups of Solidarity Exchange, Organic Solidarity Groups, Exchange and Solidarity

Legal setup

Informal groups of citizens and non-profit organisations

Interaction with public bodies

Family farms as such operate within a legal framework of Croatian law, yet CSA as a model of direct selling from the very beginning was faced with legal obstacles because it wasn't in full compliance with existing farm legislative bills. The concern of CSA farmers and consumers led to communication with the ministry of agriculture to expand and renew the bill in order to encompass basic and additional family farm activities.

Involvement of the eaters

From The Census data, we can say that group members are willing to invest their time and energy in actions which are tied to group interests, e.g. sharing recipes, covering administration work and attending open days. The group commitment could go a long way towards playing a bigger part in investment and food growing but this falls back on the grower who must openly ask for help.

Organic certification

Out of seven respondents, three replied that their food is certified organic and another three respondents replied that their food is organic but not certified. However, even within groups there are differences about whether or not producers can be accepted if certification proves to be a financial obstacle for them.

Outlook

Croatia is a country where family farms occupy 84% of agricultural land and about half of the farms have less than one hectare. Families in the countryside are therefore still social actors that determine a significant part of our already small manufacturing role in the overall consumption of food. Research on the characteristics of Community Supported Agriculture in Croatia for the most part confirmed similarities with the characteristics of similar groups in other parts of the world.

Community Supported Agriculture can provide significant support to the development of organic agriculture, primarily as an additional distribution channel for organic products ensuring the purchase and inclusion of local communities. CSA group activities can definitely contribute to the building of local networks which may encourage more small-scale producers to engage in organic agriculture. This is certainly one of the activities that can contribute to the diversification of agriculture in Croatia, especially among the rural population who do not have sufficient capital to launch a market-oriented agricultural production.

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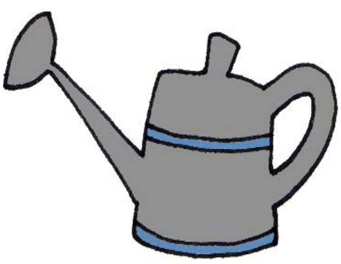
Author

Danijel Balaban is a CSA organic grower and biodynamic enthusiast. At the very beginning of the CSA movement in Croatia, together with a group of activists, he started one of the first CSA groups and organic-farmers' markets in his region. He was an administrator of the local CSA group when, after a year, he decided that farming might be the response to the freedom he was looking for. Aside from being in the field, he works with Urgenci as a Kernel member and a research group member. Lately he does web design and graphic design for Urgenci's activities.



Czech Republic

Vratislava Janovská

Native name

Komunitou podporované zemědělství (community supported agriculture)

Common definition

In the Czech Republic, CSA is based on a mutual relationship between consumers and producers of food, who, in common with each other, share rich or poor yields alike. Among the main targets of CSA are: belonging to a local chain of food production and consumption, supporting environmentally friendly ways of cultivating land, cooperating with people, and cultivating an affinity with food.

Country context

General information

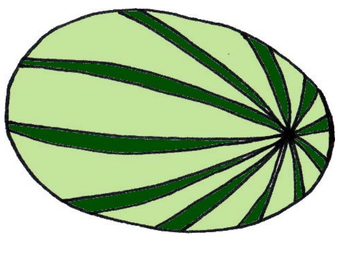
In the Czech Republic, approximately 10.5 million people live on an area of 78,866km² (about 133 people per km²). The survey about expenditure of income for food from the analysed period 2001–2009 based on data from the Statistics of Family Accounts shows that the Czech households expended their disposable income primarily on food and non-alcoholic beverages which constitute, on average, 19% of net monetary expenditure. The demand for food items appears to be relatively satiated, and it may thus be assumed that the growing purchasing power implied primarily a transition to the consumption of higher quality and luxury food items (Malá et Červená, 2012). Proving this point, a change occurred around 2010 whereby there was more interest in direct sale of food from farmers – people were discovering shorter supply chains from the producer to the consumer. There was a wave of several dozen farmers' markets opening throughout the country and the development of small stores specialising in local food. Consumption of food with added value intersected to some extent with unofficial direct sales from farms – which still exists – by using the motto: "Najdi si svého farmáře" ("find your farmer"). This demand came mostly from the city consumers who are interested in healthy, quality food and it was also a trigger for the beginning of CSA in the Czech Republic (Frélichová, 2013).

Consumption of organic produce

In general, each inhabitant of the Czech population spends around CZK200 on organic food products per year, and the share of organic food of the total consumption has remained approximately 1% over the long-term. About 60% of organic food is imported, and total sales of organic food, including exports, are currently at the level of around CZK2.1 billion. Czech consumers buy most organic food from retail chains (67%), followed in second place by health food and organic food shops (20%). The share of direct sales of organic food (consisting of farm direct sales and direct purchases from producers and distributors) accounts for a further 4%, the share of sales at independent small food shops is 1%, and around 1% of organic food is sold in restaurants (eAGRI, 2015a).

Agricultural information

Agricultural entrepreneurs now farm around 4,264,000ha of agricultural land in the Czech Republic, around half (54%) of the total area of the country. There is 0.42ha of agricultural land per one member of the population of the country, 0.3ha of this being arable land (roughly the European average). More than a third of the land of the Czech Republic consists of forestry. Most agricultural land is owned by natural persons and legal entities. Czech and Moravian agriculture can be characterised by the serious fragmentation of land ownership and the large percentage of leased land (circa 85%). The size of business structures differs greatly from the businesses structures in the twenty-eight member states of the European Union. Businesses with more than 50ha of agricultural land occupy 92.2% of the total area of the agricultural land farmed in the Czech Republic. Agricultural production employed approximately 141,000 people in 2004 and this number has been falling steadily. The percentage of workers in agriculture in the overall employment structure of the national economy is therefore 2.9% (eAGRI, 2015b). Nowadays, Czech farmers are showing increasing interest in the production of organic food. By the beginning of 2012 there were already 646 organic food producers registered in the country, along with 3,920 organic farmers working an area of 482,927ha, which represents 11.4% of all agricultural land. Of this, 59,281ha was arable land, 6,453ha plantations, and vineyards accounted for an area of 965ha (eAGRI, 2015a).



Factbox Czech Republic

Number of CSAs?	23
Since when?	2009
National umbrella organisation?	AMPI - Asociace místních potravinových iniciativ (Association of Local Food Initiatives, (www.asociaceampi.cz), which is a non-profit organisation established in 2014 Its main target is to educate adults in the field of environmental aspects of agriculture and food consumption, provide advisory services for farmers and consumers to assist them in setting up local-food initiatives and social enterprises, promote local food alternatives and to perform research and study activities in the field of sustainable farming and local food systems
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	Concerning the number of consumers involved in these 23 CSAs in the Czech Republic, there are approx. 600 members (usually families) involved; which can mean around 1,400 people in total fed by CSAs

History and characteristics of CSA

The results of this chapter are based on The Census run by the CSA Research Group of Urgenci in 2015 and the online survey distributed by AMPI to CSA members between November 2014 and October 2015. As of 2015, there are 23 known CSA schemes or initiatives in the Czech Republic, though only 18 CSA representatives (78%) answered the online survey questionnaire, The Census, by the CSA Research Group.

The development of CSAs in the Czech Republic started recently, the first CSA was established in 2009, CSA Toulcův dvůr. The information about CSA and its systematic dissemination is due to Jan Valeška, the founder of the non-profit organisation PRO-BIO LIGA in 2002 (http://biospotrebitel.cz/chci-znat-bio/pro-bio-liga). The development of CSAs was not rapid according to the responses to this census, because, in the following years (2010, 2011) only one new CSA was established each year. From 2012, the growth was noticeable – in 2012 and 2014: 3 new CSAs, in 2013 there were as many as 4 newly established CSAs. In 2015, there are another 5 new CSAs. CSAs are unevenly distributed within the country, they are particularly concentrated in big cities such as Prague and Brno (see map CZ1). The majority of CSAs belonged to the informal network of local food initiatives, although a formal network of CSA was established in 2015 due to the activities of AMPI. Therefore, all established CSAs can apply to be part of this network from 2016.

Defining characteristics

In the Czech Republic, CSA is understood to be the mutual relationship between consumers and producers of food, who commonly share rich or poor yields alike. A direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers is recognised by 15 respondents from the Urgenci census. 14 respondents out of 18 CSAs claimed that shared risk within CSA is an important part of the commitment with the farmer. Moreover, 16 respondents answered that shared responsibilities of farming or delivery activities are relevant for their CSAs. On the other hand, only 7 respondents recognised shared rewards of farming activities as part of their CSA. It can be connected with the distribution methods of products used in the Czech Republic. Most products are delivered by farmers to collection points which are usually in the cities (16 CSAs). Only 2 CSAs have a self-harvesting method or 5 CSAs offer pick-up at the farm.

Are there different types of CSA?

Community subscriber groups

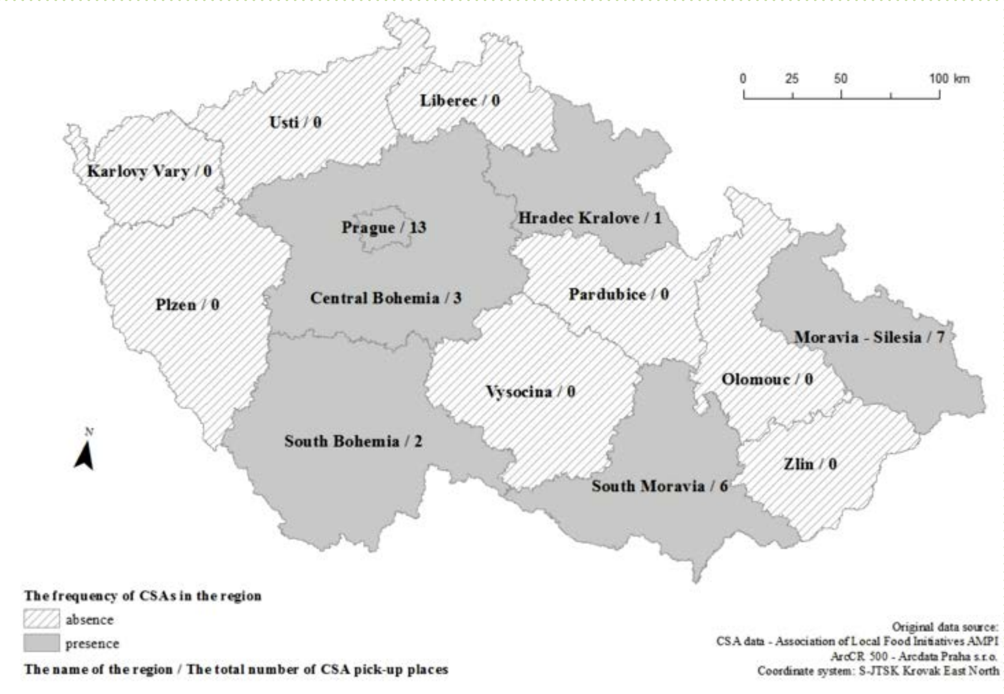
The majority of the CSAs (12 initiatives) act as a community subscriber group in the Czech Republic. This category is described as a group of consumers commiting to an existing farm for a specified period of time. Consumers usually commit to a subscription by season (whole or a half season) and pay in advance for the membership (usually in instalments). Members are responsible for organising the administration of the group and location for distribution. Farming is the sole responsibility of the farmer who is an entrepreneur selling his produce to members. Risks and rewards are shared to a certain degree as consumers usually agree to receive shares based on output (smaller/no shares in emergency cases).

Community shared farms

Community shared farms (5 initiatives) are a type of CSA organised by a community or non-governmental organisation (NGO) which hires a farmer to manage the cultivation on land which is owned or rented by the enterprise. All costs and benefits (such as produce) are divided among members. The farmer is usually both a member and employee who is often solely responsible for production and farm operations (including volunteer organisation). Risks and rewards are shared fully.

Subscription CSA

Another type of CSA (6 initiatives) are a Subscription CSA group. The farmer offers his produce and consumers



CZ1: Map showing the distribution of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives in 2015. Name of the region / The total number of CSA pick-up places (Krcilková at al., 2015)

subscribe for shares during a whole season for a discounted price. Deliveries and the outlet for distribution are organised by the farmer. There is no risk or reward sharing. Moreover, no commitment apart from advance payment and subscription for the entire season is required from the subscribers. This type of CSA can encounter problems if community involvement is not strong.

Legal setup

These different types of CSAs are closely connected in terms of the legal form of CSA in the Czech Republic. 11 CSAs have written formal agreements and 7 CSAs have only an informal agreement.

Involvement of the eaters

CSAs offer an opportunity for community members to build a closer relationship with the farmer and potentially with other members. Many CSAs also include elements such as social events and opportunities to work on the farm. In the Czech Republic, the option for participatory involvement in community activities is important for 35% of respondents (Krčílková at al., 2015). According to the The Census, members involved with CSAs in the Czech Republic are mostly doing administration or organisation (16 CSAs). Members helped to grow produce in only 5 CSAs, although 9 CSAs claim that members help to pack produce. In 6 CSAs, members are involved in decision-making but members invest their money into the development of the farm in only 2 CSAs. Lang (2010) suggests that members of CSAs are more interested in the theoretical aspect of community and commitment within the CSA rather than the practical involvement; therefore, their rate of actual involvement in local community issues is often low. The level of desire for community involvement varies significantly among members. For CSA farmers this means that they should not judge the success of their CSA by how often or how many of their members are actively involved with the operations. Farmers should recognise that different members have different needs (Zepeda et al., 2013). Some members would rather pay a little more money per share in order to have fewer, if any, farm-related responsibilities (Lang, 2010).

Type of produce

Most of the products are fruit and vegetables therefore the area for this produce is equal to the total area used for CSA. None of CSAs produce meat. Only 1 CSA offers dairy, bread or honey, 5 CSAs provides eggs.

Note

We should be aware that the information about the income and the amount of land is approximate as very often the representatives of CSAs who answered The Census are not farmers and do not know the exact numbers which they confirmed in The Census questionnaire therefore it is necessary to continue the questionnaire process with further research.

Land ownership

Land tenure security is also an important issue connected with CSAs. The land is mostly owned by the farmer in the Czech Republic (8 CSAs), the land of 4 CSAs is rented by the farmer from private land owners and only 2 CSAs are rented by all members. Most of the CSAs were already established farms which separated part of its production for CSA products.

The range of the total farm area is between 1ha and 80ha. The average is around 3–5ha. The total area used for the products of CSA is around 1–3ha.

Labour and income

CSAs are mostly run by a farmer (10 CSAs) with a family (9 CSAs). 12 CSAs use seasonal workers or wwoofers (3 CSAs). Only 5 CSAs confirmed that their members help with work at the farm. Only 2 farmers are employed by the CSA. The rest of the farmers (16 CSAs) are not employed by the CSA. Only 1 CSA farmer confirmed that the income is 100% covered by CSA. Most of CSA (9) income is up to 25% of all farm income.

The rest of farms have another income other than from CSA commitment. 8 farmers supplement the income with subsidies, 10 of them have other distribution channels and 4 of them have another job.

Agroecological practices

Most of the CSAs (14 farms) are certified organic (1 of them is biodynamic with organic certification), the rest are without certification but they do at least follow the main targets of CSA in the Czech Republic which are connected with local food production and consumption, support of environmental friendly ways of cultivating land, cooperation among people and cultivating the affinity to food. The most common response for member incentives in joining a CSA in the Czech Republic is the ability to access healthy, fresh, nutritious and organic food. The study results support the assumption that CSAs are favoured by people who have sufficiently strong preferences for local food and financial resilience to withstand the associated costs. One third of respondents to The Census expressed concern about the safety and reliability of the food supply; they want to know where their food comes from, who produced it and what agricultural methods have been used. Another common driver for CSA membership is awareness of seasonality – the idea that one should eat not only locally, but also what is in season (Krčílková at al., 2015).

The concept of agroecology is not common in CSAs around the Czech Republic but the umbrella organisation AMPI is helping to spread the knowledge about agroecological principles not only among farmers and consumers, but also among the vast public using seminars, newsletters and other channels to share information. The AMPI embraced the principles from the Nyéléni Declaration for agroecology in its charter.

Outlook

The awareness about CSAs among the Czech population is increasing as not only non-profit organisations and activists but also the media has started paying attention and seeking new approaches to sustainable food production. Community members came up with the idea of starting CSAs in the Czech Republic in nine cases compared with the farmers themselves in only two cases. Another common way to set up a new CSA is the mutual idea of the farmer and the consumers (6 cases). In order to understand the background of members' motivations to be part of CSA in the Czech Republic, Krčílková at al. (2015) analysed the demographic characteristics of the respondents from the online survey distributed by AMPI to CSA members between November 2014 and October 2015. Among them, women represent a slight majority (66%). If we consider the average age, the respondents tended to be young, 80% were in the range of 26–40 years old. 55% of respondents have children living with them at home. Interestingly, all respondents have at least high school education and 81% of them have a university degree. This suggests that members of these CSAs tend to be a highly educated part of the population with a higher income. The members' primary motives for joining a CSA in the Czech Republic were (1) the access to high quality fresh food and (2) the opportunity to support local farmers. The downsides perceived by the majority of CSA members in the Czech Republic were found to be lack of choice and dysfunctional community.

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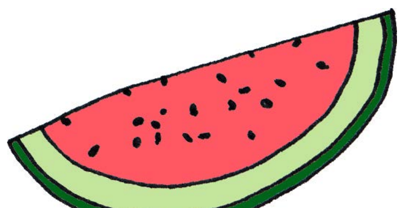
Vratislava Janovská is a researcher working at the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague. She holds a master's degree in Applied Ecology and is a PhD candidate in Landscape Ecology, writing her final thesis on the topic 'The causes and consequences of farmland fragmentation'. She is interested in agricultural landscape structures, land tenure security and access to land, especially how is it all connected with small local initiatives such as CSA. Since January 2015, she is a coordinator of CSA CooLAND (www.cooland.cz) as she believes that the connection among the researchers, farmers, public and other stakeholders is the best way to learn from each other. She is a member of the national network for CSA in the Czech Republic – AMPI (http://asociaceampi.cz).



Finland

Noel Bruder

Native name

Kumppanuusmaatalous (partnership agriculture)

Country context

Agricultural information

Finland is one of the most northerly agricultural countries in the world. It has an area of nearly 400,000km^2 and a population of around 5.4 million. Despite the harsh climatic conditions and generally poor soils, it manages to be self-reliant in basic foodstuffs. It is still a substantially under-developed landscape: 95% is rural and 86% is forest. About one third of the population live in rural areas and there is still quite a strong connection to the land.

7.6% of the land area is in agricultural use. Up until the 1970s, Finland was still a largely agrarian country. The family-farm model still predominates, with an average farm size of 39ha. A typical farm also includes a large forest area. 80% of agricultural land is used for pasture or for arable fodder crops. The horticulture area is 16,000ha.

About 9% of farmland is organic, comprising 200,000ha and 4,300 farms. The organic movement began in the 1910s with a biodynamic influence but didn't really take off until the early 1990s when improved government supports were introduced. There is a high production of cereals, especially oats, and also a significant wild product (especially forest berries) component.

The market share for organics is about 2% and rising. Over 80% of this is sold through mainstream supermarkets. The current Government goal is to have 20% of produce organic by 2020, but this is quite optimistic.

History and characteristics of CSA

The first initiative was in Helsinki in 2011, inspired by an Urgenci presentation and the AMAP model. This was established alongside an existing food coop and adopted the same kinds of methods and structure. A few similar, cooperative-style, schemes have appeared around the country but not all still survive. There are also a number of farmer-led schemes, mostly still in the early stages or with small-scale CSA activity alongside other sales. The largest CSA has around 200 members and the average is around 50.

The Finnish Organic Association, Luomuliitto, has a role to promote CSA, particularly for producers. Otherwise, the scheme in Helsinki has been a bit of a "godmother" for other initiatives. There is currently no national network and only informal sharing or cooperation between schemes. We hope to generate interest in setting up a national network as a result of this survey work. There are no particular government supports or policies relating to CSA, though some general incentives and grants promoting organic production and, in some cases, to support employment and training, are utilised. In the main, I would say that the level of activity is simply too small at the moment for it to be noticed.

A particular feature in Finland has been the cooperative nature of initiatives. Five of the eight initiatives surveyed by The Census had been established by members and were managed largely on a cooperative basis. Not surprisingly, these places incorporated most of the elements in the CSA definition, to do with shared risk and that members are involved in a whole range of activities. This has also meant that most growers are employed, either full-time or part-time/seasonally, and that land is rented. Where land is rented it is, of course, used exclusively for the CSA. Farm-based schemes used as little as 1/80th of the land for CSA and this indicates that this is one among many marketing options. Only one place, a coop-type, said that 100% of the grower's income came from the CSA. Most schemes relied on informal agreements and likewise most are organic but not certified, indicating a high level of trust.

The number of people being fed through CSA is difficult to say based on the results on The Census because respondents clearly approached this differently. Some gave number of members, some probable numbers supplied with some proportion of their food, though in some cases this might be only one or two products. What is useful to know is that there are around 500 members or shareholders and a typical share in Finland will provide for an average family for about half the year. The season is short and there is very little activity in the Winter. One place specialises in apple production and another in meat and eggs, but everywhere else produces at least vegetables, with a few also supplying fruit and a limited amount of other produce (dairy, beans and mushrooms mentioned).

The main distribution method is "pick-up from the farm" but most places offered a few options, including collection points and self-harvesting.

Factbox Finland

Number of CSAs?	8–10 active CSAs
Since when?	2011
National umbrella organisation?	none
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	Approx. 1,500–2,000 people for the growing season (half a year)

Special mention should be made of a CSA-related scheme called REKO. This was also inspired by the example of AMAPs in France and has as an aim to bring producers and consumers together. It operates as a series of self-managed Facebook groups, whereby orders are placed online and delivered at the equivalent of a country market. There is no particular oversight of the schemes and the proportion of food that is organic or ethical depends on the supply and demand. The original inspiration was also to have more CSA-type shared responsibility but this quickly fell away as things developed. REKO has had phenomenal growth, 700% this year alone. There are now reckoned to be 1,000 schemes with 100,000 members.

CSA farm Lasilla. Finland.

Agroecological practices

All but one initiative listed themselves as applying agroecological methods. As mentioned above, the majority are organic but not certified and a couple of places apply biodynamic methods. Other than this, the main emphasis in production seems to be on quality.

Rather surprisingly, given the cooperative nature of the majority of enterprises, shared responsibility was only highlighted in two places. This is despite most indicating that members are involved in administration and decision-making. Less ambiguously, nearly everywhere highlighted the social aspect of members' involvement. This was not a focus of The Census and I think it would warrant closer inspection. To what degree are these initiatives community building exercises? I would guess this is a significant element for many.

More broadly, agroecology is not a very prominent theme in Finland and even less so the holistic definition applied in the Food Sovereignty Movement.

Outlook

Finland is not a typical Scandinavian-style "green" society. Innovations, alternative markets and institutional supports are not generally well-developed for agroecology in general or CSA in particular. Thus far, CSA activity has been centered around a few bigger towns and the Helsinki region in particular. This is where the particular kind of people who have the interest and will to get involved more are clustered. But even saying this, there were two schemes in Finland's second biggest city, Tampere, and both seem to have folded within a couple of years. So, the foothold that CSA has needs developing if any kind of broader movement is to flourish.

A clear area for development, mirroring experience elsewhere, would be for more existing farmers to adopt CSA. This is being promoted by the Organic Association. I can imagine that if there were more incentives in this direction, there could be considerable growth. Finland's environment is still relatively pristine and there must be real opportunities to market this more.

The experience with REKO shows the demand for alternative food sources and, perhaps, the preference to remain as customers rather than as activists in more participative models. Research in the USA, where CSA became established in the 1980s, shows that the preferred model is a subscription-based one, with little or no involvement by the members. This would be a lost opportunity, in my opinion, because the unique characteristics of CSA lie in the reciprocal relationships that it engenders and in the members' direct involvement in the most fundamental human activity of food growing.

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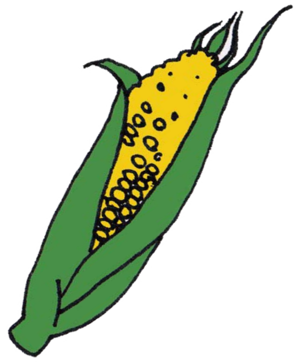
Author

Noel Bruder is one of the founders – and currently the gardener – of a biodynamic CSA cooperative in Finland which has just completed its third season. Previously, Noel lived for 15 years in Camphill communities both in Finland and in Ireland, his native country. In Ireland, Noel was a gardener, farmer, craft worker and social therapist. Prior to that, he worked in researching and lecturing on environmental management. He is just starting a PhD research project on CSA and sustainability transformations.

France

Jocelyn Parot



Native name

AMAP – Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne (Association for Maintaining Small Scale Family Farming, sometimes also literally translated as Peasant Agriculture)

Common definition

It is generally agreed in France that CSA coincides with AMAP. AMAP stands for Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne (association for maintaining small-scale family farming). The original idea was to make it possible for smallholders to keep their business alive through strong support from consumers' groups.

Risk sharing is the key to the AMAP model. In the AMAP model, a written contract is signed by each producer and each consumer for a duration of several months or one year. The other way in which "risk sharing" is put into practice is the pre-payment system, enabled by the use of "*chèques*", which makes it possible for each producer to get secured monthly payment from the consumers.

Do you have a national charter?

There is a national charter for CSAs in France. The first version was written in 2003 by the AMAP pioneers from AMAP-Provence, the first regional network to be established in the country. Thus AMAP is considered a brand, registered at the National Institute of Intellectual Property, and the brand can only be used on condition of compliance with the Charter. The Charter has just been revised during a long, two-year comprehensive consultative process that ended in December 2014. The mobilisation on the field was quite encouraging, and workshops took place basically everywhere in France. Twenty-seven local and regional AMAP networks participated through a general questionnaire focusing on potential modifications. Moreover, fifty-seven isolated AMAP (which were not network members) replied during the first year of the process. There are important differences regarding the representativeness of these contributions. On the one hand, some networks made a single, but very representative, contribution. For example, in the Département of Isère, only thirty AMAP had been consulted during four inter-AMAP meetings held in different geographical sectors. Similarly, in Picardie, up to seventeen different AMAP had been taking part in three debates organised during winter 2012/2013 before the questionnaire was disseminated to the whole network and was then summarised. Other networks can hardly claim the same degree of representation. This is a report from Bretagne about the Charter rewriting process: "After soliciting forty-nine AMAP in two départements – just one feedback. Organisation of an inter-amap meeting, with people representing six AMAP from the Rennes area, including two producers. Proposals were sent to the AMAPs on the territory for information and comments". Any claim to fair representation can always be challenged. However, in the French case, the efforts deployed to revise the Charter during a long, participatory process clearly indicates a collective will to position itself as a movement of citizens and not just an operation of fresh organic boxes.

Country context

General information

France is a country of 66 million inhabitants, who live on approximately 550,000 km^2 (a density of about 115 people per km^2). Agriculture has enjoyed a very positive perception in French society until the last decades, when the negative outputs of industrial farming started to be pointed out. The Méline laws, passed at the turn of the twentieth century to protect French farmers from foreign competition, structurally differentiated the French model from the English one for instance. In England, an early decision had been already made during the nineteenth century to focus on industrial development and to feed factory workers with imported food (for example, lamb from New Zealand).

Factbox France

Number of CSAs?	2,000 AMAP groups (increased from 1,334 in 2011) according to the newest census conducted in 2015 by the Inter-regional Movement
Since when?	The first AMAP was set up in 2001
National umbrella organisation?	Since 2010, an "Inter-regional Movement of AMAP", composed of the regional AMAP networks, covers the major part of the national territory. It is the result of a long process, led by the three main regional networks, including the first which was established in the Provence region
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	In 2011, the ADEME, the National Sustainable Development and Energy Agency conducted a national poll that stated that up to 6% of the national population have been "doing AMAP" at some point. This means there are up to 4 million Frenchmen and women have experienced AMAP during the last twelve years. A still-unreleased census conducted in 2015 by Miramap estimates the number of existing AMAP at 2,000+. This would represent around 320,000 mangeurs (eaters) or consom'acteurs (conscious consumers) and approximately 3,500 farms. The increase since the previous census organised by Miramap in 2011 – which counted 1,335 CSA groups – is quite significant. There are other models that could qualify under the term CSA according to the European standards, like the 120 social integration gardens called "Jardins de Cocagne". The first Jardins de Cocagne were set up in 1991, ten years before AMAP, and now totalling 4,000 socially challenged workers, 20,000 member families or 80,000 eaters. Thus, the cumulated number of CSAs is 3,620 farms and 400,000 eaters in France in 2015.

In France, despite unchanged political discourses on the need to protect farmers, the trend has been, since the Second World War and the European integration process, towards land concentration, reduction of the number of farms and focus on export-oriented monocultural production units. This evolution has been dictated by the industrialisation of food production processes, the decrease of food prices, and the re-orientation of a large part of family incomes towards other mass consumption goods. From around 50% of the share of the family income at the end of the Second World War, the proportion of income spent of food has steadily decreased to a mere 14% share in the 2000s.

Agricultural information

The official figures, even from such a short period as 2010–2013, demonstrate a steep decrease in the number of farms. Whereas the used arable land declined slowly (27,622,527ha in 2013, from 27,712,724ha in 2010), the number of farms is reduced even more dramatically during the same period: from 491,384 to 451,606. The average size of a farm in France in 2013 was 61ha, compared to 55ha only three years earlier. Contrary to Italy, Spain and some other European countries (Romania, Poland), even if the symbolism attached to agriculture is still strong in French society, there is no traditional farming in France anymore, at least not in the sense of subsistence or semi-subsistence family farming. Most of the farms are highly mechanised and growing, and only 3% of the total workforce are employed in agriculture. Only 28.9% of these jobs are held by women.

The share of organic agriculture has been growing on a regular basis since 2008, after a threshold that lasted four or five years in the mid-2000s. In 2014, around 5.6% of farms were certified organic, and about 7% of the jobs in the agricultural sector were provided by organic farms and companies. These ratios should be compared to the 4.14% of the land which has already been converted to organic. Obviously, the organic sector seems to be focusing on smaller farms and to be more labour intensive than the conventional farms. Even more importantly, the amount of purchases of organic products in the public procurement system rose by 11% from 2013 to 2014, which is a sign that the general trend of growth of organic consumption (around +10% each year) is also happening as far as schools and public administration are concerned.

Another striking detail, as we are drawing the landscape of agriculture in France, is to note the close relationship between culture and politics. On the one hand, the term terroir, for example, highlights the existence of artisan food cultures connected to a particular territory, characterised by unique soil composition and climatic conditions. The notion of terroir is thought to have a central role in the worldwide success of French elite products, including wines and cheese.

On the other hand, agriculture in France also has an assertive political dimension. It is no surprise, since France is often considered as the political nation par excellence, where everything turns out to be political. Thus, these two French passions, food and politics, have regularly met in an explosive combination. This was the case, in Summer 2015, when the price paid to industrial pig herders went down so much that many of them faced bankruptcy. However, beside protests, often led by conventional farmers, there has been, since the 1990s, a growing and perhaps more constructive *agriculture paysanne* movement.

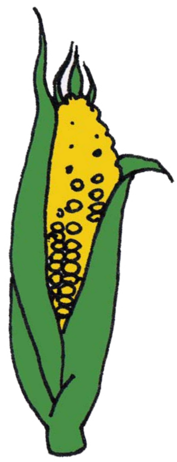
History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

The first AMAP was born from a meeting between a group of militant "eaters" and Daniel Vuillon, a farmer who had seen a CSA pick-up while visiting family in New York. Together, they decided to launch a similar initiative and were very successful in spreading the world. The context of the original partnership should be underlined: the farmer shared the idea with an Attac-group in a period when Malbouffe, the French word for Trash Food, was a top issue for almost all French citizens. This campaign culminated when José Bové and several fellows dismantled a McDonald's in Southern France in 1999. That was less than two years before the first AMAP distributions took place, 10th May 2001.

The birth of the AMAP movement, and its exponential growth during the years 2001–2008, should be understood as the confluence between two movements: the agriculture paysanne (peasant agriculture) movement on the farmers' side, and the critical consumption movement on the consumers' side.

Agriculture paysanne, the concept AMAP refers to, would literally translate into peasant agriculture. As in English, the word paysan used to be extremely pejorative, a synonym for dirty, without manners, uneducated, uncultivated... But a movement of small-scale family farmers, in the 1990s, decided to use it to qualify the type of agriculture they were claiming to do: an environmentally friendly agriculture, also respectful of local cultures, landscapes and of the social conditions of all farm workers. In fact, the key element enclosed in the concept of agriculture paysanne is the autonomy of the farmer within the food production and distribution channels. Instead of being just one link in the chain, specialised in just one type of production (monoculture), the paysan is someone who has control over his model of production from the seeds to the marketing scheme.



Since 1998, when the term agriculture paysanne was registered as a brand, it has been widely used in France by the alternative farmers' union called Confédération Paysanne. It has travelled and has met similar concepts in other countries in the frame of La Via Campesina, the international federation of family farmers' unions, by all the actors of the Food Sovereignty Movement. Food Sovereignty, the "right for people to decide how the food they consume is produced and distributed", combines very well with the objective of regaining autonomy in a context of food and agricultural crisis.

Both the concept of Food Sovereignty, as defined above, and agriculture paysanne underline the need to question the relationship between the farmer and the society. Paysan comes indeed from pays (country) in this case the area where the farmer is from, and the territory upon which his activity impacts.

The second strand in the formation of AMAP is the responsible consumption movement. Attac members played an important role in providing a core group of militants to the first AMAP groups. Attac was founded in 1998 in France as a movement advocating the implementation of a Tobin tax on financial transactions, and quickly became a major anti-capitalist organisation. Within a couple of years, its membership figures became even bigger than some secondary political parties. Led by intellectuals and academics, it bore a radical critique of consumerism and called for actions by "consom'acteurs" (consum'actors), through boycotting and choosing ethical products. Attac members gave the first AMAP groups a militant structure and a voice in the media. Yet, Attac can't claim the exclusive paternity of AMAP. Indeed, there were many more reasons driving the consumers towards the first AMAP pick-up points. I will point out the two most visible reasons here. One of them was the consciousness that farming was going through dramatic times in France, with a reduction in the number of farms from around one million in the 1980s to less than 600,000 in the early 2000s. Another significant reason was, as in any country where the movement grew strong, the distrust towards the agrifood industries following the Mad Cow Disease and several other food-safety issues. The environmentalist component of the movement should, of course, not be neglected.

What is understood by CSA?

CSA is almost always understood as an English translation for AMAP. AMAP is a local and solidarity-based partnership between a producer and some consumers.

AMAP is indeed an association (and not a business) that supports the relationship between a consumer group and a local producer. These two parts, the producer and each consumer, are linked through a written contract-based direct-selling system. The idea is to make sure the farm relies on guaranteed incomes that will keep providing a sound ground for at least the next year.

Are there different types of CSA?

AMAP is the most widespread model, but there are other models which could be called CSA. For example, the 100 Cockaigne Gardens – social integration gardens – have been functioning with a membership and commitment system since 1991, ten years before AMAP.

Yet, we decided to focus on the AMAP model, because this movement is the most visible and has been able to spread in the most successful way.

Legal setup and interaction with public bodies

In March 2012, AMAP surprisingly came under the political limelight: they were the subject of a question to the government, asked by two deputies from the opposition. In military language, these questions would be called “friendly fire”. On 13th March, deputy Gille explained in front of his peers that the proclaimed governmental support to short-supply chains was not effectively being implemented through an appropriate legislation; on 20th March, another deputy, Jack Lang, took up the topic in a similar way. The purpose of these interventions was mainly to push for a derogatory tax exemption for AMAP. The driving forces behind these initiatives are difficult to map. But one could think that the deputies had been invited to act in this way by short-supply chain intermediaries claiming to do AMAP, although not strictly following the AMAP Charter.

AMAP as an association supports the relationship between a consumers’ group and a local producer but the transactions are conducted directly between them. There is no cash flow through AMAP. It is therefore quite difficult to understand how AMAP itself could be subject to taxation.

The Government brought up an answer in a very short timespan, on 17th April. The answer first includes a reminder of the association’s fiscal regime. Then comes a general definition:

> *"The Associations pour le Maintien d’une Agriculture Paysanne (AMAP) have been designed to create a direct link between a producer and some consumers, who commit themselves to buy his production at a fair price allowing the producer to cover his production costs and to generate an income, while remaining accessible to consumers“*

But the most surprising and thus interesting part was the following:

> *"An AMAP that guarantees to a professional the sale of his production through connecting (even without commission) the members to the producer, contributes to the economic development of the farm. The AMAP activity is thus considered to be profitable and should be subject to commercial taxes.“*

This exchange in the parliament fostered a controversy: are AMAP “business as usual” or associative not-for-profit structures run by self-organised citizens with the objective of serving the general interest?

The national AMAP network, Miramap, reacted with a press release, which stressed the notion of general interest and claimed to be a social movement.

Commitment of the eaters

The major aspiration to be a social movement is reflected in a whole set of practices implemented everyday by stakeholders to “do amap” (“faire de l’amap” as the amapians themselves are used to saying). If we compile CSA kits and internal organisational CSA documents in France, it seems the following tasks have been commonly identified as key aspects of collectively running an AMAP or a CSA: pick-up-point management (cleaning, opening, etc.); diversification of products available and farms engaged; communication, especially between the consumers and the farm; member recruitment; collection of contracts and cheques; event planning.

Communication should be understood in two ways. First, it is the work of a Farm Group, which is in charge of following and understanding the evolution of the farm, updating the group and supporting (if needed) the farmer in explaining his own farm dynamics to the consumers, through regular farm visits for example.

