The background of the cover is a white space filled with various watercolor illustrations of fresh produce. There are several red tomatoes, some whole and some sliced. There are also yellow flowers, green leafy vegetables, purple radishes, and orange carrots. The illustrations are scattered around the central text, creating a vibrant and fresh atmosphere.

*Fostering*  
**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORTED  
AGRICULTURE**

---

*a Guide for Growers and  
Extension Educators*



# *FOSTERING COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE IN UTAH*

Dr. Kelsey Hall, Utah State University

Dr. Roslynn McCann, Utah State University

Graphic Designer: Anna Tuckett

Writers: Brittyn Dauk, Kenna McMurray

This curriculum was made possible through funding from the Farmers' Market Promotion Program grant of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Quotations throughout were obtained from various Utah CSA growers in 2016. All rights reserved.

© 2020 Utah State University Extension, Logan, UT

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions. Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities. This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kenneth L. White, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*MODULE 1: FUNDAMENTALS OF CSA.....4*

*MODULE 2: CSA MARKETING & OUTREACH .....20*

*MODULE 3: CSA MANAGEMENT.....46*

*MODULE 4: CSA PRICING.....66*

*MODULE 5: CSA CROP PLANNING.....76*

*MODULE 6: LEGAL CONCERNS FOR CSA OPERATIONS ...90*

*MODULE 7: ACCEPTING SNAP PAYMENTS.....100*

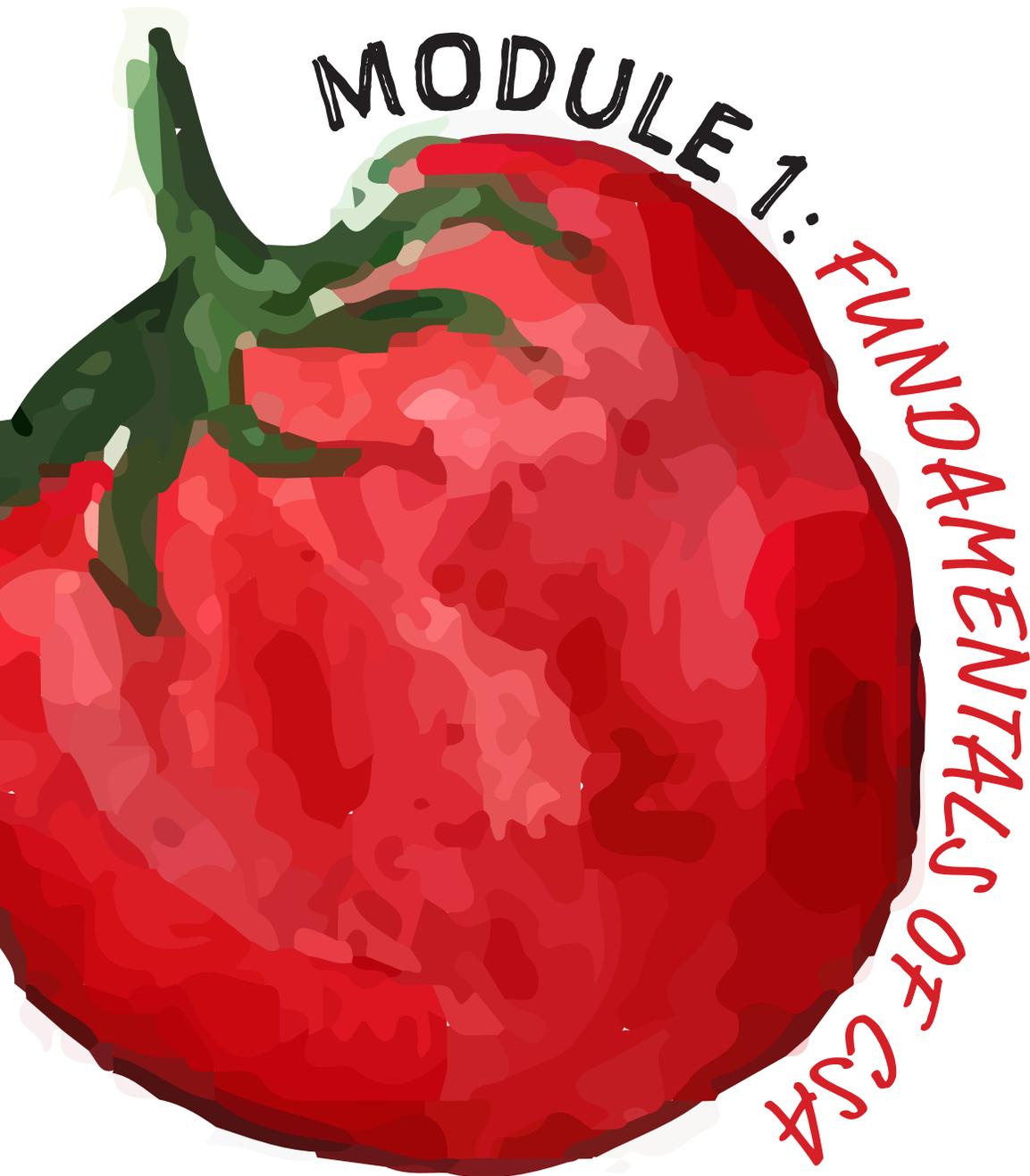
*MODULE 8: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.....110*



## MODULE OBJECTIVES:

This module will enable you to:

- » Understand the purpose of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- » Describe the potential benefits and challenges of implementing CSAs
- » Differentiate between various types of CSA models



# WHAT IS COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) provides a direct connection between local community members and growers, generally through provision of a weekly share of goods (Local Harvest, 2016). This concept was originally created by farmers in New England in the 1980s as direct farm marketing, which is when the farm sells and distributes directly to the consumer (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). This type of program became a means to share locally grown produce, promote small businesses in the community, and help to cover costs of production for farms.

The popularity of CSAs has increased nationwide and continues to grow. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, there are over 12,617 registered CSAs in the country (USDA, 2016). In the United States, most CSAs are seen in eastern states or in coastal states. However, there is a large potential for successful CSAs in other areas, including Utah. In 2012, the state of Utah had 141 registered farms participating in a CSA, which had increased by about 28 percent since 2007 (USDA, 2016). By educating growers, consumers, and community members on community supported agriculture, we hope to continue to increase the success of CSAs in Utah.

Instead of primarily focusing on the gardening and growing aspect of agriculture, a CSA also follows a business model. There are several types of CSAs, and we will discuss further the differences between them. The overall concept is that each grower markets to “shareholders” or “subscribers” who then pay a certain amount of money in order to have a “share” of the season’s final yields. This income covers the grower’s cost of production, and each shareholder becomes a part of the growing experience. Often, many shareholders also volunteer and assist in growing, gathering, and distributing produce. This way, the shareholders, volunteers, and growers communicate and work side-by-side to create a working environment. Overall, this positive relationship promotes a wide array of benefits such as a guaranteed sale of product, learning how food is grown, and the support of local small businesses.



# WHY CONSIDER COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE?



Whether you are a potential CSA grower, shareholder, or Extension educator, this question can be addressed by looking at the benefits and challenges faced by CSAs.

## *BENEFITS OF OPERATING A CSA FOR GROWERS*

There are many benefits for growers, which include:

- » Gaining supplemental farm income
- » Having a guarantee of consumers
- » Becoming involved in the community
- » Receiving farm labor assistance
- » Experiencing moral uplift

With each purchase of a share at the beginning of the season, the supplemental farm income goes toward the cost of production. Instead of struggling to pay for input (seeds, proper soil, fertilizer, etc.), growers also receive a reasonable wage for their labor. This money constitutes part of the grower's salary, which is valuable given the risks that are involved with farming.

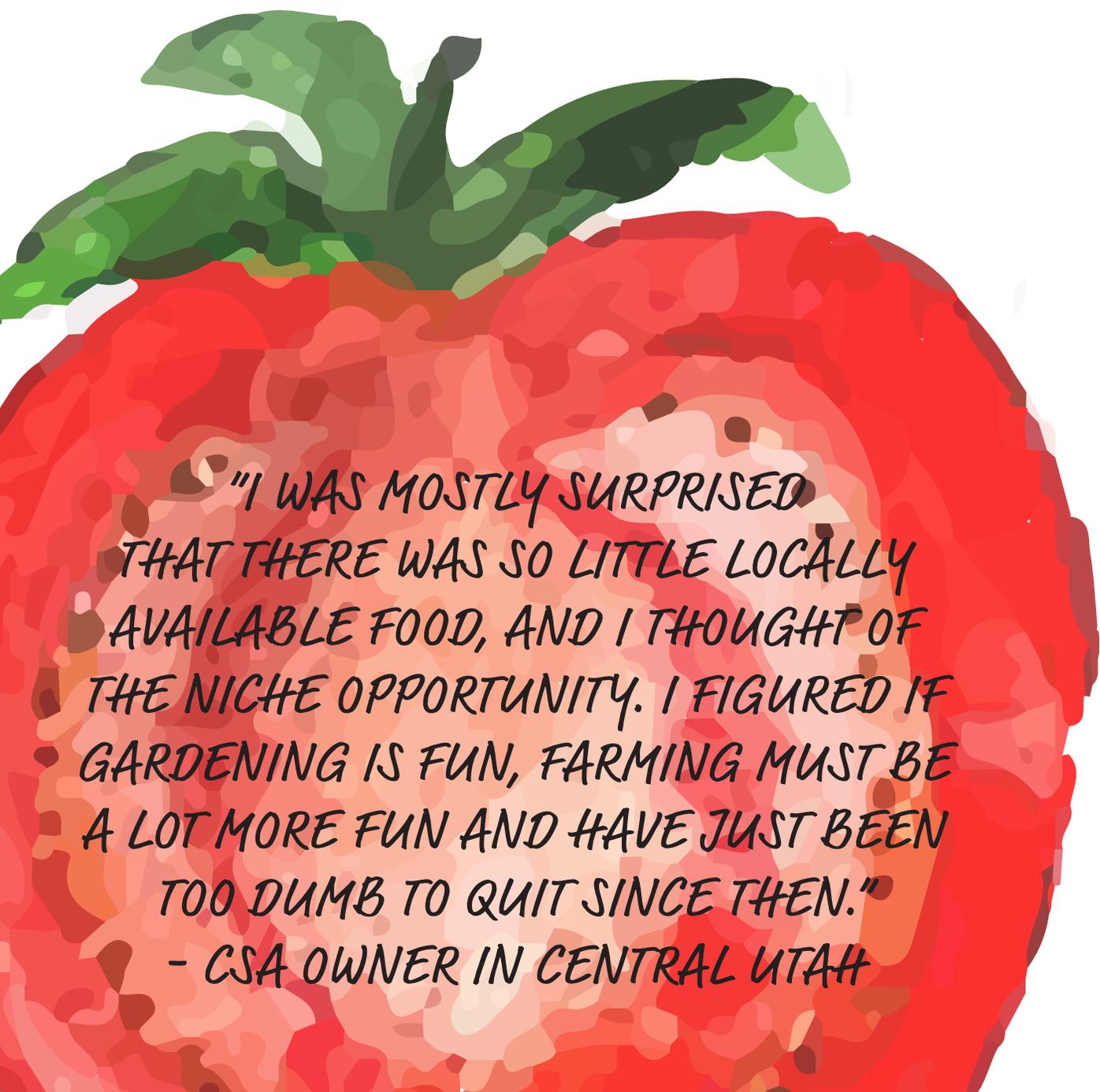
Shareholders also create a guarantee of consumption. During and at the end of the growing season, growers know who they need to deliver their product to. Instead of bartering goods at a

WE STARTED FARMING IN 2001, AND WE WERE JUST SELLING AT A FARMERS' MARKET, BUT WE WERE ALSO WORKING SECONDARY JOBS. IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT THE AMOUNT WE WERE GOING TO BE ABLE TO SELL THROUGH THE FARMERS' MARKETS WASN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO SUSTAIN US FINANCIALLY...WE HAD SPENT A COUPLE YEARS GOING AND TALKING TO OTHER CSA OWNERS; IT HAD ONLY BEEN AROUND FOR A COUPLE YEARS IN UTAH. TALKING TO THEM AND SEEING WHAT THEY WERE DOING, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA BECAUSE IT GAVE US ANOTHER REVENUE STREAM. WE KNEW WHERE AT LEAST A PORTION OF OUR CROPS WERE GOING TO. SO WE STARTED OUR CSA IN 2009.  
- CSA OPERATOR IN NORTHERN UTAH

farmers' market or local grocery store, they can automatically deliver the produce to consumers. Growers also discover the benefits of becoming involved in their local community. By marketing their CSA, interacting with subscribers, and distributing produce, they create a link known as "community attachment." This is defined as a positive bond between a citizen and the community (Hall, 2011). Knowing that you are tied to those who surround you is proven to initiate a positive psychological boost and leaves both parties feeling morally uplifted.

By having shareholders, CSA providers receive farm assistance. Many subscribers volunteer on the farm and offer help that many small farms need. This aid gives growers the opportunity to share knowledge and receive the farm help needed in order to make sure produce is maintained.

