



# **Community Supported Agriculture: An Overview**

**Sarah Brown**

**Organic Conservation Specialist,  
Oregon Tilth**

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# My Background

- Oregon Tilth
- Organic Conservation Specialist
- Diggin' Roots Farm



# Outline

- **The CSA Concept**
- **How they work**
- **Consumer Considerations**
- **Variations**
- **Farmer Considerations**

# CSA History

## ● Japan

- 1970's- Women alarmed by pesticide use
- Teikei- partnerships with local farmers through annual subscriptions

## ● USA

- 1986 Two New England farms started CSAs
  - Consumer driven- core groups

# CSA Philosophies

## Consumer driven

- Community supported agriculture
- Philosophically oriented
- Community owned



## Farmer driven

- Community subscription agriculture
- Commercially oriented
- Direct-market model



# Why CSA?

## For Consumers:

- Know your farmer
- Know your food
- Supporting local economy- 'slow money'
- 'Experience' agriculture
- Food security
- Food safety
- Food quality



## For Producers:

- Shared risk
- Direct market- No middle man
- Build community
- Cash flow
- Consistent market
- Decrease liability?
- Community support

# CSA: How it Works


















































































































CSA #19

- 1 1/2 lb. tomatoes
- 1 lb. eggplant
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 4 sprigs rosemary
- 1 bunch parsley
- 1 bunch cilantro OR dill
- 1 bunch kale
- 2 lb Asian pears
- 1 bag of grapes
- 1 bunch of beets
- 1 head of garlic
- 1 1/2 lb potatoes

# Eating with the Seasons

PRODUCE	may	june	july	aug	sept	oct	nov
Apples							
Asian Pears							
Basil							
Blueberries							
Bunch Beets							
Broccoli							
Carrots							
Cilantro							
Collard Greens							
Corn							
Cucumbers							
Currants & Gooseberries							

PRODUCE	may	june	july	aug	sept	oct	nov
Eggplant							
Flowers							
Grapes							
Green Beans							
Herb Transplants							
Kale							
Leeks							
Lettuce							
Onions							
Okra							
Parsley							
Peaches							
Peas							
Peppers							
Potatoes							

PRODUCE	may	june	july	aug	sept	oct	nov
Radishes							
Salad Mix							
Spicy Salad Mix							
Scallions							
Spinach							
Strawberries							
Strawberry Tomatoes							
Summer Squash							
Swiss Chard							
Tomatoes							
Turnips							
Vegetable Transplants							
Winter Squash							



# New Vegetables

Taku Choy

Bok Choy

Green  
Garlic

Chinese  
Celery

Celeriac

Japanese  
Sweet Potato

Garlic

Fenugreek

Anasazi  
Beans

Purple Potatoes

# Consumer Considerations



- **Cost**
- **Length of season**
- **Typical share- size & make-up**
- **Pick-up location**
- **Missing a share**
- **Consumer involvement**
  - **Volunteering**
  - **Work-trade**
  - **U-pick**
  - **Community events- Potato harvest, garlic planting, apple pressing, tours & parties**

# Variations

- Produce
  - Pick-your-own
  - Pre-packed
  - Farmers market credit
- Meat
- Full-diet
- Fisheries
- Flowers
- Add-ons



# Meat CSA: Example



**Full Size Share - \$80 per month**

10 lbs of meat delivered **each month** for a year  
\$960 total for one year

\$8/lb

## **“Standard” Share**

1.0 lb - Smoked Bacon  
2.0 lbs - Pork Tenderloin  
3.0 lbs - Whole Chicken  
1.0 lb - Ground Turkey  
2.0 lbs - Lamb Shank  
1.0 lb - Lamb Sausage

## **“No Pork” Share (w/Rabbit)**

3.0lbs - Whole Chicken  
1.0lbs - Ground Turkey  
3.0lbs - Whole Rabbit  
1.5lbs - Lamb Tenderloin  
1.5lbs - Rack of Lamb

## **“No Lamb” Share**

1.0 lb - Breakfast Sausage  
2.0 lbs - Pork Chops  
1.5 lb - Pork Spare Ribs  
1.0 lb - Chicken Sausage  
3.0 lbs - Whole Chicken  
1.5 lbs - Turkey Breast

# Bean & Grain CSA: Example

6 months.

Each monthly share will contain fresh-milled flour, popcorn, heirloom beans of varying types, whole grains, and polenta corn. The total monthly share is 13 pounds.

A typical monthly share might include:

- 2 lbs. Wheat Flour
- 2 lbs. Rye Flour
- 2 lbs. Oats
- 1 lb. Barley
- 1 lb. Heirloom Popcorn
- 1 lb. Emmer Berries
- 1 lb. Fresh ground Polenta
- 1 lb. Buckwheat Pancake Flour
- 2 lbs. Heirloom Beans (varying choices monthly)

**Total Cost of a 6 month share is \$294.00  
(\$49/month, ~\$3.75/lb)**



# Farmer Considerations

- **Risk & Commitment**
- **Length of season**
- **Types of product**
  - **Produce: The basics (tomato, carrots, broccoli) vs. unusual (kohlrabi, chicories, celeriac)**
  - **Add-ons?**
- **Repetition of produce- how often**
  - **Planning successions**
- **Consumer communications**
  - **The CSA agreement- what are they signing up for?**
  - **Newsletters and recipes**
  - **Shared risk- make them understand the farm**

# Why CSAs can fail...

## For consumers:

- Too many vegetables
- Poor product mix
- Too much risk
- Would rather shop
- Inconvenience
- Not an experimental cook

## For Farmers:

- Not charging enough
- Lack of expertise
- Unsecured land
- Lack of member commitment
- Burn-out

# CSA Resources

## For Consumers:

- **Local Harvest**

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

- **Eat Wild**

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

## For Farmers:

- **New Farm, Rodale Institute, CSA Resources**

[http://newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/features/0403/csa\\_resource\\_list.shtml](http://newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/features/0403/csa_resource_list.shtml)

- **Robyn VanEn Center**

<http://www.csacenter.org>

- **The Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, UCSC**

<http://casfs.ucsc.edu/education/instructional-resources/teaching-direct-marketing-and-small-farm-viability>



**Sarah Brown**  
**Organic Conservation**  
**Specialist, Oregon Tilth**  
**503-273-2433**  
**[Sarah.Brown@por.usda.gov](mailto:Sarah.Brown@por.usda.gov)**