But communication is also about enhancing the fun of doing CSA, through recipe-sharing, short newsletters, websites/ blogs. These communication efforts are then targeted both at current and potential members, thus contributing to member recruitment.

Besides this information channel, a well-functioning CSA also requires members to take an active part in regular events. Even if only an active minority of CSA subscribers, often called the Core Group (le noyau in French), are taking part on a regular basis, they are very important in drawing a difference between non-CSA models and in feeding the process of collective choice-building.

Organic certification

According to regional network’s own accounts, approximately half of the AMAP producers in France have organic certification for all or part of their production. The fact is that the Charter (written in 2003, extensively revised in 2014) does prohibit the use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers but doesn’t require organic certification for AMAP. Since the very beginning of the first initiatives (the idea of CSA was brought back from the US by a non-certified organic farmer, who nevertheless worked in an organic way), there has been a continuous and structured debate within the movement to define if organic certification should be required. The only consensual answer until now has been to avoid this requirement by enhancing the need for Participatory Guarantee Systems as an alternative to third-party certification. The rationale is that PGS could be more adapted to the specificities of the AMAP model and could frame the improvement of practices on AMAP farms. For example, through PGS, the consumer group practices could also be scrutinised, as well as the social conditions on the farm (situation of farm workers), whereas the organic certification is only looking at the technicalities of agricultural practices.

Agroecological practices

The rewritten AMAP charter was adopted in December 2014 by an assembly of representatives from all parts of France. In this new text, a whole paragraph is devoted to agroecological practices. It says that "AMAP supports an agriculture that is respectful of human beings, the environment and animals, and refers to the fundamental principles of organic agriculture. In particular, it commits to a way of farming that:

- is sustainable, diversified and adapted to the territory, independent from agro-chemicals and from all attempts to grab the living (GMO for example);
- enhances vegetal and animal biodiversity;
- contributes to maintaining and developing farmers' seeds.

The Preamble explicitly refers to the loss of peasant agriculture know-how. As explained earlier, agriculture paysanne is the pillar of the AMAP model and the key concept within the AMAP charter. Agriculture paysanne is referred to in the preamble and then briefly defined through five fundamental principles:

- support the sustainability and the installation of new farms;
- foster autonomy in the way farms are functioning;
- work towards territory- and solidarity-based dynamics;
- support the economic sustainability of partnering farms;
- care about the social conditions of the farming activity.

Outlook

The French CSA movement is at the crossroads of several issues, including environmental and food-safety issues. It is also a reaction to a situation where large-scale retail companies have been dominating the food chains for so long. In a way, AMAP is one more expression of a double French passion for food and politics.

But finding the right balance between both aspects can sometimes be challenging. In particular, since 2011, the Miramap leaders have been trying to reinforce the social movement dimension of AMAP groups. Indeed, even if there is widespread knowledge about the political dimension (not in a partisan but rather in a societal sense) of AMAP engagement, there are also many cases of purely business-driven initiatives claiming to be AMAP. For this reason, the AMAP networks have been increasingly working on communication and pedagogical tools, include Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), to reassert the call for social change originally delivered by AMAP, and to make sure that everyday practices are oriented towards this social change. This clarification effort is necessary if AMAP are planning to keep away from commercial initiatives and reassert themselves as a social movement.

Author

Jocelyn Parot is General Secretary of Urgenci, also co-author and editor of several books on CSA in Europe published by Urgenci (Kernel Editions): The European Handbook on CSA (2013); Les systèmes alimentaires alternatifs: études de cas (2015); Training in Alternative Food Distribution Systems (AFDS): Regional logistics (2015).

Germany

Katharina Kraiß, Sara Meißner

Native name

Solidarische Landwirtschaft (solidarity based agriculture)

Common definition

According to the preamble of the statutes of the German national network:

"Solidarity based agriculture/ farming together (on a voluntary basis) as producers and consumers ...

... means sharing the risks and responsibilities of farming;

... means organizing economic processes on the basis of solidarity and mutual trust;

... means agreeing on the standard according to which the farming is done (and the size of the farming operation) and on the costs of agricultural production, including an appropriate level of pay for the farmers and farm workers. All the costs are covered by the members;

... creates a reliable relationship between the producers and the consumers, involving a long-term and binding commitment;

... creates freedom from economic coercion in agricultural production; leads to genuine food sovereignty;

... is beneficial for the health of soils, water bodies, plants, animals and people and promotes their wellbeing and development; and

... promotes a spirit of internationalism and understanding among nations."

Country context

General information

In Germany, approximately 81 million people live on an area of 360,000km² (about 227 people per km²). Both expenditures for food and profits of agriculture have changed considerably in the last decades: consumers have been spending an ever smaller part of their incomes on food. On average, in 2013, people in Germany spent 10.4% of their incomes (€2,700 per month and household) on food and non-alcoholic beverages (a sharp drop from 43% in 1950 and 25% in 1970) (Statista, 2015). At the same time, farmers' revenues accounted for 25.4% of consumer expenditures for food of domestic origin (compared to 48% in the early 1970s). In the case of milk and dairy products the figure stood at 45% in 2013 and at 26% for meat and meat products. The lowest rate (5%) prevails in the case of bread-grains and bread-grain products (Bauernverband, 2015a). In contrast to these figures, in CSAs, all the money spent on food goes directly into agriculture.

Agricultural information

In 2012, 16.7 million hectares in Germany were used for agriculture (Bauernverband, 2015b). Of this, 71% is arable land, 27.8% meadow and pastures, and 1.2% permanent crops. The average farm size is 58.6ha. 23,000 farms (8.2% of the total number of farms) and an area of approximately 1 million hectares (6.4% of the total agricultural area) was under organic agriculture in 2014 (Bauernverband, 2015c).

The average area required to feed a person with organic food is approximately a quarter of a hectare. On one hectare, the vegetables for about 100 people can be produced.

In 2013, about 1 million people in Germany worked in agriculture: approximately 50% of these are from farming families, 200,000 are permanent employees and 314,000 are seasonal workers (Regionalwert AG, 2015).

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

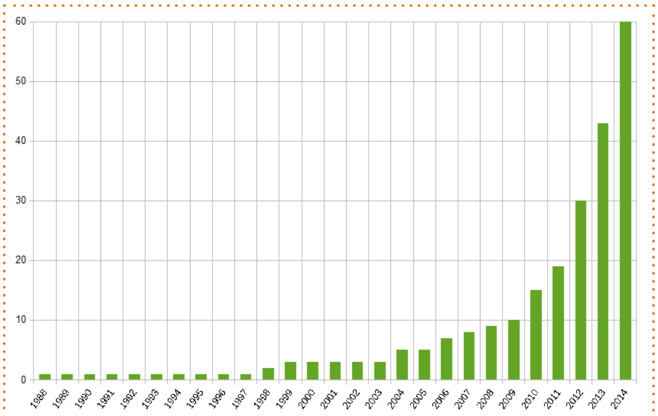
The development of CSAs in Germany started off slowly.

Factbox Germany

Number of CSAs?	92 CSAs (Solawis) and around 100 CSAs in foundation are listed on the national network's homepage
Since when?	The first CSA started in 1988
National umbrella organisation?	Solidarische Landwirtschaft (www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org) founded in 2011
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	According to The Census, the average CSA has 100–120 shares, therefore, as a share is usually divided between 2-3 people, we estimate that a total of 25,000 people in Germany receive food from CSAs

After the foundation of the first CSA, Buschberghof, in 1988, only three further CSAs were set up in the following fifteen years. Between 2003 and 2007, the number doubled to eight CSAs. After this, and with the establishment of a national network, the movement grew very dynamically. Today, approximately 90 CSA farms are operating and another 100 CSAs are in preparation.

See DE1 which shows the dynamic development of the number of CSAs in Germany from 1988 until 2014. See also DE2 which is the responses received from The Census about the formation of new CSAs.



DE1: Growth in the number of CSAs by year

There has been a remarkable and growing interest in CSA from consumers and producers, as well as from the media, science and politics. In many areas, people are looking for serious solutions for a change towards a small-scale, regional agriculture. This challenge has also been recognised in a global report by the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (McIntyre, 2009). In 2009, the first German CSA, Buschberghof, received a national award from the Ministry of Agriculture for the development and successful implementation of its economic system.

Networks

The national CSA network sees itself both as a movement and an association of grassroots democratic organisations. It is a union of individuals and farms working together to promote CSA. Central tasks of the network include offering advice and company to CSA farms, matching consumers and producers, public relations, and the coordinating inquiries from scientists and politicians. In order to exchange experiences and further develop the movement, national meetings are held twice a year. During these meetings, a network council, which represents farms as well as individual members and which takes central decisions, is elected. In order to guarantee a strong link with farming realities, at least half of the council consists of representatives of farms. The council itself elects a coordination body which meets for a telephone conference twice monthly to discuss important decisions and queries to the network. Thematic working groups and regional groups also exist and are represented in the council.

Most of the work done by the network takes place on a voluntary basis. Bigger tasks are carried out by paid network officers. In line with CSA principles, their budget is covered by membership contributions. Around half of the German CSA projects which responded to The Census are members of the national network (see DE3).

For more information on the role of the German CSA Network, see the section under the heading 'Agroecological practices'.

DE2:

2010	1
2011	1
2012	9
2013	5
2014	12
2015	7
TOTAL	35

DE3:

Urgenci	1
National networks	20
None	13
Other	1
TOTAL	35

DE2: Foundation of new CSAs in Germany indicated by responses to The Census

DE3: Membership of networks

What is understood by CSA?

The definition given before according to the charter of the national CSA network is not a final version but a working definition. However it gives a good overview of the defining elements of CSA in Germany. Risk sharing is a central defining aspect of Solawi/CSA. It means for instance that if the harvest is bad or lost, because of factors the farmer cannot influence (e.g. weather), members will pay their contributions anyway.

The definition used for The Census was:

> *"CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared, through long-term formal or informal shared agreement. Generally operating on small-scale, CSAs aim at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way."*

Most of the criteria given in this definition can be found in the 35 German CSAs who took part in The Census (see DE4).

DE4: CSA characteristics

Direct partnership	28
Shared risks	29
Shared rewards	30
Shared responsbility	13
Long-term agreement	17
Formal or informal contract	28
Aiming at providing quality food	31
Production in an agroecological way	30
TOTAL	35

Are there different types of CSA?

Generally, the following types of CSA can be distinguished:

- A farm or market garden is linked with a group of members (we don't like the expressions "consumers" or "clients", because for us, they do not capture the spirit of CSA)
- Several farms or market gardens are linked with one group of members to provide a full supply of food.

Creation and origin

Some general differences can be observed between CSAs founded by farmers/gardeners and those founded by members. The CSA Census shows that most German CSAs were founded by one of these groups. Only few are set up by both – farmers and consumers together or other groups, for example, a student initiative.

Legal setup

The different founding conditions, motivations and requirements of the CSAs are reflected in a variety of legal forms.

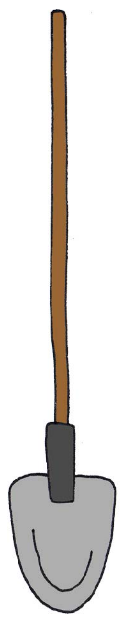
The choice of a specific legal form depends on the interests, ideas and aims of the participants. Often, there is a legal separation between different functional areas such as ownership (of the farm, the land, the tools, etc.), the agricultural holding and practice, and the cooperation with the group of members (financing and consumption).

The choice of the legal form influences areas like: liability and financial risks (working capital, accident insurance); social security of the farmers (illness, pension), the form of employment (self-employment or salary), structures for decision-taking and control, possibilities of getting further financing, long-term perspectives and administration. Legal forms are kept as simple and unbureaucratic as possible.

In Germany, agreements are usually written contracts. However, some groups work with informal agreements.

Interaction with public bodies

Like all farms, CSAs operate within the legal framework of the country. As a new type of farm, they are sometimes confronted with the fact that public bodies can't place them within any existing general economic framework. In most cases, those interactions have positive outcomes. In problems arise, an exchange of experiences and contact with the network often helps.



Further details from The Census

35 German CSA activists took part in the European CSA Census; around 30% of the known CSAs in Germany are represented. The tables in this country report show the results of The Census in order to give an overview of the state of the CSA movement in Germany.

Type of produce

According to the CSA Census, almost all German CSAs supply vegetables while some CSAs produce fruit, honey, meat, dairy products, eggs, and bread (see DE5).

DE5: Produce.

Fruit	15
Vegetables	34
Meat	8
Dairy	4
Eggs	7
Bread	5
Honey	10
TOTAL	35

Organic certification

Usually, the CSA farms are certified organic or biodynamic (see DE6). Some are not certified because they don't need the certificate – the members know how they work.

DE6: Organic or biodynamic certification

Certified biodynamic	5
Certified organic	17
Organic methods but not certified	12
TOTAL	34

Distribution method

There are different modes of distributing the products. In most cases, members pick up their products from distribution points or directly from the farm. Few members do self-harvest and almost no German CSA offers home-delivery (see DE7).

DE7: Distribution methods

Home delivery	1
Pick-up at farm	20
Distribution points	31
Self-harvesting	8
TOTAL	35

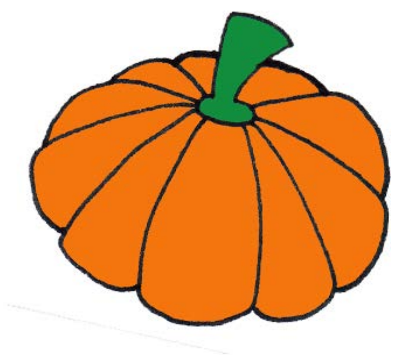
Land ownership

Most commonly, CSA land is part-rented and part-owned by the farmer or completely owned or completely rented by the farmer. However, there is also some CSA land, which is owned by the CSA itself or other non-profit organisation. Moreover, there are efforts to free further land of private ownership (see DE8).

DE8: Who owns the land?

Owned by farmer	9
Part-rented and part-owned by CSA	1
Part-rented and part-owned by farmer	10
Rented by CSA	2
Rented by farmer	8
Other	4
TOTAL	34

According to the CSA Census, the average size of farms that work with CSA schemes was approximately 21ha. An average 38% of this area was used for CSA related production and half of that for vegetable and fruit production.



Labour and income

Many different groups of people work on CSA farms, including farmers, CSA members and seasonal workers (see DE9). Most of the producers are not formally employed (see DE10). Table DE11 shows the range of the percentage of CSA farmers' incomes that derive from the CSAs themselves. Many farmers have other sources of income beside CSA membership fees, such as revenues from other distribution channels, subsidies and other jobs.

DE9: Workers at CSA farms

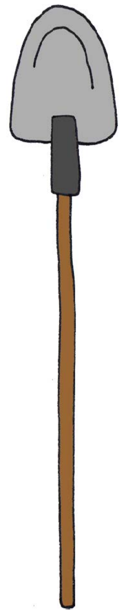
Description	"Yes"
Farmer	18
Farmer and family	8
Farmers' collective	4
Seasonal workers	8
Full-time workers	9
CSA members	20
Wwoofers	1
Other (e.g. interns)	2
TOTAL	35

DE10. Employment of CSA farm workers.

Full-time employed	3
Not employed	24
Part-time employed	4
TOTAL	31

DE11: Percentage of farmers' income from CSA

0–25 %	3
25–50 %	5
50–75 %	6
75–99 %	3
100%	9
TOTAL	26



Involvement of the eaters

In most CSAs, members are involved in activities like deliveries, decision-making or administrative and organisational tasks (see table DE12). The opportunity for CSA members to working on the farms is handled differently from farm to farm. This work mostly takes place on a voluntary basis, however, in some CSAs, farm work is a requirement for members.

DE12: Members' involvement

Buying shares	18
Helping to grow produce	24
Helping to pack/deliver produce	18
Administration/ organisation	20
Decision-making	23
Attending open days/social events	28
Exchanging recipes	21
Investing money in the farm	14
Other	7
TOTAL	35

Agroecological practices

The German CSA network aims to promote CSA in Germany and to contribute to a paradigm change in agriculture.

This aim is put into practice by offering advice and assistance to CSA farms and groups that want to set up a CSA. Moreover, the CSA network makes information available to politicians, scientists, educationalists, and the general public.

The network tries to do as much as possible on a grassroots level. Regular meetings of the network and of regional groups guarantee a horizontal exchange of experiences and support.

With its holistic approach emphasising the maintenance of soil fertility and inclusion of all participants, CSAs promote the local economy. CSAs give people access to and responsibility for the land and true food sovereignty. By caring for and developing the health of soils, water bodies, plants, animals and humans, CSAs serve us all.

Sharing costs, risks, responsibilities, and the harvest among all participants results in relationships of trust between producers and consumers. These relationships are built for the long term and provide sustainable food supply and fair pay.

CSA also contributes to a better understanding between cities and the countryside and strengthens rural areas. The agricultural diversity helps to increase the quality of life in CSA regions. Moreover, regional economic structures are strengthened when the money spent on food stays in the region. Another effect is that farms and the land are protected from market pressures that often result in detrimental agricultural practices.

A direct connection of people with agriculture contributes to an increased consciousness about natural resources. Less food is wasted when products like crooked cucumbers are valued. Plastic waste is also reduced as there is little packaging.

High levels of transparency allow all participants to learn about techniques of agricultural production and caring for the land. This leads to the development of stronger emotional connections to the land which is of particular importance for children. Farmers enjoy their work because they know for whom they do it.

Outlook

Every day, Germany loses several farms. Food has been getting ever-cheaper and the number of farmers declines.

In this context, CSA has become a movement that offers new perspectives to farmers. Quality, sustainability and transparency are gaining importance and a growing number of consumers are willing to pay a fair price for 'ethical food' that is produced regionally under fair conditions and in respect for all life forms.

The perspectives that CSA offers are manifold: the preservation of fertile agricultural soils, the reduction of long transport routes and unnecessary packaging materials and organic production contribute to environmental protection, climate responsibility and biodiversity. In times of ongoing alienation of most people from agriculture, CSA plays an important pedagogic role: CSA farms are places of intergenerational learning.

The term CSA has arrived in the public debate. Now, the central ideas behind the context must be communicated. It is important for both farmers and consumers to free themselves from the prevailing ideas of profit maximisation and to move towards the true costs of covering our needs. This is a process which is going to need time as we (re)build trust and confidence.

A challenge is the great workload for farmers. They need assistance in the conversion of their farm into a CSA. In view of the fast growth of the movement, it is important to build capacities for accompanying and advising new CSA farms. Other important topics that are much discussed are farmers' incomes and access to land

In order for CSA to develop into a real alternative for overall agriculture, the national CSA network has been encouraging CSA initiatives to broaden their range of products through diversification and cooperation with other farms. For instance, vegetable producers could join forces with grain or dairy farms.

Many people see CSA as a necessary part of a transition towards a sustainable agriculture and gain hope for the future from the movement.

Arguably the most important aspect of CSA is stated by Wolfgang Stränz, founding member and long-term treasurer of the first German CSA, Buschberghof:

> *"The growth of community supported agriculture is not so much a question of money as a question of consciousness. There are no limits to the creativity in putting it into practice. The basic requirement is a group of people interested in applying the concept, because the most important capital of a farm are the people around it."*

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Authors

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Sara Meißner is a participant of the German network council. Her focus areas are international exchange, CSA declaration writing process and seeds.

Solawi Kassel. Germany.

Greece

Jenny Gkiougki

Native name

The direct translation of 'Community Supported Agriculture' into Greek is '*Κοινοτικά Υποστηριζόμενη Γεωργία*' but because of Greek language contextual meaning the first word 'community' would be seen to imply Agriculture Supported by the European Economic Community (EEC) and – although this entity has been replaced by the EU – for people unaware of the idea of CSA, '*Κοινότητα*' could be seen to refer to the EU. Hence, some use *Κοινωνικά Υποστηριζόμενη Γεωργία* (Socially Supported Agriculture) instead, which has the same acronym (*ΚΥΓ*). The acronym, *ΚΥΓ*, is pronounced kiy with 'y' as in 'yacht'. The initials *ΚΥΓ* have been used since the 1980s and can be found in literature and research papers until today. People tend to also use the English acronym CSA, whilst most of the initiatives also put '(CSA)' – in Latin letters – next to their names. In Summer 2015, we introduced the term *ΚΥΓεω* – just adding an extra syllable to the existing one, as *ΚΥΓ* does not roll with the tongue. The added syllable made *ΚΥΓεω* (kiyeo – with 'y' as in 'yacht') easier to pronounce and it is now used extensively. One initiative uses the term *ΚΟΣΑΠ* (KOSAP) *Κοινωνικά Στηριζόμενη Αγροτική Παραγωγή* (Socially Backed Agricultural Production). Another project prefers the name *Αλληλέγγυα Αγροτική Οικονομία* (Solidarity Agricultural Economy). During the first Hellenic CSA meeting (27–28 October 2015) it became clear that there is no consensus with regards to the name and different projects use different terms.

Common definition

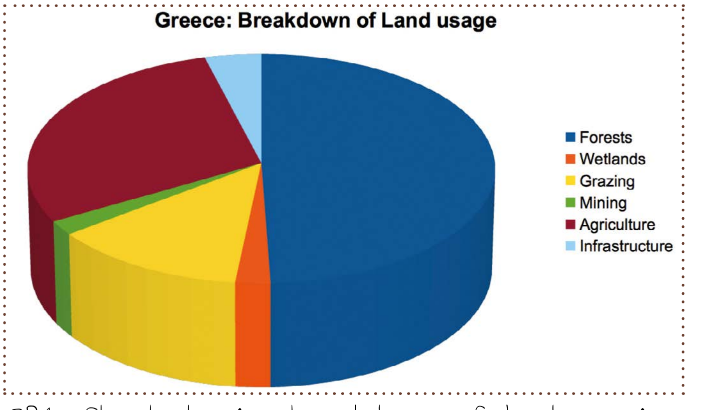
Although projects vary greatly in structure and form, they seem to share the ideals of:

- the production of quality food
- produced in an agroecological way
- a direct relationship between producer and consumer
- abolition of the middlemen
- solidarity
- voluntarism.

Country context

General information

Greece stretches over an area of 132,000km². Its topography is quite particular as it is run through by big mountain ranges and it boasts one of the biggest coastlines (15,000km) and more than 2,500 islands, while almost 20% of its land falls under the protection of natura2000. Population density is 82 people per km². Chart GR1 shows the breakdown of land use.



GR1: Chart showing breakdown of land use in Greece.

Of its almost 11 million inhabitants, 5 million are under the age of 30 and 2.5 million are over 60 years old. Geographically speaking, they are dispersed as follows: almost 4 million live in the greater area of Athens and 1 million in Thessaloniki. 70% live in cities and the rest in villages and towns with less than 50,000 inhabitants.

The effects of the economic crisis (loss of more than 26% of GDP in 5 years) are harsh as depicted in table GR2 where a comparison is made between the current situation and that of the year just prior to the country's loss of sovereignty and inclusion in the IMF.

Other important numbers in understanding the socio-economic situation in Greece are:

- Official Unemployment rate is 26% and youth unemployment is greater than 50% (real figures are higher).

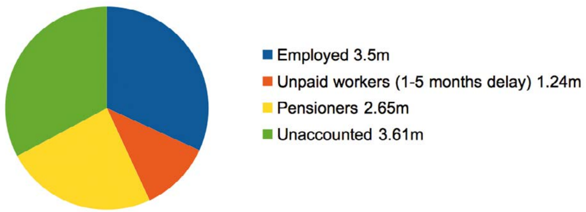
Factbox Greece

Number of CSAs?	7 known initiatives
Since when?	The first CSA started in 1995, the rest after 2010
National umbrella organisation?	There isn't one yet
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	According to the CSA Census and data collected in other ways, the estimation is around 600 shares weekly; if a share feeds 2–4 individuals then, collectively, we are talking about 1,200–2,400 people.

	2014	2008
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	177.6bn€	242.0bn€
GDP per capita	16.250€	21.194€
Net Disposable Income	13.206€	17.854€

GR2: Table demonstrating the effects of the economic crisis.

- Living under poverty line (annual salary of €4,000): 36% – if we took away the small benefits some population groups are getting this number becomes 52%.
- Six out of ten pensioners get less than €700 per month while 45% of pensions are under the poverty line (changes to the health benefits also means they have to pay much more for medical attention and medicine too).
- The workforce breakdown of the population (11 million) is shown in chart GR3.



GR3. Chart showing breakdown of the workforce population (11 million).

- 350,000 homes without a single member of the family working
- Average net salary full-time: €815 per month; part-time: €346 per month
- 7 out of 10 jobs have 'flexible employment' status
- 'Capital Controls' still in effect since end of June 2015
- Suicide rates before the crisis were around 300 per year. For the last five years the collective official number is 5,000 whilst the real number could be more than 15,000 (many suicides are not recorded as such due to religious and social reasons and also due to the state's constant endeavour to paint a brighter picture – like the ban on news of suicides to the media).

Agricultural information

According to the most recent data by Eurostat, Greece's utilised agricultural area (2.8% of EU total) has seen a rise of 22.4% in the decade 2003–2013. The average area per holding has gone up from 4.8 to 6.8 hectares in this period but the number of holdings has seen a 14% fall and is currently at 709,500 individual holdings with 'big farmers' holding roughly 40% of arable land. 4% of agriculture is organic, as opposed to 0.4% in 1998. Of this, almost 60% is olive groves. Agriculture uses up 86% of the country's water resources.

Historically speaking, the end of the feudal system ('*τσιφλίκια*' – tsiflikia), the population exchange and the influx of refugees in 1922 lead to a redistribution of land and the disintegration of traditional, large farmsteads. Today, most farmers do not live on a farm, rather they reside in the village and their plots are often – but not always – at a nearby distance.

This piece of land has sentimental and social value and is seen as the farm family's efforts to secure social reproduction and preserve agricultural identity; of which the land is the symbol (Koutsou et al.). So plots pass on from generation to generation rather than being sold off. Thus, land does not always belong to the person farming it; old folks in the countryside tend to it for the sake of their city-dwelling offsprings and women inherit it from deceased fathers or husbands.

Inclusion in the CAP subsidy system means that in some cases, in order to fit the qualification criteria, farmers cede their land to wives, children or daughters-in-law, creating new holdings that exist only on paper, or that the owner gets the subsidy and the caretaker gets the land rent-free. So, the real number of farms is 14% to 36% less than the registered official data.

Another characteristic is the 'present-absent' farmers (Koutsou et al.) meaning that it is very common to see farmheads having more than one occupations of which farming is not necessarily the biggest earner (pluriactivity); many living and working in cities visit the field sporadically (remote distance farming).

Although on paper there seems to be a 'feminisation' of agriculture, a very limited number of farms are actually run by women, and a significant proportion of farm heads are pensioners. Age breakdown of Greek farmers: <35 5.2%, 35–44 14.7%, 45–54 23.9%, 55–64 24.9%, >65 31.3%

Climate change also affects farmlands as, especially in the south and on many of the islands, there are areas that do not see a drop of rain for the whole summer, with floods and soil erosion being an issue, while in heavily farmed areas contamination of the water table is a big issue.

Greece's very particular geography makes transportation especially costly (too many mountains and islands) and this is why – together with the fragmented agricultural land – it is important that farmers enjoy special status with tax exemptions and lower prices so as to keep agricultural products affordable.

Since 2012, we do not have an Agricultural Bank anymore and the market is controlled by layers and layers of intermediaries. Old-school agricultural coops have failed with corruption and embezzlement scandals not being the exception.

The latest 'post-referendum' austerity pack expects farmers to start pre-paying 55% of next year's taxes; to pay taxation rates and insurance contributions equal to those of all other professions; and that taxation on 'farming petrol' will surge from €66 to €330 per ton.

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

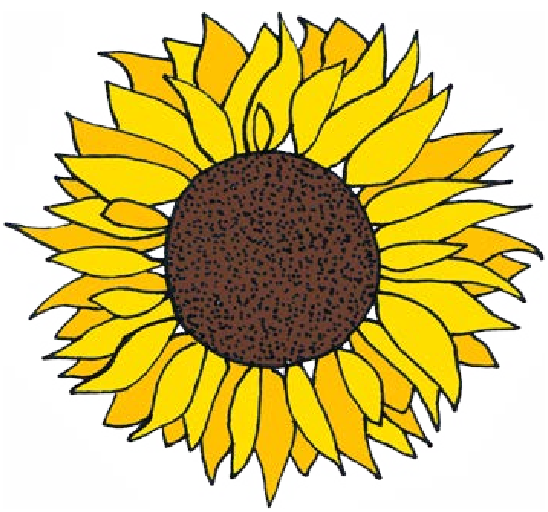
In the mid 1990s, organic production began taking shape, mainly as an answer to the demand for clean quality food, and it was then that bio-farmers started realising the constraints the marketplace was creating for them. There are no farmers' markets in Greece, only street markets where most vendors are not the producer but a merchant. The struggle to create organic street markets started together with an investigation into alternative distribution channels, but with limited results due to a multitude of reasons – bureaucracy, rigid legal and tax frameworks, the failed example of agricultural coops, to name but a few.

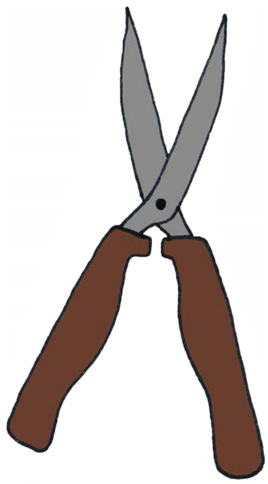
Since 2009 and the advent of the crisis, we see a surge of citizens' groups trying to tackle food in different ways, and since then we have box-schemes, collective-buying groups, no-intermediaries markets, social solidarity grocery stores, non-profit supermarkets, and of course CSAs. People are becoming more aware and conscious of issues relating to their food, health and economy. The continued austerity is creating a fertile ground for such endeavours to continue and flourish, even though, it has to be noted, that the legal and tax framework contexts are hostile and we need to push for big changes and the creation of alternative frameworks.

What is understood by CSA?

When talking to people who are ignorant of the idea of CSA it is very difficult to get them to understand the concept; to steer away from concepts like 'price per kilo'. Even those that partake in such projects realise they still have a long way to go compared with examples from other European realities. And it seems that every group has their own particular interpretation. But, in today's Greece, where the social and economic web was dismantled so rapidly and viciously, we cannot expect to see a copy of what we would see somewhere else. The elements that seem to be universal in Greek CSAs are:

- a direct partnership between a network of consumers and one producer or a network of producers
- an informal, not legally binding, agreement between the two parties
- the production of quality food in sustainable, agroecological ways
- the land belongs to the farmer who is the one responsible for agricultural decisions
- very low levels of consumer participation
- most participants are not politically motivated
- most projects count on the work of a very small number of volunteers, without whom the project wouldn't survive.





Though most cases seem to be a box-scheme type operation (we call them baskets ‘***καλάθια***’), there is evidence of risk sharing practices – either by accepting to pay a slightly higher price for a period of time to compensate for the producer’s bad harvest, helping out financially in times of crisis, or eating only spinach and greens for weeks due to bad weather, but very little towards sharing of responsibilities.

Are there different types of CSA?

All projects are different to one another. To explain this, we can present a few distinct cases:

Just at the outskirts of Thessaloniki, there is a proper farm with a farm house, stables and 1.5ha of land which produces wheat, vegetables and some dairy products. Since 1995, the farmers wanted to run it under the CSA principles. During this time, they have managed to create a pool of families that are in touch with the farm and visit it to procure their food but also to take part in other activities like (therapeutic) horseback riding, workshops or a lazy stroll around the place on a Sunday morning. There is no regular assembly, no written contract between parties, nor is it obligatory to order food every week. There is the possibility of hand-picking from the gardens, helping out with chores and taking part in open days and festivities in the farm. Some of the consumers have developed a closer relationship with the farming couple and help out financially or manually if and when they can. They do not, however, take part in major decision-making, and the running of the place, organisation of crops etc. is the sole responsibility of the farmhead.

In 2010, a group of concerned citizens under the name Agronauts (***Αγροναύτες***) started presentations and open discussions in Athens to inform people of the idea of CSA – calling it Community Backed Agricultural Production – and soon after they were able to create a network of consumers in different neighbourhoods willing to buy directly from producers. Today this network feeds around 300 families per week, catered by two main producers and another two occasional ones. There are seven delivery points at present in Athens, and individual consumers have to pick up on a specific day and time. Consumers do not have a say into what they buy, rather they agree to having a basket delivered to them which will contain roughly 8+ kilos of 7–10 different seasonal varieties produced in an agroecological way for the cost of €10. Agronauts act as a mediator between the two parties and help by organising a lot of the work and by doing presentations and promotions of this model, strictly on a voluntary basis. People are encouraged to pre-pay on a monthly or yearly basis but it is still possible to pay by the week. Deliverers do not handle money and only deliver pre-paid orders. The Agronauts promote the idea of self-organisation of drop-off points and ask for at least twenty families in an area to gather in order to start deliveries, but will include a place with only five families if it’s in the vicinity of another drop-off point. This is the only group that has set up a list of rules that can be found on their very informative website, although here too there are no written agreements of any sort. People are also encouraged to visit the farmers and have a look at how their food is being produced as the network really wants to promote the cultivation of closer relationships between producers and consumers. The farmer with the biggest input in the network has a piece of land around 3ha which produces organic vegetables. He also runs an ecological school to pass on some of his and others’ knowledge and skills to aspiring new farmers. Every year they organise a festival there which many members attend. Legally speaking there is no signed contract, consumers can ask for a receipt and most farmers are in the position to issue one but the standard practice is that money is seen as a donation to the farm and subsequently the farmer gifts some vegetables to the donors. Solidarity and risk-sharing have been demonstrated as consumers will take a smaller basket when seasons are low or receive less varieties and less volume when the harvest is bad.

Up north again and close to Thessaloniki, a young couple of new farmers were encouraged by two Food Sovereignty activists to start running their small piece of land (0.3ha) as a CSA. During a few meetings, they were given information and literature to study, and got help with finding the twenty-five families that would take part. The couple created an online questionnaire that was distributed to the prospective members and was used as a tool towards price setting and choosing of crops. There was no signed agreement between the parties. The project ran successfully for the 2014 Summer–Autumn season with two weekly deliveries of €5 and €10 baskets (half and full share) with the farmers doing all the delivery work unaided by the consumers. This put a big strain on them and lead them to rethink their strategy: although there was a waiting list they put the project on hold. It is due to be revived this season with thirty families as members but different levels of participation on their part and possibly a change in prices.

In the area of Korinth, 80km south of Athens, we find The Garden of Korinth (***Περιβόλι Κορίνθου*** – Perivoli Korinthou) a group of young and old, small-scale, low-intensity farmers (fifteen at present) who have created an informal association since 2011 with the view to helping each other out in solidarity with labour and distribution issues. They have fruit trees, orchards, olive groves and vegetables and the size of their fields vary from case to case. Some of the young farmers rent the land they are cultivating. In 2013, they started an ordering system via email and they also introduced the idea of the basket. They now cater for thirty families in Athens with weekly home deliveries handled by a third party for a small fee which the consumers agree to pay. Apart from their own, they also make available produce from other farmers but use a colour coding system to denote items out of seasonality (and hence with bigger eco-footprint). There is no formal contract and consumers are offered different payment possibilities with 50% discount for collection from the farm and self-harvest and 60% if they commit to going three to four times a year to the field to help out. Sometimes the possibility for collective ordering is offered for things that are not produced by them, for example legumes. Their hope is to create a "fully autonomous consumers' network" that would take a more active role but at present consumer involvement is very low. They believe there is great need for consumer education and awareness and try to play their part in this. Recently they also started doing a little exporting of organic fruit and veg to Europe.

A group of university students in Heraklion, Crete, concerned with producers' hardships, undistributed food quantities and food waste created Weeds (***Ζιζάνια*** –Zizania) in 2011. Weeds is based on the Agronauts model. A team of volunteers practically organises all aspects of ordering and deliveries but there is no commitment on the part of the consumers, and no written contract. Consumers are given the option between a set basket or an open order. Orders are placed online via an application they created – and are willing to share with whoever is interested. Products come from sixteen farmers and include dairy products and meat apart from horticulture. There are three drop off points and about 20–25 baskets are delivered on a weekly basis. Although on their blog the acronym CSA features next to their name they do however say that they are not a full CSA yet, but rather are on the way there. This project has an assembly that comes together twice or four times a month to decide on all major issues.

Production, certification and distribution

All projects' production steers clear of the use of chemicals and most are certified organic. 99% of them need to use other distribution channels to make ends meet, the main one being (organic) street markets, followed by eco-festivals, no-intermediaries markets, catering, organic/ solidarity/ social shops and restaurants. Only a few are doing a small amount of exports.

Legal status

All CSAs in Greece are currently operating informally without any legal status. During the Greek CSA meeting in October 2015, we had with us an accountant and a lawyer to address the issue. The conclusion was that there is no legal form at present beneficial to such endeavours. We are waiting for the new bill on agricultural coops (due this summer) to see if it will be helpful. This is a major drawback as it stops the expansion of existing teams and prohibits the creation of new ones. It also makes it next to impossible to have other types, for example consumer-owned or -rented land CSAs.

Interaction with public bodies

Understandably, and especially due to the above mentioned legislative gap, there is little interaction between CSAs and other public bodies. Neighbourhoods In Action, a group of activists that got elected as a member of the Thessaloniki Local Government Council in 2014 made a formal proposal to the municipality regarding the issues of CSA, food policy councils and farmers' markets which was received with great interest. Subsequently, Thessaloniki is one of the 116 cities that signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Act on 15 October 2015. This leads us to believe that some greater collaboration and interaction will be seen in the near future.