Many growers attribute their involvement with community supported agriculture to their ethics. In support of small and natural agriculture organizations as opposed to larger scale crops, they receive a positive moral boost knowing they are supporting these beliefs.



**"I WAS MOSTLY SURPRISED THAT THERE WAS SO LITTLE LOCALLY AVAILABLE FOOD, AND I THOUGHT OF THE NICHE OPPORTUNITY. I FIGURED IF GARDENING IS FUN, FARMING MUST BE A LOT MORE FUN AND HAVE JUST BEEN TOO DUMB TO QUIT SINCE THEN."  
- CSA OWNER IN CENTRAL UTAH**

### *BENEFITS OF CSA MEMBERSHIP FOR CONSUMERS*

There are many benefits of supporting, volunteering, or becoming a shareholder of a CSA. These include:

- » Knowing where food is grown
- » Gaining access to organic food (depending on the CSA)
- » Accessing locally grown food
- » Experiencing fresh produce
- » Eating food that is in season
- » Learning more about the process of planting, growing, pruning, and harvesting

- » Meeting others who share your interest
- » Supporting local businesses
- » Increasing community attachment and social capital

Consumers are becoming ever more curious about how their food is produced. By building relationships with the grower and by working on the farm, subscribers see first hand the journey of their fresh produce. According to a 2009 Survey of Community Supported Agriculture Producers, 18 percent of CSAs were organically certified (Woods, Ernst, Ernst, & Wright, 2009). However, 66 percent grew according to organic standards but were not officially USDA certified, and only 1 percent refrained from using any organic techniques (Woods et al., 2009).

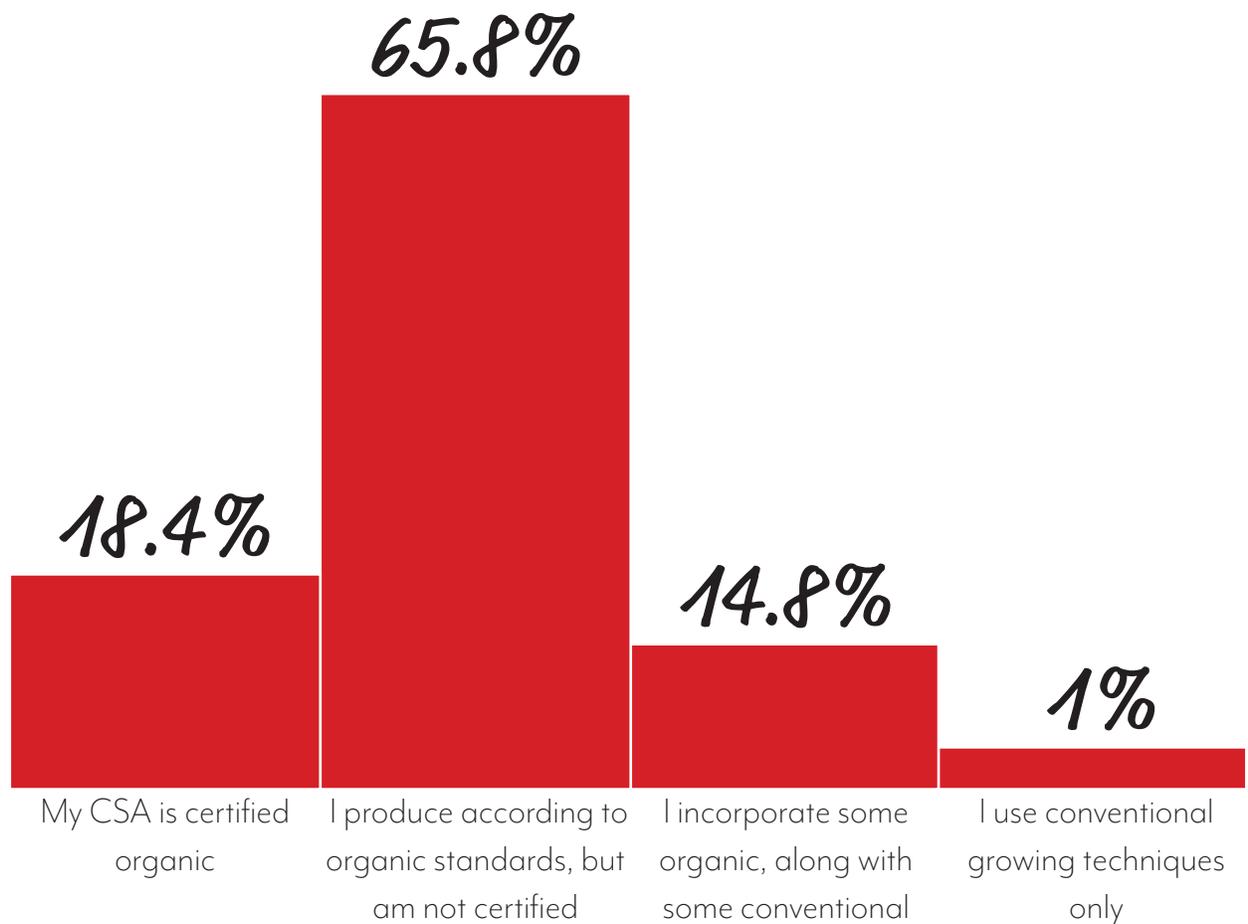


Figure 11: Organic Certification of CSAs from in a 2009 Survey of Community Supported Agriculture Producers (Woods et al., 2009).

Growers who choose to grow certified organic follow standards approved by the USDA, as outlined in the Organic Foods Production Act (USDA, 2012). According to the Organic Farming Research Foundation (2012), these organizations avoid using genetically modified plants, synthetic pesticides, or fabricated fertilizers that may be seen on larger farmsteads. Instead, they work with nature by using techniques such as crop rotation, no-till, the growth of pest resistant crops, and natural pesticides. This creates healthier food, keeps water and irrigation pure, is more sustainable for the environment, helps the soil, and protects the area's animals (HDRA, 1998).

Shareholders receive vegetables or fruits throughout the season as soon as the produce is ripe and ready with the advantage of eating their food the same week, or even day, it was picked. According to a study done by Brehm and Eisenhauer (2008) on the motivations for joining a CSA program, subjects ranked fresh food lacking in preservatives and added hormones as one of the highest motivating factors for becoming a shareholder. Fresh, diversified and non-synthetic food was important to the consumer and differentiated the produce from what was offered at the local chain store (Brehm & Eisenhauer, 2008).

The involvement of shareholders not only educates community members of the strategies and advantages of farming, but creates a community bond. Growers share expertise with members by teaching techniques of planting, pruning, harvesting, and cooking through workshops, activities, and recipes. Members of a Utah State University Student Organic Farm CSA responded to survey questions about their involvement. Of the 28 adults and five children who responded, "92.8 percent reported that their overall nutritional intake improved, 92.9 percent reported that they gained food preparation and cooking knowledge, and 64.2 percent reported that they ate at home more" (Opsahl, 2016). By becoming involved with a CSA, subscribers gain experience and knowledge about the variety of fruits and vegetables located in their area, how to plant and grow food independently, and how to prepare the produce. Through meeting others who share similar interests, they receive a positive boost through "in-group" involvement. This bond promotes an environmentally conscious community.

As shareholders become more involved with the community, they build relationships with their home environment and



those around them. Known as community attachment, this bond generates a feeling of belonging and trust. This also contributes to social capital, which has been defined in several ways. Overall, there are three dimensions summarized by Kay (2006): (1) trust, social networks and reciprocity pertain to relationships between individuals and organizations; (2) shared behavioral norms, shared commitment, and a sense of belonging are created by shared values; and (3) information channels allow individuals and groups to gain access to information from within and outside the limitations of their community. Social capital is strengthened by involvement with CSAs through trust, commitment, and communication. This creates positive societal impacts for communities through social support and cohesion (Claridge, 2004).

### **BENEFITS OF CSA FOR THE STATE'S COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM**

Along with grower and consumer benefits, there are also benefits for the Extension educators involved with CSAs. Sharp, Imerman and Peters (2002) found these benefits:

- » Increasing interaction with growers and their clientele
- » Building new markets
- » Building trust networks (social capital)

The involvement of Extension educators increases their interaction between farms, consumers, and the community, while providing opportunities for research-based information to be shared. Through linking CSA farms, they gain connections, which create future business benefits and more sustainable environments.

This involvement establishes new markets of consumer interest and investment from community members who would otherwise have no knowledge of CSAs.

Extension educators also build trust networks through educating and making connections. This allows new growers and consumers to develop a relationship with Extension educators.

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY CSA GROWERS**

Although CSAs offer many benefits to growers, they do face several challenges. We will address some of these later in the manual and explain how these can be solved. They include:

- » Lack of public interest
- » Uncertainty by growers of how to market CSA share availability
- » Retention of shareholders
- » Weather discrepancies resulting in crop damage
- » Maintaining high quality produce
- » Problems with quantity (not enough for specific produce, threw out too much produce, etc.)
- » Improper facilities or substantial labor
- » Administrative complexities
- » Land security

Some CSA growers have a difficult time gaining public interest. Many community members do not have the prior knowledge of what a CSA is and, therefore, have no ties to it.

**"...WE HAVE TRIED FLIERS AND POSTING STUFF ON FACEBOOK, AND WE HAVE JUST NOT GOTTEN ANY INTEREST WHATSOEVER, AND WE WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE STUFF CLOSE TO HOME, BUT IT JUST ISN'T WORKING."  
- CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH**

**TRYING TO FIND MORE OF A MARKET. WE HAD HEARD A LOT OF GOOD THINGS ABOUT BEING ABLE TO FIND A GOOD MARKET THROUGH CSAS. WE TRIED IT RIGHT OFF THE BAT GROWING VEGETABLES AND DIDN'T GET A SINGLE BITE. IT FAILED MISERABLY; WE GOT A LITTLE GUN SHY AND STAYED AWAY FROM IT FOR A LITTLE WHILE. WE THOUGHT WE WOULD TRY AGAIN. IT'S BEEN OKAY, BUT NOTHING AMAZING. - CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH**



These obstacles can be overcome through learning marketing and effective public relations strategies. Through the spreading of knowledge about CSAs, and sharing what makes them different, better, and special, consumers will be attracted (Schulz, 2012).

One CSA owner in Northern Utah expressed two challenges: knowing what your customers want and finding consumers who are interested in joining a CSA. The owner has attended a CSA open house every spring at a historical farm. Over time, fewer and fewer consumers have attended the open house to sign up with a CSA, so the CSA owner stopped attending the event.

It can be difficult to maintain the same shareholders year after year. Many people are hesitant to spend money on something that could be seen as a potential risk, or some simply get preoccupied before the season. By building a relationship between the grower and consumers, strengthened through communication and involvement, a higher percentage of shareholders will return the following year.

Like any agricultural arrangement, season and weather patterns play a large role on the success of crops. Often storms, droughts, or prolonged rain have large impacts. Growers may feel pressured after shareholders have already paid for the expected produce, while certain weather

prohibits them from growing their expected yields. This will always be a risk, as weather patterns are unpredictable, yet open communication will increase understanding between shareholders and growers.

Some farms also struggle with achieving the correct quantity of produce, whether they do not have enough or they have too much for distribution. This could be due to weather or to the applied growing strategies. Maintaining healthy crops in general can be a challenge for growers.

Proper planning could help solve this problem. Many CSAs partner with fellow farms in order to have enough supply for their shareholders. As growers establish business plans and growing strategies, more understanding will be gained and applied to the following season.

**WE STRUGGLE WITH A VERY HIGH WEED POPULATION. SOME OF IT HAS BEEN OUR FAULT. DURING THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER WE GET BEHIND. WE HAVE HORSE PASTURES ALL AROUND US. IT'S A DOUBLE WHAMMY THERE. - CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH**



Certain CSAs may lack the proper facilities or substantial labor in order to support their business model. CSAs are encouraged to bring shareholders onto the farm and host involvement opportunities, such as canning workshops or the harvesting of fruits and vegetables. Farms must have the space to do this without creating potential problems. CSA farms continually plant and harvest a large variety of crops throughout the growing season. As with any fresh vegetable or fruit operation, harvesting, weed management, and post-harvest handling on a CSA farm represent a large proportion of total farm labor and require careful oversight. The proper farm equipment is necessary along with enough farm help for the amount of crops. If the farm relies on volunteers, a grower must establish a volunteer schedule to accomplish work by deadlines.

Forming a CSA includes administrative complexities that may be difficult for those who do not have prior experience. The handling of consumers, growing the produce, shareholder billing, distributing shares, coordinating community support events, etc., all require significant amounts of time and skills in building a social organization. The development of these skills is essential in running a CSA.

Some CSAs face the difficulty of obtaining land security. CSA operations share the challenge of access to affordable lands close to urban areas where CSA farming usually thrives. This adds a financial strain to many growers.