Agroecological practices

It goes without saying that all farmers operate with agroecological principles. Most of them do not do conventional organic farming but go a step further and use alternative agriculture practices like permaculture, biodynamics, homodynamic, no-till and natural farming principles. They use heirloom, traditional varieties and many try to breed their own seeds. Most are small scale and non-intensive farmers who share a special bond with nature and it shows in their work.

Outlook

The existing projects seem to be doing better every year, and most are keen on coming closer to the CSA principles of solidarity and sharing of risk, responsibility and reward.

CSA's future in Greece looks very promising. Despite the uncertainty around legal forms and related issues, the continued harsh austerity forces both consumers and producers to look for other solutions.

Having said that, it is clear that much effort will need to be placed on educating consumers, i.e. citizens, in more participatory models of procuring their food while farmers, on the other hand, will need training and new skills when it comes to being CSA farmers.

The matter of mutual trust and commitment will have to be addressed. Consumers find it hard to trust uncertified bio-farmers. Farmers feel uneasy with the idea of pre-payment, thinking that it will create pressure and unreasonable demands from the consumer. This has been said to me by farmers but is also documented (Partalidou).

Clearly this means that emphasis has to be placed not just on promoting the CSA model, but on clearly stating the benefits for each side and probing them into creating new types of relationships.

Providing aspiring CSAs with a range of tools can prove critical to their success; from CSA management (things like costing, and calculation of number of shares, or achieving transparency) to personal relations, participatory systems, conflict resolution etc.

Experience sharing and know-how exchange are key factors.

We also foresee greater collaboration between existing CSA groups, and with other types of Alternative Food Systems.

The way forward is Food Sovereignty.

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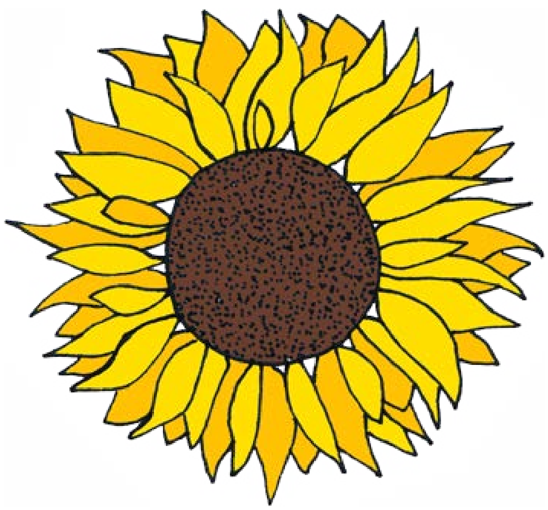
Author

Jenny Gkiougki, a business consultant by trade, returned to Greece in the time of crisis to assist the bringing about of change in the country. She is an activist on many fronts ranging from social justice to ethical and solidarity economy. She is a social entrepreneurship advisor and mentor on a voluntary basis. Her main focus is on Food Sovereignty and all things related as she strongly believes this to be the way out of the present situation. In 2011 she co-organised the Greek Conference on Food Sovereignty and in 2014 the Permaculture Caravan. She is part of Neighbourhoods In Action, a group of activists – focusing mainly on ecology and environment, human and urban rights, social ethical business – who ran for the local government elections for the municipality of Thessaloniki (1 million inhabitants, the second largest city of Greece) and won one seat at the council. In the last two years, she has instigated the creation of two CSA projects.



Hungary

Zoltán Dezsény

Native name

Közösség által támogatoss mezögazdaság (community supported agriculture) or short version: Közösségi mezögazdaság (community agriculture)

Common definition

The Hungarian CSA Network, established in 2014, created a document laying out this common definition and these shared values:

> *"Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system based on trust, solidarity, mutual commitment and personal contact between a group of consumers and one or several producer(s). It is a local food system, based on the principles of organic farming (whether certified as organic or not), initiated by individual farmer(s) or NGOs, with the consumer members making a commitment to the farm(s) for a given period of agricultural production. Under the terms of such an arrangement, consumer members can share the food produced without a price tag attached, but pay a flat fee, thereby financing the functioning of the farm by regular contributions."*

Country context

General information

In Hungary approximately 10 million people live on an area of 93,036km^2 (about 93 people per km^2). In 2013, on average, people in Hungary spent 24.8% (approximately €55) of their monthly expenditure[1] or 16.6% of their monthly income[2] (approximately €276 per month per capita) on food and non-alcoholic beverages.

Agricultural information

Agriculture has traditionally been an important sector in Hungary's national economy. In 2010, 5.3 million hectares[3] (60% of the territory) were used for agriculture. Of this, 77% arable land, 18% meadow and pastures and 1.5% permanent crops. The ratio of agricultural land supply per hundred people exceeds the European average of 45ha by 35%. Regarding arable land per agricultural employee, Hungary is the fourth in Europe. There were 182,000 people primarily employed (5%) in the agricultural sector in 2010 of the 3.7 million people employed in the country. The average farm size is 29ha and is constantly increasing. In 2010, there were 576,000 agricultural holdings in the country and 1.1 million households were involved in some kind of agricultural activity for family consumption through home gardens and holiday home backyards; this data indicates that very low values were defined for the minimum farm size. The number of agricultural holdings has been constantly decreasing in the last fifteen years while the average farm size has been increasing. Approximately 130 thousand hectares (less than 3% of the total agricultural area) were under organic agriculture in 2014[4].

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

The first attempts at organising CSA farms in Hungary and probably the first one in the Central Eastern European (CEE) region is closely linked with the Open Garden Foundation (in Hungarian: Nyitott Kert Alapítvány) which was registered in 1999 with the aim of promoting sustainable agriculture and community supported local food systems[5]. Since its establishment, the Open Garden Foundation has been successfully managing an organic market garden and a local food delivery system. The Foundation has also been running education and training programs for consumers as well as producers and defined itself as a bottom-up initiative with the vision and mission of establishing a local food system by bringing together producers and consumers based on the adaptation of the principles of CSA in the CEE region (ibid.). They state that in the 1990's the socio-economic context was not supportive of such radical and creative solutions like a CSA scheme (ibid.). Although the number of customers in the CSA scheme grew every year, they had main struggles relating with economic viability and high membership turnover they could

Factbox Hungary

Number of CSAs?	12 CSAs are known
Since when?	The first CSA started in 2011
National umbrella organisation?	Közösségi Kisgazdaságok Szövetsége (KöKiSz) – Alliance of Small Scale CSA Farms in Hungary
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	1,000–1,200 eaters are estimated

not overcome which led to the termination of the scheme. The CSA transformed towards a more service-oriented approach providing more choice and year-round vegetable provision to people. From 2002, a new system, the Real Food Box (Nyitott Kert Futár), an organic delivery service, was set up and the original CSA system was terminated.

Since 2008 the Association of Conscious Consumers (ACC) has organized several informative events for consumers and also workshops for interested Hungarian farmers about CSA with participation of French AMAP farmers. This activity catalyzed the appearance of most of the CSA farms existing today. This transitional process in recent years, along with the slowly growing local food movement, creates an expanding interest in new CSA initiatives as well. According to estimates, box schemes, subscription schemes and community led farm enterprises currently total around 15. The Census was filled in by 14 CSA schemes in Hungary.

Following the experienced French AMAP farmers' explanations of their system in 2010, a handful of young and educated Hungarian farmers realised the opportunities of this special form of direct marketing and began converting their regular farmers' market customers over to a standard box subscription scheme. As a result of these inspiring workshops in 2011 three CSA was established by the farmers and another one by an ngo independently from the others.

In following year (2012), there was no established CSA. According to The Census, the development of CSAs was constant after 2013, in all years till 2015 three new CSAs started to operate. They are unevenly distributed within the country, particularly concentrated around Budapest and some other around bigger cities.

From 2012 on CSA farmers regularly met on events formally organised by ACC or the Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (ÖMKi). After four meetings and two years the involved farmers and NGO representatives decided to form an informal network and the they established the Alliance of Small Scale CSA Farms (KöKiSz). It functions as a national network and had three meetings during the last year since it has been established. On the meetings farmers discussed practical topics such as CSA organisation practices, seed exchanges etc. and also theoretical questions regarding to self-identification, definition of the network and its role within the movement. Currently it is an embryonic grassroot initiative, there is no formalised structure or elected representatives exist. Running the network and its organisation solely takes place on a voluntary basis, issues and tasks are discussed during the meetings twice a year. Currently there are 8 (57%) CSAs taking part in the network in Hungary.

What is understood by CSA?

According to the charter of the national CSA network (KöKiSz), the definition of CSA (not a final version but a working definition) has the following elements:

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system based on trust, solidarity, mutual commitment and personal contact between a group of consumers and one or several producer(s). It is a local food system, based on the principles of organic farming (whether certified as organic or not), initiated by individual farmer(s) or NGOs, with the consumer members of making a commitment to the farm(s) for a given period of agricultural production. Under the terms of such an arrangement, consumer

Vegetables from a CSA in Hungary.

members can share the food produced without a price tag attached, but pay a flat fee, thereby financing the functioning of the farm by regular contributions.

Hungarian actors in the field of CSA have decided to establish an informal Network called Alliance of Small Scale CSA Farms (Közösségi Kisgazdaságok Szövetsége/KöKiSZ) in order to support each other and to promote the cause of community supported agriculture.

Members of the network agree on the following:

- They promote the creation of local food sovereignty.
- They take part in establishing and nurturing local communities.
- They are committed to sustaining and developing the way of life of small scale country producers seeking harmony with nature and society.
- They observe the principles of organic agriculture.
- They ensure transparency in financial and agricultural issues for their members.
- They agree on abstaining from introducing externally produced food into the system and from selling their own produce via other channels without informing their members. Should they decide to purchase or get produce from elsewhere, preference shall be given to members of the Network or other organic farmers they know.

Characteristics of CSAs

A direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers is recognised all but one respondents from The Census. All of the CSA schemes are aiming to provide quality food to people and set-up their production according to agroecological principles. 10 respondents out of 14 (71%) CSAs claimed that shared risk within CSA is an important part of the commitment with the farmer. 8 respondents answered that shared responsibilities of farming and long-term contract are relevant for their CSAs. 12 respondents (86%) recognised shared rewards of farming activities as part of their CSA and same number arranges formal agreements with its members. Less respondents (8) answered that long-term contract is relevant compared with the entries for formal written agreement (12). It assumes that the rest of the cases the informal/formal contract is short-term or partially can be due to the different interpretation of "long-term" by the respondents since there was no time span defined in The Census. Most products are delivered by farmers to collection points which are usually in the cities (13 CSAs). Only 1 CSAs have self- harvesting method and 5 CSAs have the option pick-up at the farm.

All of the CSA farms are small, area varies between a thousand square metres to a few hectares. None of them exceed 10ha. Membership ranges from a dozen people up to hundred. According to The Census, the Hungarian CSAs feed approximately 1,800 people, 129 on average. 12 CSA (86%) producing vegetables, 5 fruit (36%), 3 of them eggs and there is one meat producer. There is no bread, honey and dairy product CSA in the country.

Are there different types of CSA?

The following types of CSA can be distinguished:

Farmer-led share model CSA

Here CSA members pay in advance (prior months, half season or season) and the payment is not for the produce but considered a membership fee. There is a mutually signed contract presumes a season or half-season long commitment. Here there are standardised boxes, no or minimal option to fulfil individual desires through customisation. According to The Census, 10 respondents out of 14 (71%) was established by the farmer and 9 (64%) of the respondents indicated that members buying shares from the production. However only 4 (29%) indicated that the entire income of the farmer comes from the CSA. This means that for the rest of the cases CSA is not the only product outlet.

Community shared farm

One such initiative exists. This type of CSA organised by a community or non-governmental organisation (NGO) which hires a farmer to manage the cultivation on land own/rented by the enterprise. All costs and benefits (such as produce) are divided among members. The farmer is usually a both a member and employee who is often solely responsible for production and farm operations (including volunteer organisation). Risks and rewards are shared fully.

Subscription CSA group

One such case exists. The farmer offers his produce and consumers subscribe for shares during a whole season for a discounted price. Deliveries and the outlet for distribution are organised by the farmer. There is no risk or reward sharing. In Hungary the consumer group is formal cooperative, the farmer is member of the cooperative as well. The cooperative has other kind of community activities apart from the CSA.

Community-producer partnership

One Hungarian case comply with this category. Here there is an informal group of consumers who take substantial part of the organisation of the CSA because the lack of capacities of the producer. This CSA follows the share model, the members pay all the cost of farming activities and accept the possible losses of production.

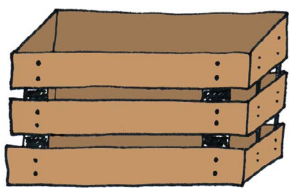
Legal setup

The different starting conditions, motivations and requirements of the CSAs are reflected in a variety of legal forms. The farmer-led CSAs are organised by the farmer itself, here the CSA does not have a formal entity, but the producer has legal form as individual agricultural entrepreneur or licensed traditional small-scale producer. In these cases (10 or 71%) the land is owned and/or rented by the farmer.

Apart from these cases there is one case where the CSA organised around a former cooperative and one where the CSA is run by a non-profit Ltd. In the former case the land is owned by the farmer while in the former case it is owned by the members.

Further details from The Census

For most of the farms the farmer and his/her family provide the primary labour force. The CSAs bigger than 1ha cropping are mainly hire seasonal and/or seasonal workers. Most CSA farmers want to provide year-long membership to its employees. A few CSAs accept volunteers or interns. Only 2 CSAs (14%) involve members in production. This means that members mainly do not take a highly active role in the organisation and maintenance of the CSA scheme and the production. Only in one case (7%) they help pack or deliver product and in 3 cases (21%) perform some administrative task regarding of running the CSA. In 6 CSAs (43%) take members role in decision making, 71% of the cases exchange recipes and almost all cases (12 from the 14) attend open/social events at the farm.



Agroecological practices

All CSA follow organic production principles, 9 have and 5 have not organic certification. from the 14. For the Hungarian CSA farmers, organic, synthetic pesticide-free production methods are important, but so far there is no strong discussion on the wider agroecological debate and there was no influence of the Nyéléni Declaration on the development Hungarian CSA movement. Mainly because it was out of scope for most of the Hungarian CSA farmers.

Outlook

The CSA model appeared in 1999 in Hungary but at that time the only pilot project could not maintain financial viability under the given socio-economic conditions, and after a few years the scheme transitioned into an organic food delivery service. CSA appeared again in Hungary in 2010 after the Association of Conscious Consumers (ACC) held workshops on the idea of CSA with the involvement of French AMAP farmers. This direct experience was a decisive moment for a handful of young, educated, enthusiastic farmers to gain momentum and to implement a share model CSA initially build on their prior customer base. A few other farmers who had community building experience set up organic vegetable box subscription schemes in farmer-community arrangements initiated by formal or informal groups of environmentally conscious urban consumers. Irrespective of these above-mentioned initiatives two nonprofit organisations set up CSA arrangements, recruited members using the organisation's interpersonal network, took the role of management and hired growers for production. These types of CSA make up the range of CSA in Hungary at the time of writing.

During the last years approximately 15 CSA arrangements emerged. They are all considered small farms, with cropping area ranging between 0.2ha and 10ha. Seven of them are located around Budapest, the capital of Hungary and the biggest market for organic produce in the country. The number of members or subscribers ranges between 10 and 100. CSA in Hungary represents an ambition and provides a number of flexible models that initiatives adapt according to their local circumstances and the needs, ideas and ideals of their participants. Important to stress that despite the Western-European trend where the community perspective is stronger and most of the schemes are initiated by communities, almost all Hungarian cases are farmer-led CSAs

Farmers following CSA in Hungary are mainly skilled organic growers even though some of them have only a few year of farming experience. Though these few initiatives tend to be relatively small in size, their impacts and role in the alterative food movement are disproportionately significant. They provide volunteering opportunities and informal local food education, serve as hubs of stakeholder networks, and take lead roles in the reconceptualisation of the agro-food system in the context of the discourses of sustainable development. Within certain limitations (geography, access to adequate market in urban areas, ability to build up necessary assets), CSA provides an opportunity for small farms in the country as an alternative niche market outlet which secures regular income, eases farmers from dependency on fluctuating prices and carries the possible rewards of community building. Limitations should also be stressed here; for other farmers to adopt the practice requires considerable social capital creation and possession or ability to build essential stocks of human capital.

Expansion of CSA is rational in the country since the first adopters have already reached initial success and can serve as good examples, sources of knowledge, and possible mentors for prospective followers. During the last ten years the number of consumers motivated by environmental and health consciousness, quality choice, sense of community and solidarity in purchasing from local farmers has been increasing.

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Ireland

Róisín Nic Cóil

Native name

Although no native name is decided upon yet, the Irish CSA network are considering alternative names for the Irish incarnation of CSAs, for example, Community Backed Farming. Similarly, Irish language terms are under consideration, including Pobal Laistiar d'Fheirm.

Common definition

In Ireland, CSA is seen as a model in which people who would like good food can club together to pay a farmer who will provide for them. The important elements are therefore: direct relationship, quality food, agroecological principles. If the model is followed through, importance is placed on the 3Rs (shared Risk, Reponsibility and Rewards) and on formal long-term commitment. In order to cut down on financial costs, participants in CSA can take on some of the work of the food-production which opens up the possibility of strengthening a community.

Country context

General information

Unemployment rate: 9.7%

Population living under poverty line: 8.2%

Average net salary: €2,227 /month; €26,724 /year

Standard rate of social welfare for unemployed person €188 /week; €815 /month; €9,776 /year

GDP: €180 billion; GDP per capita: €39,870

Number of inhabitants: 4.6 million [island of Ireland: 6.4 million; NI: 1.8 million]

Average density of people/land: 66p/km^2 [island of Ireland:76p/km^2; NI: 127p/km^2]

Area: 70,273km^2; 27,133 sq miles [island of Ireland: 84,421km^2; NI: 14,130km^2]

Agricultural information

54% of the country is farmed

Average farm size: 32.7ha

Number of farms/holdings: 139,829

Number of registered organic farms: 1,721 (Eurostat figure is 870), approximately 1% of farms are organic

81% of agricultural area is devoted to pasture, hay and grass silage (3.63 million hectares), 11% to rough grazing (0.48 million hectares) and 8% to crops, fruit & horticulture production (0.38 million hectares).

The agri-food sector employs 150,000 people, the equivalent of 7.7% of national employment.

Commentary

The agricultural sector in Ireland is undergoing a difficult period, as in much of Europe, with many farmers on low incomes. Especially at Christmas-time, campaigns were launched, for example by the IFA (Irish Farmers' Assocation, largerst farmer union) to highlight the cheap selling of vegetables by multi-national supermarkets, saying "In 2013, some items were sold at one tenth of their production cost. This action had the consequence of decimating grower incomes and sending a misleading message to consumers regarding the inherent value of what is healthy food".

The social welfare system in Ireland can create a social welfare trap. Recipients of a social welfare payment, for example unemployment benefit, enjoy a stable, regular, weekly income with additional assumed benefits including some or all of the following: medical card, heating allowance, childcare, travel supplement, rent allowance. It is risky for someone to give up this payment and take a leap of faith into a precarious employment sector such as farming. There are no specific aids available from the Irish state either through local or European funding for the establishment of small scale primary food producers supplying local markets. Back to work activation advisors have proven limited in scope when suggesting employment opportunities.

Food Harvest 2020 foresees an increase in cattle, this reflects the dominance of a narrow focus on conventional farming, and particularly beef and dairy.

History and characteristics of CSA

It is possible to list here the names of CSAs in Ireland at present:

Factbox Ireland

Number of CSAs?	7
Since when?	2009
National umbrella organisation?	CSA Network Ireland (working name) founded on 23 September 2015
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	7 farms feeding 485 people

Cloughjordan Community Farm

Dublin CSA

Derrybeg Farm

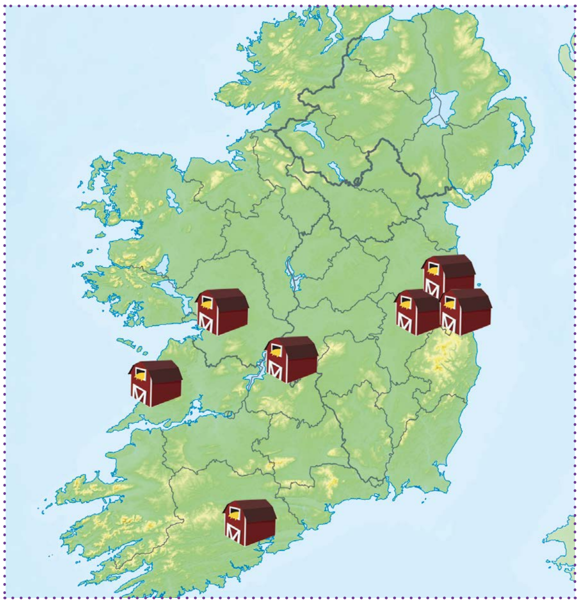
Skerries Harvest Group

Kinsale CSA

Leaf and Root CSA

The Growing Farm

See map IE1 for the approximate location of the CSA farms in Ireland. The longest-running CSA in Ireland is located near an intentional community in the eco-village at Cloughjordan, County Tipperary. That farm draws members from a wider area than the eco-village.



IE1: Map showing the location of CSAs.

The town of Kinsale is a scenic coastal town in south County Cork. Kinsale was home to Rob Hopkins in the formative stage of the Transition Towns movement. For many years, this part of Ireland has been a destination for alternative-minded Europeans seeking to settle in an idyllic location.

Three farms supply the urban area of Dublin City and suburbs: Derrybeg Farm between Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge in County Kildare, Dublin CSA grows in Celbridge, County Kildare and delivers into Dublin city centre, and Skerries is in north County Dublin.

Two farms are in rural locations with low population density: Leaf and Root near Loughrea in County Galway and The Growing Farm in Lahinch in County Clare.

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

The development of CSAs has been related to a number of factors: climate change, concern for the soil and the environment, a concern for community resilience, an increasing awareness of unfair wages and lack of support for small-scale and/or organic farmers. Such issues form the political backdrop to the development of CSAs.

A Feeding Ourselves event is run annually in Cloughjordan Eco-village. These events have featured speakers from various national and international organisations involved in CSA-like projects.

In general, members of CSAs are, even if in a minor way, politically-minded.

What is understood by CSA?

The following elements apply to all CSA initiatives in Ireland:

- A direct partnership
- Formal or informal agreement
- Aiming at providing quality food
- Production in an agroecological way

See the table, IE2, for the characteristics which apply to each CSA.

Are there different types of CSA?

It is the question of land ownership which invariably highlights the inherent structure of a CSA. In the case of two CSAs in Ireland, the land is rented "by the CSA", so that the community group has taken responsibility for the land. In the other cases, the land is owned or rented by the farmer. If the farmer is from a background of farming within the family, family land is used, whether rent is paid or not. This arrangement provides a degree of stability for the CSA whereas renting land from a local authority or another farmer is typically on an 11-month lease.

There is no land trust in Ireland and access to land for new farmers with no family background in farmers can be challenging.

Farm size

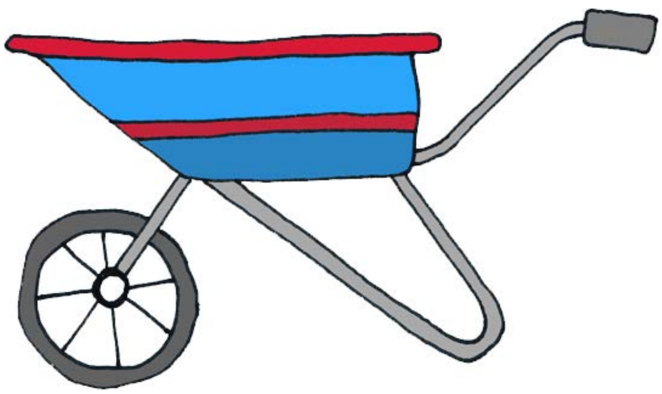
The largest farm is 17 acres (7ha) in size. One of the farms is 2,000m² (approximately half an acre or 0.2ha) following a project in Berlin, 2000m2.eu. On average, the area of land used for production comes in at 3 acres.

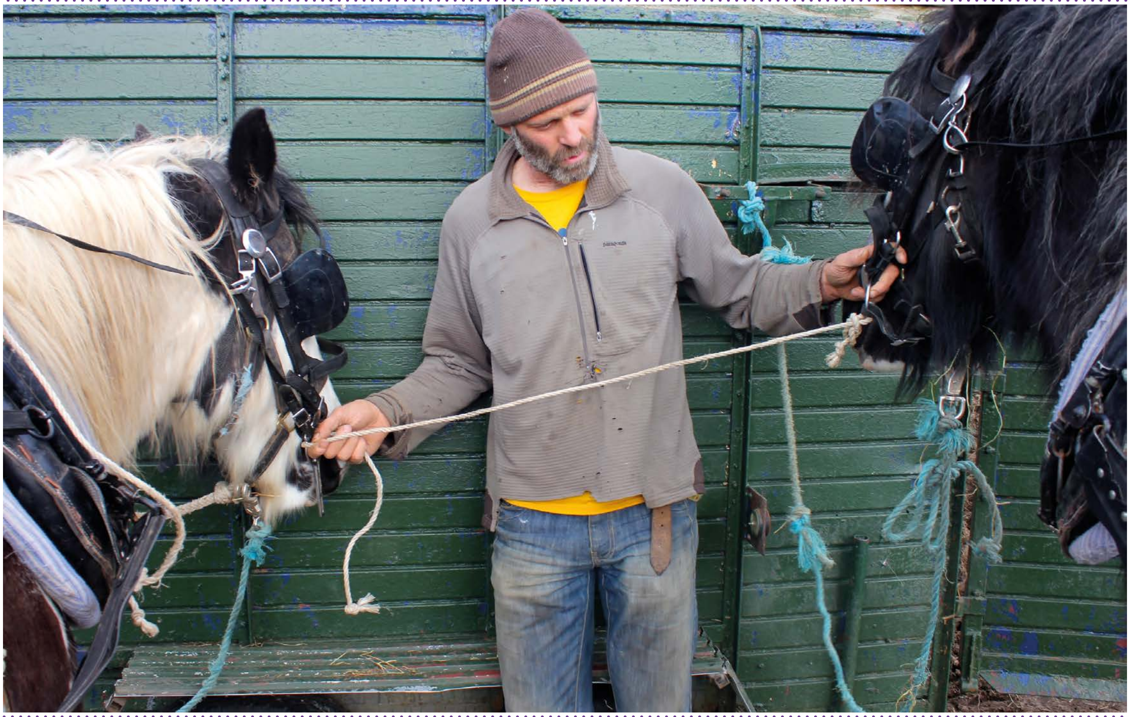
IE2: CSA characteristics which apply to each CSA

	Direct Partnership	Shared Risks	Shared Responsiblities	Shared Rewards	Long-term agreement	Formal or informal agreement	Aiming at providing quality food
Cloughjordan Community Farm	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Derrybeg Farm	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dublin CSA	√			√		√	√
Skerries Harvest Group	√	√		√	√	√	√
Kinsale Community Supported Agriculture	√					√	√
Leaf and Root CSA	√	√		√	√	√	√
The Growing Farm	√		√	√		√	√
Total % of farms	100%	57%	42%	86%	57%	100%	100%

IE3: Produce available at each CSA

	Fruit	Veg	Meat	Dairy	Eggs	Bread	Honey
Cloughjordan Community Farm		√	√				
Derrybeg Farm		√			√		
Dublin CSA		√			√		
Skerries Harvest Group	√	√			√		
Kinsale Community Supported Agriculture					√		
Leaf and Root CSA	√	√					
The Growing Farm		√			√	√	
Total % of farms	29%	86%	14%	0	71%	14%	0





Pat Malone, farmer, with workhorses at Cloughjordan Community Farm. Photo by Davie Philip. Ireland.

Organic certification

All vegetables are produced organically but none of the CSA farms have organic certification. Cloughjordan Community Farm uses biodynamic principles. The CSA which provides only eggs does so non-organically.

Types of produce

One CSA produces eggs only. Others produce vegetables, with some including eggs. None of the CSAs produce dairy or honey. One of the CSAs produces bread, another fruit and another meat. See table IE3 for breakdown of the responses received from each farm about their produce.

Labour and income

None of the CSAs provide full-time employment for a farmer. Farmers supplement their income from the CSA either by:

- another job or employment which is non-farming
- providing educational modules
- Government supports – either unemployment

IE4: Involvement of members in each CSA

	Buying shares	Helping to grow produce	Helping to pack/ deliver produce	Administration/ organisation	Decision-making	Attending open days / social events	Exchanging recipes	Investing money in the farm
Cloughjordan Community Farm	√	√		√	√	√	√	√
Derrybeg Farm	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dublin CSA				√	√	√	√	
Skerries Harvest Group	√			√	√	√	√	
Kinsale Community Supported Agriculture					√			
Leaf and Root CSA	√					√		
The Growing Farm		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Total % of farms	57%	42%	29%	71%	86%	86%	71%	29%

welfare benefits or start-your-business grants.

Each CSA in Ireland is supplied by one farm, i.e. there are not buying clubs or farmer groups. Sometimes, farmers buy in additional produce from neighbouring farms who do not operate as CSAs although this is a hot topic for discussion amongst the CSA farmers and members. There is a mix of farmers from a farming background or not.

One of the farms avails of subsidies.

Efforts are underway to form a Land Workers Alliance and members of the CSAs are very involved with this. It is important to have fair working conditions for land workers.

An apprenticeship proposal is underway which will demonstrate the pathway to a livelihood as a food grower, showing CSA as one option. CSA farms are already being approached by students on horticulture, organic, and permaculture courses seeking work experience and volunteer opportunities. IOFGA (Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Assocation) currently run an apprenticeship.

Collection points

All of the CSAs provide a collection point for members to collect their shares. Both of the rural CSAs also provide home delivery and one of them enables self-harvesting as well as pick-up from the farm. Only one other CSA invites pick-up from the farm.

Involvement of the eaters

In general, consumers are very committed in the long term. In the case of at least two of the CSAs, some members even pre-financed the farms to help establish them. Of key importance for this commitment is the community-building element between members.

The smallest CSA feeds 20 people. The largest feeds 120. On average, CSAs in Ireland feed 66 people.

Membership involvement varies from one CSA to another. Most farms offer a social event and a farm visit to members at least once a year. CSAs which have core groups to make decisions and alleviate some stress from the farmer find that it is a good model. See table IE4 for breakdown or responses received from each CSA in The Census regarding the involvement of members.

Additional tasks for members not listed in table IE4 include PR, fundraising, communication, managing member applications, making fundraising and grant application, coordination, board of directors, updating website and social media.

Legal setup

Only three of the CSAs use a form of written contract between the farmer and the consumers, and even then it is questionable whether the contract is legally binding.

There is no simple legal form for a CSA to take in Ireland. Some of the farmers register with the Revenue Commissioners as Sole Traders with regard to their income tax liabilities.

The CSA as an entity can operate as An Unincorporated Body, this format is sufficient in order to open a bank account, purchase insurance cover and perform certain other tasks.

Setting up as a Limited Company would ensure that the CSA is a separate legal entity and, therefore, is separate and distinct from those who run it. A company is registered under the Companies Act 2014 through the CRO (Companies Registration Office).

The Registry of Friendly Societies deals with the registration of Industrial & Provident Societies, Trade Unions and Friendly Societies. The Friendly Societies and Industrial and Provident Societies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 was enacted on the 21st July 2014. Industrial and Provident Societies are registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1893-2014, and these include cooperatives.

However, formal registration is not without obligation and can be burdensome for small volunteer-run CSAs, incurring annual charges and requiring filing of accounts and documentation.

Some CSAs prefer to apply the principle of direct partnership and trust instead of these ill-fitting solutions.

Kathleen and Hazel at Derrybeg Farm, Ireland.

Agroecological practices

Agroecological practices are uppermost in the minds of CSA farmers in Ireland. A copy of the Nyéléni Declaration was distributed at the formation meeting for the national CSA network.

Outlook

The greatest challenge for a CSA network in Ireland is to prove the viability of CSA farming as a livelihood option for farmers. To demonstrate that this method of food production is economically sustainable is challenging. The benefits to society, health, the environment of CSA farming are demonstrable.

It is a fascinating social experiment to be involved with a CSA. The consumer-culture so prevalent in today's society is broken down. Eaters have the opportunity to stand face-to-face with the producer of their food and discuss growing methods and management issues. Neighbours have an excuse to eat together, to meet each other regularly at the collection points, to discuss the weather in a meaningful way.

CSA can be extremely empowering for a community and thus can allow for an increase in social capital in the face of a growing awareness of climate change and the changes which will be required for its mitigation, the CSA model offers key possibilities, reduced food miles, greater use of local land for growing of vegetables, far lower use of fossil fuels for fertilisers. In addition, the trust and immediacy of the farmer–buyer relationship serves to alleviate the many health and environmental concerns associated with agribusiness models. CSAs can thus act to supply the growing number of people leaning towards organic and ethical food systems. Challenging this consensus through cultivation of media contexts, lobbying, information days and so on will be essential for the progress of CSAs in Ireland. The Irish network looks forward to working with groups internationally who can advise us on such work.

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Author

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Italy

Chiara Aurora Demaldè, Adanella Rossi, Stefania Colombara

Common definition

CSA experiences in Italy are conceived as groups of farmers and citizens–consumers that cooperate in a common project of food production which respects agroecological principles and social justice. Normally, consumers share the economic risks with the farmers and give them financial sustenance by paying in advance. In some cases, consumers are not only buyers but contribute directly by working on farm activities.

In Italy, the most important reality is that of Solidarity Purchase Groups, called Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS, that is very close to the common definition of CSA. The core vision of GAS refers to the principles of solidarity, mutuality and sustainability; this core vision underpins the relationships between group members and farmers. The close relationship with the farmers is generally characterised by friendship, trust, transparency, respect, fairness. The financial support is reflected in fixing fair prices and, in many cases, in various forms of advance payments and funding. In the last two decades, GAS have contributed to the spread of a different approach in the production–consumption relationship.

This research incorporates feedback from Italian GAS.

Country context

General information

Italy territory covers 302,073km^2 with 60.7 million inhabitants (Istat, 2014) and a density of 20,121 people/km^2. The country is characterised by a hilly territory (41.6% of the total area), followed by mountain areas (35%) and plains (23.2%).

In Italy the GDP was €25,400 per capita in 2013 (-6.6% since 2000). Italian families have €2,419 monthly, of which €468 for food purchasing (Istat, 2012). Data by region of residence differs significantly by age, nationality and gender.

Agricultural information

In 2013, Italian farms numbered about 1.5 million, occupying 992,000 work units (1,620,844 active farms in 2010 with 12,856,048ha cultivated). The agricultural system is generally characterised by a strong presence of small units: 80.7% companies employing less than a unit of work and 88.6% with a turnover of less than €50,000. 96.7% are individual companies and 97.5% are owner-managed. The farms that produce exclusively for their own consumption account for 10.4% of the total.

The number of organic farms registered for cultivation and breeding is 45,162, corresponding to 2.8% of the total number of farms in Italy. The average area used for organic farming is 18ha per farm, higher than the average for the conventional plus organic which is 7.9ha. There are big differences across the Italian regions – in the South and Islands the area is even greater (43.3ha in Sardinia, 23.7ha in Basilicata, 22.8ha in Apulia). 70.9% of the area used for agriculture in the South is dedicated to organic farming (Istat 2010-2012). In Lombardy there are 1,442 organic farms, satisfying less than 10% of the demand of organic products (€300,000,000 per year).

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

To describe the dynamics, it is necessary to distinguish between CSA and GAS experiences.

The first CSA created in Italy is the Caps (Comunità agricola di promozione sociale – Farming community for social promotion), in the area of Pisa. Starting as a group of more than 100 families, it currently involves 20 families. It is the first example of CSA where the members are organised as a group. It was established with the aim of advancing the GAS experience. Its main goals were to support a farmer, by ensuring him/her a fair and steady income, and to participate in farming activity according to a 'co-production approach'. Therefore, the members discuss the annual production activities and the economic aspects with the farmers and participate in cultivation activities by doing some hours of work.

In the last few years, other similar associations or cooperatives were created: Fattoria Il Biricoccolo (BO), Cooperativa Arvaia (BO), Officina della Terra (SO).

Arvaia, in the area of Bologna, is currently the most important experience of CSA in Italy. It is a cooperative

Factbox Italy

Number of CSAs?	There are approx. 1,000 GAS registered, plus as many or even more are unregistered. There are then some experiences closer to the model of CSA 68 entities answered The Census.
Since when?	The first GAS (Gruppo di Acquisto Solidale – Solidarity Purchase Group) was registered officially in 1994 but most of the groups began to develop in the early 2000s. The first CSA was established near Pisa in 2011.
National umbrella organisation?	Italian CSAs do not have an umbrella organisation, but there are synergies with the GAS national network.
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	According to the responses to The Census, there are 15,050 but in reality they are much more if we count all the GAS in the national territory (the size of groups ranges from 15 to more than a hundred families).

composed by citizens and organic farmers, cultivating public land rented from the Municipality. It was established in 2013. Now, it regularly engages four farmers. Its main purpose is cultivating the land through collective management, mainly for the members' food consumption or to support the activities of the cooperative. The cooperative manages a market and a small shop. The members plan together the annual production activities and, based on the budget, finance them in advance. The members can visit and see fields and cultivations and are asked to contribute to the work through some half days during the year.

In terms of the development of GAS, there has been an incredible boom in Italy: from 1994 to 2004 there was a steady growth, reaching a total of 150 units registered in 2004. From 2005 onwards the development has been stronger, with the number of groups duplicating every three or four years. Nowadays, there are more about 1,000 units registered and it is estimated that there are as many units again – or even more – which are not registered.

What is understood by CSA?

The model of CSA in Italy is that groups of farmers and citizen–consumers cooperate on a common project of food production that respects agroecological principles and social justice. Consumers share the economic risks with the farmers and give them financial sustenance by paying in advance. In some cases, consumers are not only buyers but contribute directly with work on farm activities.

As said, in Italy, however, the most important reality is that of GAS.

Are there different types of CSA?

Although, during the last years, some project-experiences have developed in strict adherence to the CSA model, in Italy, there is a stronger tradition GAS (Solidarity Purchase Groups). These groups have many aspects that bring them close to the common definition of CSA. There core vision refers to principles of solidarity, mutuality, and sustainability. These priciples informe the relationships among the group members and with the farmers. The close relationship with the farmers is generally characterised by friendship, trust, transparency, respect, fairness. In particular, the financial support finds expression in fixing fair prices (that is, meeting the farmers' needs as well as being affordable for the consumers) and, in many cases, in various forms of advance payments and funding.

From the website of the National Network of Solidarity Economy (www.economiasolidale.net):

> *"A GAS chooses the products and producers on the basis of respect for the environment and the solidarity between the members of the group, the traders, and the producers. Specifically, these guidelines lead to the choice of local products (in order to minimise the environmental impact of the transport), fair-trade goods (in order to respect disadvantaged producers by promoting their human rights, in particular women's, children's and indigenous people's) and reusable or eco-compatible goods (to promote a sustainable lifestyle)."*

According to the responses of The Census, GAS result characterised by having a direct partnership (97%) but they seem not so much engaged in sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards, and to set a formal contract with producers. It is considered important to have a formal or informal agreement (68%) but less respondents assigned importance to set a long-term agreement (30%). The situation is different with CSA, where the members' commitment is greater. The aim to provide quality food is common in most respondents (96%), as well as for the production of food in an agroecological way (92%).

Beyond the results of The Census, it is important to underline that the relationships between producers and consumers are, in general, very close. Consumers and producers coordinate with each other on many of the decisions of the production process (type of agricultural produce, prices, forms of delivery, various problems, and so on). So, even if there are no written contracts, the commitment of GAS members is very intense,

as they participate emotionally and materially in supporting the producers' problems, even financially (in many cases GAS have saved a local producer from quitting activity thanks to financial support and pre-payment campaigns).

More generally, GAS have become an instrument of community-building that promotes change in production and consumption practices towards a fairer and more sustainable food system. In this sense, Italian GAS are particularly effective as space of learning, as they work as platforms of exchange for knowledge and specific information on agroecology, environment impacts, social justice, and the solidarity economy. In the last two decades, GAS has indeed contributed to a wide strengthening of critical consumption and to the spread of a different approach to the production–consumption relationships even beyond their world. GAS contribute to the development of civic engagement and political awareness among their members. They operate as important instruments of solidarity economy and sustainable development. They are involved in ethical financial initiatives (i.e. Banca Popolare Etica, Mag), thereby giving economic support to the third sector actors; moreover, they support the various campaigns organised by various organisations and movements. For all these reasons, they are widely acknowledged as spaces fostering citizenship and civism building.

Type of produce and distribution method

Typically, GAS buy food, and, to a lesser degree, other commonly used goods (clothes, shoes, cleaners, cosmetics, water filters). However, new initiatives are emerging aimed at collectively buying services (i.e. car insurance, energy).

According to the results of The Census, the food which is produced and distributed most are fruits, vegetables and honey (from 80% to 90% of the total respondents), then meat and eggs (about 70%), while less then half of the respondents deal with bread (40%).

The distribution appears mainly organised through collective points (85% of the respondents) and only in a smaller part by home delivery and pick-up at farms (respectively 25% and 28%). Only 5% of the respondents practice self-harvesting.

Legal setup

Most of the GAS are informal organisations, although there is a national law that recognises them if they constituted as formal associations; The Census confirms this information.

Some CSA are formal organisations, formalised associations or cooperatives.

Networks

Italian CSA and GAS do not have an umbrella organisation but there are synergies with the local networks (i.e. inter-GAS), or with other local actors within the solidarity economy movement, for example Districts of Solidarity Economy (DES - Distretti di Economia Solidale) or Networks of Solidarity Economy (RES – Reti di Economia Solidale). All DES have converged in a national structure of coordination called Tavolo of Italian Network of Solidarity Economy. There are 14 DES registered and more than 20 nets that are formally linked to Tavolo Res and its charter.

According to The Census, half of the respondents are part of the national network of GAS or an organisation of solidarity economy. Others are connected with local (municipal) or regional networks of GAS or solidarity economy organisations.

Involvement of the eaters

In general, all members of GAS organise, on a volunteer basis, all the logistics of taking orders and distributing food as well as managing collective activities. In every GAS, in fact, some members maintain contact with the various farmers: they open and prepare the material for the order, deliver the order to the farmer, organise the logistics for the distribution and the payment, check that all the procedures work correctly. In big GAS the working structure may well be clearly articulated with a precise definition of roles and tasks.

Every month – more or less – there are internal meetings and periodically there are visits to the farms. The farmers are welcomed to participate in the meetings and, often, special events are organised to facilitate the communication between producers and consumers (explaining the characteristics and difficulties of cultivation, sharing knowledge, etc.).

In addition to the management of provisioning, GAS usually share other activities, such as: discussions or public debates on specific issues, training activities, adhesion to particular campaigns or participation in events organised by other organisations at local or national level, barter and other forms of exchange, etc. All these reinforce the relationships among the members. A particular means of social interaction is enabled by the practical sharing of food values. It is very common that GAS organise meeting and events where people sit together around a big table, enjoying food and conversing about the food itself. These practices are very important for the exchange of knowledge and in order to support an individual change in food consumption.

The data gathered through The Census more or less confirms this kind of organisation. The relevance of buying shares emerges (79% of respondents) which is in accordance with the modalities characteristic of the GAS experience; of less significance is the willingness to invest money in the farm: 15% of respondents. More than a quarter of respondents are involved in managing the deliveries. More than two thirds of them (34%) are involved in decision-making. About half attend open days/social events and participate in other forms of internal interaction.

Organic certification

Organic farming is one of the requirements considered by GAS members when choosing a producer, and it is one of the staple principles defined in the National Charter. However, in many cases, GAS choose producers that have no official certification although they apply the principles of organic farming in their cultivation/production. The reason is that small farms often have to overcome financial and bureaucratic obstacles to obtain the certification and prefer to renounce it even if they are effectively organic in their production method. In these cases, the social control exerted within the local networks is the means used to guarantee adherence to the requirements.

Agroecological practices

CSA and GAS are both strictly linked to agroecological principles in farming practices; organic farming is preferred but there are also cases in which biodynamic techniques are adopted. In the census more than 97% of respondents affirmed that they produce and distribute organic food (be it certified or not).

The link with the land and the awareness of its value are considered essential. For this reason, most of the GAS organise periodical meetings with the farmers and visits to the farms. These visits reinforce relationship but, of course, also increase the citizens' knowledge of farming practices. CSAs such as Caps and Arvaia do stimulate members to participate directly in cultivating the land and supporting the farmer in the field so that they can learn about land management (fertility preservation, weed control, etc.) and become aware of the difficulties linked to the production of organic vegetables.

Outlook

In Italy, CSA appears in a national context where Solidarity Purchasing Groups (GAS) have already prepared the terrain for local projects and actions linked to the solidarity economy, agroecology and critical consumption. In the last 5 years, the first CSA-like initiatives were mostly created starting from the efficient structure – formal and informal, material and cultural – of the GAS national network. As CSAs are aimed at providing a support to farmers, they can be considered the natural evolution of GAS, which can be seen as more consumer-centred initiatives, characterised by a strong personal engagement with the farmers but without a formal commitment towards them. The Italian CSA movement is small and undeveloped compared to the growth of GAS, but it is, however, exerting its presence on the world of GAS. There are in fact signs of an evolving process which is moving towards a model characterised by a stronger commitment in relation to the sharing of responsibilities and risks. This represents an emerging debate within the GAS world.

The evolution from a GAS model to a CSA model is not easy because citizens are used to approaching cooperation with a consumer-driven perspective and many farmers have already set standard agreements with GAS. Nevertheless, much could be done to promote a shift in this sense and to help the spread of information about this model. First – as CSA is not well known – it would be necessary to communicate clearly in all the national territory about what CSA is and which characteristics define it compared to GAS. At the same time, people could be helped to make it happen by creating the right conditions and giving concrete support to implement this change.

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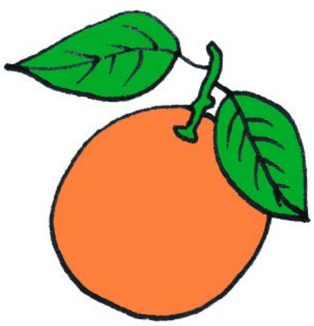
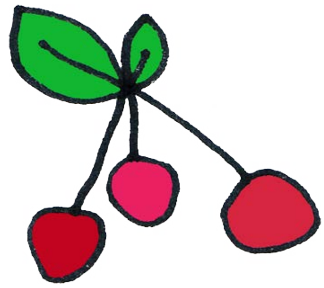


Lithuania

Deimante Zigyte



Common definition

There is no agreed definition for CSA in Lithuania but the common points are the communities of eaters who somehow (by work or financial input) contribute in the establishing of a farm, farming activities or distribution of produce.

Country context

General information

In Lithuania, approximately 2.9 million people live on an area of 35,300km² (about 45 people per km²). In the last decades, income rose considerably, but the respective amount spent on food did not grow a lot. On average, in 2008, people in Lithuania spent 22.9% of their incomes (€700 per month and household) on food and non-alcoholic beverages.

Agricultural information

In 2004, 35,000km² in Lithuania was used for agriculture. Of this, 46% of land area was devoted to crops and pastures. The average farm size in 2007 was 11.6ha.

The average Lithuanian organic farm size, 39ha, is about four times the size of the average conventional farm. The largest organic farm is 700ha. Grass and leguminous crops accounted for 61% of total organic farming in 2005, followed by perennial grasses at 26%.

As of 2004, the agricultural sector in Lithuania employed about 227,000 people and contributed about 6% of GDP.

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

No real CSA exists in Lithuania, so not a lot can be said about overall CSA development. However, there are two organisations which have a lot of the features of a CSA. The first CSA – Cheese Makers' Home – was established in 2006 by the voluntary initiative of smallholding farmers who started making cheese when raising cattle and goat for milk became untenable. The quality of their cheeses was exceptionally high and some loyal customers appeared immediately, who later became involved in the work on the farm without any commitments. The production was sold directly in farmers' markets and, some time later, a small café and cheese shop opened on the farm, demonstrating another short food supply chain example from the Cheese Makers' Home. In 2014 another CSA – Ilzenbergas Manor - appeared in Lithuania. It was established as a private limited liability company offering a fully-functioning basket system with a rich spectrum of produce (vegetables, dairy produce, meat, bread) produced on a certified biodynamic farm. It was promoted well and soon around fifty eaters had joined the CSA.

The Cheese Makers' Home has a stable number of eaters (around 30) who contribute to farmwork and the number of eaters in Ilzenbergas Manor is limited by the productivity of biodynamic agriculture so the number of people fed by these CSAs is constant. However, there was some public and media attention given to this kind of community supported agriculture and the short food supply chain of the basket system and, as a result, some new movements, inspired by CSA principles, like community urban gardens are establishing at the moment.

What is understood by CSA?

There is no understanding of what a CSA is among most of the public. However, there is somewhat of an unwritten idea among concerned target groups, for example, cosmopolitan farmers, some NGOs, and other food chain actors. It is more or less agreed that CSA represents a long-term solidarity between rural and urban communities based on mutual trust and understanding. It implies a fair share of revenue with most of the income settling in the farm with the primary producer, which is beneficial to local economies and influences rural development. Also, the concept of CSA is tightly associated with respect for the public good as less harm is done to the landscape and water, soil quality is preserved and biodiversity is promoted. It is usually realisable in small-scale family farms.

Are there different types of CSA?

The two CSAs that are active in Lithuania are completely different. Ilzenbergas Manor is based on the basket system

Factbox Lithuania

Number of CSAs?	2
Since when?	2006
National umbrella organisation?	none
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	Aprrox. 100 people

model and Cheese Makers' Home is more about participation in farm activities (both agricultural and cultural). The main difference between the CSAs is that the one in Ilzenbergas is supported by eaters who pay for the production prior to the season and the other is supported by a community who participates in farming activities and loyal consumers who pay the actual market price for the produce during the season.

Legal setup

The two existing forms of CSAs are a cooperative of farmers and a private limited liability company (Ltd.). The first is convenient because the activites of a cooperative of farmers not mainly based on profits but reaching out to cultural events or awareness-raising campaigns can claim financial support from national and EU funds. On the other hand, the private limited liability company is business-oriented and its revenue is legally not limited.

The newly emerging community-based public urban garden took a legal form of association.

Interaction with public bodies

Since the two existing forms of CSA have chosen popular legal forms, there are no problems in administrative, regulatory or legal interactions with public bodies. They have their place in the existing general economic framework and tax system.

Involvement of the eaters

In Ilzenbergas Manor, the commitment of the eaters is merely financial and takes place before the start of the season. They pay the agreed price and then get the basket every week in the season. Eaters are not encouraged to work on the farm. At the Cheese Makers' Home, however, the situation is different. There is no formal commitment of the eaters and the work on a farm is organised individually every season, however, some people participate in the work on the farm every season. So basically there are no legal commitments nor requirements for eaters to be a part of the CSA.

A basket of goods from Ilzenbergas Manor, Lithuania.

Organic certification

Ilzenbergas Manor is a certified biodynamic farm. Cheese Makers' Home is not certified at all – it is against their spirit and not necessary. They do not need certificates for their eaters, since eaters are welcome to the farm at any time and can ascertain the processes and conditions of growing, producing and processing themselves. This is one of the ways of building mutual trust.

Agroecological practices

The two CSAs practice some aspects of the Nyéléni Declaration for agroecology. Both CSAs are strongly against GMOs and other modifications of life and the means of distribution of their produce are by short food supply chain and direct selling.

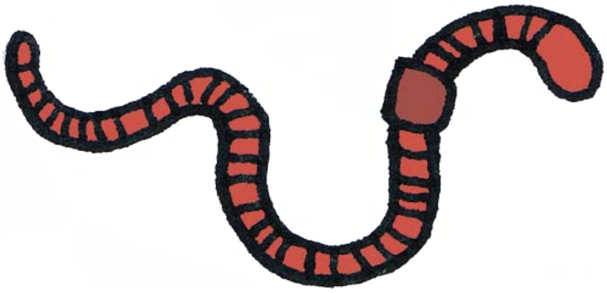
Despite the fact that the Cheese Makers' Home is not ecologically certified, both CSAs apply environmentally-friendly techniques and have established agricultural practices which have a minimal impact on the environment and make use of minimal inputs from outside the agricultural system.

In the case of Ilzenbergas, the cosmo-vision is clearly emphasised. They see people as a part of nature as well as cosmos and apply biodynamic principles in agriculture. They also put a strong focus on a spiritual connection with the land on which they work. Cheese Makers' Home emphasise the importance of solidarity between rural and urban communities and interrelations based on transparent relationship between consumers and farmers.

However, the knowledge transfer between generations is an aspiration, but is not implemented anyhow because of the inclusive urbanisation and emigration of youth from rural areas as well as a poor image of farmers. Also, the role of women as leaders in CSA is an outlandish idea and is not thought to be a necessity; the work as well as the leadership is naturally shared between the genders more or less equally.

Outlook

CSA in Lithuania is just starting to develop but there are some major gaps for successful progress in Lithuania. Firstly, from the farmers' perspective, for the medium or small-scale CSA farm to be rentable, the cooperation of farmers should be



encouraged. This way the spectrum of produce which could be supplied would widen and some major costs (for example logistics) could be shared. Farmers should be able to produce value-added items instead of providing only the raw materials or primary produce. Primary producers should receive knowledge and financial support to create final produce which uses minimal input farms, they should as well be provided with some guidance for the promotion of the produce and marketing advice. Secondly, another important missing part is a well-informed and conscious society which is not only willing to buy produce of high quality but also concerned about the social impact of their choice.

There is a growing need for fresh and safe local produce which cannot be satisfied in urban farmers' markets because of the reselling of produce from neighboring countries and trust issues. CSA provides a solution for rural development issues which covers not only socio-economic but also environmental problems.

Bearing that in mind, and overcoming the problems stated above, there is a high potential for the development of CSA in Lithuania.

Author

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Biodynamically grown vegetables in the greenhouse at Ilzenbergas Manor, Lithuania.

Marije Mulder

Netherlands

Native name

Usually, "CSA" is used, but the oldest CSA used to be known as *pergola-associatie* (association pergola) named after the garden feature which is formed from connecting elements that support growth.

Country context

General information

- Country size: 3,370,000ha / 33,700km²
- Number of inhabitants: 16.9 million
- Income per capita: €52,071

Agricultural information

- Arable land: 2,260,000ha
- Organic agriculture: 46.34ha
- Number of agricultural enterprises in 2013: 67,481

After the logistics sector, agri and food is the biggest sector in the country. Nevertheless, people sometimes find it hard to find local food on the market and in shops. Most produce is being exported.

An agri sector banker said in an interview (2012):

> *"The Dutch agrotechnical industry stands worldwide on top and its production-efficiency is five times better than the European average. In 2011 this industry made 72.8 billion in export revenues, the second biggest food-exporting country of the world."*

Central government policies and higher education have been focusing mainly on strenghtening this economical position and neglecting the environmental impact and the international solidarity aspects of the total production chain. However, NGOs and civilians are taking action for a sustainable food system.

In 2014, the first Food Otherwise conference was held at the heart of agro-industrial education, Wageningen University. Of about fifty national and international organisations only two chair groups joined the conference: Rural Sociology and Farming Systems Ecology WUR.

Over eight hundred people attended the conference's working sessions, discussions and mini-lectures on subjects such as agroecology, fair trading policies, local food networks, urban farming, soil, permaculture and more.

It became clear that we are part of a worldwide, rapidly-growing and higly necessary movement aiming to achieve fair and sustainable agricultural systems, with fair pricing and appreciation for farmers, in which we can eat the food we value and in which we cooperate with nature. A system ruled by food democracy instead of the monopoly of a few big multinationals.

In 2016, on 12–13 February, the second Food Otherwise Conference took place in Wageningen accompanied on the second day by the Reclaim the Seeds event. See weblinks for these events under References.

History and characteristics of CSA

The development of CSA in the Netherlands started in 1994 and is recently accelerating.

The first CSAs were farmer based, driven by thoughts about solidarity between farmers and consumers and support for organic faming.

Now there are more initiatives from city-dwellers who care about transparency of food production, sustainability, localism and fostering biodiversity, including soil biodiversity.

The combination of (1) the growing disapproval of people with the ruling farming and food system and (2) the financial crisis in 2008 and the following years, have urged more people to take action. Combined with the easy access to information – through informal networks, internet and education – many CSAs have been founded in the seven years since 2008.

Thanks to the geography of the country, which is perfectly flat with countryside and agglomerations interwoven, people

Factbox Netherlands

Number of CSAs?	There are 47 known CSAs, 20 of them responded to the questionnaire
Since when?	1994
National umbrella organisation?	none
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	Together the 20 respondents to The Census provide for 10,972 eaters (it is unclear how big the shares are)

can easily visit the farms. So most CSAs have self-harvesting and pick up at the farm. Farmers and eaters appreciate the regular contact.

The great diversity in the organisation of CSAs is striking. They vary from fully-democratic associations of farmers and eaters, through cooperatives of self employed farmers with volunteers, to regular firms with subscribers. But the latter often also have some mode in which subscribers can participate in the process of choosing the assortment of produce.

Farmers whose income comes fully from the CSA are rare, some have other jobs or get an income from other activities at the farm, such as giving care to people or education.

Often the CSAs can be seen as urban farming too, because of the small size and population density of the country. The more recent initiatives are especially taking part in the conversation on urban farming. They often cooperate with municipalities because urban farms help to achieve municipal goals regarding health, biodiversity, social cohesion and more.


CSA het Zoete Land, Leiden, 2014. Netherlands.

What is understood by CSA?

Here, the name CSA is applied to farm-based CSAs only. Initiatives in which consumers cooperate in buying food directly from different producers or box schemes with local produce are generally not recognised as such and were not included in this overview.

In 2015 there are 47 known CSAs, 20 of them responded to The Census.

Creation and origin

The oldest CSA of all respondents to The Census was founded in 1994 and three more followed in the years after. Then, after a pause in the late nineties to early noughties, each year one or two new CSAs were founded, peaking with four start-ups in 2014.

Two thirds of CSAs were founded by farmers, a sixth by community members and the other sixth by other means.

Defining characteristics

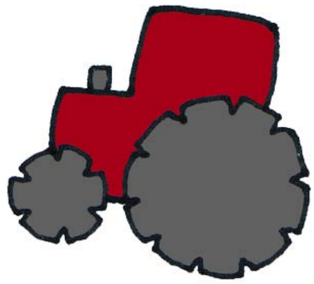
The aspects of the CSA definition that are most recognised by respondents are 'production in an agroecological way', 'providing quality food' and 'shared rewards' and 'shared risks'.

Type of produce

The main produce consists of vegetables and fruit. Two respondents are producing dairy, three meat, three honey and only one of them produces bread. Although it wasn't an option in The Census, is is worth mentioning that many CSAs in the Netherlands also produce herbs. Sometimes flowers are part of the produce. Together, the 20 respondents provide for 10,972 eaters (it is unclear how big the shares are).

Organic certification

The vast majority of CSAs in the Netherlands work organically. Of all respondents more than half are certified organic, including biodynamic.



Distribution method

The produce is distributed in different ways, but mainly by self-harvesting and pick-up at farm. Home-delivery is not taking place, probably because CSAs are situated close to where the eaters live. Box schemes or food cooperatives, as mentioned already, were not included in this overview.

Networks

Farmers can be organised through different organic farming networks, but there is no national CSA network to join. Only a few are members of Urgenci. Many are connected informally through attending the yearly CSA conference with the CSA network of Flanders, Belgium.

Legal setup

Two thirds of respondents work with an informal agreement with their eaters, others have a written contract.

Land ownership

The majority of CSAs are situated on land which is owned or rented by the farmer. A few use land rented by the CSA or provided by others, such as the municipality or a foundation. Together, the farms where the CSAs of respondents are situated on, have 722ha of land. The average size of land that is being used for the CSA is 1.28ha. They regard 1.25ha as necessary for a CSA.

Labour and income

All respondents have a farmers' collective, varying between an informal collective of self-employed farmers and a small firm. Only two are employed full-time, but it is not clear if they are really employees of the CSA or of a bigger organisation that also provides the land. The farmers often work together with members of the community such as volunteers, interns and care recipients. A quarter of the farmers take 100% of their income from the CSA, the rest of them further rely on other distribution channels, subsidies or other jobs. Most respondents make less than half of their income within the CSA, half of them not even more than 25%.

Involvement of the eaters

There are many ways in which people can be involved in CSAs in The Netherlands. The most common ways are: helping to grow produce and to pack/deliver it, administration/organisation, and decision-making. Followed by attending events, and exchanging recipes.

Outlook

The Netherlands is spatially laid out in such a way, that a lot of farms are not too far away from places where many people live. According to Carolyn Steel, The Netherlands has the perfect layout for sitopia.

Carolyn Steel coined the term sitopia, derived from the Greek words sitos meaning food and topos meaning place. With this concept of food-place, her aim is to create a balance between our needs and those of nature.

In Steel's words,

> *"Food is the sine qua non of life; treating it as such would fundamentally change the way we live. Food belongs at the heart of society, not at its periphery."*

We need food to survive, so why not recognise its importance in our lives and build our cities around the food-place?

Regarding this, the accelerating number of CSAs being founded, and the growth of other initiatives in The Netherlands where people take matters into their own hands, such as energy collectives, we can expect further increasing numbers of CSAs.

The development of CSA farming is typically bottom-up, as the national government is not promoting it. The prevailing political culture is very much focused on commercialism, hardly seeing the revenues of other models.

Gradually, some scholars are noticing the movement, mainly as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The aspects of sharing risks, rewards and responsibilities and thereby not having to take loans from banks in order to start farming, have not as yet been seen as subjects for research.

The word of CSA is being spread through different informal farming networks, depending on the background of the specific CSA which is usually either biodynamic or permaculture. They are not yet aiming at the general public to promote CSA. The main sources of information for consumers are local media or hubs with a sustainability focus.

Some NGOs are campaigning for organic products but not yet for CSA. They might not be aware that it contributes to their goals.

Some people are still trying to find out if CSAs should cooperate through a national organisation that is not linked to either biodynamic of permaculture; is it necessary to join forces or should everyone find their own way, adapting to the local situation?

CSA het Zoete Land, Leiden, 2014. Netherlands.

The Food Otherwise movement and the newly founded network Toekomstboeren (Future Farmers) bear hope for a broader movement. If we want agroecological farming practices to become more widespread, a national network could do a lot by promoting and supporting CSA.

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Marije Mulder is a permaculturist, co-founder and chair of a CSA in Leiden, the Netherlands (www.hetzoeteland.nl) and she is the gardener at a small community garden in Delft which is in the process of being set up as a CSA (www.groenkracht.nl/wat/delftse-proeftuin).

Elin Romo Grande

Norway

Native name

Andelslandbruk (cooperative agriculture)

Country context

In 2015, the population of Norway was estimated at 5.2 million. Of the mainland's 323,771km^2, only 4.3% is arable land and 2.9% of the area is used for arable crops (The Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute 2014). As of 2014, 4.7% of agricultural area was certified organic (Norwegian Agriculture Agency 2015).

Norway is a net importer of food. In 2012, the self-sufficiency rate was 43%, which is historically low (The Norwegian Agricultural Economic Research Institute 2014). Norwegian agriculture is dominated by small family farms with an average size of 23ha, well below most European countries (Store norske leksikon 2015). Much like other European countries, the criteria of economic efficiency and agricultural policies are driving farmers to increase their land areas, intensify production and increase output. Every year, a high number of farmers retire and their land is sold or rented out to neighbouring farms. Land in remote areas is often left fallow. The number of organic farms is also decreasing. This can be explained by the reasons already mentioned, but additionally, there has been a weakening in the policies which stimulate organic production. This is seen by many as paradoxical given that the demand for organic food is on the rise.

A parallel development to the industrialisation of agriculture is the ever-narrowing concentration of the food-market to three major retail chains; reduced from four in 2015. These chains dominate 95% of the food market (Nielsen 2015). They favour standardised products and large volumes, thereby limiting access-to-market for small producers, minimising the variety of products, and affecting the price for both the farmer and the consumer. Food prices might seem high in Norway, but in 2011 people in Norway spent on average 12.7% of their budget on food and non-alcoholic beverages, a figure which is comparable to other countries in Northern Europe (Statistics Norway, 2011). The focus on low food prices has been dominant for many years.

On the other hand, more people want food with special qualities and high ethical and environmental standards, including local and organic food. These people are also willing to pay for this type of food. In 2014, the sale of organic food from grocery stores rose by 30% compared to 2013. Sales through other channels grew by almost 20% during the same period (Norwegian Agriculture Agency, 2015). This trend would seem to be favourable for concepts such as CSA. The number of CSAs is on the rise in different parts of the country.

History and characteristics of CSA

A feasibility study for CSA in Norway was conducted in 2003, followed by a project with the aim of establishing pilot CSAs to test the concept in Norway. Oikos - Organic Norway participated in the project group, together with Jolien Perotti, who brought valuable experience of CSA from the Netherlands, and others. The project resulted in the first CSA in Norway, Øverland andelslandbruk, established in 2006 outside Oslo, followed by Ommang Søndre andelslandbruk in 2008.

Since 2008 the number of CSAs has increased considerably. In 2014, there were 14 CSAs, in 2015 the number increased to 38, and several new initiatives are underway. One of the CSAs, Bodø andelslandbruk, situated north of the polar circle, is probably the northernmost CSA in the world.

The fast-growing number of CSAs coincides with the increasing demand for local and organic food, as mentioned above. Urban gardening has also become popular among "ordinary people" during the recent years, a phenomenon which is linked to the same trend. Waiting lists for both CSAs and allotment gardens illustrates the popularity of these activities. For farmers and gardeners, the CSA model seems to be an attractive alternative to the conventional food system. In a study from 2014 (Hvitsand), all five CSA gardeners and farmers interviewed had a critical view of today's food system. They wanted an alternative to industrial agriculture, they wanted to avoid intermediaries using alternative distribution channels, and they wanted to come closer to and have a dialogue with their consumers.

While many of the first-established CSAs are consumer-driven, most CSAs initiated in the last couple of years are farmer-driven, which indicates that more farmers find this model attractive. In addition to Oikos - Organic Norway which is the only Norwegian organisation uniting organic farmers and consumers, The Norwegian Farmers' Union and the Norwegian Farmer and Small-holders' Union have

Factbox Norway

Number of CSAs?	In 2015 there were 35 operative CSAs Another 3 CSAs were established in late autumn 2015 and will have their first growing season in 2016 More initiatives are in the pipeline and the number of CSAs is expected to continue expanding
Since when?	The first CSA, Øverland andelslandbruk, was established in 2006 in the outskirts of the capital, Oslo
National umbrella organisation?	There is no CSA umbrella organisation but Oikos - Organic Norway has the coordinating role for the network of CSAs; the role includes organising network meetings, development of the CSA model in Norway and giving advice to existing and new initiatives. Oikos - Organic Norway has published a guide on how to start a CSA and is responsible for the webpage (www.andelslandbruk.no) where important information on the various CSAs in Norway and on CSA in general is presented. A new webpage is under construction
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	We assume that about 5,000–6,000 people are fed by a CSA in Norway

more recently put CSA on their agenda after witnessing the interest among farmers. Local groups of Friends of the Earth Norway have been involved in establishing new CSAs as well, demonstrating the interest among environmental organisations in this model.

Interaction with public bodies

The national goal, enacted by the Norwegian Parliament in 2009, is to achieve 15% organic production and consumption by 2020. The Norwegian Agriculture Agency is mandated to stimulate organic production and consumption to achieve this goal. This agency has actively supported the development of CSA in Norway by financing the feasibility study for CSA in Norway, the follow-up project to establish pilot CSAs as well as an ongoing project led by Oikos - Organic Norway to further develop the model in Norway. In addition, some municipalities and county governors have provided financial and technical support for the establishment of CSAs.

What is understood by CSA?

This publication's definition of CSA:

> *"CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared, through long-term formal or informal shared agreement. Generally operating on small-scale, CSAs aim at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way."*

is very similar to the following, the definition of CSA generally referred to in Norway:

> *"CSA is a partnership between farmers and consumers, where the responsibility and rewards from farming are shared."*

Furthermore, in Norway, a CSA is based on three main principles:

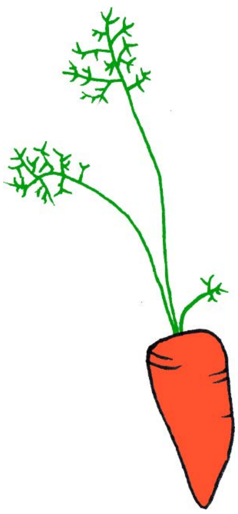
1) Dialogue between producer and consumers;

2) Sharing the harvest and sharing the risk and;

3) Open and transparent economy.

How is CSA organised?

Partnership and dialogue is at the heart of the CSA model. In Norway, shareholders are – to varying degrees – invited to take part in activities such as decision-making and administration, farm work, distribution of the produce and participation in social events. Most CSAs practice self-harvesting, which requires dialogue about what should be harvested at what time and how.

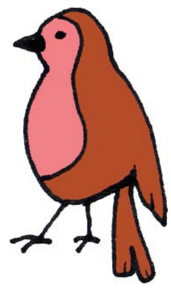


A survey, entitled The Census, which was carried out prior to this report revealed that the elements of shared risks, responsibility and rewards are relevant to most of the CSAs, with shared risks and rewards being the most relevant aspects. The answers were not explained in the The Census, but a lower score on shared responsibility (see diagram NO1) could possibly be linked to long-term responsibility of farming. Only 5 out of the 21 respondents, representing 21 different CSAs, stated that the element long-term agreement of the definition (1) was relevant for them. Most CSAs operate with pre-payment, which represents a year-long commitment from both the producer and the shareholder. This represents a far stronger commitment from the consumers' side than what common trade involves. However, one year in farming is not that long, taken into account the time it might take to build up and sustain a production, as well as the necessary investments in buildings and machines. As far as we know, not that many CSAs are yet organised to cater for the long-term responsibility of farming and none of the shareholders in the CSAs that participated in The Census invest money in the farms. But we also know that there is work in progress to find out how to do so.

NO1: What elements of the CSA-definition apply to your initiative?

Most farms in Norway are small-scale, and the CSAs generally operate on only a section of the farmland. Hence the CSAs in Norway are all small-scale. Most of the CSAs that participated in The Census stated that they aim at providing quality food for their shareholders. All of them produce vegetables, some also provide dairy products, meat, eggs, berries, fruit and honey. All of the 21 respondents said that they produce food following organic principles. 11 of the CSAs have organic certification and one has biodynamic certification.

NO2: How is the food produced?



Open and transparent economy, one of the principles of CSA in Norway, is not included in the definition of CSA used for this publication. In Norway, CSAs organised as cooperatives (see next paragraph on 'Legal forms') have open and transparent economies inherent in the organisation form. It is indeed the members of the cooperatives (i.e. shareholders) who decide on the budget. Also CSAs with other organizational forms aim at following this principle.

Different types of CSA and legal setup

In Norway the main difference between the CSAs are if they are consumer-driven or producer-driven initiatives. The consumer-driven initiatives are normally organised as cooperatives where the consumers rent land and hire a gardener or farmer (generally the owner of the land) for the farm work. Producer-driven initiatives also have the possibility of including the CSA in agricultural enterprises already existing and owned by farmers, these are generally organised as sole proprietorships.

Agroecological practices

CSA in Norway is organic. Organic practices is not a requirement for establishing a CSA, but rather a consequence of the attitude of those involved who do require high environmental and ethical standards. But CSA is about more than just complying with the definition of organic agriculture. CSA implies elements that harmonise with agroecology, a concept that is not yet well known in Norway. The CSA farmers and gardeners interviewed by Hvitsand (2014) stated that they wanted an alternative to traditional organic production, which is also specialised and standardised. CSA as a contrast offers variety and diversity, which is a key point in making the model attractive and allows for seasonal variations. Inherent in the model is also the creation of local food systems and direct contact and solidarity between producers and consumers. Additionally, as the shareholders are mostly from urban areas, CSA is a way to stimulate mutual understanding between people from rural and urban areas. Interesting discussions have for instance been witnessed on what should be the decent salary of the farmers and gardeners of the CSAs, a topic which is mostly not a concern among ordinary consumers. Another aspect is the knowledge transfer and learning about organic agriculture, which happens in the dialogue between shareholders and the farmers and gardeners. This

Maiken Pollestad Sele. Norway.

element represents a strong motivation for people to become shareholders.

Oikos - Organic Norway, the coordinator of the CSA network in Norway, dedicates its work to changing the current agricultural paradigm. The organisation promotes organic farming and consumption based on the four pillars of organic farming as defined by IFOAM; health (for soil, animals, plants, humans = healthy planet), fairness, ecology, and care. It unites producers and consumers with the aim of bringing forward the mutual understanding and solidarity between the two groups which builds the basis for working towards common goals. CSA represents an excellent combination of these elements by involving more people in food production and thereby building a shared responsibility for sustainable food production. An example of activity initiated and led by Oikos - Organic Norway, and in which representatives from many CSAs participate, is participatory plant breeding. This new initiative embraces several aspects of agroecology as it promotes development of local varieties and control of seeds, collective self-organisation and horizontal learning processes.

Based on the previous arguments and facts, we would argue that the values and principles of CSA in Norway, Oikos - Organic Norway and agroecology as outlined in the Nyéléni Declaration could all be placed within the same paradigm.

Outlook

CSA has definitely gained popularity in Norway, as reflected in the fast growing number of CSA initiatives and the long waiting lists to become shareholders. The model seems to respond to consumers' awareness on ethical and environmental standards of food and their desire to participate in and learn about organic food production. For farmers and gardeners who reject standardised and intensive food production, CSA is an alternative that allows diversity in cultivation on top of organic principles, avoids intermediaries and brings them closer to the consumers. Hopefully, the discussions on the producers' income within and among the CSAs will end up with securing them a decent economic situation, as it will probably be important for the viability of the model in the future. It will also be important to find solutions on how to secure the long-term shared responsibility for farming and food production through this model in the coming years.

The development of CSA in Norway has mainly come about by grassroots organisations and initiatives, partly supported by the authorities. However, adjustments in agricultural, but also educational policies, could improve the conditions for the development of the CSA model. One of the challenging aspects for the development and expansion of CSA in Norway is the lack of farmers and gardeners with knowledge and experience on how to grow more than only a few different varieties of vegetables, and how to do it organically. Farmers and gardeners can and do learn from each other, but there is a need to change the focus from standardisation and big volumes in agricultural education, extension services and policies in general to enable more people to acquire this kind of knowledge. It will be interesting to see if the emergence of CSA can contribute to bringing about these changes, and even influence the current thinking and practices of agriculture to become more in line with agroecological principles.

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Author

Elin Rømo Grande is an organisational development advisor at Oikos - Organic Norway. Elin wrote her master's thesis on CSAs in Norway, published in 2009.