*THERE'S REALLY NO INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AGRICULTURE HERE IN SALT LAKE COUNTY ANYMORE. NOBODY TO SHARE WITH, NOBODY TO LEARN FROM, NOBODY TO TRAIN WITH. LAND IS EXPENSIVE, LABOR IS HARD TO COME BY. IT'S A LOW MARGIN BUSINESS. LIKE ALMOST EVERY OTHER FARMING FAMILY, I WORK OFF SITE. MY WIFE WORKS OFF SITE. MOSTLY WE'RE JUST SUBSIDIZING THE COMMUNITY'S GOOD TIME THROUGH OUR EFFORTS HERE AND EVERYONE REALLY APPRECIATES IT, BUT IT'S HARD TO KEEP COMING BACK FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT BECAUSE, WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM? I'M NOT COMPLAINING; IT'S FUN TO BE OUTSIDE AND BE TAN AND FILTHY AND TIRED AT THE END OF THE DAY AND EAT GOOD FOOD. ECONOMICALLY, IT'S LOCAL AND ORGANIC BUT NOT SUSTAINABLE. IT'S FINANCIALLY NOT SUSTAINABLE. - CSA OWNER IN CENTRAL UTAH*

### CHALLENGES FACED BY CSA SHAREHOLDERS

- » Seasonality of production
- » Product issues (more variety, want to select more, uncertainty of how to prepare produce from CSAs)
- » Cost of shares

Each farm will experience seasonal limitations throughout its existence. This stems from the fact that consumers do not always have a prior understanding of seasonal foods. For example, consumers may assume they will receive cantaloupe from their CSA because it is in the grocery stores. However, it may not currently be in season, suit that geographic region, or be ready to pick at their local farm. The variety of vegetables, fruits, grains, beans, seeds, dairy products, or meats that will be distributed should be previously communicated to the shareholders. By establishing expectations, consumers will become more satisfied with the results.

Consumers may have issues with the distributed products, such as wanting more variety or quantity or an uncertainty of how to prepare the produce. This can also be handled through the conveyance of produce offered and corresponding recipes.





## ROLE OF EXTENSION EDUCATORS

Extension educators offer a connection between organizations, growers, and consumers. They educate both consumers and growers about the health specifics, guidelines, and strategies of participating in a CSA using research-based information. Through promoting community sustainability, they encourage individuals to become more involved in agriculture programs. Often, they create links for growers. Extension educators may suggest partnerships between specific farms for multi-farm CSAs (Sharp et al., 2002). For example, through introducing farmers to each other, the farmers can then exchange produce or goods between each other, resulting in a wider variety of

distribution. As discussed in an article titled “Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): Building Community Around Farmers and Non-Farmers,” Extension educators enable CSAs to increase interaction by encouraging community involvement with the farm and educating consumers about the benefits of doing so (Sharp et al., 2002). They also help CSAs form new markets, especially for farms starting in new areas where there is not an original consumer group (Sharp et al., 2002). Extension educators work to increase social capital in communities as trust and networks strengthen (Sharp et al., 2002). Through working alongside growers and consumers, they are often very influential to the success of CSAs in the community (Sharp et al., 2002).



# TYPES OF CSA MODELS

Several specific types of CSAs exist, though they all roughly follow the same basic structure.

## *MEMBERSHIP/SHAREHOLDER CSA*

This is a CSA that is consumer driven. According to “A Farmer’s Guide to Marketing Community Supported Agriculture,” a group of potential shareholders enlist a grower and may continue to work with the grower throughout the season (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). There are variations of this, which include Workplace CSAs and Cooperative CSAs (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

**WORKPLACE CSAS** - Workplace CSAs consist of shareholders who join from the same work environment, often established by gathering a group together from a specific office or business where shareholders already know each other. This is beneficial to the grower who can focus marketing and distribution energy to a tailored group (Marks, 2011).

**COOPERATIVE CSAS** - Cooperative CSAs sell produce in cooperation with a farmers’ market (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

This is a valuable marketing platform, as consumers have regular contact with growers by visiting the farmers market.

## *SUBSCRIPTION CSA*

Subscription CSAs are more popular and are often the ones we think of with community supported agriculture. This is when growers market to the public in an attempt to gain shareholders. They control the prices, produce options, and schedule delivery (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

## *SINGLE/MULTI-FARMS*

Single farm CSAs offer produce from one farm while multi-farm CSAs offer produce grown from several farms, which offers a larger distribution (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). Many CSA operations have teamed with producers of different crops to collectively supply the wide diversity of produce and other foods that consumers prefer.

# PRODUCTS OF CSAS

CSAs offer a variety of products, which they provide to consumers. These include vegetables, fruits, grains, seeds, flowers, plants, meat, eggs, dairy, bread, honey, etc. Popular types include one or a combination of the following:

**MIXED VEGETABLE CSA** – This is the most common form of CSA. It provides a wide diversity of fresh, annual vegetables to consumers.

**FRUIT CSA** – Many CSAs offer fresh fruit that is produced by the CSA growers themselves, or through purchasing from other growers, as part of their shares (or as supplemental shares).

**GRAINS, BEANS, AND SEED CSA** – A small number of CSAs offer rare varieties of fresh grains, beans, and seeds as part of their offerings.

**“ADD - ON” CSAS** – Many CSA owners grow or purchase meat, dairy, and baked goods from other producers and offer them as part of their shares or as “add-on shares.” Some CSA operations are now purchasing bulk food (e.g., tropical fruits) and food supplies from wholesale distributors and reselling these items to their shareholders in order to accommodate the “one-stop shopping” that many consumers prefer.

**FULL - DIET CSA** – Offers products from every food group, including grains, beans, fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, eggs, and breads. They even offer flower bouquets and wine.

## IS A CSA THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOU?

According to “A Farmer’s Guide to Marketing Through CSAs,” you must recognize three things before initiating a successful CSA (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). The first is that CSAs require production experience. Shareholders expect high quality, specific quantity, diversity of produce, and dependability. If you lack production experience these results may be difficult to achieve. The second requirement is the need for market potential. Decipher if there is a demand for a CSA in the area. Potential growers should ask themselves, “Are people willing to pay? How many shares could I distribute?” The third is developing proper marketing skills and building relationships. A small business such as a CSA cannot thrive without reaching out. For example, CSAs require excellent customer service because much of their business comes from word-of-mouth. With these three concepts examined, you can move forward in choosing to develop a CSA (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).



---

# PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE

CSAs have a higher chance of success when growers have previous production experience. Because consumers expect high value produce within a specific time frame, growers must be capable of growing or obtaining such a delivery. Experience with production or crop planning, season extension, and production timing are beneficial to potential growers (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). A background in farming and harvesting large quantities is also helpful. Knowing how to organize payments and distributions while working with

shareholders is also valuable. Those who don't have the proper production experience may struggle with starting a CSA on their own. However, if growers are indeed lacking experience, a great method is to start small. By beginning as a small-scale CSA or by joining a multi-farm CSA, growers can learn from experience and first hand from experienced growers (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). This will give new CSA growers a significant platform to start from in order to expand their own successful CSA.





## SUMMARY AND WHAT'S NEXT

This module provided information about the different types of CSA models and the products that could be offered to shareholders (produce, bread, grains, beans, dairy, meat, etc). Whether you are an Extension educator or grower, a CSA is a business model that can benefit you and consumers by offering locally grown, fresh products to guaranteed consumers, and by becoming more involved in your community, and supporting sustainability. However, challenges exist that can impact the success of a CSA, such as the lack of public interest, recruiting and retaining shareholders, offering the variety and quantity of produce desired by shareholders, and having the facilities, land, and labor needed. In the next module, you will learn how to advertise to potential shareholders, communicate with current shareholders, and use communication tools that can be used to market CSAs.



# REFERENCES

- Brehm, J. M., & Eisenhauer, B. W. (2008). Motivations for participating in community-supported agriculture and their relationship with community attachment and social capital. *Southern Rural Sociology*, 94-115. Retrieved from <http://www.ag.auburn.edu/auxiliary/srsa/pages/Articles/SRS%202008%2023/1/SRS%202008%2023%201%2094-115.pdf>
- Bruch, M. L., & Ernst, M. D. (2010, December). A farmer's guide to marketing CSAs. Retrieved from <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/pb1797.pdf>
- Claridge, T. (2004, January 5). Benefits and importance of social capital. Retrieved from <http://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/literature/theory/benefits.html>
- Hall, K. (2011). *Marketing community supported agriculture in Texas: A dual-method case study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Texas Tech University.
- HDRA - The Organic Organisation. (1998). What Is Organic Farming?. Retrieved from [https://www.organicconsumers.org/sites/default/files/what\\_is\\_organic\\_farming.pdf](https://www.organicconsumers.org/sites/default/files/what_is_organic_farming.pdf)
- Kay, A. (2006). Social capital, the social economy and community development. *Community Development Journal*, 41(2), 160-173. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsi045
- Lass, D., Bevis, A., Stevenson, G. W., Hendrickson, J., & Ruhf, K. (n.d.). Community supported agriculture entering the 21st century. Retrieved from [http://www.cias.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/csa\\_survey\\_01.pdf](http://www.cias.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/csa_survey_01.pdf)
- Local Harvest. (2016). Community supported agriculture. Retrieved from <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>
- Marks, P. (2011). What's next for CSAs? Retrieved from <http://asapconnections.org/downloads/csa-toolkit.pdf>
- Opsahl, K. (2016, July 12). USU study finds benefits to community-supported agriculture. *HJ News*. Retrieved from [http://news.hjnews.com/allaccess/usu-study-finds-benefits-to-community-supported-agriculture/article\\_de97be56-9f73-53fe-b4dd-e16aa13a26b9.html](http://news.hjnews.com/allaccess/usu-study-finds-benefits-to-community-supported-agriculture/article_de97be56-9f73-53fe-b4dd-e16aa13a26b9.html)
- Organic Farming Research Foundation. (2012). Organic FAQs. Retrieved from <http://ofrf.org/organic-faqs>
- Schulz, E. D. (2012). *The smart marketer's toolbox: The latest marketing innovations and how to use them to grow your business*. Self Publishing: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Sharp, J., Imerman, E., & Peters, G. (2002). Community supported agriculture (CSA): Building community among farmers and non-farmers. *Journal of Extension*, 40(3). Retrieved from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2002june/a3.php>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2016). Community supported agriculture. Retrieved from <http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/community-supported-agriculture-3>
- Woods, T., Ernst, M., Ernst, S., & Wright, N. (2009, July). 2009 Survey of community supported agriculture producers. *Agricultural Economics Extension Series*. Retrieved from <https://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/csareport.pdf>

## Worksheet 1.1: Is a Community Supported Agriculture operation right for you?

Do you have production experience? If so, describe:

---



---

Are there people in the area interested in a CSA?

Yes       No

Do you already have a solid base of customers?

Yes       No

What CSAs exist in the area?

---



---

What distribution methods do you currently use for your products (farmers' markets, farm stand, U-pick, etc.)

---



---

What potential CSA types would be best for your CSA operation?

Membership/Shareholder CSA

Subscription CSA

Single-farm CSA

Multi-farm CSA

What products would be best for your CSA?

Mixed vegetable

Grains, beans, and seeds

Fruit

Add-on

Full-diet

## MODULE OBJECTIVES:

This module will enable you to:

- » Define various marketing strategies for CSAs
- » Discover how to advertise a CSA to potential shareholders
- » Develop ongoing communication and build relationships between growers and existing shareholders



# MARKETING STRATEGIES

There are three separate types of marketing strategies that you may use. One is wholesale marketing, when companies order large quantities of a particular product in advance from the grower. This can be unpredictable, as the orders depend on the success of the other business, and wholesalers may place large orders for produce at the last minute (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). However, this is highly profitable as businesses pay larger sums for produce in bulk (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). Another strategy is retail marketing, when farms have contracts with grocery stores or restaurants in which produce is normally distributed. The third strategy is direct marketing (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). Direct marketing is the strategy Community Supported Agriculture falls under, as growers sell directly to consumers. With direct marketing, growers have the ability to decide on price, distribute produce in small quantities, and build relationships with customers, referred to as shareholders (Barrentine, Donovan, & Berman, 2010). In this module, we will discuss how to fully develop this strategy for CSAs, in recruiting, communicating with, and maintaining shareholders.

## KNOWING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAREHOLDERS

Knowing the characteristics of shareholders is a key part of marketing your CSA. According to research presented in several studies, shareholders tend to have the following characteristics:

**Gender:** Shareholders are predominantly female (Brehm & Eisenhauer, 2008; Cone & Myhre, 2000; Durrenberger, 2002). Females also tended to initiate membership, fill out forms, and process the produce for cooking (Cone & Myhre, 2000).

**Education:** Shareholders tend to have a higher level of education (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Galayda, 2006; Kolodinsky & Pelch, 1997), most have earned a bachelor's degree or higher and 35% have obtained a master's degree (Cone & Myhre, 2000).

**Home & Relationship Status:** Married, with up to two children, describes the majority of shareholders (Brehm &

Eisenhauer, 2008). More than half of shareholders described one partner as working outside of the home (Cone & Myhre, 2000)

**Income:** Average shareholder incomes ranged from less than \$25,000 to more than \$75,000 a year, with a high percentage earning above \$60,000 (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Polimeni, Polimeni, Shirey, & Trees, 2006).