Poland

Julia Olszewska, Marta Sylla

Native name

Rolnictwo Wspierane przez Spolecznosc – RWS (community supported agriculture)

Common definition

In Poland, there is no common definition of CSA but most of the CSA groups use this statement at the beginning of their CSA agreements:

"We, the members of an informal group of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), which connects consumers and ...... (name of the person), the owner of the farm in...... (name of the place), decide to mutually support and share the risk of food production. The aim of the CSA is to support the development of small-scale, family-operated organic farms and the direct sale of food to the consumers."

Country context

General information

Poland is located in central Europe. Poland is inhabited by 38.5 million people (2014), which makes it the sixth largest country in the European Union by population. The total area is 312,679km^2 and is divided into the following land use: agricultural 60%; forest land as well as woody and bushy land 31%; built-up and urbanised areas 5.3%; land under water 2.1%; wasteland 1.6%[1]. About 60% of Poles live in the cities (2014). The capital of the country is Warsaw which is the biggest and most-populated metropolis. It is also the first city where, in 2012, CSA groups started operating.

Agricultural information

In 2010 there were 1.5 million agricultural farms, which amounts to 12.5% of all agricultural farms in the European Union. The majority of Polish farms own between 2ha and 5ha of land and the average Polish farm has got 10.49ha.[2] In 2010, agricultural production and industry contributed to about 7% of the GDP of the country. Organic farming constitutes a relatively small share of all agricultural activities in Poland. However, the organic sector is characterised as having dynamic growth and increasing in surface area. In 2013, there were 26,000 organic farms[3]. The average land area of organic farms (25ha) is much greater that conventional farms and constitutes 4% of agriculturally-used land in Poland[4]. The organic processing industry is still very marginal in Poland compared to other European countries.

History and characteristics of CSA

The first CSA group was established in summer 2012 by some members of the Warsaw Food Cooperative. Piotr Trzaskowski and Wojciech Mejor were leaders of this initiative. They were, however, guided and supported by the experienced CSA practitioner, Jan Valeska, from the Czech Republic. The group consisted of fifteen households from Warsaw and two organic farmers and activists: Sonia Priwieziencew and Tomasz Włoszczowski. Sonia and Tomasz were running the AgriNatura Foundation which aims to promote agricultural biodiversity and the sustainable development of the countryside. The CSA was treated as a pilot project to test this idea in the Polish context. The farmers declared that they did not want farming to become their primary occupation. The pilot project turned out to be successful enough to encourage new farms to try out this model of cooperation with consumers. In 2014, three new farms decided to set up their own CSA groups. Bartłomiej Kembłowski, who was not a full-time farmer at the time, set up a CSA group with more than twenty households who were members of the Southern Food Cooperative in Warsaw. At the same time, Małgorzata and Sławomir Dobrodziej, organic farmers from the northwest of Poland, established two CSA groups in the cities of Poznań and Szczecin.

Wanda Nowicka, an organic farmer from the southwest of Poland started her small CSA group in the midst of summer 2014. The year of 2014 was the last year for the first CSA group, Świerże-Panki, because the founders of this pilot CSA group came to the conclusion that it had served its educational purpose. By the end of autumn 2015, there are eight farms in Poland cooperating with local consumers on the basis of the CSA model.

Factbox Poland

Number of CSAs?	8 farms, which support in total 11 consumer groups
Since when?	2012
National umbrella organisation?	none
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	700–800 eaters are estimated, 8 farms

What is understood by CSA?

Although there is no one common definition of a CSA in Poland, the following statement was used in the first agreement drafted by the CSA Świerże-Panki

"We, the members of an informal group of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), which connects consumers and ...... (name of the person), the owner of the farm in...... (name of the place), decide to mutually support and share the risk of food production. The aim of the CSA is support development of small-scale, family-operated organic farms and the direct sale of food to the consumers".

This statement was used later on in the template agreement of at least three other CSAs.

Common features of all functioning CSA groups are:

- direct sale of food produced at the farms
- pre-payments made by the members
- the length of the cooperation is minimum 20 weeks
- delivery of the produce, at least, weekly
- Most differences across various CSA groups in Poland arise from the following questions:
- Do the members have the liberty to choose the produce or are they given a box of produce selected by the farmers?
- Is there a collection point or do the farmers deliver the produce directly to the doorsteps of the members?
- Do the members express some kind of engagement and take up some responsibilities connected to the farming or distribution of the produce?

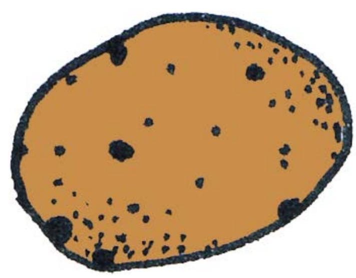
Legal setup

CSAs in Poland are established as informal groups. From the legal point of view, the sale of food produce is treated as a direct sale between the farmer and each individual member of the group. The farmers in Poland are allowed to conduct such direct selling of unprocessed produce without any major restrictions. When it comes to the written agreements which are signed between consumers and farmers, their validity as binding legal documents was questioned by some of the members. This is why, on purpose, we tend to avoid the word "contract" and use the word "agreement" instead. The document is an expression of the goodwill of the two parties and is a summary of the main rules of the cooperation: the price of the share, means of delivering the produce, obligations of the parties towards each other and, most importantly, the stipulation of how the risk is being shared between the two parties.

Interaction with public bodies

The first CSA group in Poland started as a grassroots initiative, as an act of consumer activism. The initial groups didn't get any financial support from their local or regional government. The members of the first group devoted their time and effort in spreading the word about the initiative to help set up new groups. The idea was promoted through a voluntary-run blog (www.rws.waw.pl) which described the idea of CSA and the first experiences of the pilot group, Świerże-Panki. Some of the members of this first group, also as volunteers, were spreading the word about their initiative during public events related to sustainability and ecological farming.

All the current groups are financially sustainable and don't receive any governement subsidies for their CSA-related activities. To the best of our knowledge, no demands to support existing CSA groups or to promote the idea among the farmers and consumers were made either by consumers or CSA farmers. This is why, when it comes to the interactions of CSA groups with public bodies, the interaction is either very marginal or non-existent. It seems that public institutions are unaware of the existence of the model. Because of this fact, in 2014, a small CSA solidarity fund was set up by members of CSA Swierże-Panki and CSA Dobrodziej (in Poznań and in Szczeciń) to support promotion-related activities. The fund covered the travel costs of volunteers, print-out of leaflets, the cost of a new website. The money was raised as a small fraction of every CSA share and is collectively managed by the contributing members.



Further details from The Census

In 2015, we were able to contact 8 farms in Poland which declared they had established CSA partnerships with different consumer groups. They supply in total 11 consumer groups which accounts for about 700–800 eaters. Ten groups are located in big cities: Warsaw (4), Poznan (1), Wroclaw (2), Szczecin (1), Toruń (1), and Opole (1). There is one rural CSA group meaning that the consumers live in the villages near the farm. The average number of shares in a single CSA is 23. The biggest group has 44 and the smallest 6 shares. If we assume that one share can feed three people, the average CSA group has about 70 members.

Creation and origin

36% of the groups were established together by the farmers and consumers. 27% of CSA groups were initiated by the farmers. Two groups were facilitated by Julia Olszewska, who actively works to promote the ideas of community supported agriculture in Poland.

Type of produce

All of the farmers in CSA grow vegetables. Half of the groups receive not only vegetables but also fruit. Four groups receive eggs and three groups have also meat.

Although the question on whether the consumers are free to choose the produce or the farmers prepare a "set box" was not included in The Census, it is one of the aspects that distinguishes Polish CSA groups from each other. It turns out that, in 5 of 8 CSAs, consumers are given a box of produce selected by the farmer, whereas, 3 CSAs follow a more flexible approach. It means that consumers indicate what they would like to receive before each delivery. In one of the groups which offers such a solution, the farmer admitted that some consumers tend to rely on the choice of the farmer and deliberately ask her for a "surprise" box, leaving the farmer the liberty of choosing what kind of produce they want to deliver.

Organic certification

5 out of 8 farms have organic farming certificates. The other three use which organic farming methods but are not certified.

Distribution method

In terms of transport and distribution, most of farmers deliver food to one collecting point. There are only two groups that have the shares delivered to members' doorsteps.

Labour and income

The average farm area is 15.3ha but area for CSA production is 4.5ha. That is related to the fact that, for all of the farmers, CSA is not a main source of income but rather an additional activity. Almost all of the farmers are subsidised and some of them have got other jobs as well.

Involvement of the eaters

When it comes to the consumers' involvement in the CSA, in 4 groups the consumers help with distribution and organisational issues. It turns out that the majority of the members rarely visit the partnering farms.

Agroecological practices

The concept of agroecology in Poland functions as a purely scientific term and is defined as:

> *"section of ecology, which examines phenomena within agrocenosis; Agroecology examines the influence of the environment on the plant and animal organisms, the influence of the agricultural practices and plants protection measures on the productivity of the crops, organisation and regulation of the herbivores, predators and parasites"*[5]

The term agroecology cannot be thus considered a political term as in other countries, for instance Spain or France. The term agroecology as used in the food sovereignty movement and the Nyéléni Declaration appears in Poland in translations of foreign literature published by non-governmental

Depot of CSA Dobrzyn nad Wisla, Warsaw, Poland.

organisations, such as the Institute of Global Responsibility in Warsaw.[6]

In fact, CSA in Poland is considered as a practical tool, which facilitates a beneficial cooperation between farmers and consumers. The use of the model as a tool for a systemic change of the current food systems lies, so far, outside the scope of the involved parties. Nonetheless, the very first CSA project was deeply rooted in agroecological – understood as a food sovereignty concept – principles. One of the founders of the pilot CSA group, in a short article on the CSA-promoting blog (www.rws.waw.pl), 'Why do we need CSA?'[7], refers to values such as: care of the farmers as the core of CSA model, soil as a value passed on to the next generations, protection of the ecological and cultural landscape and the long-term viability of small-scale farms as a common good.

For the purpose of this research we have compared the section of the Nyéléni Declaration for agroecology 'What are we fighting for?'[8] with currently existing Polish CSA groups' practice and their way of promoting the CSA model (e.g. CSA Dobrzyń nad Wisłą's facebook page and its section 'about')[9]. We can say that the common points of the concept of food sovereignty and what the Polish CSA stand for are:

- a fair wage for the farmers' work
- healthy and affordable food provision
- sustainable management of land
- interdependence between producers and consumers

Issues which are either put aside or not stressed as an aim of Polish CSAs are: respect of women's role in the food production and distribution systems, realisation of the right to food as a basic human right, support of traditional knowledge and heritage, spiritual dimensions, local autonomy in the governance of land, or active fight against corporate power.

Outlook

Although, in comparison to the Western European countries, CSA is relatively new in Poland, it is evolving very quickly. In 2012, there was one CSA group uniting 1 farm with about 25 households. Already in the growing season of 2015, there were 8 farms working with 11 consumers' groups which fed over 700 eaters. All the farmers we spoke to declared their will to continue working with the CSA model despite the fact that the year 2015 turned out to be challenging, especially for the new CSA groups. The severe drought tested both farmers and consumers on the aspect of risk sharing. In many cases, consumers had to accept smaller crops than expected, for which many of them turned out not to be prepared. However, farmers express their willingness to continue CSAs because they have learnt to appreciate the benefits of such a model of cooperation. It should be underlined, however, that they are still learning how to communicate with eaters, especially those who are not used to buying organic produce. Although all CSAs in Poland are following a very similar set of rules, the way they operate varies from one group to another. This is because each CSA is still looking for its own way to establish relations and rules that are accepted by both producers and consumers.

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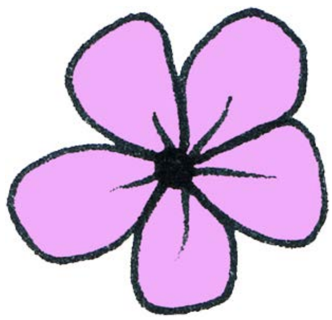
Authors

Julia Olszewska (MSc in Human Ecology) has been interested in the subject of Community Supported Agriculture since 2012 when she spent six weeks as a worker–volunteer at AMAP farms in south-western France. In 2013, she became a member of the first CSA group in Poland, RWS Świerże-Panki. She spent Summer 2013 at two CSA farms in New York State, again working and observing different kinds of farmer–consumer cooperation. She was a project coordinator of the European CSA project "Learning towards Solidarity-based Food Systems" (2013-2015). Since 2014 she is a proud member of CSA Dobrzyń nad Wisłą.

Marta Sylla (née Szkaradkiewicz) is a PhD candidate at Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences. Her research covers a variety of topics in regional planning and ecosystem services. She was one of the first members of the CSA group in Poznan, which is the second CSA group in Poland. From 2014, Marta is a proud member of CSA Pora na Czosnek.



Romania

Adrian Briciu

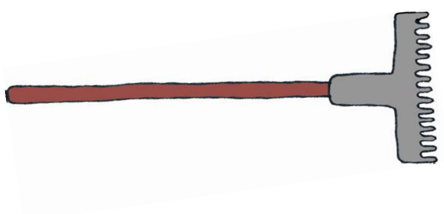
Native name

Asociatia Pentru Sustinerea Agriculturii Taranesti (association for the support of peasant agriculture)

Common definition

According to the ASAT Charter in Romania, CSA is:

"an association between a producer and a consumer-group organised with the aim to support peasant agriculture, to help preserving and saving local proximity that practice sustainable forms of agriculture. CSA aims to create and preserve environmentally friendly forms of agriculture and socially equitable economic exchanges. [...] CSA aims to ensure that consumers can buy quality food at a fair price and that they can choose how their food is produced. Each CSA brings together a group of consumers and a proximity producer in a partnership formalised by a contract. Each consumer commits to buy early in the season part of the production. And the producer commits to deliver quality products grown in a socially responsible and environmentally friendly manner."



Country context

General information

Romania is the largest country in south-eastern Europe, the twelfth largest European country by area (238,392km^2), and the tenth by population of 19.82 million with a negative demographic growth.

Romania has one of the largest rural populations in Europe with 46% of Romanians living in rural areas.

Romanian families spend on average 39.5% of their income on groceries (food and drink), one of the highest in Europe.

Agricultural information

Romania holds 7.6% of the utilised agricultural area (UAA) of the EU, 13.05 million hectares, ranking sixth in the EU.

Until a decade ago, the majority of the Romanian population lived in the countryside. Despite accelerated rural flight, Romania still has large and vibrant rural communities. About one third (31.5%) of the total EU agricultural holdings are registered in Romania, namely 3.62 million, but the number is fast decreasing.

99% of Romania's farms are run by small peasant households! In 2014 there were 3,601,776 family farms in Romania. According to the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, the average area of a peasant farm (small-scale family farm) was 2.02ha and together all small-scale family farms take 55.7% of Romania's agricultural land. The rest of 44.3% of the Romanian agricultural area is exploited by farming enterprises of different shapes and forms with an average farm of 207ha.

According to Eurostat, 29% of Romania's workforce works in agriculture, the highest percentage in the EU. The real number is even higher considering that many peasants still practice subsistence agriculture.

There is no reliable data on the output of organic agriculture and organic consumption. According to an outdated study from 2007, only 1% of Romania's agricultural land was cultivated organically (the lowest number in the EU). On the other hand, according to that same study, the average size of organic farms in Romania is 47ha which is significantly

Factbox Romania

Number of CSAs?	10 CSAs that are part of the ASAT network and another 5 that we know of and are not part of ASAT
Since when?	The first CSA started in 2008
National umbrella organisation?	Asociația Pentru Susținerea Agriculturii Țărănești since 2008 (http://asatromania.ro)
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	Around 900–1,000 eaters are estimated

larger than the average size of European organic farms (34ha) (Willer & Yuseffi, 2007). This makes us believe that the study had access only to data from large eco-business farms and had no access to data from small-scale family farms. As of yet, there is no reliable data on the percentage of organic agriculture in Romania. Based on non-scientific observation we believe that a large part of the production done on small-scale peasant or family farms is organic.

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

The first CSA group was started by ASAT in 2008 in Timisoara, Western Romania. A couple of years later, in 2010, a few other partnerships were added to the ASAT network, all three in the western part of Romania. In 2012, a couple of partnerships were started in Central Romanian, in Transylvania. The largest growth took place in 2013 when 5 new partnerships were started in different regions of Romania – basically covering most of the country: west, central and south. In 2014, a couple of new partnerships were started in Transylvania. Likewise, at the beginning of 2015, two new partnerships were started and a third one was added at the end of the year. Three further partnerships are in process for 2016.

Some of the partnerships started through the ASAT decided to leave the network and go independent. They continue to operate in a CSA fashion whereby the farmers and consumers share the risks and benefits and there is an upfront payment at the beginning of the agricultural year. We are aware of only one other CSA partnership that was started – and is still running – completely independently of the ASAT network.

Most of the CSA development is driven by consumers. Usually conscious-consumers from urban areas pull their resources together, identify potential farmers as well as other potential consumers, and explain what CSA is and how it works. It is quite common that long-time consumers from the ASAT network get actively involved, on a voluntary basis, in helping out new initiatives. Somewhat unusual, but of great importance, is the help provided by different NGOs working on the solidarity economy and agroecology in developing and promoting CSA. A crucial role in the development of ASAT was the CRIES association (the Center for Ethical and Solidarity Initiatives) which actively supported the CSA movement in various ways over the years and continues to do that. Between 2008 and 2014, the ASAT network had no legal status and functioned as an informal association of consumers and producers guided by its charter. In 2014, the ASAT network was registered as an NGO. Nevertheless, ASAT continues to see itself and to function as a horizontal grassroots movement.

The size of CSA partnerships varies greatly. The largest provides for around 300 families (meanwhile it left the ASAT network but it still functions as a CSA) while the smallest for only 15. Most of the CSA partnerships produce for around 40 families.

There is a growing interest in CSA from all across Romania, both among consumers and producers and NGOs working on ecology and the solidarity economy. In the past years, numerous events promoting CSA were organised.

The work inside partnerships and for the ASAT network is done on a voluntary basis. Some of the non-wage expenses (for example travel, expenses for organising events) are covered from the ASAT budget. This budget, in turn, is covered solely by membership contributions.

What is understood by CSA?

According to the charter of the national CSA network, ASAT, CSA is characterised by the following elements:

- Solidarity: An association between a producer and a consumer-group whereby they share the risks, responsibilities and the rewards of the farm.
- CSAs create and preserve environmentally-friendly forms of agriculture and fair economic exchanges
- Advance payment: consumers pay part (or sometimes all) of their share in advance
- Long-term commitment
- Solidarity between producers and consumers: support for the producer in case of natural hazards (pests, bad weather, etc.)
- Direct sale, no middleman
- Locally produced food
- Common management of the partnership
- Consumers accompany producers to self-sufficiency

Are there different types of CSA?

Until now there is only one model – the one implemented by ASAT – which is inspired by the French AMAP model. Since most other groups are former ASAT groups they implement the same model either in a stricter or in a less strict way (i.e. either with more consumer involvement or with less consumer involvement in the running of the partnerships, either with more or with less emphasis on the use of traditional and heirloom seeds, etc.).

Legal setup

The ASAT network is registered as an NGO. The CSA partnerships are informal groups of direct sale. There is no legislation concerning CSA.

Interaction with public bodies

Small scale family farms operate within the legal framework of the country. Each partnership must respect the national legislation concerning small-scale family farming, taxation for small-scale farms, safety standards for processing and distribution. Romania has special legislation for small-scale family farms and processing units. Until now they have not been confronted with any type of legal problems. The members of the ASAT network often offer legal advice concerning national legislation.

Further Details from The Census

Involvement of the eaters

The consumer's involvement in helping the farmer varies with each group. It also varies depending on whether the group is affiliated with the ASAT network or not. For example, consumers from groups within the ASAT networks usually organise the distribution, help the farmer calculate the yearly budget, do the accountancy for the farmer (in most groups), take an active part in planning the annual vegetable crop, and in advertising the partnership to the wide public. In some groups the consumers also share the price of certain items necessary for the farm.

As far as CSA groups which are not affiliated with ASAT are concerned, the amount of commitment varies greatly; from groups (only one, in fact) where consumers co-work the farm, organise the distribution, etc., to other groups (all the rest) where consumers play no part in the organisation of the group (no part in organising the distribution, or in the administration of the group, etc.).

Organic certification

The CSA farmers are not certified organic with the exception of one farm.

Agroecological practices

The Romanian CSA network aims to promote CSA and tap into the great resources that Romania has for small-scale ecological farming.

All initiatives use agroecological methods and some use biodynamic methods. A great emphasis is put on using traditional and heirloom seeds as well as in preserving these traditional seeds.

Many aspects of the Nyéléni Declaration were incorporated into the ASAT charter: food sovereignty (consumers accompany producers to self-sufficiency), access to commons (land, water and food), preservation of traditional agricultural practices, farming is just one aspect of the larger movement towards a more sustainable and fairer economy.

Outlook

In spite of a flurry of agroecological initiatives in Romania over the past years (most of them not in the shape of CSA) the outlook is bleak. Every hour, three small-scale family farms disappear. Romania was a predominantly rural country until 10 years ago, but it is now experiencing accelerated rural flight. Due to high levels of poverty and marginalisation in the countryside, many Romanians are fleeing to larger cities or to western European countries. At the same time land-grabbing is a serious issue in Romania. Over the past few years, large parts of agricultural land were taken over either by big agri-business or by financial companies who see it as a safe investment. In 2015, 99.2% of small-scale farmers – peasants – worked 55.7% of Romania's agricultural land while 0.8% of farmers – basically big companies – work 44.3% of its agricultural land.

Nevertheless, there is some room for hope. First there is a reawakening of Romanian civil society that is quickly (re)discovering ecology and a solidarity economy. Many successful movements and initiatives working on these two topics were started in the past few years. This is an opportunity for CSA. Secondly, as a consequence of these movements, the Romanian government together with IUCN, The World Conservation Union, declared large areas of Transylvania (Central and Western Romania) to be protected areas of biodiversity. These areas contain a considerable number of villages where small-scale traditional agriculture is still being practiced.

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Author

Adrian Briciu coordinated the Romanian CSA network in 2015. He is an enthusiast of agro-ecology and especially of efforts to preserve heirloom seeds.

Serbia

Smilja Ignjatovic

Native name

Solidarne prehrambene grupe (nutritional solidarity groups)

Common definition

As Serbia doesn't have an umbrella organisation or national network, a statute or official national definition does not exist. As things stand now, the working definition agreed by the European CSA Research Group is being used:

> *"CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared, through long-term formal or informal shared agreement. Generally operating on small-scale, CSAs aim at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way."*

Country context

General information

Serbia is country that has very often had changes in its borders in recent history. The most recent change was in 2011 and according to a census of that time, Serbia has approximately 7.2 million people on 77,474km^2. Serbia is a member of the UN but is still in negotiation for EU accession. As a country in constant economical and political crisis, the population hasn't felt the global economy crisis particularly radically, as has been the case in developed countries. The average monthly disposable income (after tax) is €331, from that, an average consumer spends 31% on food and 13% on food in restaurants. Serbia's imports exceed exports by 28.9%. Serbia is one of the largest providers of frozen fruit to the EU; the largest to the French market, and second largest to the German market. It is important to say that, even with the current trend of shopping with imported food and nutritional products in big chain markets, Serbia keeps the tradition of farmers' markets alive. You can find farmers' markets all across the country – no matter what size of city – and in larger cities, every township has its own farmers' market. More than 70% of all food products are still sold through small grocery shops, some 30,000 of which are scattered throughout the country. In 2010, 31% of shoppers claimed that the supermarket was their main shopping place and only 10% preferred to make their food purchases in hypermarkets.

Agricultural information

Serbia has very favourable natural conditions, both land and climate, for varied agricultural production. It has 5,056,000ha of agricultural land (0.7ha per capita), out of which 3,294,000ha is arable land (0.45ha per capita). The active labour force in 2014 stood at 1,703 million, 23.9% are employed in the agriculture. There has been in a sharp decline in agricultural activity since 1948 when almost three quarters of the population engaged in farming, to the present one quarter. Abandoned land and a lack of huge industrial agricultural activities presents a huge potential for ecological farming. The structure of Serbia's agricultural labour force is as follows: livestock breeding (43%), field crop farming (42%), fruit and wine production (12%), other crops (3%). The highest share in food consumption refers to dairy products, bakery, meat and vegetables. Consumption of organic products is still less than 0.01% compared to 3-4% in the developed countries of Europe. Organic farming and processing has begun to grow in the last five years making up 0.17% of total agricultural land and involving about 3,000 farmers in 2009. The latest trend is to produce export-oriented organic products: 116 processing units are involved in the fruit and vegetable processing of organic products, out of which 55% is dominated by refrigeration companies. Major organic products are frozen fruit, fruit juice and concentrates, jams, pasteurised and frozen vegetables, mushrooms and marmalades.

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

To understand the slow development dynamics of CSAs in Serbia is to understand the wider context of this country and its inhabitants. Going back to the middle ages when this country was completely conquered by the Ottoman Empire and up until the nineteenth century, Serbian people were in the habit of stealing and of cheating their own country because, after all,

Factbox Serbia

Number of CSAs?	2, according to responses to The Census
Since when?	2008
National umbrella organisation?	none
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	70 people, according to responses to The Census

it wasn't theirs – it was the Turks' – for such a long period. This traditional habit remains until the present moment. We could see it very reinforced during the 1990s. It is present from the highest politicians to the regular people and peasants, and this goes both ways. By presenting that example, I want to theorise on the core reason why it is such a slow battle for CSAs to develop in Serbia – and this is the same core basis for CSAs – the trust! As far back as 2011/2012, there was an intention to establish the first official CSA movement, but, alas, the idea was soon forsaken and remained as an informal group of consumers that were finding and supporting small-scale producers. On the other hand, some individual farmers started or had already been working on something similar to CSA independently of the intentions of the consumer group. When we ask why they are still not responding or wanting to be a part of CSA, the answer brings us back to the question of trust.

What is understood by CSA?

Non-formal CSA in Serbia can be understood in few ways. Firstly, organised research by groups of consumers that are supporting small-scale local producers, albeit not certified and not 100% ecological, who can be trusted or talkative. This includes sharing the risk of trusting, sharing products and sharing commitments amongst the group of consumers in search of these kind of producers across the width of the country. This leads to informal long-term agreements between consumers and producers, but not necessarily sharing the risks and responsibilities for agriculture. Economy in this relationship is based on mutual trust and agreement, it is not the economy of the marketplace. These groups are supporters of food sovereignty and traditional small-scale farming. Secondly, farmers perceive it as a mutual trust and long-term partnership between them and eaters.

Are there different types of CSA?

We can notice some small differences between groups that are formed by consumers and the way that CSA farmers work with their own groups of consumers. Farmers are more focussed on long-term commitment and groups of consumers are more focussed on finding bigger diversity throughout all the seasons of the year.

Legal setup

Choosing a legal form depends on the starting conditions, the motivation (and business plan), and the requirements

Pineapple melon, village Brusnica, Serbia.

Harvest basket, Earthship, Serbia.

of participants. The form of employment (self-employed, salaried, volunteering), the social security of farmers and workers (health and pension), the long-term business plan, and the administration are the most common legal forms that are being considered. Relations have been kept as direct as possible and at their simplest in terms of bureaucracy. It can be said that bureaucracy is often avoided.

Interaction with public bodies

As it is very difficult to put the kind of farm and way of business of a CSA in any economical or public body framework, it not strange that people are usually very careful, discreet and mistrustful of joining an official global CSA network. Therefore, people – farmers and consumers – holding on to each other in well-known, small-scale, private networks.

Organic certification

Usually, certified organic farms are not trying an alternative economic way of working, so most of the CSA farms are not certified. Some of the farms are biodynamic (which are not subject to the legal framework).

Farm size

Most commonly, the average size of land for vegetable and fruit farms is between one and four hectares. According to responses to The Census, the average farm size is 1.5ha. For beehives and beekeeping, 4ha is the most common size.

Labour and income

Working labour on farms is usually provided by family members – couples with their parents and brothers and sisters – and wwoofers.

Agroecological practices

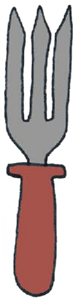
Permaculture in Serbia is developing alongside agroecology. Global trends of self-governance and self-sufficiency is certainly affecting people to educate more in these fields. There are two possible ways in which small alternative farms are developing in Serbia – one is an organic farming business model base but trying to find more or new economy solutions; the other way is people who firstly educate in permaculture and start everything from the scratch. This way requires more time, as permaculture (sister of agroecology) practice is also young in Serbia.

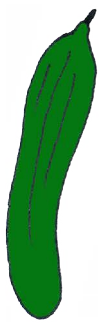
Outlook

Generally speaking, small-scale farmers, especially those not certified organic farmers, are afraid of the giant agro-industry that has been taking over small farms and small businesses, they are afraid of being taxed and fined by the government because of a lack of certification and working in alternative economy praxis, being afraid to be accused of taking part in the grey economy. These are the biggest issues that concern CSA or biodynamic or permaculture or alternative farmers/groups in Serbia. Also, translation of the name “Comunity Suported Agriculture” is very strange in the Serbian language and not understood by people that are not familiar with this praxis. CSA or SPG requires an explanation or better synonym or time to invent a more distinct name. As of now, only two farms declare themselves as CSA, i.e. SPG, practitioners in Serbia. Even though there are many more of these kind of groups, it has been very hard to motivate people to show off and take part in The Census.

Author

Smilja Ignjatovic (MA sculpture) is a permaculture designer and lecturer, a builder with natural materials, co-founder of Earthship Serbia and co-inventor of Marcel urine diverter for composting toilets.





Slovakia

Alexander Fehér

Native name

Komunitou podporované polnohospodárstvo (community supported agriculture)

Common definition

Slovakia does not have its own definition; CSA has no legal framework. The first clear definition was introduced by the Urgenci CSA European Census (Slovak translation of the "Urgenci definition", 2015): direct partnership, shared rewards of farming activities, long-term agreement, formal or informal agreement, aiming at providing quality food and production in an agroecological way. The shared risk and shared responsibilities of farming activities were not emphasised.

Country context

General information

The Slovak Republic is a country in central Europe bordered by the Czech Republic, Austria, Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. Slovakia's territory spans about 49,000km² and is mostly mountainous (excepting SW and SE Slovakia). The population is over 5 million and comprises mostly ethnic Slovaks. The capital and the largest city is Bratislava. The official language is Slovak.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Slovakia was worth $99.79 billion US dollars in 2014. The GDP value of Slovakia represents 0.16% of the world economy. GDP in Slovakia averaged $41.36 billion from 1982 until 2014, reaching an all-time high of $99.83 billion in 2008 and a record low of $5.80 billion in 1984 (World Bank, 2015). The GDP per capita was €13,885 in 2014.

Growth in Slovakia gathered pace in 2014, driven by a recovery in domestic demand, as both private consumption and investment picked up after several years of decline. Export growth, however, weakened, as demand from Slovakia's main trading partners declined. Overall, GDP is estimated to have grown by 2.4% in 2014, putting Slovakia among the better performers in the Eurozone. Employment grew throughout the year, but the unemployment rate remained above 13%. Inflation collapsed sharply in 2014, driven mainly by a fall in energy prices (European Commission, 2015).

Agricultural information

Agricultural land covers 49.7% of the total area and forest land 40.8%. The utilised agricultural land is 1,927,000ha, of that arable land (mainly cereals, fodders and industrial crops) 1,362,000ha, permanent grassland 20,000ha, permanent meadows and pastures 523,000ha and home gardens 32,000ha (Green Report of the Ministry of Agriculture of SR, 2013). The share of organic farms is low and unstable: there are 210 ecofarms with 92,191ha of agricultural land (including circa 60,000ha in conversion). It is circa 5% of Slovak agricultural land (26,796ha arable land, 555ha orchards, 91 vineyards and 64,749ha grassland).

Approximately 90% of the total area of the utilised agricultural land is leased depending on the district. The rent for agricultural land ranges from €6–€120 per hectare. The dynamics of the reduction in the number of workers in agriculture is increasing. The year-on-year drop accounted for 3.8 thousand people, i.e. by 7.4%, to 47.8 thousand workers. The share of agricultural workers in the total number of workers in the Slovak Republic's economy achieved 2.2% and dropped by 0.1 p.p. on a year-on-year basis.

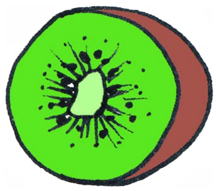
The last known trends in the development of basic macroeconomic indicators (gross value added GVA, intermediate consumption, gross fixed capital formation GFCF, employment, average monthly wage, foreign trade) of the Slovak Republic's economy and its sectors were reflected in changes of the agriculture and food sectors' share in the national economy as follows (see the Green Report):

- the share of agriculture in the Slovak Republic's economy increased in terms of GVA, GFCF and dropped in terms of GVA, intermediate consumption, employment and average wage,
- the share of the food sector in the Slovak Republic's economy increased in terms of GFCF and dropped in terms of total employment and average wage,

Factbox Slovakia

Number of CSAs?	No exact data is available, 10 CSAs are known by the writer (there might be more), 1 new is in process of foundation Considering the low responsibility level of consumers (solidarity), we guess that a 100% pure CSA cannot be found in Slovakia but some of them are close to this (eg. sharing the risk by buying boxes regularly)
Since when?	The first CSA-like initiative started in 2007
National umbrella organisation?	none
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	1,300 consumers are estimated (regular consumers) More irregular and not well-organised consumers can be added

- the share of agri-food foreign trade in the total export and total import of the Slovak Republic's foreign trade dropped.



History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

The development of CSA-like initiatives in Slovakia started in 2007 (Agrokruh Bratislava, BioPapa Trencin etc.). The development of CSAs was supported by the Urgenci mission in Slovakia in partnership with CEPTA (represented by Daniel Lesinsky) in 2010 and the second wave of the development was initiated by a new CSA tour in 2012. Recently, we know about circa 10 initiatives (but not all of them can be classified as CSA clearly because the way of risk sharing is not always well defined). According to The Census responses, the CSAs were initiated by both farms and consumers. The average Slovak consumers prefer cheap and accept low quality food. One of the most preferred CSA-like activity is buying vegetables and/or fruit in pre-ordered boxes (debnickari in Slovak which translates as "boxers") or buy products on farmyards. The CSA initiatives do not network enough; no umbrella organisation has been established.

What is understood by CSA?

There has not been a clear definition, we adopted the definition of the CSA Research Group when they met near Freiburg in 2015 for the purposes of this report. Many CSAs are bound with organic farms.

Type of produce

The main CSA products are vegetables, fruit, dairy products, eggs, bread, and honey, but meat is supplied only in exceptional cases. Teas, jams, oils and fruit juices are available as well.

Distribution method

Home delivery, pick up at farm and collection points are the most important distribution methods, self-harvesting is rare but available – apples, strawberries etc.

Land ownership and farm size

The land is owned by farmer(s), in some cases part is rented by farmer. No CSA ownership is known. The size of farms is different, usually 2ha or less (for comparison: the state-wide average size of farms is 470ha), almost 100% of it is used to produce fruit and vegetables.

Labour and income

The main labour force is farmer and his/her family, rarely only the farmer. The farmer's income is always less than 100% from CSA (usually 0–25%, rarely 50–75%), another job/employment is necessary or other distribution channels.

Are there different types of CSA?

Considering the low number of initiatives, we cannot distinguish different types of CSA. The majority of initiatives are related to different food distribution schemes without well-defined responsibility of consumers. Two possible basic types of CSAs can be observed: home delivery CSAs and farmyard sale CSAs.

Legal setup

CSA has no legal framework, farms and consumers have to respect the relevant legislation on farming, business, food quality etc. Usually, CSAs are informal (not legally recognised). There are legally correct written contracts or informal agreements between farms and consumers. Sales from the farmyard are legal only since 2009. Taxation rules are still complicated.

Interaction with public bodies

Slovak CSAs operate within the legal framework of the country. The visibility of CSAs is at a low level and more publicity is necessary. The communication is poor, for example, only approximately 40% of known CSA-like communities answered The Census.

Involvement of the eaters

Only a few CSA members work on the farms and it takes place on a voluntary basis, farm work is never obligatory. The majority of CSAs are driven by farmers; the consumers seem to be still rather passive. In promotion and development of CSA, NGOs have had a clear and positive role (CEPTA etc.). CSA members attend open days or social events, less often buy shares, help to pack or deliver products, take part in administration or organisation, participate in decision-making and invest money in the farm.

Organic certification

The CSA farms are certified organic or organic without certification or non-organic with minimum spraying (for example, twice per season, depending on the crop, vegetables or fruit). Organic meat and related products are not available within CSA.

Agroecological practices

There is no umbrella organisation in Slovakia and the Nyéléni Declaration for agroecology is not discussed enough. The cooperation among different CSAs is minimal; we cannot speak of a movement considering the declaration of Nyéléni. Also the risk sharing is at a low level, the solidarity of consumers is poor (with the exception of buying boxes of vegetables, in some cases picking or harvesting fruit or vegetables, etc.).

Outlook

The Soviet-type agricultural cooperatives cannot generate CSA communities at all; the number of small family farms is low. Farmers cannot compete with the low prices of global companies. Organic food is a solution but is expensive compared to non-organic food in shops. Besides the prices, the obstacles comprise a low-level of awareness and lack of information.

We are hopeful of future development and in the prospective interest of consumers in food quality. An umbrella organisation could promote that, but the number of really active CSA-like initiatives is low to form such a "legal" network. We miss a clear definition of CSA and the classification or the inclusion of an initiative to the category CSA was questionable in many cases. In many cases, risk sharing is not clear or not well explained, and delivery organisations try to enter – take over – the relationship between farms and consumers.

CSA is still a challenge based on local, bottom-up initiatives without the direct support of authorities, ministries or agencies.