**Age:** Most shareholders ranged from 30 to 55 years, with an average of 38 years (Lang, 2010)

**Political Affiliation:** Political affiliation may influence a shareholder's desire to join a CSA (Lang, 2010). Of shareholders belonging to the From the Ground Up CSA in Maryland, about 87% supported Democratic or Green parties and 13% supported Republican.

**Length of Residency:** Most shareholders have lived in their communities for more than 10 years (Brehm & Eisenhauer, 2008). This could influence their willingness to become more involved.

**Location of Residency:** Shareholders tend to live in urban or suburban areas (Cone & Myhre, 2000; Durrenberger, 2002). Proximity to more populated areas would allow for easier access to pick-up locations.

With this information, marketing can be tailored to resonate with those who are among the target audience. However, it is always helpful to identify characteristics of your own community, as target populations will vary.



# COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

Community-based social marketing (CBSM) combines social marketing with psychology (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000). Through marketing techniques aimed at a specific target audience, social marketing encourages behavior change that is beneficial to society (Andreasen, 1994; Kotler & Lee, 2011). Instead of focusing on marketing a product, CBSM encourages people to alter their behavior through community interaction (Kennedy, 2010). The key to achieving this change is by understanding the target audience and by creating motivation. McKenzie-Mohr, founder of CBSM, explains that this can be accomplished by these steps:

1. Selecting behaviors to target and promote
2. Identifying the barriers and benefits of operating a CSA
3. Creating strategies aimed at changing behavior that uses tools such as commitment, social norms, prompts, communication, incentives, and convenience
4. Piloting the CBSM strategy on a small scale
5. Implementing strategies and assessing how behavior has changed

First, you must select specific behaviors to promote. These “end-state” behaviors are actions that yield the desired outcome (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). For example, the behavior you should promote is purchasing shares by joining your CSA.

Then, you need to identify the barriers and benefits to operating a CSA. By gaining knowledge on who CSAs market to, you can apply successful strategies. Knowledge can be gained by reviewing relevant information, conducting focus groups, administering surveys, or completing observational studies (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). Module 1 discussed the consumer benefits and challenges of joining a CSA and the benefits and challenges faced by growers. A good CBSM strategy uses tools that are tailored to the barriers and benefits you have identified. The idea of these strategies is to increase behavior that leads to benefits and

discourage behavior that presents barriers (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). As shown in Figure 2.1, the CBSM strategy involves creating a benefit-barrier analysis table that reduces the barriers and increases the benefits for the encouraged behavior. For a discouraged behavior, you want to increase the barriers while decreasing the benefits. As an example, in wanting individuals to join the CSA, the behavior you may wish to discourage is buying out-of-state produce from grocery stores during the growing season (see Figure 2.2).

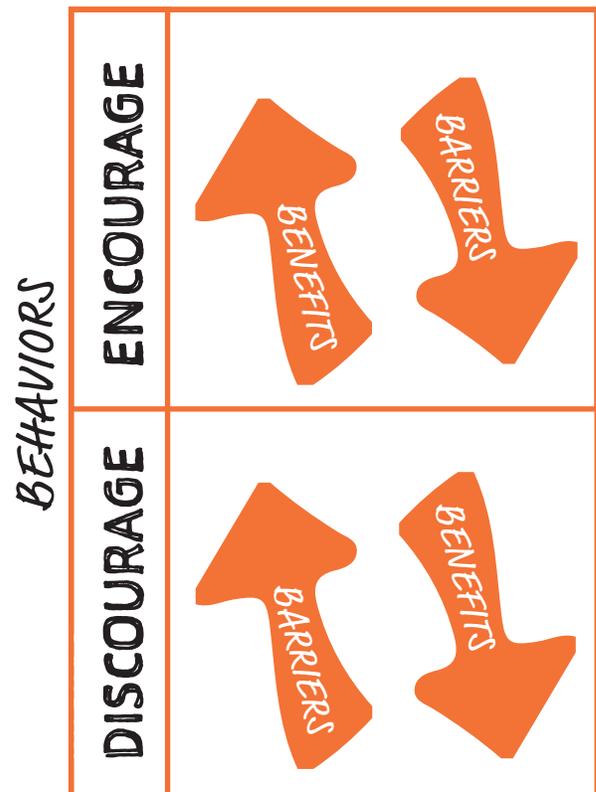


Figure 2.1: Barrier-benefit analysis as a major step in planning (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

		BARRIERS	BENEFITS
<b>BEHAVIORS</b>	<b>ENCOURAGE:</b> Consumers joining a CSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Not knowing how to prepare produce</li> <li>» Wanting more variety or larger quantity of CSA products</li> <li>» No refund if a pick up date is missed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Eat fresh, locally grown produce that is in season</li> <li>» Develop a relationship with the grower who grows their food and learn more about how food is grown</li> <li>» Get exposed to new vegetables and new ways of cooking</li> <li>» Visit the farm/garden at least once during the CSA season</li> <li>» Support sustainable living</li> </ul>
	<b>DISCOURAGE:</b> Consumers buying out-of-state produce from grocery stores during the growing season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Buy unripe produce</li> <li>» Not knowing where the produce was grown or how it was grown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ease of shopping at larger grocery stores</li> <li>» Variety of fruits and vegetables</li> <li>» Use of coupons</li> <li>» Use of sales and markdowns to find deals</li> </ul>

Figure 2.2: Benefit-Barrier Analysis from the Shareholder's Perspective.

One of the marketing strategies in CBSM is **commitment**. The "foot-in-the-door" technique has been proven to increase commitment by asking small requests first then increasing to larger requests (McKenzie-Mohr, 2000). Consumers are more likely to agree in order to maintain compliance (Patel, 2014). For example, you may ask a simple first request like following the CSA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or subscribing to your blog or YouTube account. This places a metaphorical foot in the door. A slightly larger request could be to attend a social event or workshop. The final and largest request would encourage consumers to purchase a share for the season. If they agreed to previous requests, consumers will have internal motivation to agree to your large proposition (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

Another way of gaining commitment is through enforcing **social norms**. Social norms are inherent standards in which

people base their actions, label themselves, and perceive ideas. They generate compliance and conformity (Kennedy, 2010). In order for social norms to be effective, they must be internalized, and deemed important for the individual to follow (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). By enforcing certain social norms, consumer behavior will change in order to conform to follow others, to avoid rejections, and gain reward. Norms can be used to identify people more likely to join a CSA. Marketing can be geared toward those who share these social norms in attempt to gain more shareholders. Some social norms of shareholders may include positive feelings toward environmental sustainability, involvement within the community, and interest in fresh, local foods. You can create and encourage these social norms by posting signs, posters, publishings about how important it is to participate in this behavior, or how popular the behavior is.

For example, you may showcase shareholders on social media who are involved with the farm and who are happy with their shares. *Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing* gave the following guidelines when enforcing social norms (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011):

- » The norm must be noticeable
- » The norm must be presented at a time when consumers are taking a related action (such as placing posters about the CSA at a grocery store where consumers are purchasing food)
- » Norms should encourage positive behaviors, not just deny negative behaviors
- » Praise should be combined with descriptive information when someone is exhibiting positive behavior

**Prompts**, which are short reminders to behave a certain way, are another way to gain commitment (Kennedy, 2010). Often they are visual or auditory aids that encourage people to participate in behaviors that they already have a desire for, yet simply need the encouraging reminder to do (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011).

For example, commercials, signs, or posters which encourage people to recycle their plastic bottles or to turn off their lights remind them to take these actions. You can use posters, fliers, and social media posts to prompt people to take actions such as purchasing a share, picking up their produce, or attending an event. Prompts to join the CSA, used in the dead of winter when consumers are likely missing fresh, local produce, may be a good strategy to use.

**Communication** is also an excellent way to increase commitment (Kennedy, 2010). This is a great way to generate interest, trust, and build relationships, resulting in consumer involvement and loyalty. Tapping into visual and verbal trends, such as “Keep Calm, Join our CSA” can be a fun way to reach out to new audiences.

Using **incentives** is another potentially beneficial strategy. Incentives are benefits that entice people to take actions. These incentives should be clear and paired with a specific behavior (North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, n.d.). For example, one Utah CSA offered a cheaper price on the next season’s CSA if shareholders signed up by a certain date.

**Convenience** is a strategy that identifies external barriers and limits them. An external barrier, such as consumers’ lack of understanding about CSAs, or how to sign up, can be addressed by increasing communication and advertising between you and community members. As you work to break down barriers for potential shareholders, consumer involvement will increase.

The next major step to CBSM is to enact the strategies through a small-scale pilot test. By first testing strategies on a small group of consumers, you will save time, money, and resources in the long run (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). You should work through different techniques and make alterations in order to find what works best.



*“WE MARKET DIRECTLY TO OUR CURRENT CLIENTS AT THE END OF THE SEASON TO GET THEM TO SIGN UP WHILE THEY’RE STILL MEMBERS.” - CSA OWNER IN CENTRAL UTAH*

When one strategy is proven successful, then it is acceptable to implement it on a larger scale.

The final step is to assess how consumer behavior has changed. Both qualitative and quantitative information can be used to measure the success of the strategy. Qualitative data consists of context specific, exploratory information, gained by asking subjects open ended questions (Wyse, 2011). Quantitative data is numeric, provides statistics, and can be gathered through compiling data (Wyse, 2011). For example, CSAs can measure the number of subscribers

to a blog, electronic newsletter, Facebook page, Twitter, YouTube, or Instagram account, and interpret whether or not the number has increased. Another example is to calculate the number of registered shareholders in relation to previous seasons. Surveys and focus groups are valuable in evaluating changes in behavior or attitudes. Testing on a smaller group of shareholders first allows you to interpret what works best. This allows new CSA growers to offer a small number of shares as they work through production, marketing, distribution, etc. If the CSA is successful, these CSA growers could offer more shares the next season.



## RECRUITING SHAREHOLDERS

Recruiting new shareholders is essential to a CSA's success, as it is a large portion of their income. New shareholders can be gained by reaching out and marketing the CSA membership through an effective communication strategy.

According to the Small Farm and Direct Marketing Handbook, people desire "authenticity" and "trust" when it

comes to their food (Barrentine et al., 2010). People adhere to word-of-mouth and personal relationships when deciding to join a CSA, from whom they will be gaining their next meal (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). Therefore, a great way to market and establish a CSA business is to establish and build relationships with customers, so they can share with their friends (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

CSAs benefit by becoming involved in the community. Examples include claiming a booth and selling at the nearby farmers' market, fair, or street sale, becoming recognizable in the community by partnering with local shops and markets, and distributing fliers and brochures. By hosting workshops or social events where shareholders can bring friends and family, you expand your circle of contact. Overall, you should work to establish who you are selling to and build upon such knowledge.

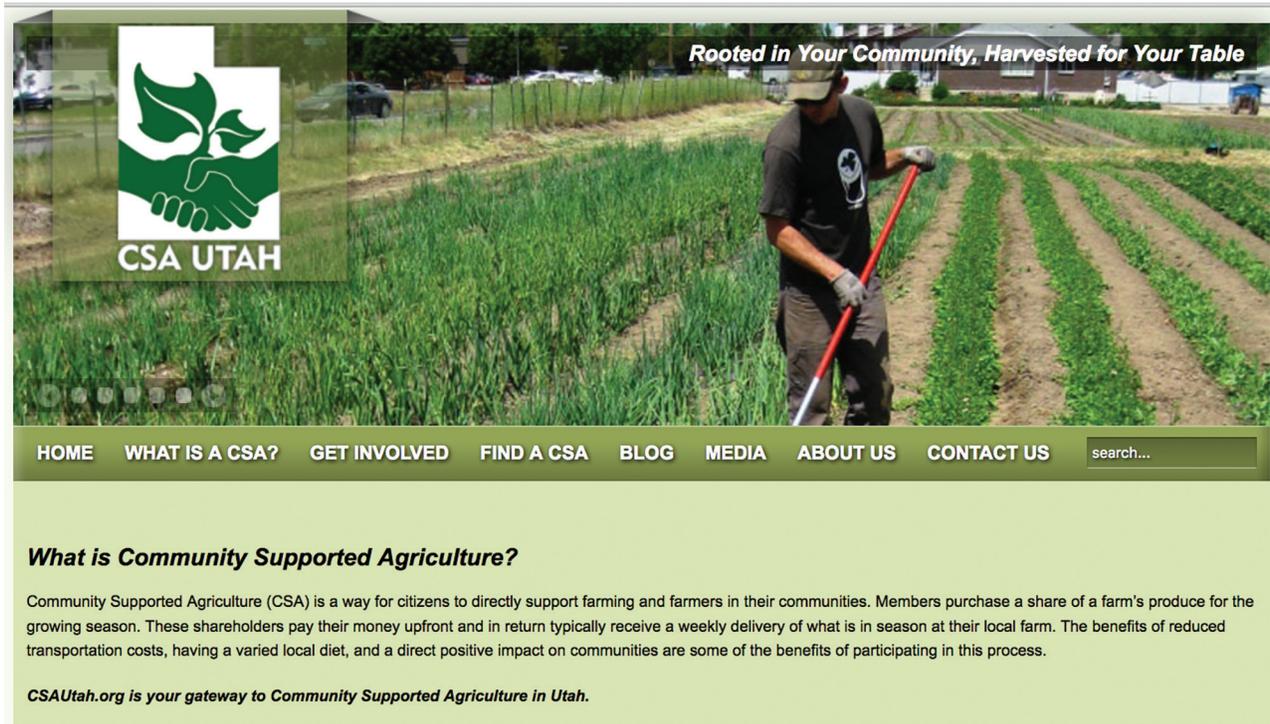
Finding places to market to new shareholders is also important. Advertising with social, religious, and community organizations are great places to start. Marketing at wellness centers, libraries, community clubs, churches, or schools allows people who may have similar interests in health or the environment to join together. In Minnesota, eight CSAs were formed through associates and friends (Cone & Myhre, 2000). Another CSA engaged with people who were already participating in a community action organization (Cone & Myhre, 2000). Two CSAs were formed through marketing with church congregations, and one relied on parents whose children were in the same private school (Cone & Myhre, 2000). It is smart to market to workplaces

or organizations where you already have shareholders working, and where they can buy shares with their colleagues and friends.

Having potential shareholders find the CSA easily is important for marketing. A key place to do this is online. Now more than ever, people use the internet to gain information. It is fast, convenient, and for the most part, free advertising for businesses. By achieving search engine optimization, when websites are linked through searches on Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc., the website increases usage. A good way to do this is to register the CSA online through free services such as LocalHarvest.org and local directories such as CSAUtah.org and UtahsOwn.org.

*WE GIVE [SHAREHOLDERS] SOME PERSONAL HISTORY ABOUT OURSELVES AND WHAT OUR PRACTICES ARE, THE INPUTS THAT WE USE, AND OUR PHILOSOPHY ABOUT WHAT WE WANT OUR VEGETABLES TO BE. - CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH*

Homepage of CSAUtah.org (CSA Utah, 2016)



**Featured CSA**

**Urban Farm and Feed**  
Serving Salt Lake and Summit Counties  
[More Information](#)

**CSA Utah Newsletter**

**CSA Farm Member Sponsors**

While we appreciate all the CSA farms in Utah for the great work they do, we especially want to thank those farms pay a sponsorship fee that helps support this website, the annual open house and the other programs of CSA Utah and the Great Salt Lake RC&D. Thank you to Borski Farms and Urban Farm and Feed!

**Latest News and Events**

**2016 FARM HIGHLIGHT: COPPER MOOSE FARM**

 Copper Moose Farm is in its 10th year farming in Summit County! They



Utah's Own homepage (Utah's Own, 2016)

It is worthwhile for CSAs to create social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and to build a website or blog to establish presence online. One helpful way to gauge how easy it is to find the CSA online is to search the name of the town and "CSA" and see whether it comes up online. For a fair search, clear the search history first. Every basic question consumers have should be answered easily when they search for the CSA. Information such as who the CSA is, what they offer, how to access their business, and so on should be relayed to consumers in seconds. The online platforms are important marketing tools, yet they are also a great way to communicate with shareholders.

*WE TELL THEM ABOUT THE TYPES OF PRODUCE THEY CAN EXPECT OVER THE SEASON. WE PAY ATTENTION TO TRY TO EXPLAIN TO THEM THAT EVERYTHING IS LOCALLY GROWN. EARLY IN THE SEASON THEY'LL BE RECEIVING PRIMARILY LEAFY GREENS AND ONIONS, COOL SEASON CROPS. WE FOUND THAT KIND OF INFORMATION IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY HAVE MISTAKEN OUR CSA WITH A BOX PROGRAM SUCH AS BOUNTIFUL BOXES IN THE PAST, AND THEN WONDERED OR EVEN BEEN A LITTLE UPSET WHY THE TOMATOES AREN'T READY IN MAY. SO WE DEVELOPED LITTLE GRAPHICS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF TYPICAL SHARES OVER THE COURSE OF A SEASON TO TRY AND EDUCATE OUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS OF WHAT TO EXPECT. WE HAVE THE PRICE, START DATE, END DATE, WE HAVE A CANCELLATION POLICY, AND A PICK UP POLICY. - CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH*

*"WE TRY AND GIVE PEOPLE AN IDEA OF A CROP LIST, QUANTITIES AND VARIETIES AVAILABLE THROUGH THE COURSE OF THE SEASON."  
- CSA OWNER IN CENTRAL UTAH*

# USU Student Organic Farm

Issue no. 15

## Farm Newsletter

22 Aug 2016



### In The Box

Chard  
Tomatillos  
Beans  
Bell Pepper  
Jalapeños  
Carrots  
Garlic  
Cucumber

### Coming Soon...

Tomatoes

## A Note on Carrots

Included in your shares with the carrots are the carrot greens. Though usually discarded, carrot tops are actually edible and highly nutritious. They can be eaten raw in salads, cooked into soups, or used in a variety of other ways. Important to note however is that due to the natural biological processes in the plant, if your carrot tops are left attached to the roots for an extended time they will make your carrots soft. This is because the plant is still alive and the leaves are still pulling moisture from the roots.

## Announcement: CSA Pick-up change - All CSA Members

Due to the start of fall semester, the majority of our farm workers will not be available during regular pickup hours. Starting the week of August 29 - September 3, pick-up time for all CSA members will permanently change to Saturday from 10:00am to 12:00pm. All pick-ups will take place at the farm, which is located at 1750 N 800 E in Logan. Please contact us if this creates a conflict.

# COMMUNICATING WITH EXISTING SHAREHOLDERS

Communication is the key to any successful relationship because it generates trust, authenticity, and understanding. All of these factors are essential when it comes to running a CSA. Because you rely on the satisfaction of your shareholders for long-run success, it is important that the shareholders walk away with a feeling of agreement. This will lead to positive word-of-mouth marketing and help the CSA.

Shareholders become more understanding when they are included through communication. For example, if a CSA endures a harsh storm, their crops may be damaged. This leads to a lower quantity and quality of distributed produce and less variability in the products. Shareholders, not knowing the reason why, may become disgruntled when expectations are not met. Thinking that they are not getting their money's worth, they label the CSA as unsatisfactory and share negative experiences with their friends and in online ratings. This situation might be different if the CSA owner had communicated the setbacks with the shareholders. By clearly updating members and asking for support, shareholders grow in

understanding and have the option of becoming involved. Another way to keep current shareholders involved is to include a weekly newsletter with the shares, notifying shareholders of any events that happened or are anticipated on the farm, fun updates, and a recipe or two from the products in that week's share.



## Fire Cracker Green Beans

By Wendy O'Neal, <http://www.aroundmyfamilytable.com>

### Ingredients

- ✓ 1 pound green beans
- ✓ 4 slices of bacon, cooked (grease reserved)
- ✓ ~2 tbs bacon grease
- ✓ 1/2 large onion, chopped
- ✓ 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- ✓ 1/2 jalapeno, seeded, deviened, and finely chopped
- ✓ 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- ✓ 1 cup chicken broth
- ✓ 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- ✓ 1/2 tsp salt
- ✓ Ground black pepper

Snap the stem ends of the green beans, wash, and set aside.

Cook bacon in a large skillet until fully cooked and crisp. Remove bacon from pan to drain on paper towels.

Add chopped onion, red pepper, and jalapeño to bacon grease in a skillet over medium heat and cook just until the onions have softened and starting to caramelize. Add the garlic and cook for a minute.

Add the green beans and cook until the beans turn bright green, about a minute or so. Add the chicken broth, crushed red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper. Turn the heat to low and cover the skillet with a lid (leave the lid cracked slightly to allow steam to escape). Cook until the liquid evaporates and the beans are fairly soft, but still a bit crisp, 20 to 30 minutes.

Roughly chop cooled bacon and top finished beans before serving!

# COMMUNICATION TOOLS

You can communicate with your shareholders, volunteers, and with the community using a variety of tools.

## WORD-OF-MOUTH

Word-of-mouth communication strongly impacts CSAs because of the locality of their target audience. Because there is such a small customer base, negative word-of-mouth may be more damaging to a CSA than other direct marketing practices (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). Effective customer service and problem solving skills are valuable to use in order to avoid harming the CSA's reputation. It is helpful when you are willing to work with shareholders in order for them to be happy. For example, one farm allows shareholders who will miss a pick-up day due to travel, to get two boxes instead of one the week prior. They state, "Our members really appreciate this gesture, and it is actually not difficult to do. Many people schedule vacations around the same time and the missed shares generally balance the doubles" (Good & Good, 2014). They also accommodate those who need to switch their pick-up location

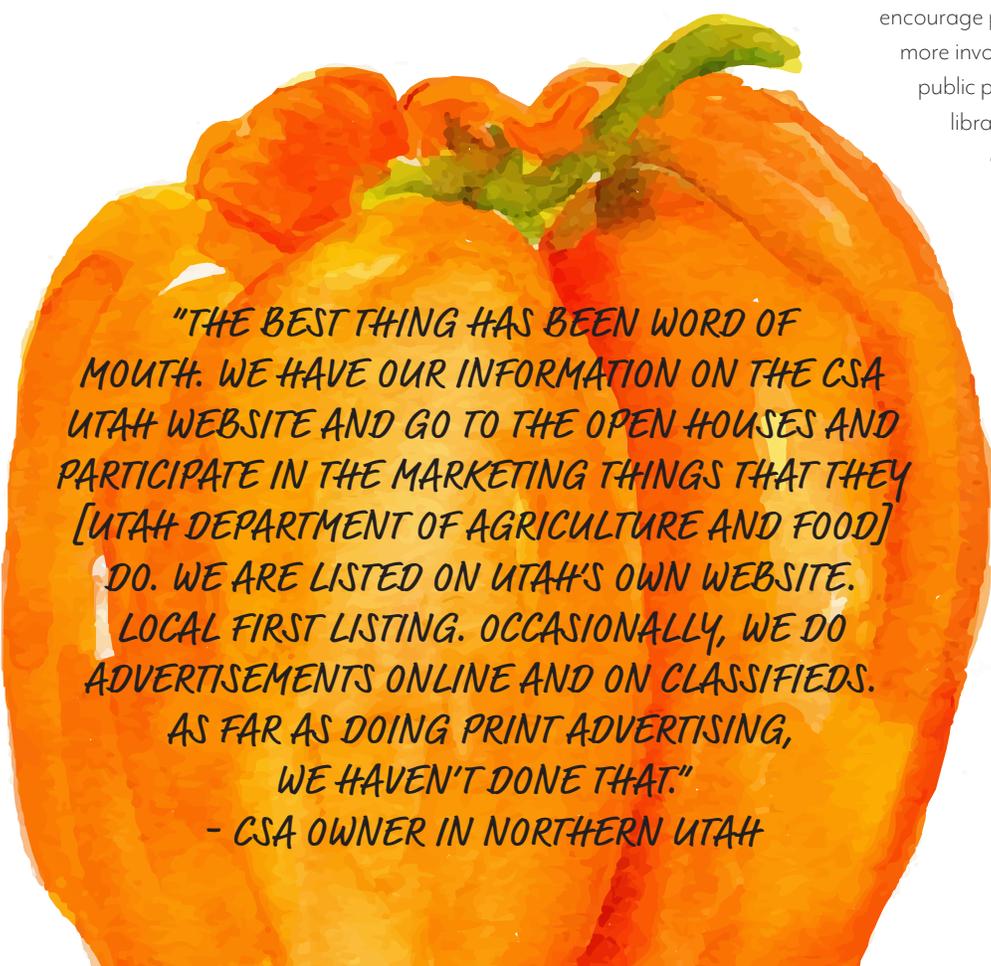
or time for a certain day. By putting in a little more effort, the farm shows their shareholders their importance to the CSA, resulting in positive feedback. Positive word-of-mouth can be encouraged by asking members to share with their friends, give testimonials, and recruit new members (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

## BROCHURES

Brochures may not be the most effective way to make a CSA known; however, they are a great place to gather and communicate information. By summarizing who you are, your story, where you're located, produce offered throughout the season, cost of shares, and contact information, potential shareholders have all they need in order to take a step forward. Brochures are also simple to distribute and may be the best tactic for older community members.

## FLIERS

Fliers are a way to raise awareness of registration deadlines, pick-up times, social events, and much more. They quickly give basic and necessary information that encourage potential shareholders to become more involved. Fliers can be distributed in public places such as grocery stores, co-ops, libraries, community centers, wellness centers, or workplaces.