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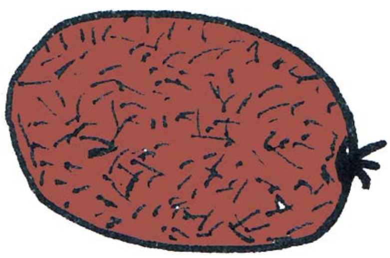


Spain

Daniel López García

Native name

The CSA-like form (defined as: box-scheme; one farm for many consumers; pre-payment; risk-sharing tools or systems; consumers involved in farm works; etc.) has been called many names in Spain: Cooperativa Unitaria (a unitary cooperative, for example Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta in Madrid); Cooperativa Agroecológica (agroecological cooperative, for example Hortigas in Granada or Surco a Surco in Toledo); or Agricultura de Responsabilidad Compartida (shared responsibility farming, for example ARCo-COAG in Nekasarea). There are a few projects that use foreign terms, such as CSA (CSA-Zarazalejo in Madrid) or AMAP (La Montañita in Burgos; PACA in Catalunya).

Common definition

For Spain, within this study, a CSA is defined by having

- a long-term agreement (at least one year) between farmers and consumers;
- shares as the only way of food delivery;
- risk-sharing mechanisms such as stable fees which are independent of the amount of food received by consumers, or pre-payment of fees at the beginning of the season;
- a commitment from the consumers to be involved alongside the farmers in distribution, administration and decision-making about food production and the economy of the project.

Country context

Spain is the second largest country in western Europe (500,000km^2) and the European Union, and the fourth largest country in Europe. By population, Spain is the sixth largest in Europe and the fifth in the European Union (46 million inhabitants). Per capita GDP is about €22,000, 93% of EU-28 average.

Although population density is quite low (92 people/km^2), about 80% of people live in cities; and rural territories represent 80% of land. Only about 4% of the active population works in the agricultural sector, which represents about 2.5% of GDP (especially fruit and vegetables, wine, olive oil, and others)[1]. Family expenditures on food has severely decreased its relative weight from 50% in 1950 to 14% in 2014[2]. The average price of raw food received by farmers represents about 20–25% of the final prices, which varies from, for example, 5% for oranges to 50% for some meats[3].

Spain is the country in EU with more organic certified land (2.8Mha in 2014, which represents the 5% of total agricultural land) and sixth in the world, but only has 32,000 certified farms (noticeably less than, for example, Italy, which has less certified organic land), about 3% of all farms. But the annual per capita consumption of organic food is below €10 which represents less than 1% of total food sales. Short food supply chains are expected (in Government data) to deliver from 35% to 50% of total organic food final sales in inner market, but this number should noticeably grow regarding to fresh fruit and vegetables[4]. About 80% of spanish organic food is exported to the EU and USA, mainly raw fruit and vegetables, oil and wine (often to be bottled in other countries). In 2012 about €350,000 of organic food was imported, mostly manufactured foods[5].

Since the 1990s, the most widespread kind of short food supply chains (SFSC) have been food coops, bringing together consumers and farmers within the scope of alternative and solidarity economy. Since the beginning of this century, the model of little consumer groups has become the most usual, within a margin from 550 to 850 groups, and involving more than 50,000 consumers. It usually consists of single groups of 10–25 families who contact different farmers or deliverers of different produces for direct, collective ordering; based on volunteer, non-professional self-organisation. These consumer groups show different levels and sorts of commitment between consumers and farmers, and, in some cases, come close to CSA schemes. In the last five years, during the so-called crisis, this model of little consumer groups has been shown to be reaching its limits and we can observe a trend in the growth of the number of consumers involved in each group, the professionalisation of some tasks in the management of the ordering, and the creation of local networks for coordinated ordering and

Factbox Spain

Number of CSAs?	75 identified, but depending on the focus of the definition could be much more
Since when?	The first CSA, Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta, started in Madrid in 2000
National umbrella organisation?	No country umbrella organisation There is an umbrella organisation in Bizkaia (Nekasarea) and another in Gipuzkoa (BasHerri Sarea), both in Basque Country There are informal networks of CSA around Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta in central Spain, and other groups are involved in regional food sovereignity networks
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	7,000–7,500

delivery. At the same time, big food coops (over 200 hundred family-members) are growing and strengthening; and other SFSC are developing and becoming more usual and stable in the form of small non-specialised shops, regular farmers' markets (between 150 and 200) or public procurement.

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

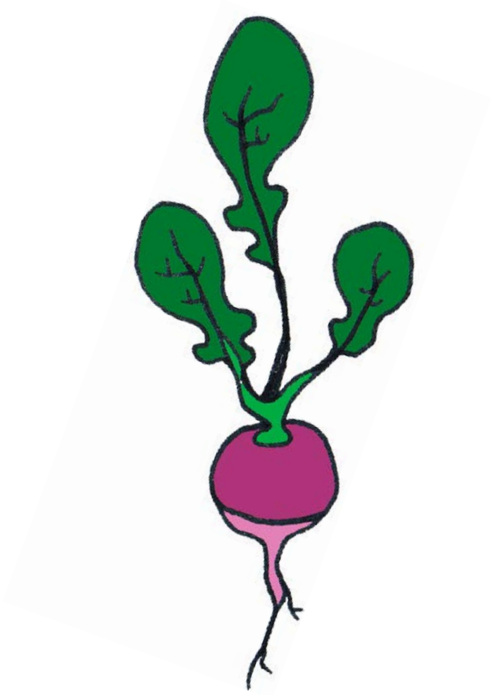
In 2000, the first CSA in the metropolitan area of Madrid was created (Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta) by occupying a piece of public property – abandoned agricultural land. This model was spread in the region of Madrid and to other cities, and, in 2005, there was a meeting in Madrid of 14 initiatives of CSA-like food coops. Since then, new initiatives inspired by French AMAPs appeared (e.g.: La Montañita, Burgos, 2012; PACA, Catalunya, 2013). In the Basque Country, the farmers' union EHNE-Bizkaia set up, in 2006, the Nekasarea network of farmers and consumers, which currently involves more than 30 farmers and 90 groups of consumers, under a CSA-like scheme. In the neighbouring province, Gipuzkoa, another network (BasHerri Sarea) appeared in 2012, inspired by the pioneer CSA project Uztaro Kolektiboa (Beizama, 2004), but there are only a few CSA schemes within this network.

93% of the CSA contacted were created after 2005, and 62% after 2010, so we can consider such experiences to be a growing movement, but quite new and therefore not stabilised in Spain.

What is understood by CSA?

The most common features of CSA recognised by answers to The Census about the CSA definition are: direct partnership (96%); production in agroecological ways (96%); aiming at providing quality food (93%); formal or informal agreement

CSA field visit to Oliva de Plasencia, Caceres. Spain.



(89%); shared risks (86%); and long-term agreement (78%).

Within this study, a CSA is defined by the long-term agreement (at least one year) between farmers and consumers; shares as the only way of food delivery; risk-sharing tools such as stable fees independent of the amount of food received by consumers with pre-payment at the beginning of the season; and consumer's commitment to distribution, administration and decision-making about food production and the economy of the project alongside the farmers.

This is the strongest definition regarding to consumers' involvement, and has been also taken from many debates between CSA projects during the last fifteen years. It is linked to assemblies, self-organised groups, with a deep political view of agroecology and food sovereignity.

The Census: main data

In this study we have found 75 CSAs feeding about 7,000 people (on average, 100 people fed by each CSA). The average land size is 1.1ha of vegetables and fruit, and 150m²/ consumer.

Land ownership

Most of the farms are rented (40%) or owned (26%) by the farmers. Only 12% are rented (10%) or partly rented (2%) by CSA; and in three cases land is a private cession.

Type of produce and distribution method

The most common type of food available on CSAs are vegetables (96%), bread (67%), and fruit (52%). 98% deliver through collective collection points, and in 26% of the CSA it is possible pick up the produce at the farm, what is the unique possibility for vegetables in one case.

Labour and income

Only 38% of farmers take 100% of their income from the CSA, and the average number is 79%. Most take a complementary income from another distribution channel (54% of the farmers).

Are there different types of CSA?

There are many different models, which we could summarise in four general types:

Producer-led CSA

This type is promoted by a single farmer or, sometimes, a group of farmers who organise consumer groups to deliver their produce. Land is usually owned or rented by farmers, as are farming tools and machinery. They set up mechanisms for risk-sharing, such as stable fees independent of the amount of food delivered (no prices for food), pre-payment, and long-term buying commitment. Consumers' commitment is limited to financial support and economic risk-sharing; participation in decision-making, delivery, or farm work is usually scarce from consumers. We can find about 15 projects of this type, one is quite big with 1,200 consumers associated with it.

Producer-network-led CSA

There are two networks that could be integrated into this model, both in the Basque Country. What differentiates this model from the producer-led is that shared-risk systems exist not only between consumers to farmers but also between associated farmers. Farmers exchange produce to provide consumers a full supply of food, and usually support each other in order to complete the shares when crops decrease on any farm, as a collective risk management tool. There are about 50 projects under this model, joining two different networks in Basque Country and another project in Andalusia.

Joint consumer- and farmer-led CSA (Cooperativas Unitarias)

This is the model with the strongest commitment between farmers and consumers, and for some projects it is the only real CSA model. It includes about 15 projects. Usually consisting of groups of people who manage the land where a farmer or group of farmers produce – usually vegetables – for the CSA, usually as employees of the CSA. Each consumer pays a regular fee independent of food production; tools, machines and land rental are joint responsibilities and collective property. Consumers show a big commitment, including assembly decision-making, administration, delivery support, and farmwork (sometimes compulsory).

Consumer-led CSA

Under this model, consumers establish a long-term agreement with a farm or group of farms to buy their food and support the farm when crops decrease or when the farm needs financial support. The land is rented or owned by the farmer, as well as the tools and machinery. The commitment of

Field visit, Nekasarea, Basque Country. Spain.

consumers is reduced to buying shares or minimum ordering, occasional financial support, and attending open days. Only three projects under this model answered The Census survey (and therefore they consider themselves a CSA), since many projects doesn't consider this type to be a CSA. We could find more than a hundred such groups in Spain.

Legal setup

Most of the CSAs are informal groups with no legal form or recognition. Few of them have registered associations to be able to legally employ the farm workers and to prevent possible legal problems with sanitary or treasury administration. In two cases (3% of the sample) there are legal cooperatives where farmers and consumers are members. Only 6% of the CSAs have formal agreements between consumers and farmers.

Labour and income

The most common situation is that farmers are independent workers, as single farmers (59%), farm-families (29%) or a group of farmers (7%). Only 8% of CSA has full-time workers or part-time workers (3%) employed by the CSA; and in 3 cases farmwork is mandatory for consumers.

Interaction with public bodies

CSAs in Spain are usually not involved in relations with public bodies. The most common situation is single projects whose main political activities take place through social movements but without the aim of policy impact or lobbying. 21% of CSAs are linked to local networks of CSA or food sovereignity in some way.

The Nekasarea network (45 CSAs in Bizkaia province) is the only network member of Urgenci, and, together with another project in Castilla y León, are the only CSA which are part of a national network (ARCo-Agricultura de Responsabilidad Compartida, linked to the farmers' union COAG). Only these CSA networks are involved in interaction with public bodies, exclusively through the farmers' unions with which they are linked.

Involvement of the eaters

The main involvement of consumers in CSAs is in exchanging recipes (91%); buying shares and decision-making about farming management (90%); attending open days (87%); and investing money (76%). Only in a few cases do consumers get involved in farmwork or administration tasks (29%), and packaging (17%).

Organic certification

71% of CSAs produce organically but are not certified, and 28% are certified. Only one CSA produces food which doesn't use organic farming practices. Some of the CSAs are involved in local Participatory Guarantee Systems, especially those defined as producer-network-led CSAs.

Most of the CSAs go beyond organic certification in their farming practices, e.g. using local seeds and varieties, committing to seasonal and local food, or producing their own inputs through local resources like vegetal exctracts. Crops diversity needed for delivering food during all the year leads to a very diversified design of the farm, and sometimes includes livestock (especially poultry) mixed with vegetable farming.

Agroecological practices

The Spanish CSAs, in general, are involved in the food sovereignity movement, and are an active stakeholder in promoting food sovereignity at local levels. Most of the projects are involved in local, environmental and social struggles, and support the creation of new CSAs and the spread of agroecology. Many of them are also involved in local seeds networks and try to recover traditional ecological knowledge, formally or informally, in the territory where the farm is situated. They can be considered a powerful tool to sustain the first steps of young, urban people who want to link with the countryside and agroecology, and perhaps support them to become farmers. But nowadays, aside from the Basque Country, political activity is weak.

Outlook

The CSA movement in Spain has developed in the last fifteen years in different ways, depending on the different territories and organisational contexts in the farming sector. On the one hand, CSAs in the Basque Country have been promoted by local farmers' unions, and they are visible, coordinated and politically active. After ten years, the development and maturity of the network shows a trend to localise the networks and to launch local processes of food sovereignity, and to strengthen the professionalisation of farmers. On the other hand, in the rest of Spain, we find many little, disperse and isolated CSAs (excepting around Madrid, with ten groups under informal coordination), frequently facing highly precarious situations, and with trouble keeping up their activity.

In both contexts, CSAs are mainly linked to an urban population, in relation to both farmers – who are often new to farming – and consumers, and it is difficult to bring professional, conventional farmers into such schemes. The lack of knowledge, appropriate land and other farming resources for the new farmers is often highly precarious with high risk of scarce production for consumers. The process of professionalisation of these new farmers is bringing new challenges to the movement, as political aims are loosing weight in the face of technical and marketing problems faced by farmers. This leads to a reconfiguration of the CSA idea, which follows the need to ensure economic viability for both farmers and consumers, and to simplify the coordination structures and work, both internal and external to the CSA.

In 2005, the CSA model was proportionally strong in regard to the general development of SFSC in Spain. Since then, the huge development of SFSC in Spain has not been based on CSA (excluding Basque Country) but on simpler, less committed models of consumer groups. Compared to neighbouring countries such as France, reflection is needed on why the CSA movement is growing so slowly in Spain, especially in the context of growing political awareness and the strong development of alternative, cooperative and solidarity economy projects all around the country. Perhaps we couldn't find appropriate models of internal organisation of CSA; or perhaps the lack of public support for such projects (and, in many cases, the rejection of searching for this public support) is hindering the movement. Perhaps we do not know how to communicate the project and the values of CSAs, and therefore the European charter could be an interesting tool for reactivating the movement.

In any case, CSAs still exist and are growing in Spain, and the process of reflection, that comes with the maturity of the projects, is now beginning. May this census be a powerful tool for it.

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Daniel López García is a member of Ecologistas en Acción. He is a researcher for alternative food networks and participatory action-research at Universidad Pablo de Olavide (Sevilla) and the coordinator of a post-graduate program for Local Agroecological Development at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-IGOP). Daniel is an organic cherry grower and food sovereignity activist. He was co-founder of the first CSA in Spain, Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta in Madrid in the year 2000.

Ecologistas en Acción is a nationwide confederation of about 300 local, grassroot groups who work for developing the social ecology paradigm, with a total of about 30,000 members. Within the "Agroecology, Food Sovereignity and Rural World" working area, the local groups are deeply involved in the development of local alternative food networks. At the national level, several activist documents have been published for developing short food supply chains and alternative food networks (AFN), four nationwide meetings were held (in 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015). The aim is to spread, encourage, link and coordinate such networks. These national meetings provide a unique – albeit periodic – meeting space for such initiatives. Ecologistas en Acción have attended the Nyeléni-Europe meeting (Krems, 2011); and the two meetings of Urgenci-Europe (Milano, 2012; France, 2014).

Sweden

Tobias De Pessemier

Native name

Andelsjordbruk (percentage agriculture)

Common definition

Community Supported Agriculture in Sweden is an alternative, locally based economic model of agriculture and food distribution: a partnership between consumers and farmers sharing the risks and the benefits (harvest) of food production. Partnership can involve the purchase of a share the anticipated harvest at the onset of the growing season (self-harvesting at the farm) or the signing of a subscription prior to the season (vegetable baskets). All CSA initiatives have three characteristics in common: locally-produced, paid-in-advance, harvested or delivered (bi)-weekly.

In its statutes, the network association, CSA Sweden, makes use of the following definition:

> *"Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between a group of consumers and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement."*

Country context

General information

Sweden is the third-largest country in the European Union by area, with a total population of only 9.7 million. Sweden consequently has a low population density of 21 people/km^2, the highest concentration of the population is in the southern half of the country. Since 85% of the population live in urban areas, the countryside is extremely thinly populated. Southern Sweden is predominantly agricultural, while the north is heavily forested.

Fifty years ago, grocery bills accounted for at least 30% of the average household budget. In 1978, food accounted for 40,100kr on household comsumption expenditures of 215,500kr. Recent data (2012) from surveys conducted by Statistics Sweden, demonstrates that food spending eats up an ever-smaller portion of families' disposable incomes. In 2012, annual food expenses represented 34,570kr per year on a total expenditure of 311,320kr: only 11% of the average household budget. This number has never been so low and the trend is ongoing.

The same study also showed that Swedish households are spending more overall. Since 1980, that is, over the last thirty-five years, Swedish household spending has increased by 44%. Swedes nowadays spend considerably more money on housing, transport and even recreational activities than they do on groceries.

Agricultural information

Sweden is one of the largest countries in Europe. About half the area is covered by forest.

Mountains, marshes and lakes together cover approximately one third of the country. The cultivated area is some 2.7 million hectares. This is about 6.5% of Sweden's total land area. The growing season is almost 100 days longer in the southern province of Skåne compared to Norrland in the north. In general, the cold climate renders the growing season much shorter than elsewhere in Europe.

Structural change in agriculture has, in the last 50 years, resulted in a sharp decline in the number of farms, and at the same time the farms have grown larger and became more specialised. Most farms are family businesses, and one third of all enterprises are so-called combination enterprises, combining income from farming with income from related activities. Often the loss in agriculture is compensated by a gain in the other activities on the holding (for instance forestry).

The sector employs no more than 1.5% of total employment in Sweden and contributes less than 0.5% of the Swedish Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This share has been declining steadily since the mid 1980s. According to the Swedish Board

Factbox Sweden

Number of CSAs?	Nearly a dozen CSAs are known to be active, listed on the website www.andelsjordbruk.se
Since when?	The first CSA started in 2001, all other initiatives started in 2013 and later
National umbrella organisation?	Andelsjordbruk Sverige (CSA Sweden) since 27 November 2015
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	About 1,000 people

of Agriculture, horticultural production in 2005 took place at 2,600 enterprises. Three quarters of those enterprises had open-air cultivation on 12,560ha. 1,000 enterprises had greenhouse cultivation on a total area of 300ha. Carrots and iceberg lettuce are most cultivated, while spinach and parsnip increased the most by area.

History and characteristics of CSA

The first CSA in Sweden (Ramsjö Gård) started in 2001 as an initiative of an existing ecologically certified farm. An initial group of 30 families grew to 200 members – corresponding to 500 eaters – over the years. Ramsjö Gård is an Urgenci member since its foundation.

It took until 2013 before another CSA initiative started. Breakthrough of the concept in Sweden started in 2014, followed by a cascade of articles in the press ("My members pay my wage", "We grow, you harvest", ...). Seven more initiatives emerged in 2015.

The initiatives are very diverse: one CSA is growing food for 500 people, some for 75 or 100 people, others for only 6 or 7 individuals.

Only three CSA initiatives in Sweden have 100% income from CSA, all the others get between 0 and 25% of their income from CSA.

One CSA is connected to a golf-club in the outskirts of a southern university city, while three initiatives are situated out in the countryside in the northern part of Sweden.

In November 2015, Swedish CSAs gathered for the first time

Photo by Lisa Arfwidson. Sweden.

ever for a national meeting, resulting in the establishment of a national association, Andelsjordbruk Sverige / CSA Sweden. We discuss more about our ambitions in this regard under the 'Outlook' section later.

What is understood by CSA?

There are currently (nov 2015) 9 CSA farms, sharing three basic characteristics of Community Supported Agriculture:

- local produce from one farm(er) for its members/ subscribers
- shares/subscriptions sold prior to season/delivery/ harvest
- (bi)weekly harvest/delivery to members/subscribers.

There are two models: "weekly boxes (fetch or deliver)" and "self-harvest by participants". One farm offers both possibilities.

Most initiatives are driven by a sole farmer (household); one is driven by a collective group.

Type of produce

All but one CSA initiative grows vegetables for its participants. Interestingly, this initiative is offering meat, sharing the risks but not the rewards. No CSA is offering dairy. Two also include fruit. Two initiatives offer eggs according to CSA principles: they simply divide the amount of available eggs amongst their shareholders. Three CSAs also offer bread – one initiative using subscriptions with advance payment. One CSA farm offers Christmas trees to its members.

Distribution method

Only two out of nine CSAs dedicate themselves to providing food all year round. One of these drives 450km every other week for home delivery purposes.

Home delivery is organised by roughly half of the CSAs. Six apply pick-up at the farm, five have collection points. Three out of nine CSAs offer self-harvesting.

Legal setup

All Swedish CSAs have an agreement with their eaters, three using a written contract.

Farm size

The total size of CSA-driven farms in Sweden varies from 1ha to 209ha, while all but one initiative uses less than 1ha for growing vegetables based upon CSA principles. One initiative explains: "6–10m^2 per vegetable group per adult, resulting in 36–50m^2 per adult participant." One hectare would be sufficient for growing vegetables for 200 people.

Involvement of the eaters

Only in three cases are CSA participants involved with working on the farm, harvesting or packing vegetables. At only one place, members are involved in administration. At five initiatives they help with making decisions, typically, what vegetables they would like the farm to grow. However, nearly everywhere the social aspect of members' involvement was highlighted: attending open days, exchanging recipes.

Agroecological practices

Defining characteristics

Remarkably, only two out of nine initiatives confirmed all aspects of the definition of Community Supported Agriculture: they were the only two highlighting "shared responsibility". All but one initiative listed themselves as applying agroecological methods. Only the smallest vegetable growing initiative, catering for 7 people, answered in the negative.

Organic certification

All CSA initiatives apply organic methods but only half of them (the biggest farms) are certified. As a smallholder explains: "Certification is not relevant, not necessary and a waste of money." This is due to the fact that subscribers, generally speaking, have direct contact with both farm and farmers, and have knowledge of the production principles and process. One farm applies biodynamic methods. All agreed on the quality emphasis in production.

Sustainability and resilience

During their first network meeting, the attending CSA initiatives made their focus on sustainability and resilience explicit:

> *"Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) creates resilient systems based on their respective local communities."*

> *"Through CSA, we create ecologically, socially and economically sustainable food systems."*

"Through CSA, farms and lands are managed in an economically and ecologically sustainable manner, with a large measure of concern and social responsibility."

Globalisation and industrialisation

On their websites, several initiatives refer to the globalisation and industrialisation of the food system during the last century.

"This resulted in a bigger distance between production and consumption of food, not only in time and pace, but also in the conscienceness of people. The concern is also growing more and more in terms of the effects of modern agriculture and transport distances on the environment."

Outlook

Until recently, and generally speaking, CSA has been a totally unknown food production model in Sweden. Despite the successful growth of the concept in some typical farming countries on the European continent, and although more and more initiatives have popped up in Sweden, the establishment remain blind to the concept. For example, the Federation of Swedish Farmers (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund, LRF), an organisation for Swedish farmers with 170,000 individual members, representing about 90,000 agricultural enterprises, published a report about business opportunities for the green industry, Current state and development prospects 2014-2019, and CSA is not mentioned.

Earlier this year, the Swedish government agency that administers state funding for research and development (Vinnova), decided to support a preliminary study, proposed by the Swedish Village Action Movement (Hela Sverige ska leva, HSSL), aiming to "spread knowledge in Sweden about the social innovation Community Supported Agriculture". In this study, "through cross-sectoral collaboration and workshops" HSSL wants to "investigate the prerequisites of creating an umbrella organisation and a digital platform for CSA in Sweden". Vinnova was unaware of the fact that the Swedish CSAs were preparing their own network organisation. The HSSL project was set-up and is running without the support of the Swedish CSAs. A test version of the proposed digital platform seems to be aiming at providing a direct link between consumers and producers, avoiding a middle man. The link with CSA is uncertain.

It is important to mention the fact that one out of twenty-one County Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelsen) in Sweden, more specifically in the county of Västra Götaland, has a project manager for "CSA – secured outlets for locally produced food". Her explicit task is to support the development of CSA in the county by, for example, networking and organising lectures.

As mentioned already, in November 2015, Swedish CSAs formed a national network association, Andelsjordbruk Sverige / CSA Sweden. The formation of this association is expected to result in a firm spread of the concept across the country and an increase in the number of initiatives in the next few years. The total number of CSAs in Sweden is expected to double every second year. CSA farms in Sweden are typically grassroots initiatives, started by new young farmers from scratch. Most of the CSAs are – surprisingly – situated in the countryside at a distance from urban environments. The next wave is expected to happen near big cities like Gothenburg, catering for its inhabitants. As one of the CSA initiatives explains:

"CSA is a way to bring the farmer closer to the city. I think the future farmer works multifunctional. We produce not only food, but also other services for the city, in our case, for example, jobs, biodiversity, and integration capabilities."

Krokshult, 8 december 2015.

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Switzerland

Gaëlle Bigler

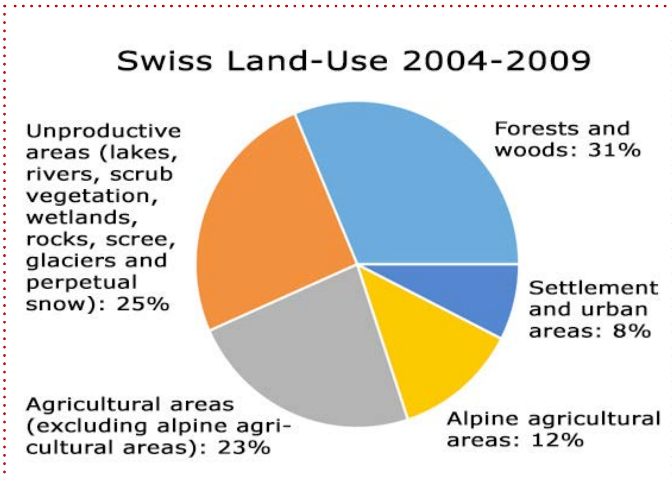
Country context

General information

Switzerland is a small country with a population of 8 million people living on 41,285km², making it a density of 203 people per km². 73.7% of the population lives in cities.

Agricultural information

The available land for farming is 14,817km², but 0.61m²/sec is being lost while the settlement and urban area are growing by 0.69m²/sec. See chart CH1 for graphic representation of land use in Switzerland.

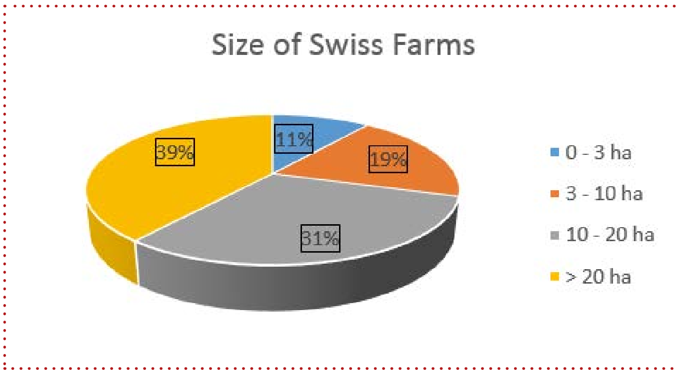


CH1: Swiss land use 2004-2009.

The Plateau area, with a height above sea level between 400m and 600m, makes up 30% of the area of the country. The land available for farming as well as the land used for urban areas are creating a huge pressure on available land in the Plateau.

Swiss farms are mainly small with 69% of the farms being less than 10ha. See chart CH2 showing the size of Swiss farms.

The main produce of Swiss agriculture is milk as its production is well suited to the Swiss landscape[1]. See Table CH3 for breakdown of the shares of different agricultural outputs.



CH2: Size of Swiss farms.

Type of agriculture	%	Sub-%
Crop output	39.7	
Cereals		3.6
Forage		8.7
Vegetables and horticultural products		13.2
Fruit and grapes		5.4
Wine		3.9
Other crop outputs		5
Animal output	49.7	
Cattle		12.4
Pigs		9.5
Milk		22.1
Other animals and animal products		5.6
Agricultural services output	6.5	
Non-agricultural services or activities	4.1	

CH3: Percentage of Swiss agricultural outputs.

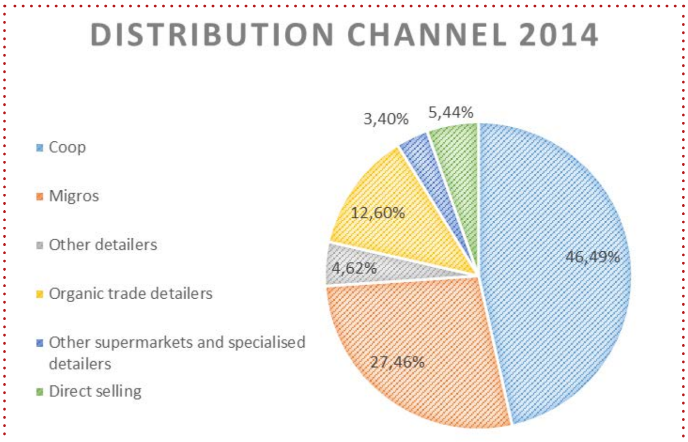
Main retailers of organic produce

The Swiss food market is organised around two main companies, namely Coop and Migros. As the graph shows (see CH4), 46.49% of organic produce is sold in a Coop supermarket. This company works with the organic label Bio Suisse[2], a private-sector organisation which is the federation of Swiss organic farmers. This umbrella organisation counts

Factbox Switzerland

Number of CSAs?	60. The Census was sent to all the CSAs in November 2015, 24 CSA members answered
Since when?	Apart from the two pioneering CSA groups (Les Jardins de Cocagne, 1978 and La Clé des Champs, 1982), most groups were created since 2007
National umbrella organisation?	Regional networks: Les Paniers Engagés – Fédération Romande d'Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité (FRACP) is the French-speaking federation of contractually organised and locally produced agriculture, created in 2008 by 13 CSA groups German-speaking CSAs organised themselves as the Verband Regionale Vertragsland-wirtschaft (RVL) with the help of FRACP in 2011 Conprobio is a consumer-and-producer-driven group in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	At an average of 450 eaters per farm, based on 24 responses, the estimate is 10,800 people according to The Census

32 organic farmers' associations among its members, as well as the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL. They issue common and uniform standards for agriculture and processing with a common label, the Bud (German: Knospe). Organic produce carrying the Bud label has a market share in Switzerland of about 60% and more than 800 processing and trade companies have a licence contract with Bio Suisse to use the label. Many CSA producers are also members of Bio Suisse. The other main suppliers have their own organic label, called Migros Bio and Bio Natur Plus[3]. The average spending on organic food is 269 Swiss Francs per head in 2014. 66.2% of consumers buy organic products several times per month and 35.4% several times per week.



CH4: Distribution channels, 2014.

Organic farms

In 2014 there were 6,387 organic farms.

The total cultivated organic area is on average 12.3%. 20.4% of that is in the mountains and 7.1% in the plain regions.

Bio Suisse announces that the number of organic producers continues to grow in Switzerland. In 2014 there were 5,979 producers working according to the Bio Suisse specifications, 95 more than in 2013. See table CH5 for breakdown of organic agriculture compared to total.

The organic market has improved as well. The turnover of organic products has reached 2,207 billion francs. 164 new producers started working with Bio Suisse from the first of January 2015. The positive evolution remains strong. Since 2010 the number of organic farms has increased by 2% on average[4].

Description	Total	Organic
Farmholdings, total	54,046	6,195
Full-time farms	38,837	4,390
Jobs in agriculture	158,762	18,483
Agricultural area used (ha)	1,051,183	133,973
Open arable land (ha)	271,474	13,406
Average agricultural area used pro farmholding (ha)	19.5%	21.6%
Cattle livestock (total)	1,562,801	166,999
Cows livestock	705,371	78,126
Pigs livestock	1,498,321	29,112

CH5: Agricultural structures, 2014.

History and characteristics of CSA

Are there different types of CSA?

There are three main forms of organisation for CSA in Switzerland: the cooperatives, the non-governmental organisations and the individual initiatives.

Food cooperatives

The food cooperative is the oldest form of organisation in

Switzerland. Several projects are organised this way, such as the first two Swiss CSA projects: Les Jardins de Cocagne[5] (established in 1978 in Geneva) and La Clé des Champs[6] (1982 in the Jura canton).

How do they function?

Within a food cooperative, the consumers are co-operators and the producers are generally employed by the cooperative.

The investment for the production and distribution are partly covered by the social shares of the co-operators. Co-operators usually pay an annual fee for the good running of the cooperative.

The co-operators usually participate in the decision-making process and partake in some production and management tasks. A contract states the delivered goods and the half-day shifts of work done by the co-operator.

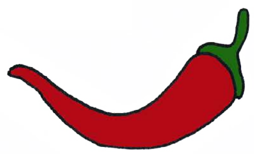
The cooperatives usually offer vegetables every week.

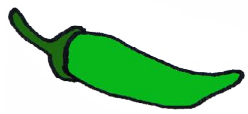
The cooperative wants a collective management of the land.[7]

Non-governmental organisations (NGO)

The majority of CSAs in Switzerland are organised as NGOs.

How do they function?





An NGO linking consumers and producers organises the distribution of products coming from one or several farms.

The products are distributed to consumers belonging to the same organisation or to a group of self-organised consumers.

The contract states the number and frequency of the deliveries (weekly, monthly or annually).

The producers are usually recognised as farmers and receive a direct payment[8] from the state. Generally, the CSA is only a small share of their income.

Some groups are consumer-driven, some producer-driven and some a mix of the two.

Individual initiatives

Some producers, in order to create a new distribution channel for their produce, decide to implement a CSA-type basket delivery. It can also be a new farm starting.

It usually implies the capacity to diversify the production, a new organisation of work, with preparing the baskets and explaining the functioning to their clients. The advantage is the low entry cost.

How do they function?

A farmer offers his/her products to consumers (not to an organised group of consumers) with a contract.

The contract, generally for a year, states the delivery and distribution of the products but very rarely includes tasks to be done on the farm.

The producer is generally a recognised farmer and receives the direct payments from the state.

The management is totally taken care of by the producer.

Dispersion on the territory

Most CSA projects in Switzerland are set on the Plateau Region, the very densely populated and urbanised region going from the borders of Lake Leman with Geneva and Montreux to the area around Zurich up to the northern border and Lake Constance.

Many CSA projects are close to big cities or to the main cities of a canton: 12 around Geneva, at least 11 around Lausanne and 3 around Zurich.

There are also a few projects in the other French-speaking cantons, namely Neuchatel, Jura, Fribourg and Valais.

Regional networks

Les Paniers Engagés - Fédération Romande d'Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité (FRACP)

The work of the FRACP[9] (French-speaking federation of contractually organised and locally produced agriculture, known as Paniers Engagés, FRACP) has a strong input in the creation of CSAs. FRACP is a federation created in 2008 with thirteen CSA groups as founding members. It is hosted by Uniterre[10], a small farming syndicate promoting the concept of food sovereignty, and is part of La Via Campesina.

The statutes of the organisation state that the aim of the organisation is to:

- promote food sovereignty
- promote locally-produced and contract-based agriculture on the basis of its charter
- work for the interests of its members
- facilitate exchanges of experiences and knowledge

help the research, the development, the knowledge-sharing and the promotion of CSA.

The FRACP helps with the creation of new CSAs by counselling and helping them integrate into the network. It organises a workshop for the exchange of information and knowledge between CSA members.

Verband Regionale Vertragslandwirtschaft (RVL)

German-speaking CSAs organised the Verband Regionale Vertragsland-wirtschaft, RVL, with the help of FRACP in 2011. RVL offers courses on agricultural farming[11] with the help of the Kooperationsstelle für solidarische Landwirtschaft, Solawi and is currently working on an open source administration tool called OpenOlitor.

Conprobio

The group in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, Conprobio[12], is organised as a consumer-and-producer-driven group. The steering committee issues a list of products from selected organic producers and food cooperatives in the locale, in Switzerland, or further afield if unavailable locally. The consumers agree to buy a minimum amount and get their order at a collection point.

Further details from The Census

The Census is the name given to the questionnaire which was sent to all the CSAs in November 2015. Twenty-four CSA members answered from the different regions and cantons.

Year of creation

Apart from the two pioneering CSA groups (Les Jardins de Cocagne, 1978 and La Clé des Champs, 1982), four groups were created in 2007, one in 2008, one in 2009, six in 2010, one in 2011, three in 2013, one in 2015.

Creation and origin

CSAs were created by community members (10), by farmers (8) or by both (5), and one CSA said "other" specifying it was an NGO.

Number of people fed?

From 10 to 1,000, every possibility exists. Six answered less than 199, seven between 200 and 499, six between 500 and 799 and four above 800. Of the four above 800, namely three said 1,000 and one said 1,200. The vast majority caters for between 200 and 700 people

The CSAs with very few members are starting their activity. The three big ones are a cooperative in Lausanne, a system in Fribourg with 22 producers and about 540 families, the third one being a facilitator between local consumers and producers.

Defining characteristics

Direct partnership: 19 said yes, 5 said no. The "no" response is coherent with the fact that three of them do not have a contract; for the other two further research is needed.

Shared risks: 15 yes, 9 no.

Shared responsibilities: 8 yes, 16 no.

Shared rewards: 12 yes, 12 no.

Long-term agreement: 18 yes, 6 no.

Formal or informal agreement: 20 yes, 4 no.