"THE BEST THING HAS BEEN WORD OF MOUTH. WE HAVE OUR INFORMATION ON THE CSA UTAH WEBSITE AND GO TO THE OPEN HOUSES AND PARTICIPATE IN THE MARKETING THINGS THAT THEY [UTAH DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD] DO. WE ARE LISTED ON UTAH'S OWN WEBSITE. LOCAL FIRST LISTING. OCCASIONALLY, WE DO ADVERTISEMENTS ONLINE AND ON CLASSIFIEDS. AS FAR AS DOING PRINT ADVERTISING, WE HAVEN'T DONE THAT."  
- CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH

## WEBSITES

Because we are in the information age, it is important to have business information online. A website does not have to be extravagant or have a high cost. Sites such as weebly.com, WordPress.com, or wix.com offer free services to create a website. With several templates to choose from, CSA websites can easily be created. It is necessary that websites relay professionalism and the proper information. It is proven that people decide in 1/20th of a second whether the page will give them what they need to know (Schulz, 2012). Therefore, websites should be organized and easy to navigate with valuable information. Listed below are some basics to include concerning the CSA on a website:

- » Who you are
- » Your story (how many years, why you started, what makes you unique)
- » Production method
- » CSA season
- » What you offer
- » Location (of farm, distribution sites, retail sellers, farmers' markets) and pick-up times
- » Cost of shares and produce
- » Contact information
- » Pictures and media (growers, fellow shareholders, crops, events, produce, boxes, etc.)
- » Links to social media pages
- » Videos
- » CSA share application

It is helpful for consumers to be able to:

- » Register for the CSA
- » Communicate with you (through comments, direct messages, suggestions etc.)
- » Change their own contact or pick-up information
- » Pay for produce or shares with credit or debit cards

Example:

<http://www.johnsonfamilyfarms.com/so-god-made-a-farmer/>

## BLOGS

Some CSAs choose to have a blog as opposed to a standard website because it tells more of a story and is a great way to keep shareholders updated. While all of the above information can be included in a blog, it's also an excellent platform to share what has been planted, the status of crops, recipes, workshop information, media, and much more. Blog



## CSA 2016 - WEEK #8

July 18, 2016

**Cipollini Onions** - A lovely early onion - sweet and mild! Here's the Kitchen's take on what to do with them... I love to braise them. See the recipe below.

**Storage:** In an airtight (plastic) bag in the refrigerator. **Uses:** Raw/Cooked **When to use:** Within 5 days.

**Sugarloaf Chicory** - These are back again this week! Here are some great recipe ideas...

**Storage:** In an airtight (plastic) bag in the refrigerator. **Uses:** Raw/Cooked **When to use:** Within 5 days.

**Batavian Lettuce** - This crispy lettuce grows well in the summer, and it's one of our favorite varieties with lovely flavor and leaf texture.

**Storage:** In an airtight (plastic) bag in the refrigerator. **Uses:** Raw **When to use:** Within 5 days.

**Swiss Chard** - This cooking green loves the summer heat.

**Storage:** In an airtight (plastic) bag in the refrigerator. **Uses:** Cooked **When to use:** Within 5 days.

**Zucchini/Summer Squash** - We're reducing the quantity of squash in the share this week to give you all a little break! They're so good sliced and grilled...

**Storage:** In an airtight (plastic) bag in the refrigerator. **Uses:** Raw or Cooked, Baked **When to use:** Within 5 days.

**Cucumbers** - They're back again this week! Make a quick salad sliced with the cipollini onions and some feta cheese with a simple vinaigrette.

**Storage:** In an airtight (plastic) bag in the refrigerator. **Uses:** Raw **When to use:** Within 5 days.

## RECIPES

Cipollini Onions Braised in Red Wine

Zucchini Fritters

Sugarloaf Chicory Recipe Ideas

Swiss Chard with Lentils & Feta Cheese

Blog Post Promoting Golden Earthworm Organic Farm's CSA share during week 8 (Golden Earthworm Organic Farm, 2016).

posts should include images, videos, and links to information in order to appeal to readers. Graphic details capture the attention of the audience, entice them to purchase the pictured produce, and help them understand who you are. Blogs are an excellent platform for sharing progress on projects or crops. Posts can be created as often as you have new information; however, it is important to remain current and updated. Although the post frequency is chosen by the creator, blogs may engage viewers most when updated on a weekly or biweekly basis. The relationship between you and shareholders is strengthened as the character of the CSA is shared and shareholders stay accurately up to date.

WordPress.com and Blogger.com are popular blogging domains that offer free and easy-to-use blog templates. Simply choose a blog layout and begin creating. Web addresses can be made specifically for the CSA and can instantly become tailored for your needs.

## EMAILS

Emailing is an effective way of communicating directly with people. Since most consumers own smartphones, emails can be read and responded to quickly. However, it is important not to spam consumers too often with multiple emails. If consumers see emails too often in their inbox, they tend to label them as junk. An email with a weekly newsletter attached is one way to inform CSA shareholders. Emails are a great platform to distribute timely information including updates of distribution schedules, alterations in pricing, changes in offered produce, upcoming events, or general farm news. You should create an email list from your current shareholders, previous shareholders, and anyone else who may sign up for it at farmers' markets, distribution points, or even grocery stores. Emails may also be more preferred by shareholders depending on their demographics. For older CSA shareholders who may not have access to social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, email updates are a much simpler and efficient way to get the word out.

One way to create an email list is by creating a group within an email program, such as Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo, and typing the names and email addresses of the CSA shareholders. Another way to make an email list is by using an email marketing platform, such as MailChimp. An email marketing platform can develop an opt-in form to include on the website or Facebook fan page, create a list, manage subscribers, send emails, and track the emails to know what the subscribers read and clicked on. Each email should have an "unsubscribe" option at the bottom of the message to be compliant with the CAN-SPAM Act and save time from manually removing contacts from an email list. Long (2014) recommends you simply ask for a subscriber's name and email address. Asking for more personal information (mailing address and phone numbers) will affect the opt-in rate (Long, 2014). An email marketing platform ensures that you build your email list correctly and within the CAN-SPAM Act. Another benefit of using an email marketing platform is the ability to track how many subscribers open the email message and click on information within the message. This helps you see how your shareholders are reacting to the information provided. If you have low engagement with your shareholders, you might need to edit the subject line of the message or the type of content to include.

## ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters are a great way to communicate progress to shareholders and keep them updated. Much like a blog, they offer a platform to share recipes, workshop information, delivery schedules, what to do with surplus produce (jamming, freezing, pickling, etc.), upcoming events, or farm safety. Yet, like emails, electronic newsletters can instantly be sent out in a mass message to a set list of people. Although, they should only be sent out once a week to once a month. Several online sites, such as MailChimp, offer free services for creating online newsletters for businesses.

## CSA OPEN HOUSE

An open house is great way for potential shareholders to get to know local CSA owners. In the past, the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has hosted a large open house free to the public, involving several local farms. Community members are invited to meet several CSA owners, learn what they offer, and decide which CSA would be best for them. This is a great way for local farms to come together in order to strengthen their community and gain consumer interest.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

There are many aspects of social media that can be used for businesses. Social media gives the CSA free advertising and creates trust as shareholders talk about products, give feedback, and share with their friends. When it comes to food, word-of-mouth is the best advertising. However, by posting too much or not the correct content, people will simply ignore it. Schulz (2012) suggested three requirements to follow when it comes to what and how often updates should be posted:



Post about something that is current and/or happening within a time limit



Have a "call to action"



It connects with your audience and people should know about it

There are many specific platforms of social media, which we will break down in order to correctly use them to market CSAs.

**FACEBOOK** - Facebook has a large database of reachable people, yet it often involves spam. Many Facebook members go to a company's page to find discounts or basic information (Schulz, 2012). You should create a company page for your CSA, which gives basic information, shares media from events, and sends out updates and reminders about events. It is a fast and easy way to share messages.

**TWITTER** - Twitter is a place mostly for entertainment. Yet by making an account and posting updates about pick ups, social events, and workshops, awareness will spread about a CSA.

**INSTAGRAM** - Instagram is a place to share pictures or short videos relating to your CSA. Post pictures of produce or volunteer groups. Capture the essence of the brand and what it does.



**Farmer Next Door**

May 13 · 🌐

**SALE ENDS TODAY! 2 MONTHS OF WEEKLY HOME DELIVERY FOR THE PRICE OF 1.** That is 8 weeks of our Farm Bundle for just \$150. [www.farmernextdoor.net](http://www.farmernextdoor.net) This week's Farm Bundle: Cabbage, Apples, Carrots, Pac Choi, Mustard Greens, Tomatoes, and Bread. Sign Up at [www.farmernextdoor.net](http://www.farmernextdoor.net)



Facebook post advertising membership to Farmer Next Door's CSA (Farmer Next Door, 2016).



Instagram post about the USU Student Organic Farm's CSA (Utah State University, 2015).



**usuaggielife**  
USU Student Organ...

Follow

235 likes

55w

usuaggielife Fresh organic produce grown by USU students for valley locals. We are an agricultural school after all 🍓🍌🍎. #WholeFoodsUSU #USUsummer

laraj\_mason @paige\_mason

Log in to like or comment.

...

**YOUTUBE** - Not every CSA needs a YouTube account, but it may be an effective platform to share information and market a farm. You can record what is in each week's share, along with corresponding recipes and how-to's with the produce. The EarthDance Organic Farm School's YouTube account is a good example of how CSA owners can strengthen their brand through media, by posting fun, insightful, and relevant videos. You can also bring along subscribers in a video blog style, much like the videos of the Johnson Family Farm. These give community members a glimpse of what the CSA farm is involved with. The more accessible the CSA is online, the more comfortable people will be to approach it offline.

Search for these examples of YouTube Videos from CSAs:

[What's Fresh: EarthDance CSA Share Week #12](#)

[Eden Farm CSA Video \(Greenville, MI\) What is CSA? Why is important? What can we expect from it? Watch the video to find out!](#)

**SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOLS** - With such a large span of social media platforms, it may be challenging and time-consuming for you to invest energy into each platform separately. Social media management tools allow users to coordinate posts on multiple social sites from one place.

Social Sprout is a great place to create and schedule posts for several accounts including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Users can join conversations and track the data of their posts. HootSuite is another social media management tool that allows users to publish and track posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. It allows users to analyze data from their online platforms, review what consumers are saying, and collaborate with other users or members of a team. These may be helpful to CSA growers who have a large online following and need to organize publishings, or those who simply wish to save time.

*A LOT OF IT WE HAVE RELIED ON INTERNET TRAFFIC THROUGH OUR WEBSITE. WE'VE USED A LITTLE BIT OF GOOGLE ADVERTISING, BUT THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE SUPER EFFECTIVE. WE'VE DONE QUITE A BIT ON FACEBOOK, AND THAT'S BEEN MARGINALLY SUCCESSFUL. SOME IT HAS BEEN WORD OF MOUTH; PEOPLE TELLING THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT IT. WE'VE GOTTEN ON AS MANY OTHER CSA RELATED SITES OR WEBSITE AS WE CAN FIND. THE STATE HAS SOME. JUST TRYING TO GET OUT THERE, GET OUR NAME OUT THERE AS MUCH AS WE CAN. WE USUALLY DO A LITTLE MARKETING AT THE FARMERS' MARKET AS WELL, JUST TRYING TO LET PEOPLE KNOW. - CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH*

*"PRIMARYLY ONLINE MARKETING IS THE MOST AFFORDABLE. WE MANAGE A WEBSITE. WE DO E-BLASTS [WITH] CONSTANT CONTACT. WE MARKET THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE INEXPENSIVE LIKE CSA OPEN HOUSES, ONLINE LISTINGS LIKE LOCALHARVEST.ORG AND CSA UTAH." - CSA OWNER IN CENTRAL UTAH*



# FEEDBACK FROM SHAREHOLDERS

Receiving feedback from shareholders is a great way for CSA growers to know how to improve in order to increase overall success. One way of generating feedback is through administering surveys. Surveys should be administered at the end of the season after shareholders have experienced the entire package. One CSA owner explained,

“The annual survey is a way for members to give input and provide direction. We ask for the most and least enjoyed vegetables, suggestions for new vegetables, best and worst aspects of pickup days, etc. Open-ended questions are included for comments and suggestions. Making this an online feature increased the response to 60% of all members. Analyzing the results for common trends, we use the information to plan next season’s crop production and CSA pickup” (Good & Good, 2014).

Examples of shareholder surveys administered by CSAs:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PowissetFarmCSASurvey2012?sm=BNpit2GEOmgqHH9AsWb8YE%2fyDbnNjsvjguq6BI4DAFI%3d>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XQM6BF7?sm=DIliEskMY0Hih6%2fllVgA%3d%3d>

IN YEARS PAST WE HAVE DONE SURVEYS OF OUR MEMBERS. WHEN WE FIRST STARTED, EVERY WEEK WE WERE FACE TO FACE WITH THEM, AS THEY PICKED STUFF UP, SO IT WAS PRETTY EASY TO GET FEEDBACK FROM THEM IN THAT SETTING. WE’VE GOTTEN AWAY FROM THAT. WE DON’T EVEN MEET MOST OF OUR CUSTOMERS ANYMORE. EITHER THEY’RE PICKING IT UP AT THE ISLAND MARKET, AND [WHEN] WE’RE NOT THERE, [IT’S] ISLAND MARKET STAFF THAT’S HANDLING THE PICK UP OR IT’S ROSE HILL DAIRY DROPPING IT OFF AT THEIR DOORSTEP OR WE DON’T EVER SEE THEM. ...SINCE WE STARTED WORKING WITH ROSE HILL DAIRY, THEIR MANAGEMENT TEAM HAS SENT OUT SOME SURVEYS EVERY YEAR WITH GOOD QUESTIONS ABOUT CSAS, AND THEY SEND US THAT INFORMATION AS THEY GATHER IT. ROSE HILL DAIRY DOES HAVE SOME INTERACTION WITH THEIR PEOPLE EITHER THROUGH EMAILS OR FACEBOOK AND OR PHONE CALLS AND WHENEVER THEY GET INFORMATION ABOUT CSAS, THEY SEND IT OUR DIRECTION. SO MOSTLY IT’S BEEN RELYING ON THOSE CHANNELS AS OF LATE AND HONESTLY HASN’T GOT A LOT OF FEEDBACK FROM OUR CUSTOMERS AT THE ISLAND MARKET AND A LOT OF THAT HAS TO DO JUST WITH TIME. HAVEN’T HAD TIME TO SEND THOSE OUT THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. - CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SHAREHOLDERS

Maintaining shareholders is often achieved through building relationships. In fact, many shareholders say that this is the reason why they return the following season (Hall, 2011). There are many ways to increase the bond between you and your shareholders. These include hosting events, including volunteers, and increasing communication. Some events include farm to table dinners, BBQs, U-pick parties, farm tours, picnics, homemade pizza parties, canning sessions, and workshops.

The basis of building and maintaining relationships is formed around genuinely caring about your shareholders. One CSA shares how this made a difference with the success of their business by stating, “All members are greeted at pick-up by the friendly face of our barn manager who answers questions; helps members get their vegetables, cooperative shares, and U-pick (even providing examples of each U-pick crop); and keeps the produce bins piled high. Over the years

she has become a friend to many of our members and has consistently been voted one of the best aspects of CSA pickup in the Members’ Survey” (Good & Good, 2014).

WE’VE HAD A FEW ON FARM WORK DAYS, WE JUST INVITE PEOPLE TO COME UP AND SPEND HALF A DAY DOING WORK WITH US AND SOME OF THEM LIKE THAT HANDS-ON FEELING AND SOME OF THEM LIKE TO SEE HOW THINGS ARE BEING GROWN. WE TRY TO FIND OUT WHICH OF OUR MEMBERS HAVE YOUNG CHILDREN BECAUSE SOMETIMES WE LIKE TO SEND THEM SPECIAL THINGS. - CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH

## SUMMARY AND WHAT’S NEXT

This module explained how to use community-based social marketing to market a CSA. It is important to know the target audience, identify barriers and benefits to operating a CSA, select communication tools that deliver information potential shareholders need to join a CSA, and use communication tools to share information with shareholders during the CSA season. The next module focuses on managing a CSA by planning for land, determining share size, packaging shares, distributing shares, keeping records, and seeking financial assistance.



# REFERENCES

Andreasen, A. R. (1994). Social Marketing: Its definition and domain. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 13(1), 108-114, Retrieved from [http://www.jstor.org/stable/30000176?seq=5#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30000176?seq=5#page_scan_tab_contents)

Barrentine, P., Donovan, C., & Berman, F. (2010). *Small Farm & Direct Marketing Handbook*. Retrieved from Washington State Department of Agriculture website: <http://agr.wa.gov/fp/pubs/docs/056-SmallFarmAndDirectMarketingHandbook-Complete.pdf>

Brehm, J. M., & Eisenhauer, B. W. (2008). Motivations for participating in community-supported agriculture and their relationship with community attachment and social capital. *Southern Rural Sociology*, 94-115. Retrieved from [http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/default/files/CSA\\_support\\_study\\_2008.pdf](http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/default/files/CSA_support_study_2008.pdf)

Bruch, M. L., & Ernst, M. D. (2010). *A farmer's guide to marketing CSAs* (PB1797). Retrieved from University of Tennessee Extension website: <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/pb1797.pdf>

Cone, C. A., & Myhre, A. (2000). Community-supported agriculture: A sustainable alternative to industrial agriculture? *Human Organization*, 59(2), 187-197, Retrieved from <http://www.sfaajournals.net/doi/pdf/10.17730/humo.59.2.715203t206g2j153>

Durrenberger, E. P. (2002). Community supported agriculture in Central Pennsylvania. *Culture & Agriculture*, 24(2), 42-51. doi: 10.1525/cag.2002.24.2.42

Farmer Next Door. (2016, May 13). SALE ENDS TODAY! 2 MONTHS OF WEEKLY HOME DELIVERY FOR THE PRICE OF 1. That is 8 weeks of our Farm Bundle for just \$150. [www.farmernextdoor.net](http://www.farmernextdoor.net) This week's Farm Bundle: Cabbage, Apples, Carrots, Pac Choi, Mustard Greens, Tomatoes, and Bread. Sign Up at [www.farmernextdoor.net](http://www.farmernextdoor.net) [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/utahfarmscsa/>

Galayda, J. (2006). *Community supported agriculture, economic preference theory and subjective well-being* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy: NY.

Golden Earthworm Organic Farm. (2016, July 18). CSA 2016 - Week #8 [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://goldenearthworm.com/farmblog/2016/7/18/csa-2016-week-8PowissetFarmCSASurvey2012?sm=BNpit2GEOmgqHH9AsWb8YE%2fyDbnNjsvjuq6BI4DAFI%3d>



- Good, J., & Good, A. (2014, January 7). Dig deeper: Keeping your CSA members [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://rodaleinstitute.org/keeping-your-csa-members/>
- Hall, K. (2011). *Marketing community supported agriculture in Texas: A dual-method case study* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Texas Tech University, Lubbock.
- Kennedy, A. L. (2010). Using community-based social marketing techniques to enhance environmental regulation. *Sustainability*, 2(4), 1138-1160. doi:10.3390/su2041138
- Kolodinsky, J. M., & Pelch, L. L. (1997). Factors influencing the decision to join a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, 10(2/3), 129-141. doi: 10.1300/J064v10n02\_11
- Kotler, P., & Lee, N. R. (2011). *Social marketing: Influencing behaviors for good* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Lang, K. B. (2010). The changing face of community-supported agriculture. *Culture & Agriculture*, 32(1), 17-26. doi: 10.1111/j.1556-486X.2010.01032.x
- Long, J. (2014, April 2). How to build a killer email marketing list for your business. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonathan-long/how-to-build-a-killer-ema\\_b\\_5068931.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonathan-long/how-to-build-a-killer-ema_b_5068931.html)
- McKenzie-Mohr, D. (2000, May). Fostering sustainable behavior through community-based social marketing. *American Psychologist*. Retrieved from [http://serc.carleton.edu/files/sustainability/activities/mckenzie-mohr\\_d\\_fostering.pdf](http://serc.carleton.edu/files/sustainability/activities/mckenzie-mohr_d_fostering.pdf)
- McKenzie-Mohr, D. (2011). *Fostering sustainable behavior: An introduction to community-based social marketing*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.
- North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. (n.d.). Incentives. Retrieved from <http://p2pays.org/socialmarketing/incentives.asp>
- Patel, N. (2014, October 13). Foot-in-the-door technique: How to get people to seamlessly take action. *Forbes Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/neilpatel/2014/10/13/foot-in-the-door-technique-how-to-get-people-to-take-seamlessly-take-action/#6210a0c97bca>
- Polimeni, J. M., Polimeni, R. I., Shirey, R. L., & Trees, W. S. (2006). The demand for community supported agriculture. *Journal of Business & Economics Research*, 4(2), 49-59.
- Schulz, E. D. (2012). *The smart marketer's toolbox: The latest marketing innovations and how to use them to grow your business*. Self Publishing: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Strochlic, R., & Shelley, C. (2004, May). Community supported agriculture In California, Oregon and Washington: Challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.208.9442&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Utah State University. (2015, July 10). Fresh organic produce grown by USU students for valley locals. We are an agricultural school after all [Photograph]. Retrieved [https://www.instagram.com/p/49\\_WOcESqN/](https://www.instagram.com/p/49_WOcESqN/)
- Wyse, S. (2011, September 16). What is the Difference between Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research? Retrieved from <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/what-is-the-difference-between-qualitative-research-and-quantitative-research/>

## Worksheet 2.1: Knowing Shareholder Characteristics

Think of current and potential shareholders in your area. What are the characteristics of those shareholders? If you have no current shareholders, leave that space blank.

	Current Shareholders	Potential Shareholders
Gender		
Age		
Location		
Income		
Number in Household		
Place of Work		
Marriage Status		
Number of Children		
Education Level		
Length of Residency		
Political Affiliation		

Now make a list of what these shareholders may value (local food, sustainable agricultural practices, etc.)

---



---



---

What community connections do you already have?

---



---



---

Are there any groups, organizations, or businesses in your community interested in local food?

---



---



---

## Worksheet 2.2: Benefit-Barrier Analysis Table

Please list potential barriers and benefits consumers may perceive as a factor to becoming a shareholder of your CSA.

Behaviors	Barriers	Benefits
Encourage: Consumers joining a CSA		
Discourage: Consumers buying out-of-state produce from grocery stores during the growing season		

Please mark all of the potential barriers to starting a CSA operation.

	Yes	No
INTERNAL BARRIERS		
Retention of shareholders		
Improper facilities		
Concerns about labor		
Lack of knowledge about operating a CSA		
Lack of time to operate a CSA		
Cost of the CSA's share		
Uncertainty of how to market CSA share availability		
EXTERNAL BARRIERS		
Consumers' lack of interest		
Cost of shares sold by other CSAs		
Weather discrepancies resulting in crop damage		
Consumers upset about seasonality of produce		
Consumers wanting more variety or larger quantity		
Consumers uncertain of how to prepare produce from CSA		

Are there other potential barriers to CSA start up? If yes, list here:

---



---



---



---



---

Please mark all of the potential benefits to starting a CSA operation.

	Yes	No
INTERNAL BENEFITS		
Gain supplemental farm income		
Have a guarantee of consumers		
Become involved in the community		
Receive farm labor assistance		
Experience moral uplift		
Increase community involvement		
Support sustainability		
EXTERNAL BENEFITS		
Offer locally grown produce		
Provide fresh produce		
Help consumers eat healthier food		
Provide access to organic food		
Help consumers learn more about the process of planting, growing, pruning, and harvesting		
Build new markets for local food		

Are there other potential benefits to CSA start up? If yes, list here:

---



---



---



---



---

## Worksheet 2.3: Determining Communication Channels

What communication channels are these shareholders likely to access? Place a checkmark in any box that applies.

	Current Shareholders	Potential Shareholders
Word-of-Mouth		
Brochures		
Fliers		
Websites		
Blogs		
Emails		
Electronic Newsletters		
CSA Open House		
Facebook		
Twitter		
Instagram		
YouTube		

How many shareholders (approximately) will participate in your CSA?

---

How often will you need to communicate with shareholders?

---

Do your shareholders congregate at the same location?

\_\_\_ Yes     \_\_\_ No

### Worksheet 2.4: Feedback from CSA Shareholders

Would you like to receive feedback from your shareholders?

Yes

No

What do you want to learn from your CSA shareholders?

---

---

---

---

Please mark which communication channel you would like to use in order to receive shareholder feedback.

In-person conversations

Comments on websites

Participation with social media posts

Responses from emails, newsletter, etc.

Survey

Other (please specify)

---

If you chose survey, please mark what method you would use to survey shareholders.

Written

Verbal

How would you encourage shareholders to participate in the survey?

---

---

---

## Worksheet 2.5: Building Relationships with Shareholders

Will members be allowed to help with farming activities? How?

---

---

---

Please mark which activities appeal to you for relationship-building with shareholders?

- Farm-to-table dinners
- Barbecues
- U-pick parties
- Farm tours
- Picnics
- Homemade pizza parties
- Canning sessions
- Workshops
- Other (please specify)

---

What celebrations, fairs, or workdays can members participate in?

---

---

---

Who will organize these activities?

---

---

When will these activities be held?