Aiming at providing quality food: 23 yes, 1 said no (!).

Production in a agroecological way: 22 yes, 2 no.

Hopefully no-one said "no" to all the parts of the concept, and several said "yes" to all the points. The points to which most responded "yes" are the idea of providing quality food and doing so in an agroecological way. This is consistent with the certification statistics, see below.

The idea of direct partnership has 19/24 positive answers showing that this part of the concept is widely accepted.

Type of produce

Fruit: 12 yes, 12 no. The climate in Switzerland does not permit fruit to be easily available, the problem with small fruit and berries is in keeping the cold chain.

Vegetables: one said no as they only provide eggs and raspberries, all the rest provide vegetables.

Meat: only 3 projects provide meat, and the rest do not. This is certainly linked to the problem of keeping the cold chain for the main part. Some CSAs can only provide dried sausages and meat.

Super CSA, Notre Panier Bio, with 540 members and 22 producers, Switzerland.

Dairy: 4 yes, 20 no. The problem here may also lie in keeping the cold chain, but producing dairy may also imply taking care of cattle, and that is another story!

Eggs: 7 yes, 17 no.

Bread: 6 yes, 18 no.

Honey: 5 provide honey, the rest do not.

Other products: 6 provide other products; flowers, value-added products and re-selling other products.

Tendencies: almost all the CSAs provide vegetables. As a cooperative member of a Swiss CSA told me, it is easier to make a profit with vegetables; I would add that it is easier to handle and distribute vegetables than other products. The only CSA providing all sorts of produce is the one with more than 20 producers and more than 500 members.

Organic certification

They are almost all certified or on the way to certification. 17 said they are organically certified, 1 is a certified biodynamic farm. 4 groups said they were working along organic or biodynamic specifications but are not certified. Certification has a high cost for small structures.

Distribution method

Home delivery: 6 yes, 18 no.

Pick-up at farm: 8 yes, 16 no.

Collection points: 22 yes, 2 no.

Self-harvesting: 8 yes, 18 no.

Tendencies: 15 out of 24 CSA groups have only collection points. Only one CSA offers all the possibilities; they have a gradient price, starting cheaper if self-harvested to an increased price if home-delivered.

Networks

None were part of Urgenci, but the decision has been taken recently by the French-speaking group to sign up to the Urgenci Network, therefore about 32 are going to be part of Urgenci in the near future! I have been advertising Urgenci lately, so I hope more people will join in. 21 are part of a regional network (either FRACP or RVL) 3 are not.

Legal setup

Only 4 have informal agreements, the rest (20) all have written contracts. Among the four with informal agreement, one is a platform between producers and consumers, one is a cooperative (if people buy shares that would stand for an agreement), one asks people not to resign before having had their eleventh basket, and one produces only eggs and fruit.

Land ownership

Owned by farmer: 7

Part rented part-owned by farmer: 4

Rented by CSA: 8

Rented by farmer: 5

Some CSA members specify that the current situation is not going to last. This information should be cross-checked with the organisational structure of the CSA (e.g., cooperative, NGO, or individual initiative).

Farm size

4 had no idea, 7 said 1ha or less, 10 said 2ha–10ha, and 3 said 11ha–21ha (15ha, 16ha and 21ha respectively). Most of them employ the entire plot for growing vegetables. The farms used for CSA projects are not bigger or smaller than the non-CSA farms.

Labour and income

Who works on the farm?

Farmer: 8 yes, 16 no.

Farmer and his/her family: 5 yes, 19 no.

Farmers' collective: 7 yes, 17 no.

Seasonal workers: 5 employ seasonal workers, the rest do not.

Full-time workers: 7 yes, 17 no.

CSA members: 12 yes, 12 no.

wwoofers: only one CSA employs wwoofers. Many producers and / or members of CSA did not know the principle of wwoofing.

Other: 8 take trainees and civilistes, those who chose to do voluntary work instead of going to the army.

There should be further research on this question, as many people answering The Census wrote comments on how they organise themselves. It should be cross-checked with the type of project (e.g., cooperative, NGO, or individual initiative), the size and the production.

Is the farmer employed by the CSA?

Full-time employed: only one CSA.

Part-time employed: 10.

Not employed: 13.

The question of employment does not allow for an easy answer as a cooperative usually has some employees but they can be called "gardeners" instead of "farmers". I guess it was a tricky question asked this way. For example, many CSA groups rent the land to a farmer, but this person is not part of the project.

Sources of income

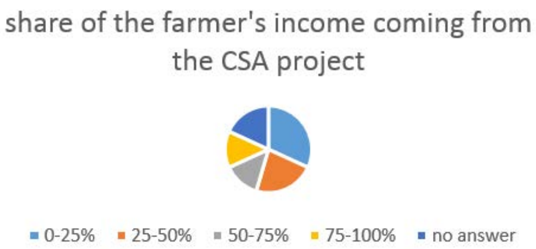
Chart CH6 displays these results.

100% of the farmer's income comes from the CSA: 0

Subsidies: 9 have subsidies; it is mandatory to have the status of a "farmer" for applying for a subsidy.

Other distribution channels: 10.

Other job: 5.



CH6: Share of the farmer's income coming from the CSA project.

Involvement of the eaters

Buying shares: 16 yes, 8 no.

Helping to grow produce: 17 yes, 7 no.

Helping to pack / deliver produce: 14 yes, 10 no.

Administration / organisation: 8 yes, 16 no.

Decision-making: 9 yes, 15 no.

Attending open days / social events: 14 yes, 10 no.

Exchange recipes: 8 yes, 16 no.

Investing money in the farm: 8 yes, 16 no.

Buying shares as the only involvement comes in 4 times, then the opposite comes 3 times. I would like to add that buying shares can only occur if the structure is a cooperative. There are no shares in an NGO. There are different kinds of involvement: would they be active with growing and delivering products, when in other structures an example of helping out is being part of the steering committee and making decisions.

Outlook

This is just the start of a journey towards building a wonderful CSA movement in Switzerland! As only three CSA groups said they had had enough of The Census, all the rest are ready to go on with research, more comprehensive fieldwork should be done…!

If trying to describe the typical Swiss CSA initiative it would be: a group of people near an urban area, whether a cooperative or NGO, producing vegetables and if possible (problem of the cold chain) something else. Members get involved some way from making a monetary commitment to spending hours on the steering committee.

The photographs from Switzerland show people working in the field. We are a grassroots movement and people should be at the centre of our food system!

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Author

Gaëlle Bigler is involved with CSA from the very local level to the international level. At the local level, she is a member of a CSA and has been on the managing committee of this CSA for three years, with two years as President. She took part in organising the Organic Market in her region four times. She represents organic farmers in different governmental working groups. She invests time educating children for Pro Natura, a large nature-conservation organisation in Switzerland, for example taking them to visit farms or going to the forest. At the regional level, Gaëlle is a member of the French-speaking steering committee for the network of CSAs in Switzerland. At the national level, Gaëlle connects people and helps them realise they are all working towards the same aim, and that "together we would be stronger". At an international level, Gaëlle takes part in different CSA working groups, including the declaration writing team and the team of researchers. She is a member of the steering committee for the CSA European Meeting in September 2016 in Ostrava, Czech Republic.

United Kingdom

Maresa Bossano

Common definition

In the UK, CSA is defined as a partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards of farming are shared. The approach can vary but the common theme is that consumers, often described as CSA members, are closely linked to the farm and the production of their food, and provide support that goes beyond a straightforward marketplace exchange of money for goods. This involvement may be through ownership or investment in the farm or business, sharing the costs of production, accepting a share in the harvest, or providing labour.

Country context

Community Support Agriculture schemes have been developing in the UK since the 1990s and there are now at least 80 initiatives. A Soil Association report in 2011 found that there were 80 active initiatives working on 1,300ha (3,200 acres) with at least 5,000 trading members and a combined turnover of approximately £7,000,000.

However, CSA is still a lot less widespread than other better-known local food initiatives such as farmers' markets or standard box schemes. In addition, the local food sector as a whole only accounts for a small part of the food system, as the large supermarkets now account for over 70% of food retail in England.

CSA counts under 0.01% of the population as members but represents over 0.2% of farm income. Public awareness of CSA is lower than other types of community food enterprise: just 32% of adult grocery shoppers have heard of the concept and only 6% know of an example. When the concept is explained, 47% find it appealing (Saltmarsh, 2011).

The development of CSAs in the UK is somewhat different from other countries because when the concept of box schemes first came to the UK, via organic farmers learning about Teikei schemes in Japan, the community involvement aspects of the schemes did not, generally, get taken on and the box schemes became mainly farmer-led. Box schemes have become even more commercial since then with two big players plus lots of smaller companies providing nationwide deliveries of organic veg boxes. Whilst this satisfies the demand many people have for fresh organic food, it means that box schemes are no longer synonymous with local produce. It has also led to many smaller box schemes closing down, as they cannot compete with the larger schemes in terms of price or customer service. This has meant that those searching for truly locally grown produce are now looking to CSAs to fulfil their needs, and more and more communities are taking on running a farm and producing food themselves because of their desire for fresh, sustainable, organic food.

General information

The current population of the United Kingdom is estimated to be around 64.6 million. The agri-food sector in the UK contributed £103 billion or 7.6% to national Gross Value Added in 2013, and 3.8 million or 13% of national employment in 2014.

Food prices have risen 18% in real terms since 2007 and at the same time income after housing costs fell 13% between 2002–2003 and 2012–2013 for low income households. In 2011–2012, all other incomes groups saw decreases in income of between 0.8% and 3.3% meaning people have less money to spend on food particularly those with the lowest incomes.

Based on price level indices, in 2013 food and non-alcoholic beverages were 7% more expensive in France and Germany, and 14% more in Ireland than the UK. In 2013, 23 countries together accounted for 90% of UK food supply. Just over half of this (53%) was supplied domestically from within the UK.

Agricultural information

Due to its climate and topography, the two main types of farming in the UK are pastoral farming (the use of grass pasture for livestock rearing), which is found in areas of higher rainfall and among the hills, mainly to the north and west of the UK, and arable farming, mainly in the south and east of the UK where the climate is drier and soils are deeper. Vegetable growing and fruit represents a much smaller part of the farming sector.

The area of land for vegetables and salad for human consumption in 2014 was 116 thousand hectares compared to 4,559 thousand hectares for arable and 9,755 thousand hectares for permanent grassland. Organic farming represents around 4% of the farmed area.

Factbox United Kingdom

Number of CSAs?	There are around 80 CSAs in the UK although we don't have precise numbers as we are still trying to map them all at the moment. Also the total number depends on the definition used for a CSAs. Thus far the numbers have been based on quite a broad definition so include some farms where the CSA is just a small part of their overall activities. There are also new CSAs setting up all the time but it is hard to estimate the number of new ones being established. Previous estimates of 100 CSAs in development included all those who made initial enquiries but then a lot of them never went on to operate. However just over the last year we have probably had about 20 potential CSAs contact us.
Since when?	CSAs started to develop in the UK in the 1990s. Earthshare was the first CSA to be set up, in February 1994 as a result of a shared desire to have more food produced and supplied locally in the wider community in Findhorn, Scotland. They provide around 175 family shares. Tablehurst Farm, East Sussex, followed soon after in 1995; the farm had been in biodynamic cultivation since 1968, but capital was required to re-establish it under the management of Peter and Brigitte Brown; a CSA was formed as an industrial and provident society and sufficient share capital was raised for the farm to survive and grow.
National umbrella organisation?	CSA Network UK, which was launched in December 2013
Estimated eaters and farms involved?	Based on 80 CSAs with an average of 40 members and with an average share feeding 2–4 people, we would estimate 10,000 eaters In The Census, 23 CSAs said they were feeding 2,273 people

In the UK there are approximately 300,000 active farms with an average size of around 57ha, much larger than the European average size of approximately 20ha. However, the UK's high average size is swelled by the impact of Scotland where the average farm size is over 100ha. In England average size is around 50ha. For Wales and Northern Ireland, sizes are smaller at around 40ha.

In 2006, the UK workforce employed in farming (full-time, part-time and casual employees) amounted to 184,000 people. There were 152,000 full-time farmers with a further 198,000 part-timer owners engaged in some capacity in the farm business. The total farming labour force of 534,000 in 2006 had been broadly stable over the previous five years but was down 80,000 on a decade earlier.

UK farming incomes have been in long-term decline since the 1960s, reaching a low point in 2000 with average Net Farm Income at just £8,700. Since then they have risen and for 2006 Net Farm Income was calculated at £20,600. This compares with median annual earnings for full time employees throughout the UK of just over £22,000 for the 2002/3 season.

History and characteristics of CSA

The development of CSA in the UK has mainly been supported by projects run by the Soil Association. In 1999 they held a conference promoting the CSA concept which resulted in a flood of responses from farmers and communities. This was followed in 2001–2002 by a two-year feasibility study, A Share in the Harvest, then a three-year development project 2003–2005, both by the Soil Association. From 2008–2012 they provided farmers and communities with a range of support and advice, a toolkit, technical information, case studies, and a comprehensive website as part of the Making Local Food Work programme funded by the Big Lottery.

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

The concept of Community Supported Agriculture started to become established in the UK in the 1990s after spreading from Japan, the United States and Europe where is had started in the 1960s. In the USA and Europe, CSA farm enterprises engage and link communities with farmers in such a way that the risks of farming are shared between the two; in the US this often takes the form of members paying for a season's worth of produce in advance as compared to Europe where shorter-term contractual arrangements are predominant. Direct community engagement in farm activities and the farm business is common, especially in Europe and the UK, but this is not always the case; in fact, CSAs have sometimes been categorised as farmer-led or community-led depending on which management ethos predominates but are perhaps best seen as partnerships between producers and consumers. Although the element of community engagement and risk are embedded in the concept of CSA business models they typically employ a broad range of actual practices on the ground to achieve these outcomes.

Over the past few years the number of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprises in the UK has been growing fast, with most successful farms and projects set up as grassroots initiatives that have succeeded, despite limited funds, through the skills and knowledge of their members and sheer determination. The growth of CSAs was also supported by the Soil Association as part of the Big Lottery funded Making Local Food Work programme which ran from 2007 to 2012. Over the past two years, keen CSA experts and supporters, together with supportive organisations like the Soil

Association and Plunkett Foundation, have identified the need for an independent network to drive CSA forward. As a result, the new CSA Network UK was launched as an independent organisation in December 2013.

What is understood by CSA?

The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network UK charter sets out the defining values or principles of community supported agriculture schemes in the UK. It is not laying down rules but stating what we are striving to achieve. Each CSA farm is on their own journey within that context. The charter is also the binding document which enables CSA farms to form the CSA Network UK under a clear statement of our common values and working principles. It is intended to be inclusive of all types of CSA farms while maintaining a clear understanding of what a CSA farm is.

CSA has been defined in the UK as meaning any food, fuel or fibre producing initiative where the community shares the responsibilities, risks and rewards of production in a spirit of mutual trust and openness. This may be through ownership, investment, sharing the costs of production, or provision of labour.

This partnership between producer and consumer supports three pillars which represent our core values:

People Care

A fair and steady income for the producer and a relationship based on trust with the consumers/members. Access to healthy food at affordable prices.

Earth Care

A chance for the land and biodiversity to flourish due to ecological farming methods and shared interest in these methods of production.

Fair Share

A share in the harvest of healthy (mostly organic or biodynamic), local and low carbon produce; a connection with the producer, the land and each other. This includes a commitment to support the farmer through both good and poor harvests.

Common practices

The CSA model is quite diverse in the UK, ranging from the purist model, where the farm is self-sufficient and receives regular support from members with farm work and administration, to models where the bulk of the work and organisation is by the farmer, with some supplementary produce bought in, during the hungry gap for instance. It is up to the farm and community to build a model which suits them best.

How ever the CSA is structured, certain common working practices are demonstrated by all CSA farms (although a farm may demonstrate all or only some of these characteristics).

These include:

Direct distribution

Members have a relationship with the producer and the production. CSA farms are not food hubs or shops; although they may buy some produce or supplementary items in to bulk up their share. CSA may make up only part of the whole farm enterprise.

Shared risk

Producer and consumer share the risks of production through a pre-arranged agreement between members and the farm for instance on the crops to be grown and fair price to be paid or through investment in the farm (whether financial or through time commitment).

Connection to the farm

Members have the opportunity to understand the extraordinary commitment a farmer demonstrates to produce our food, and an opportunity to be connected to the working life of a farm and what's produced there.

The diversity of CSA reflects the fact that CSA farms have grown from grassroots initiatives and individuals finding their

CSA farmers and members, United Kingdom.

own way to address the challenges of food production, rather than following a set model. However, all share the common principles of sharing the risks, rewards and responsibilities of food production.

Are there different types of CSA?

We have indentified four different approaches to CSA: Producer-led; Consumer-led; Producer–community partnership; and Community-owned farms

Producer-led

A farmer offers a share of production in return for a fixed subscription. The share may vary with the vagaries of production (so the risks and rewards are shared), while the subscription is generally payable in advance and for a relatively long term (providing secure income to the producer). This is the most widely used approach and is also common in France and the USA. Good examples of producer-led CSA farms include: Chagfood and Canalside Community Food.

Community-led

A farming enterprise is set up and owned by the community, which takes on direct responsibility for production. Labour may be provided by volunteers and/or employed professionals. Produce may be distributed amongst the community and/or sold for the benefit of the enterprise, including using the share of the harvest model. Stroud Community Agriculture is one of the most established CSA farms using this model.

Producer-community partnerships

The enterprise, owned by the community through a cooperative or similar structure, works in close partnership with existing producer(s) to provide a secure and long-term supply of produce to CSA members. Good examples of this model are The Oak Tree Low Carbon Farm and Cambridge Cropshare.

Community-owned farms

A farming enterprise is secured through community investment but does not necessarily trade primarily with the community members. Fordhall Farm and The Community Farm are the best known examples of this model.

Further details from The Census

The Census was completed by 23 CSAs which represents about a quarter of the current CSAs in the UK and two thirds of the CSA Network UK membership, although some of those who filled it in are not currently members. The relatively low number reflects the fact that The Census was only an online survey, not face-to-face or over the phone, and the length and format may have put some people off. However, a far more in depth survery as part of the Making Local Food Work evaluation still only had 37 respondents so 23 is actually quite a good response considering the short timeframe. Also not all of the existing 80 CSAs in the UK are currently actively engaged with the network so may not have seen the The Census survey promoted via the Facebook, website, email, etc.

Creation and origin

Of those that filled in The Census, all of them were set up between 2006 and 2015 with 5 in 2010 and 4 in 2011 and 4 being set up in the last year. This probably reflects support given by the Making Local Food Work programme which ran from 2007 to 2012.

Roughly a third of the CSAs were set up by community members, a third by a farmer or grower (note: many growers and market gardeners clicked 'other' rather than 'farmer') and a third by both.

Number of people fed?

The number of people fed by each CSA varies between 4 and 800, however the largest CSA was a community-owned farm where not all the customers are CSA members. The average was 87, previous surveys have found the average number of CSA members across the UK is 40, how each share usually feeds more than just one member.

Defining characteristics

Of the main characteristics of a CSA highlighted in the Common Ground definition – of which The Census and this report are a part – none of the CSAs said they agreed with all of them. The most common theme that CSAs agreed with was that they aimed to produce quality produce and that rewards were shared. The aspect that CSAs agreed with least in the definition was that they had a long-term agreement, which reflects the fact that a lot of UK CSAs do not have a long-term contract with their members.

Type of produce

All but one of the CSAs that filled in The Census produced vegetables and about half produced fruit. Only five out of twenty-two farms produced meat, two produced dairy, four produced eggs and two produced honey. None of the CSAs who responded to The Census supplied bread. Across the UK there are some CSAs that only provide meat shares but none of these completed The Census but there are also a growing number of fruit and vegetable CSAs that are now expanding to supply other produce.

Organic certification

From The Census results that majority of CSAs (89.5%) farmed organically. Of 22 CSAs 6 were certified organic, and 13 used organic methods but were not certified. Only 3 were non-organic but even these said they used mainly organic methods. The low number of certified farms is mainly due to the cost and reporting requirements which are quite difficult for small farms to achieve, especially when they are community-run.

Distribution method

The most common distribution methods used by CSAs in the UK highlighted by about two thirds of the respondents were pick-up at the farm or collection points. About a quarter did home delivery or self-harvest. Note: many CSAs used more than one distribution method as well as other options like market stalls.

Networks

None of the CSAs were a member of Urgenci but the majority were members of the CSA Network UK.

Legal setup

Around half of the CSAs had an informal agreement with members and half had a written contract.

Most CSAs tend to be either Community Interest Companies (CICs) or cooperatives / community benefit societies.

Land ownership

In terms of land ownership, in 6 out of 22 CSAs the land was owned by the farmer and in 13 it was rented by the CSA. This reflects the fact that it is very expensive to buy land in the UK and that producer-led CSAs are often set up by farmers who already have lots of land available. The total area farmed by CSAs in response to The Census was 122 acres with the area used for the CSA varying from 1 acre to 50 acres, the average size was 6 acres. The total area of the farms was 432 acres as some CSAs are based on much larger farms growing other produce.

Labour and income

Only 10 had farmers who worked on the CSAs, in the others it was the members who did most of the work. Of the CSAs who filled in The Census in 9 the producer was not employed, 9 they were employed part-time and only 3 employed full-time. However, a lot of CSAs mentioned that this question assumes there is a farmer but some are fully run by community members.

In The Census only a third of CSAs supplied 100% of the producer's income. The rest of their income was mainly supplied by other employment. Some CSAs also got income from grants or running training courses.

Involvement of the eaters

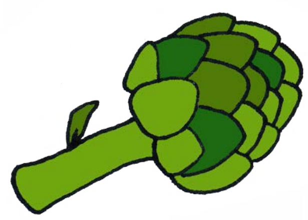
CSA members participate in the farm's activities in a wide variety of ways. The most common, in 19 out of 21 CSAs, were attending open days and events and helping to grow. Also very common were members being involved in decision-making, followed by helping to pack, administration and exchanging recipes. Only 7 CSAs had members who had invested money.

The Census results show that there was a high level of participation from members although they did not necessarily have a written contract or any long-term agreement.

Agroecological practices

Many CSAs rely on collective self-organisation and action to build local food systems, and solidarity between peoples, often between rural and urban populations.

CSAs also promote direct and fair short distribution chains with a transparent relationship between producers and consumers, and are based on the solidarity of shared risks and benefits.



Outlook

One of the main aims of the CSA Network UK is to help new CSA intiatives to start and to help existing schemes to run more successfully. Over the last eight months whilst I have been co-ordinating the Network we have continued to have lots of enquiries from new CSA iniatives that are hoping to set up or have just started. These have fallen into three main groups: new (mainly younger) growers who are hoping to start a business supplying organic vegetables and are looking at CSA as a possible option; existing farmers, often meat producers, who have land available and are looking at CSA as a way to involve the community and diversify their products; and communities that want to come together to produce their own food. All these different groups require tailored support and guidance to help them set up a CSA. The CSA Network plans to run a mentoring programme to provide one-to-one advice and to produce written guidelines to help give groups the information they need.

The CSA Network also supports existing CSAs however many schemes still struggle even when they have been running for several years. A report assessing the key factors determining the long-term success of CSA projects in Wales (Hitchings, 2013) found:

- Clear structure of the organisation (legal and actual)
- Good communications
- Realistic pricing and pragmatic forecasting
- Suitable site for the production of the intended crops and/or livestock
- Secure land tenure
- Access to an appropriately large population
- Able and competent workers of the land according to the system

Another issue for CSAs in the UK has been the reliance on grant funding, many community-led CSAs have received grants to cover many of the project costs, and then when the funding runs out find it difficult to be financially sustainable. The CSA Network would advise CSAs to have a more business-like mentality rather than rely on grants, although they can be helpful when starting up and for specific capital expenditure. However, like any other small farm, it is still hard for CSAs to cover all their costs from supplying produce and to provide workers on the farm with a living wage.

The CSA Network is optimistic for the future as there are many great examples of successful CSAs in the UK and abroad, many have only been running for a short time and we feel that by sharing the knowledge and skills gained by these CSAs, we can help grow the movement even more.

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Author

Maresa Bossano has been project co-ordinator of the CSA Network UK since May 2015. Before this she set up and ran Moose's Kitchen, a local, organic, vegan cafe in St Leonards on Sea. She worked for Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming for five years, managing the Food Co-ops project, which was part of Making Local Food Work, and as Five a Day Co-ordinator for Hastings Primary Care Trust which included setting up Hastings Farmers Market and The Community Fruit and Veg Project, a social enterprise and veg box-scheme. She has a degree in Environmental Science and master's degree in Environment, Development and Policy. She has volunteered on several organic farms in the UK and abroad.

Note: some information for this report was taken from CSA UK Network website and previous reports written by Gareth Davies, Rupert Dunn and other members of the Network.

European CSAs in figures

- aggregated results from The 2015 Census

Nicolas Cressot (GASAP), Jocelyn Parot (Urgenci), Philipp Weckenbrock (Agronauten), Peter Volz (Agronauten)

Although it is still unknown to most people in Europe, CSA is increasingly being implemented throughout the continent. This collaborative research was designed to document this growth with empirical data about CSAs in Europe. There were three main reasons why Urgenci and the CSA movement decided to launch this research.

Firstly, the European CSAs have been looking to define their common ground since 2012 at the first European meeting of CSA movements in Milan. At the same time as this research was launched, a parallel 18-month-long process of writing a European Charter of CSA started. Both processes have been feeding into each other.

The second reason is to question the practical implementation of common principles in different contexts. The strength of CSA lies in its ability to take root in radically different social, economic and agricultural ground; but how much adaptation is needed in order to make it grow?

The third reason is advocacy. CSA is increasingly being identified by decision-makers as a movement promoting important social innovations. Therefore, there are calls for the CSA movement to take a position on various policy issues. In the recent past, such requests, if not answered by Urgenci, would have been answered by others in the name of the CSA movement. The following two examples demonstrate this. The first one occurred in France in 2009 when a Ministry -led working group was charged with coming up with a definition for 'Short Supply Chain'. Among the partners sitting around the table were the large-scale retailing hypermarkets whose representatives were saying, in essence: "Look, we can provide you with a definition of short supply chains. Short supply chains are with one intermediary maximum. We are actually doing short supply chains. We are just one intermediary". The second example involves an initiative for the creation of a logo called "products from my farm". The initiative came from the farmers' union, La Via Campesina. Urgenci was invited as the representative for the CSA movement and had to explain what CSA was and that no logo or label was required within the CSA model, even if a "products from my farm" logo could be extremely useful for the farmers selling on markets. Who knows what could have been said about CSA and their support for such a logo without the presence of Urgenci.

Thus, the CSA movement cannot hide anymore. It is necessary that we take a position, otherwise somebody else will, without any guarantee that they will do so in the interest of the CSA activists and farmers.

During a research meeting in the German Black Forest, the first European CSA Census was planned by a team made up of researchers and practitioners from more than twenty different countries. Their objective was, first of all, to come up with consolidated figures regarding the number of CSAs in Europe. The second objective was to assess the state and dynamics of the movement in Europe. Both quantitative (number of CSAs per country, regional distribution, number of farms and eaters, creation date etc.) and qualitative information (produce, distribution, land ownership, labour types, internal organisation, and interactions with others, strengths and weaknesses etc.) were considered relevant.

Of course, there were many challenges with such an ambitious enterprise, e.g. agreeing on a limited set of questions, finding a common terminology which could be accepted in each national language, meeting the tight timeframe to prepare the online survey, getting CSAs in more than twenty European countries to respond on time etc.

By December 2015, just four months after the initial research meeting, 403 responses to the survey had been sent in from twenty-four European countries. This is an amazing success considering the limited time and finances.

For the questionnaire-based part of the study, the efforts focused on countries where CSA had not been subject to research yet. For this reason, the questionnaire was not used in France, the biggest CSA country in Europe which is already well-mapped and researched within the Amap movement. The other reasons for letting France out of the survey were that, on the one hand, a census had just been conducted by Amap earlier in 2015, and, on the other hand, collecting representative data on such a large movement (more than 2,000 Amap groups) in such a short timespan would not have been realistic. Moreover, the massive inclusion of the Amap would have resulted in the over-representation of French dynamics.

In spite of its limitations, The Census is still the very first study that displays how CSAs look on the continent. Enough CSAs replied to draw a trustworthy picture of the movement and serve as a basis for the next research. This picture shows how strong and united the groups are, how committed their members are to their model and principles, how fast the CSA movement is expanding, how effectively the CSAs add new products to the basic fruit and vegetables model of the early CSAs, and how willing they are to organise and collaborate on being represented in the decision-making scene at both national and international levels.

Here are some highlights from The Census:

The movement has been steadily growing since the mid-2000s

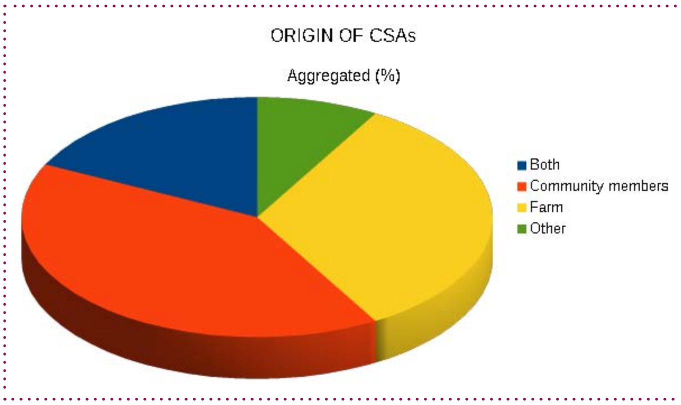
The movement has been steadily growing since the mid-2000s. The growth curve in EU4 shows a three-stage evolution:

1 - Early erratic emergence of CSAs in a few countries in the late 1970s, mostly in Switzerland, France and Italy. At this time, there were already informal groups gathered around organic agriculture pioneers although they didn't claim to be part of any specific movement.

2 - A slight augmentation between 1994 and 2000, mostly noticed in Italy and the Netherlands.

3 - A period of flat progression where CSAs are created only in Italy. The very first one in Sweden comes to light. Note that the dynamics of the French Amap movement, which grew exponentially from two in 2001 to two thousand in 2015, are not reflected here, as, for reasons explained above, the questionnaire was not circulated in this country.

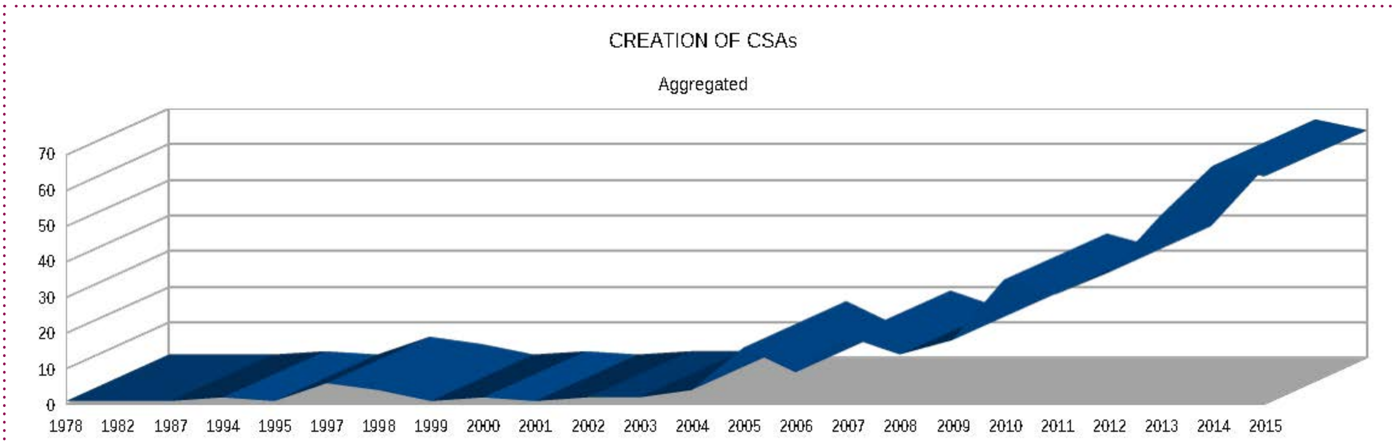
4 - Finally, stage four is the steady, almost exponential soaring throughout Europe from 2004 onward.



EU5: Origin of CSAs.

An alternative movement attracting a large number of consumers

Responses to The Census show a total of 70,865 people fed by 403 CSAs, amounting to an average of 179 eaters per CSA. As pointed out in introduction to this report and demonstrated in graphs EU2 and EU3, between half a million and one million people all over Europe receive food from CSAs.



EU4: Creation of CSAs.

A social movement initiated by farmers and consumers

As shown in diagram EU5, the vast majority of respondent CSAs have been initiated either by consumers (41%), by farmers (33%) or by both (18%). The remaining 8% were created by associations, foundations, businesses or institutions. This marginal proportion is a strong signal that the CSAs are in fact a social movement, relying heavily on voluntary commitment by actors in the field.

The CSA movement distinguishes itself from other consumer alternatives by the strong commitment shown by its members

CSAs responding to The Census identify with principles such as a direct partnership between the farm and the consumers (over 85%), the goal of providing quality food (93%) produced in an environment-friendly way (88%). The replies to this question also highlight the diversity of the CSA landscape in Europe: almost two thirds reported a commitment to sharing risks (64%), while fewer initiatives reported sharing responsibilities (41%) and rewards (58%), see EU6. However, figures relating to the latter princples tend to grow with the increased awareness of consumers in the groups which have been created most recently.

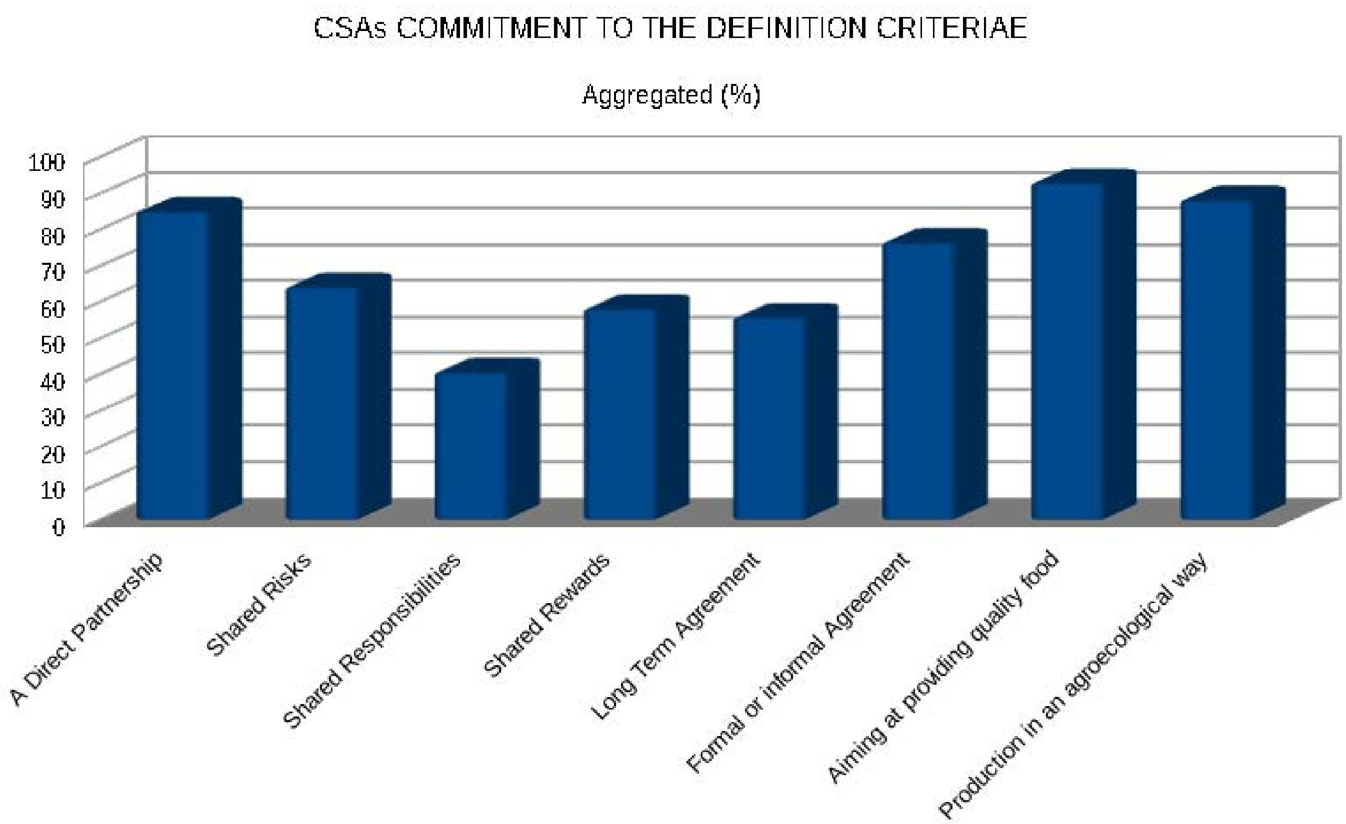
The partnership, most often formalised in a written contract, is a long term agreement of at least a production season in a majority of cases (56%), to guarantee the farm's income as well as quality food for members.

The commitment of CSA members is also expressed in the way they participate in the life of their group and farm. This list shows what it means for committed consumers to "be and act as a CSA member".

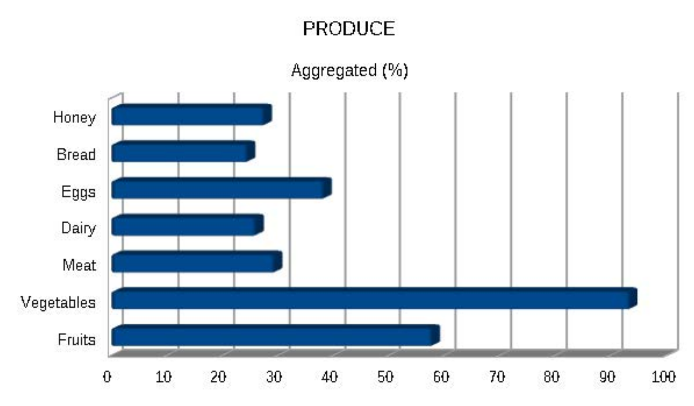
- Buying shares : 58% of respondent CSAs
- Helping to grow produce : 42%
- Helping to pack/deliver produce : 41%
- Administration/organisation : 50%
- Decision-making : 55%
- Attending open days/social events : 68%
- Exchanging recipes : 54%
- Investing money in the farm : 19%

A wide range of produce is now available through the CSA model

While vegetables have been at the core of the CSA model since its early stage (they are supplied by 94% of respondent CSAs), the variety of produce tends to grow nowadays to include, among others, fruit (58%), eggs (38%), meat (29%), honey (28%), dairy products (26%), and bread (25%); see EU7. This trend shows that consumers engaged in CSAs are willing to complement their basic veggie supplies with all other the produce they had until then been buying in organic shops, supermarkets etc. There is thus a great potential to expand the CSA model to products previously not available through CSA.



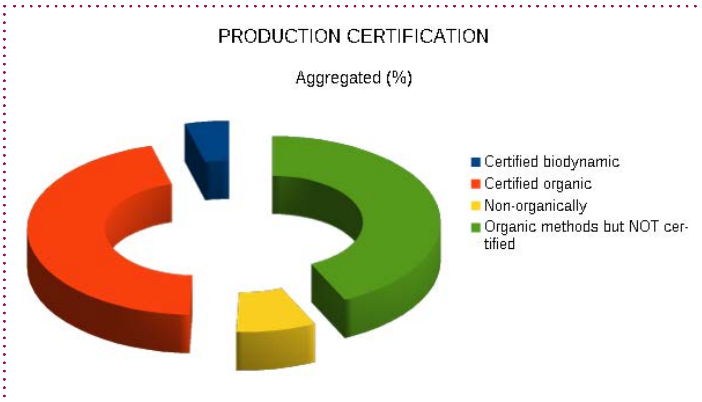
EU6: CSAs' commitment to the definition criteria



EU7: Produce.

To be or not to be... certified organic?

As pointed out above, a great majority of CSAs put a high priority on high-quality food and use organic farming practices. This does not necessarily mean that their farm is certified organic. While 44% of responding CSAs are certified organic and 4% certified bio-dynamic, 41% practice organic farming but are not certified. The rationale for the latter not to be certified includes the facts that the CSA members know the farm and feel they do not need external control, or that the costs of certification are considered too high. Sometimes, an outright rejection of certification out of ideological reasons may also be observed. Most of the 7% of CSA farms that are not organic are in the process of transition towards organic production. See EU8.

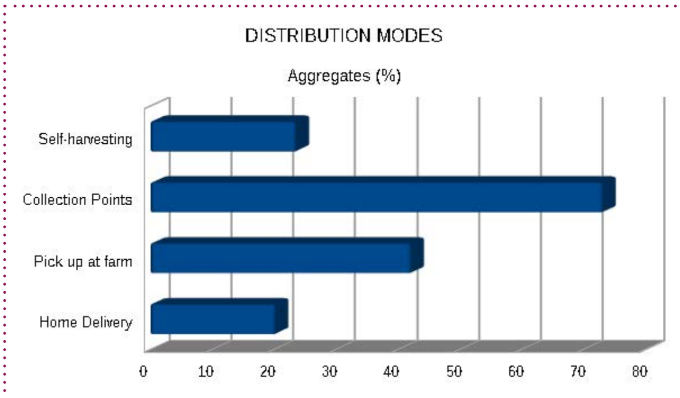


EU8: Production certification.

The movement is increasingly organising close-distance logistics

Food-related long distance logistics are a big consumer of fossil fuels and responsible for vast amounts of CO_2 emissions, noise pollution, and other environmental problems. CSAs have been developing different solutions for close distance logistics maintaining direct personal contact between producers and consumers. All are based on the proximity between production and consumption. Diagram EU10 displays the following:

- In the case of 73% of the respondents, CSA members pick up their shares at collection points or at the farm (42%)
- Self-harvesting is practiced in 24% of the groups participating in the survey
- In 20% of all responding CSAs, members receive their share by home delivery

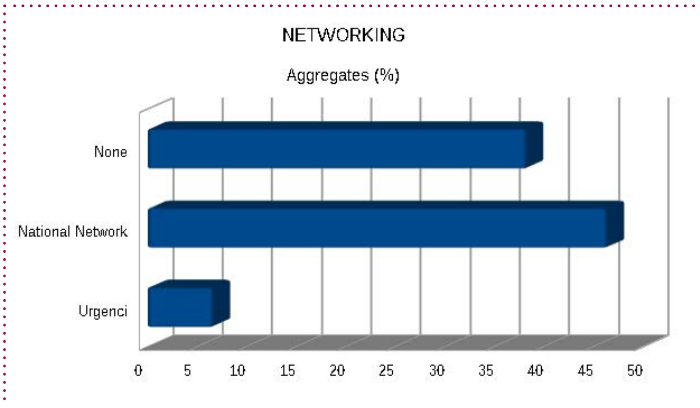


EU10: Distribution modes.

A movement still in the early stage of organising itself nationally and internationally

The Census questionnaire included a question about network membership, see diagram EU11. The idea was to see how many responding groups were effectively part of larger networks and thus to address the issue of the CSA initiatives as part of a social movement. An under-representation of those of the CSA groups which prefer to remain fully independent was expected beforehand since these groups would probably be more difficult to reach for such a questionnaire. On the other hand, the most structured CSA movement, the French Amap, is not represented in the results from the questionnaire, which probably avoids an over-representation of the CSA groups which are part of CSA networks at all levels.

- Many European countries do not yet have a national CSA network. However, 46% of the respondent groups are members of national networks, which is a quite good ratio if we consider that the surge in CSA groups' figures, for most countries, is just happening now.
- There seems to be a need for better information sharing about Urgenci, the international network of CSA, at the national level. Indeed, although all the existing national networks in Europe are effective members of this network, only 7% of the individual CSAs who responded to the survey are direct members of Urgenci.



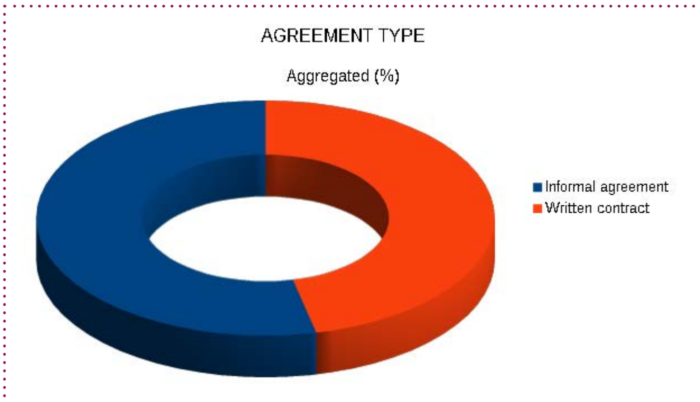
EU11: Networking.

The movement heavily relies on mutual trust

The key principle of risk-sharing may take different shapes once translated into the reality of CSA. In some countries, the bilateral written contract has been used as the cornerstone for every partnership. In others, an oral agreement is considered as reliable as a written contract.

There are many factors explaining these differences. The specific legal tradition of each country, in terms of oral or written rules, might not be the least. See EU12:

- A slight majority of respondents claimed to have an informal agreement (52%)
- 45% of the responding CSA groups are functioning with a written agreement

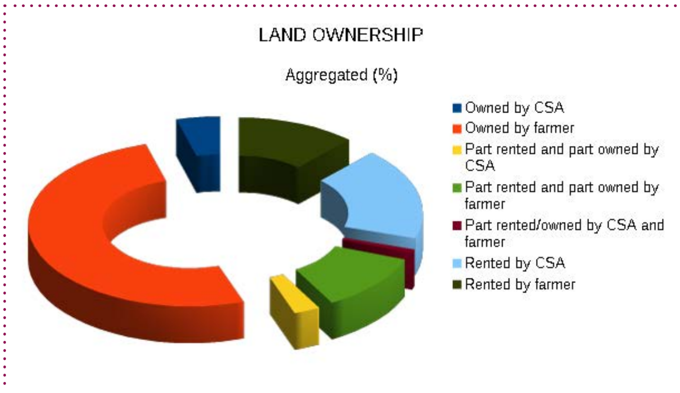


EU12: Agreement type.

A variety of situations regarding land ownership

In some countries, mostly in the northern part of Europe, CSA is understood as a kind of community farm: a group of urban consumers gather to rent or buy land in order to cultivate their own food. As one can see, about 1 out of 5 CSA groups work this way. The vast majority of responding CSA groups are connected to a farm owned or rented by the farmer herself/himself. See EU13.

- In most cases, the farm land used to produce food distributed to CSAs belongs to the farmer, either in full property (47%), lease (11%), or a combination of both (10%)
- Some CSAs rent the land they get food from (17%), but only a few own it (4%)
- CSA and farmer collaboration to either rent or own the land exists but in negligible proportion (1%)

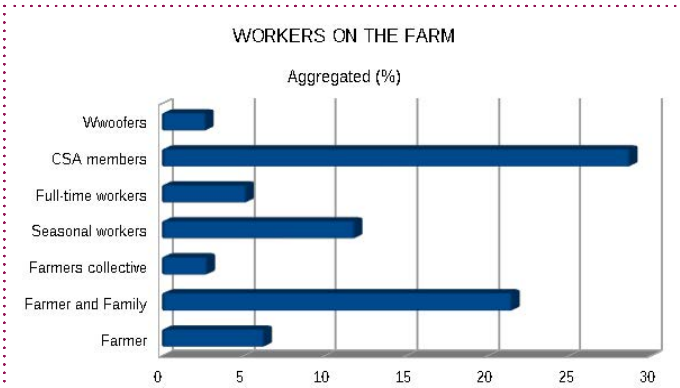


EU13: Land ownership.

A movement relying on field collaboration between the farmer and volunteers

The question about the workforce on the field generated rather puzzling answers. Beside the fact that there was probably an issue with the way the question was phrased and understood, it seems voluntary help by CSA members is an important contribution for CSA farms all around Europe. See EU14.

- Volunteers as prime labour force on the field : CSA members (29%), wwoofers (3%), farmers collective (3%)
- Farmer and family ranking second as workforce (28%)
- Employees as complementary aid: seasonal workers (12%), permanent employees (5%)

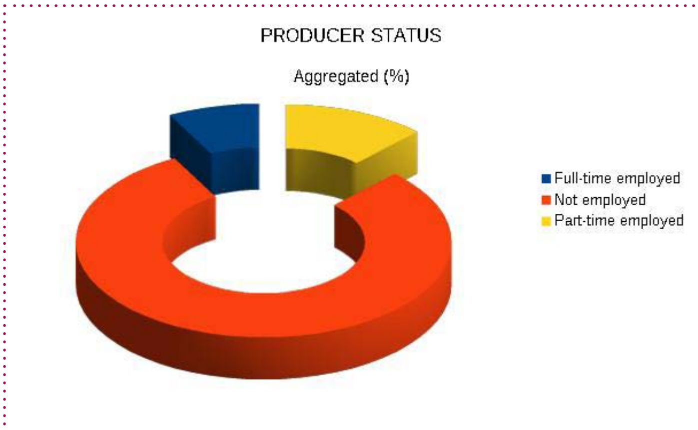


EU14: Workers on the farm.

Producers' employment status and income

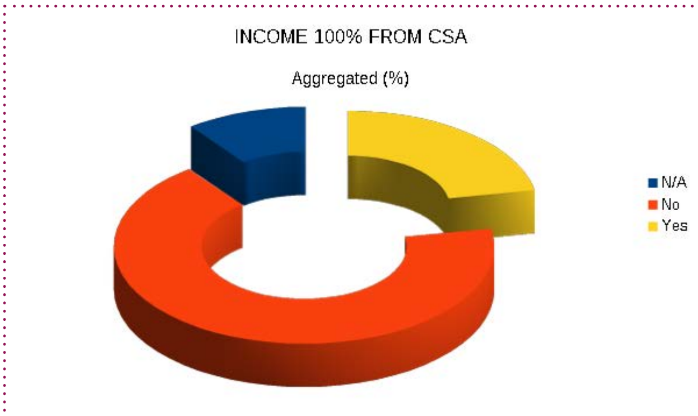
The CSA movement has been congruent with the family farming and the Food Sovereignty movements, where the autonomy of the farmer is an ultimate goal. The CSA model, the family farming and the Food sovereignty movements all share the rejection of corporate agri-food business as their common ground. It is no surprise then that the share of employees among the farmers represented in this survey is reduced to a minimum.

- Vast majority of CSA farmers are not employed (74%), most often have independent farmer or small business status, see EU15
- Regarding the few farmers who are employed, most are part-time workers (11%) and only a handful are full-time workers (7%), see EU15.

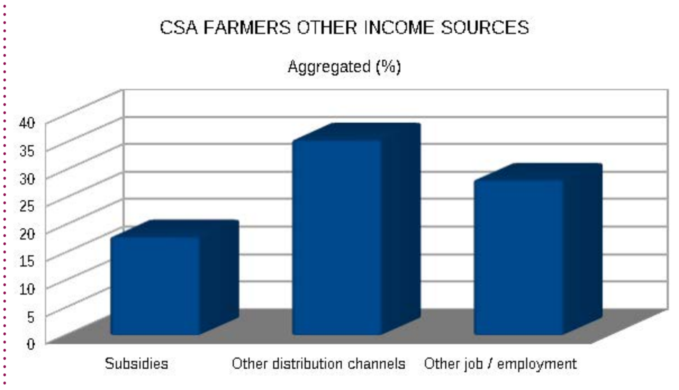


EU15: Producer status.

- Farmers involved in CSA need to have other markets for the products: 68% of respondents do not get 100% of their income from CSAs, whereas only 22% of farmers do, see EU16. Other income sources for the CSA farmers derive mostly from other distribution channels (36%) or other jobs/employment (28%), while a minority are granted subsidies (18%), as shown in the bar chart EU17.

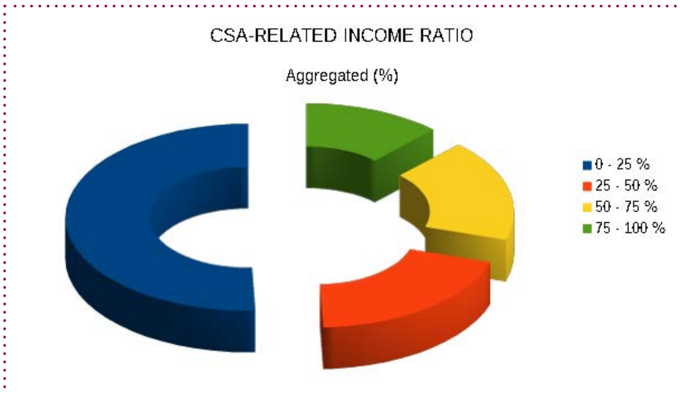


EU16: Income 100% from CSA.



EU17: CSA farmer's other income sources.

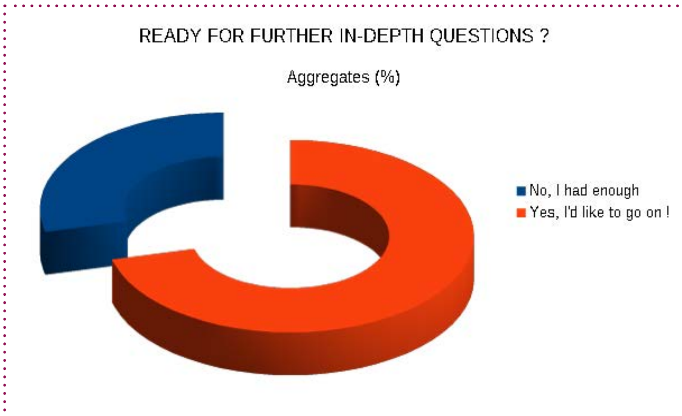
- All in all, the vast majority of CSA farmers draw up to 25% of their revenue from CSAs (27%). 10% get 25-50% from their CSAs, 9% reach a ratio of 50 to 75% of their income out of their CSAs (see EU18)
- 10% of respondents indicated they did not know about their producer's income rate.



EU18: CSA-related income ratio.

Further research needed

Although the information presented here is important for understanding CSA in Europe, there are still many more CSA-related issues to be addressed. The European CSA research group committed to gathering further knowledge beneficial to the CSA community and to those interested in this approach. This is also seen as a contribution to the democratisation of agricultural research. Fortunately, a significant proportion of CSAs (65% – see EU19) are willing to go further and answer a more in-depth questionnaire. This will also allow us to tackle issues that have been raised during this initial census.



EU19: Ready for further in-depth questions?

Appendix A: The Census.

First European Community Supported Agriculture Census: Your CSA counts!

The first European-wide census on Community Supported Agriculture groups, led by the European CSA Research Group

CSA Farmers and Eaters!

Activists and researchers from 30 different countries have joined forces to launch the first European census on Community Supported Agriculture. They came up with a common ground definitions for CSAs throughout Europe:

> *"CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared, through long-term formal or informal shared agreement. Generally operating on small scale, CSAs aim at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way."*

They also came up with the following 26 essential questions that will be sent to all CSAs throughout Europe. The objective is to map the diversity of initiatives and to identify their strengths and common characteristics. So far as we know, your group seems to fit this definition of CSA, that is why you received this questionnaire.

The CSA movement is being increasingly recognized as a model that can help fix the broken food system and support the transition to agroecology. Before others speak on our behalf, it is important to know ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses. We cannot hide any more !

This research is needed if we want to give a coherent, well-informed image of our movement to other actors and institutions.

This research is needed to learn from each other and to keep our movement creative.

Your experience is precious. Please take 5 to 10 minutes to fill in this questionnaire, reflecting the reality of your CSA group.

Important Notice :

Your contact details might be used for further research but will not in any case be made public nor used for any other purpose.

There are 27 questions in this survey

I - CSA Identity

1. What is the name of your CSA ?
2. In which country is your CSA located ?
3. What is the postcode of your CSA ?
4. What is the contact address of your CSA ? (Ex.: Postal address, website URL, email address, anything you feel confident with.
5. What year was your CSA set up?
6. Who orginally came up with the idea to start your CSA ?
    - Farm
    - Community members
    - Both
    - Other
7. How many people does your CSA feed ?
8. What elements of the CSA-definition apply to your initiative?
    - A direct partnership
    - Shared risks
    - Shared responsibilities of farming activities
    - Shared rewards of farming activities
    - Long-term agreement
    - Formal or informal agreement
    - Aiming at providing quality food
    - Production in an agroecological way

II - Products

9. What type of produce does your CSA supply ?
    - Fruits
    - Vegetables
    - Meat
    - Dairy
    - Eggs
    - Bread
    - Honey
    - Other (please describe):

10. How is your food produced ?
    - Non-organically
    - Organic methods but NOT certified
    - Certified organic
    - Certified biodynamic
    - Make a comment on your choice here:

III - Distribution

11. What distribution method/s do you use for your produce ?
    - Home delivery
    - Pick up at farm
    - Collection points
    - Self-harvesting
    - Other:

IV - Network

12. Is your CSA a member of any CSA networks or related organisations ?
    - Urgenci
    - National network of CSAs
    - None
    - Other:

V - Agreement

13. What type of agreement does your CSA have between the farmer and members ?
    - Written contract
    - Informal agreement

VI - Land

14. Who owns the land on which you produce food for the CSA?
    - Owned by farmer
    - Owned by CSA
    - Rented by farmer
    - Rented by CSA
    - Part rented and part owned by farmer
    - Part rented and part owned by CSA
    - Part rented/owned by CSA and farmer
    - Other (please specify)

15. What is the total area of your farm ?

16. Please select the relevant unit for the land surface you entered in the previous question.
    - Hectares (ha)
    - Acres
    - Ares (a)
    - Square kilometers (km2)
    - Square meters (m2)
    - Stremmas
    - Other

17. What is the total area in use for the products of CSA ?

18. What is the total area you need to produce fruits and vegetables for CSA?

VII - Labour

19. Who works at the farm?
    - Farmer
    - Farmer and his/her family
    - Farmers collective

- Seasonal workers
- Full-time workers
- CSA members
- WWoofers
- Other:

20. Is your producer employed by your CSA ?
    - Not employed
    - Part-time employed
    - Full-time employed
    - Make a comment on your choice here: (Here "Employment" should be understood as a labour contract. This question refers to your main producer only. You mayalso enter comments in the text field.)

21. Does 100% of your farmer's income come from the CSA ?
    - Yes
    - No

22. If not, what are the other sources of income for the farmer?
    - Subsidies
    - Other distribution channels
    - Other job / employment
    - Other:

23. What percentage of your farmer's income comes from the CSA ?
    - 0 - 25 %
    - 25 - 50 %
    - 50 - 75 %
    - 75 - 100 %
    - No idea !

VIII - Participation

24. How are members involved with your CSA ?
    - Buying shares
    - Helping to grow produce
    - Helping to pack/deliver produce
    - Administration/organisation
    - Decision-making
    - Attending open days/social events
    - Exchange recipes
    - Investing money in the farm
    - Other:

IX - Additional in-depth questions

25. Do you have any suggestions or comments ?
26. Thank you so much already for your time and effort filling out this questionnaire !

Are you ready to take some more ? No stress if you can't take it any more, you can still stop for now and come back later or leave it as is. Just keep in mind that any further question you answer will be precious help to better understand what CSAs are in each country in Europe, their differences and the local context they're confronted to!

- Yes, I'd like to go on!
- No, I had enough

27. If you chose the first option in the previous question, we will contact you later with a new set of questions !

Thanks for you patience and precious answers!

Appendix B: Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology

We are delegates representing diverse organizations and international movements of small-scale food producers and consumers, including peasants, indigenous peoples and communities (together with hunters and gatherers), family farmers, rural workers, herders and pastoralists, fisherfolk and urban people. Together, the diverse constituencies our organizations represent produce some 70% of the food consumed by humanity. They are the primary global investors in agriculture, as well as the primary providers of jobs and livelihoods in the world.

We gathered here at the Nyéléni Center in Sélingué, Mali from 24 to 27 of February, 2015, to come to a common understanding of agroecology as a key element in the construction of Food Sovereignty, and to develop joint strategies to promote Agroecology and defend it from co-optation. We are grateful to the people of Mali who have welcomed us in this beautiful land. They have taught us through their example, that the dialogue of our various forms of knowledge is based on respectful listening and on the collective construction of shared decisions. We stand in solidarity with our Malian sisters and brothers who struggle – sometimes sacrificing their lives – to defend their territories from the latest wave of land grabbing that affects so many of our countries. Agroecology means that we stand together in the circle of life, and this implies that we must also stand together in the circle of struggle against land grabbing and the criminalization of our movements.

Building on the past, looking to the future

Our peoples, constituencies, organizations and communities have already come very far in defining Food Sovereignty as a banner of joint struggle for justice, and as the larger framework for Agroecology. Our ancestral production systems have been developed over millennia, and during the past 30 to 40 years this has come to be called agroecology. Our agroecology includes successful practices and production, involves farmer-to-farmer and territorial processes, training schools, and we have developed sophisticated theoretical, technical and political constructions.

In 2007 many of us gathered here at Nyéléni, at the Forum for Food Sovereignty, to strengthen our alliances and to expand and deepen our understanding of Food Sovereignty, through a collective construction between our diverse constituencies. Similarly, we gather here at the Agroecology Forum 2015 to enrich Agroecology through dialogue between diverse food producing peoples, as well as with consumers, urban communities, women, youth, and others. Today our movements, organized globally and regionally in the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), have taken a new and historic step.

Our diverse forms of smallholder food production based on agroecology generate local knowledge, promote social justice, nurture identity and culture, and strengthen the economic viability of rural areas. Smallholders defend our dignity when we choose to produce in an agroecological way.

Overcoming multiple crises

Agroecology is the answer to how to transform and repair our material reality in a food system and rural world that has been devastated by industrial food production and its so-called Green and Blue Revolutions. We see agroecology as a key form of resistance to an economic system that puts profit before life.

The corporate model over-produces food that poisons us, destroys soil fertility, is responsible for the deforestation of rural areas, the contamination of water and the acidification of oceans and killing of fisheries. Essential natural resources have been commodified, and rising production costs are driving us off the land. Farmers' seeds are being stolen and sold back to us at exorbitant prices, bred as varieties that depend on costly, contaminating agrochemicals. The industrial food system is a key driver of the multiple crises of climate, food, environmental, public health and others. Free trade and corporate investment agreements, investor-state dispute settlement agreements, and false solutions such as carbon markets, and the growing financialization of land and food, etc., all further aggravate these crises. Agroecology within a food sovereignty framework offers us a collective path forward from these crises.

Agroecology at a crossroads

The industrial food system is beginning to exhaust it's productive and profit potential because of its internal contradictions – such as soil degradation, herbicide-tolerant weeds, depleted fisheries, pest- and disease-ravaged monocultural plantations – and it's increasingly obvious negative consequences of greenhouse gas emissions, and the health crisis of malnutrition, obesity, diabetes, colon disease and cancer caused by diets heavy in industrial and junk food.

Popular pressure has caused many multilateral institutions, governments, universities and research centers, some NGOs, corporations and others, to finally recognize "agroecology". However, they have tried to redefine it as a narrow set of technologies, to offer some tools that appear to ease the sustainability crisis of industrial food production, while the existing structures of power remain unchallenged. This co-optation of agroecology to fine-tune the industrial food system, while paying lip service to the environmental discourse, has various names, including "climate smart agriculture", "sustainable-" or "ecological-intensification", industrial monoculture production of "organic" food, etc. For us, these are not agroecology: we reject them, and we will fight to expose and block this insidious appropriation of agroecology.

The real solutions to the crises of the climate, malnutrition, etc., will not come from conforming to the industrial model. We must transform it and build our own local food systems that create new rural-urban links, based on truly agroecological food production by peasants, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, urban farmers, etc. We cannot allow agroecology to be a tool of the industrial food production model: we see it as the essential alternative to that model, and as the means of transforming how we produce and consume food into something better for humanity and our Mother Earth.

Our common pillars and principles of agroecology

Agroecology is a way of life and the language of Nature, that we learn as her children. It is not a mere set of technologies or production practices. It cannot be implemented the same way in all territories. Rather it is based on principles that, while they may be similar across the diversity of our territories, can and are practiced in many different ways, with each sector contributing their own colors of their local reality and culture, while always respecting Mother Earth and our common, shared values.

The production practices of agroecology (such as intercropping, traditional fishing and mobile pastoralism, integrating crops, trees, livestock and fish, manuring, compost, local seeds and animal breeds, etc.) are based on ecological principles like building life in the soil, recycling nutrients, the dynamic management of biodiversity and energy conservation at all scales. Agroecology drastically reduces our use of externally-purchased inputs that must be bought from industry. There is no use of agrotoxics, artificial hormones, GMOs or other dangerous new technologies in agroecology.

Territories are a fundamental pillar of agroecology. Peoples and communities have the right to maintain their own spiritual and material relationships to their lands. They are entitled to secure, develop, control, and reconstruct their customary social structures and to administer their lands and territories, including fishing grounds, both politically and socially. This implies the full recognition of their laws, traditions, customs, tenure systems, and institutions, and constitutes the recognition of the self-determination and autonomy of peoples.

Collective rights and access to the commons are a fundamental pillar of agroecology. We share access to territories that are the home to many different peer groups, and we have sophisticated customary systems for regulating access and avoiding conflicts that we want to preserve and to strengthen.

The diverse knowledge and ways of knowing of our peoples are fundamental to agroecology. We develop our ways of knowing through dialogue among them (diálogo de saberes). Our learning processes are horizontal and peer-to-peer, based on popular education. They take place in our own training centers and territories (farmers teach farmers, fishers teach fishers, etc.), and are also intergenerational, with exchange of knowledge between youth and elders. Agroecology is developed through our own innovation, research, and crop and livestock selection and breeding.

The core of our cosmovisions is the necessary equilibrium between nature, the cosmos and human beings. We recognize that as humans we are but a part of nature and the cosmos We share a spiritual connection with our lands and with the web of life. We love our lands and our peoples, and without that, we cannot defend our agroecology, fight for our rights, or feed the world. We reject the commodification of all forms of life.

Families, communities, collectives, organizations and movements are the fertile soil in which agroecology flourishes. Collective self-organization and action are what make it possible to scale-up agroecology, build local food systems, and challenge corporate control of our food system. Solidarity between peoples, between rural and urban populations, is a critical ingredient.

The autonomy of agroecology displaces the control of global markets and generates self-governance by communities. It means we minimize the use of purchased inputs that come from outside. It requires the re-shaping of markets so that they are based on the principles of solidarity economy and the ethics of responsible production and consumption. It promotes direct and fair short distribution chains. It implies a transparent relationship between producers and consumers, and is based on the solidarity of shared risks and benefits.

Agroecology is political; it requires us to challenge and transform structures of power in society. We need to put the control of seeds, biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture and the commons in the hands of the peoples who feed the world.

Women and their knowledge, values, vision and leadership are critical for moving forward. Migration and globalization mean that women's work is increasing, yet women have far less access to resources than men. All too often, their work is neither recognized nor valued. For agroecology to achieve its full potential, there must be equal distribution of power, tasks, decision-making and remuneration.

Youth, together with women, provide one of the two principle social bases for the evolution of agroecology. Agroecology can provide a radical space for young people to contribute to the social and ecological transformation that is underway in many of our societies. Youth bear the responsibility to carry forward the collective knowledge learned from their parents, elders and ancestors into the future. They are the stewards of agroecology for future generations. Agroecology must create a territorial and social dynamic that creates opportunities for rural youth and values women's leadership.

Strategies

I. Promote agroecological production through policies that...

1. Are territorial and holistic in their approach to social, economic and natural resources issues.
2. Secure access to land and resources in order to encourage long term investment by small-scale food producers.
3. Ensure an inclusive and accountable approach to the stewardship of resources, food production, public procurement policies, urban and rural infrastructure, and urban planning.
4. Promote decentralized and truly democratized planning processes in conjunction with relevant local governments and authorities.
5. Promote appropriate health and sanitation regulations that do not discriminate against small-scale food producers and processors who practice agroecology.
6. Promote policy to integrate the health and nutrition aspects of agroecology and of traditional medicines.
7. Ensure pastoralists' access to pastures, migration routes and sources of water as well as mobile services such as health, education and veterinary services that are based on and compatible with traditional practice.
8. Ensure customary rights to the commons. Ensure seed policies that guarantee the collective rights of peasants' and indigenous peoples' to use, exchange, breed, select and sell their own seeds.
9. Attract and support young people to join agroecological food production through strengthening access to land and natural resources, ensuring fair income, knowledge exchange and transmission.
10. Support urban and peri-urban agroecological production.
11. Protect the rights of communities that practice wild capture, hunting and gathering in their traditional areas – and encourage the ecological and cultural restoration of territories to their former abundance.
12. Implement policies that ensure the rights of fishing communities.
13. Implement the Tenure Guidelines of the Committee on World Food Security and the Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines of the FAO.
14. Develop and implement policies and programs that guarantee the right to a dignified life for rural workers, including true agrarian reform, and agroecology training.

II. Knowledge sharing

1. Horizontal exchanges (peasant-to-peasant, fisher-to-fisher, pastoralist-to-pastoralist, consumer-and-producer, etc.) and intergenerational exchanges between generations and across different traditions, including new ideas. Women and youth must be prioritised.
2. Peoples' control of the research agenda, objectives and methodology.
3. Systemize experience to learn from and build on historical memory.

III. Recognition of the central role of women

1. Fight for equal women's' rights in every sphere of agroecology, including workers' and labour rights, access to the Commons, direct access to markets, and control of income
2. Programs and projects must fully include women at all stages, from the earliest formulation through planning and application, with decision-making roles.

IV. Build local economies

1. Promote local markets for local products.
2. Support the development of alternative financial infrastructure, institutions and mechanisms to support both producers and consumers.
3. Reshape food markets through new relationships of solidarity between producers and consumers.
4. Develop links with the experience of solidarity economy and participatory guarantee systems, when appropriate.

V. Further develop and disseminate our vision of agroecology

5. Develop a communications plan for our vision of agroecology
6. Promote the health care and nutritional aspects of agroecology
7. Promote the territorial approach of agroecology
8. Promote practices that allows youth to carry forward the permanent regeneration of our agroecological vision
9. Promote agroecology as a key tool to reduce food waste and loss across the food system

VI. Build alliances

1. Consolidate and strengthen existing alliances such as with the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)
2. Expand our alliance to other social movements and public research organizations and institutions

VII. Protect biodiversity and genetic resources

1. Protect, respect and ensure the stewardship of biodiversity
2. Take back control of seeds and reproductive material and implement producers' rights to use, sell and exchange their own seeds and animal breeds
3. Ensure that fishing communities play the most central role in controlling marine and inland waterways

VIII. Cool the planet and adapt to climate change

1. Ensure international institutions and governments recognize agroecology as defined in this document as a primary solution for tackling and adapting to climate change, and not "climate smart agriculture" or other false versions of agroecology
2. Identify, document and share good experiences of local initiatives on agroecology that address climate change.

IX. Denounce and fight corporate and institutional capture of agroecology

1. Fight corporate and institutional attempts to grab agroecology as a means to promote GMOs and other false solutions and dangerous new technologies.
2. Expose the corporate vested interests behind technical fixes such as climate-smart agriculture, sustainable intensification and "fine-tuning" of industrial aquaculture.
3. Fight the commodification and financialization of the ecological benefits of agroecology.

We have built agroecology through many initiatives and struggles. We have the legitimacy to lead it into the future. Policy makers cannot move forward on agroecology without us. They must respect and support our agroecological processes rather than continuing to support the forces that destroy us. We call on our fellow peoples to join us in the collective task of collectively constructing agroecology as part of our popular struggles to build a better world, a world based on mutual respect, social justice, equity, solidarity and harmony with our Mother Earth.

The International Forum on Agroecology was organized at the Nyeleni Center in Mali, from 24 to 27 February 2015 by the following organisations: Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali (CNOP) as chair; La Via Campesina (LVC), More and Better (MaB), Movimiento Agroecológico de América Latina y el Caribe (MAELA) , Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA) , World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP).

1. Stephan Pabst, Austria 2. Danijel Balaban, Croatia 3. Daniel Lopez Garcia, Spain 4. Gaëlle Bigler, Switzerland 5. Anneke Engel, Austria 6. Róisín Nic Cóil, Ireland 7. Alexander Fehér, Slovakia 8. Elin Romo Grande, Norway 9. Zoltán Dezsény, Hungary; 10. Svetlana (cook) 11. Nicolas Cressot, Belgium 12. Katharina Kraiß, Germany 13. Smilja Ignjatovic, Serbia 14. Sara Meißner 15. Virtu 16. Jenny Gkiogki, Greece 17. Julia Olszewska, Poland 18. Cathy Bouffartigue, France 19. Borislav Sandov, Bulgaria 20. Peter Volz, Die Agronauten 21. Jocelyn Parot, Urgenci 22. Maresa Bossano, United Kingdom 23. Tala 24. Noel Bruder, Finland 25. Vratislava Janovská, Czech Republic 26. Pepijn De Snijder, Belgium 27. Kestutis Navickas, Lithuania 28. Marije Mulder, The Netherlands 29. Phillip Weckenbrock, Die Agronauten 30. Chiara Demaldè, Italy

The European Community Supported Agriculture Research Group

Building understanding of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Europe from within the community

The seed for the CSA Research Group was sown at the First European CSA Meeting in Milan in 2012. The idea was to create a platform for participatory research on CSA from within the community. In 2015, the CSA Research Group was involved in the Agroecology Project as well as the Common Ground project, the latter one was set up by Urgenci and its European partners; an output of that is this publication, Overview of Community Supported Agriculture.

The CSA Research Group is made up of representatives from over twenty European countries. We represent diverse fields of research, including agronomy, geography, sociology, economics and environmental studies. Many of us are farmers and almost all of us are actively involved in local CSAs and similar food projects and we have close ties to local and regional networks. This means we can draw from a large and diverse pool of knowledge and practical experience in our research efforts. We believe this is relevant for the democratisation of agricultural research.

On 25th August 2015, we met in a lonesome hut in the Black Forest near Freiburg, Germany. We had travelled from all corners of the European continent. A very successful and lively meeting took place over the next two days. The accommodation and facilities were basic but the food, provided by local anarchist-chefs, was excellent and plentiful, the beds were comfortable and a short forest-walk to the lake provided relaxation.
The outcome of the meeting in August 2015 was a definition of CSA, a skeleton questionnaire, nicknamed The Census, and a common methodology for this report. The Census was meticulously translated by each researcher into a language that could be understood by the farmers and the eaters in each country and then compiled into an online format for dissemination. Together with the knowledge of the country representatives, this forms the basis for the reports.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Europe has been a highly dynamic idea and it is important to understand it better. One of the crucial questions in The Census addressed the extent to which CSAs adhere to agroecological practices - Do the CSAs and/or their umbrella organisations display aspects outlined in the Nyéléni Agroecology declaration in their work and their charta? How does the concept of CSA differ within Europe, in regard to its characteristics and diffusion?

We are passionate about Community Supported Agriculture and other emerging local, short food supply chain solutions as pathways toward better food systems. We hope to provide knowledge and inspiration with this report.

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