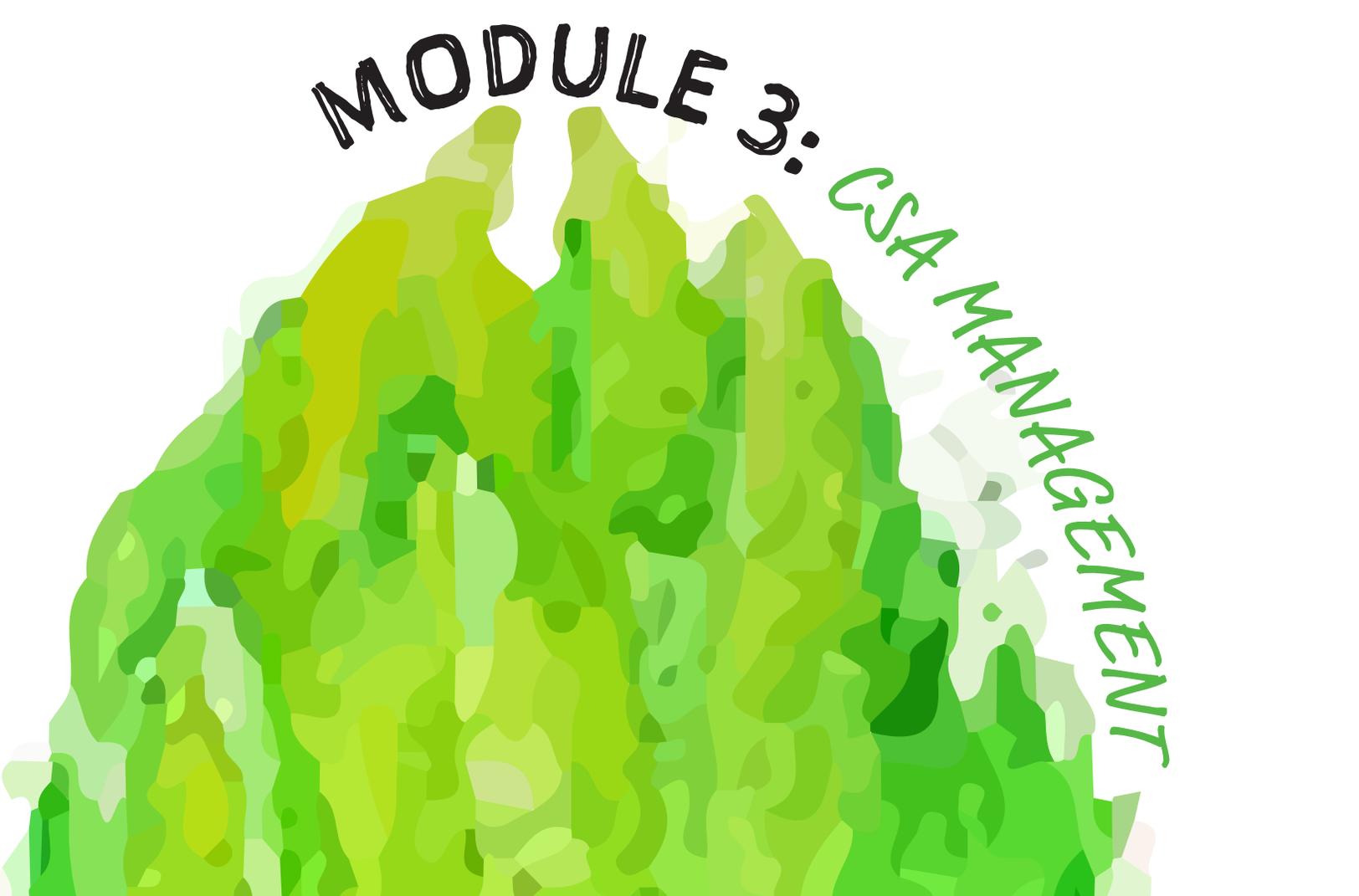
---

---

## MODULE OBJECTIVES:

This module will enable you to:

- » Plan for farm size and land ownership type
- » Determine share size
- » Develop policies for CSA shareholders interested in substituting or purchasing additional products
- » Develop a plan for how to package individual shares
- » Identify ways CSA owners distribute shares
- » Identify CSA management software to assist in record keeping
- » Identify ways CSA owners can seek financing



## MODULE 3: CSA MANAGEMENT

# FARM SIZE AND OWNERSHIP TYPE

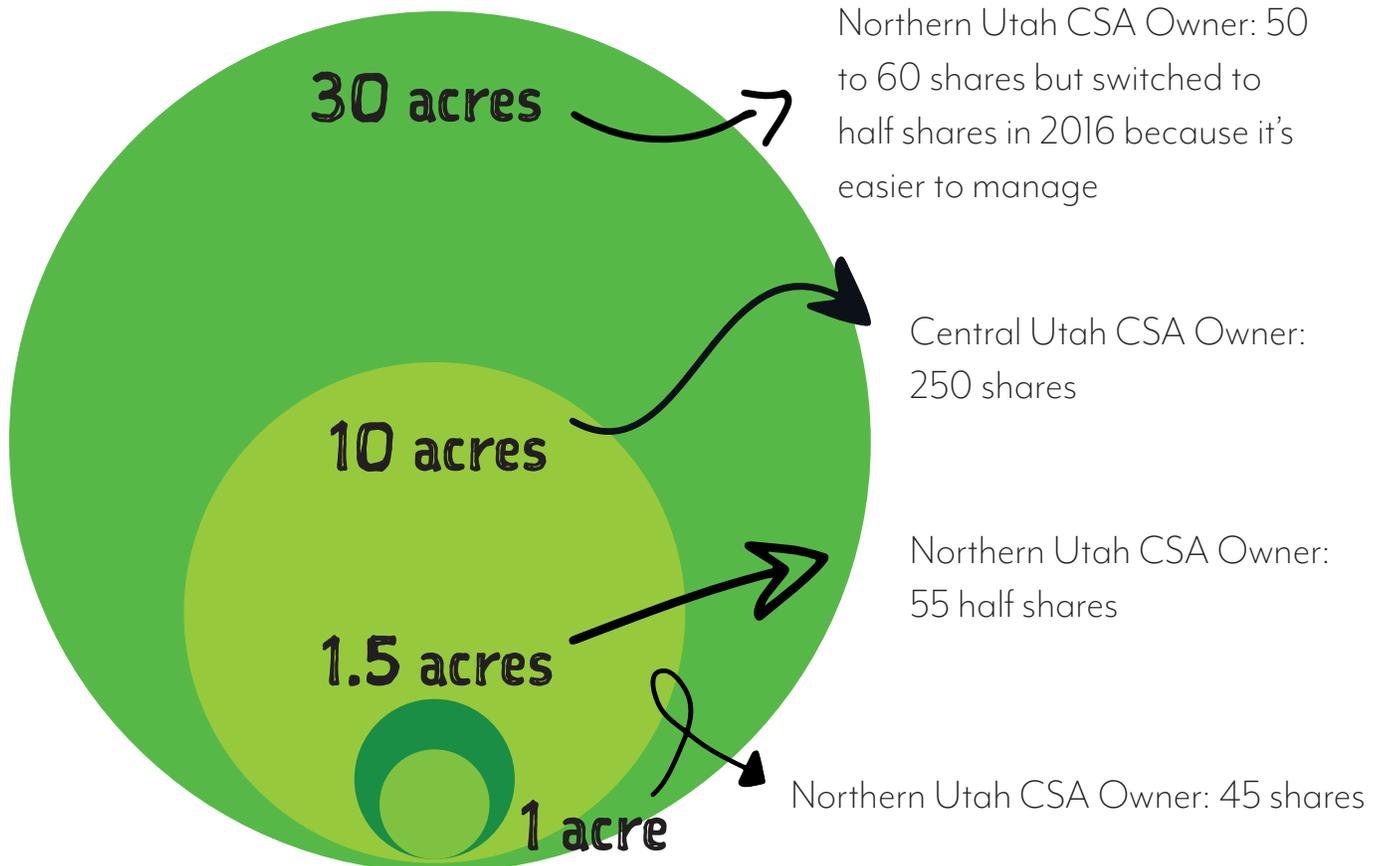
## FARM SIZE

The amount of acreage used for a CSA is up to you, yet “farms providing a full-time income grow high-quality produce for at least 80 to 100 shares” (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999). The larger the farm, the more shares will be available along with more options for crop rotations, raising animals, hosting events, and growing larger plants and trees (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999). More help will be required by volunteers, shareholders, or hired workers to manage the CSA. The UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agriculture Systems interviewed, surveyed, and observed CSA owners in Wisconsin that relied on one farmer or seasonal worker for every 20 to 40 shares. Wisconsin CSAs with 100 or more shares had crews of three or more workers or interns.

Larger farms may be harder to maintain, and use more money on seeds, fertilizer, and irrigation yet yield a higher amount of profit (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999). Smaller farms would be easier to maintain; however, the amount of produce is limited.

Many farms are involved with various strategies other than community supported agriculture, such as working with local retailers. It may be useful to separate crops designated for different outlets.

A few Utah CSA owners indicated how much land is in production for the products offered in their 2016 CSA shares along with the number of shares sold.



## BUYING LAND

Many CSAs thrive in areas located close to urban centers where there is a nearby consumer base for their product and community to interact with (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). Yet, you may struggle to find the appropriate property for your CSA. Land is not always available or ideal for farming; however, the biggest issue for you may be the high price. Buying land is the most favored option because it allows for long term investment. As crops are planted year after year, soil conditions can improve with no-till or other wise management options, and farming strategies specific to the land are established. Without the fear of relocating, you can also establish and maintain a constant tie to the local community and shareholders.

## RENTING LAND

In 1997, more than half of CSA farms in the nation did not have full ownership of their properties (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004). Of those CSAs, 68 percent had rental agreements with private landowners, including non-profits such as churches, schools, or sustainability organizations (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004). This is the more realistic strategy for obtaining land for many growers.

Salt Lake County has an urban farming program to lease unused parcels of land to growers. Farmlink is a program that links available land in Salt Lake County with interested growers. Some land may be owned by public entities such as Salt Lake County or a municipality, while some may be privately owned. If interested, you can fill out this application and send it to Supreet Gill (SKGill@slco.org) or by mail at:

Attn: Supreet Gill  
Salt Lake County Urban Farming  
2001 South State Street Ste S4-700  
Salt Lake City, UT 84190

Applicants for leases are asked about farming experience, business plan, farming method, diversity of crops to be grown, type of local food businesses used to market the produce grown, irrigation methods, and financial capability. If you or someone you know is interested in finding land to farm, or if you have any questions, contact Supreet Gill at

(385) 468-1793. If you are interested in urban agriculture in the Salt Lake City area, find out what's allowed in your city by checking out this survey: <http://slco.org/urbanfarming/doctopdf/Handout.pdf>. For more information, visit the Salt Lake County's urban agriculture website at [www.urbanfarming.slco.org](http://www.urbanfarming.slco.org).

## CREATIVE OPTIONS

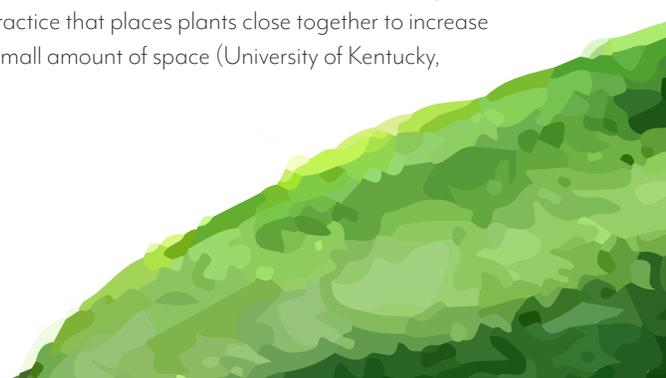
### COMMUNITY PLOTS

In first gauging whether farming is right for you, you may wish to investigate a low commitment option in your community, such as a community plot. As an example, Garden City Harvest in Missoula, MT (<http://www.gardencityharvest.org/programs/community-gardens/>) offers 15 by 15 foot plots, tools, water, compost, straw, common space, and technical assistance by leadership committee members and Garden City Harvest staff. These types of programs are great for getting your "foot in the farming door."

### SPIN FARMING

SPIN stands for s-small p-lot in-tensive agriculture (SPIN Farming LLC, 2016). SPIN farming is designed for urban growers to use backyards, front lawns, or neighborhood lots to grow produce with short harvest times so that they can grow and harvest them quickly and multiply their production in a small space.

SPIN farming is a business model, so you can choose the growing method of your choice, such as organic, permaculture, biodynamic, bio-intensive, or rotational grazing. Permaculture is a design process mimicking the diversity and resilience of natural ecosystems to create productive, abundant, regenerative yields for humans in ways that value the integrity of all living things. The goal is designing in a way that minimizes intensive labor overtime. Biodynamics is a holistic, ecological, and ethical approach to farming, gardening, food, and nutrition (Biodynamics Association, 2016). By creating a diversified, balanced farm ecosystem, you can generate health and fertility as much as possible from within the land itself. Bio-intensive is an organic farming practice that places plants close together to increase yield in a small amount of space (University of Kentucky, 2011).



Rotational grazing relates to CSAs interested in selling meat shares because this growing method involves moving livestock (e.g., sheep, goats, hogs) to different paddocks to prevent overgrazing, allowing adequate time for pastures to regenerate.

The SPIN farming model is different than traditional agriculture businesses since it helps eliminate the barriers that individuals face when attempting to farm as a profession. The three largest barriers are owning a large acreage of land, major capital investment to farm those acres, and the education needed to make farming a financially successful business. If you want to learn more about SPIN farming, the creators Wally Satzewich and Gail Vandersteen have a website (<http://www.spinfarming.com/whatsSpin/>) and guides for purchase.



## PLANNING A CSA OPERATION

Operating a CSA is not a simple direct marketing enterprise as you must consider multiple factors. You need to take into account what is reasonable for you to accomplish based on your available resources, time, and your shareholders' needs. You should determine the following:

- » share size
- » share season
- » how to package individual shares
- » pick up and delivery options
- » if and how substitutions or additions will be allowed
- » labor needs
- » pricing for a season's share
- » payment options
- » membership agreements
- » methods to recruit new shareholders
- » methods to communicate with and build relationships with existing shareholders
- » methods for receiving feedback about the CSA



**DETERMINING THE SHARE SIZE**

Many CSAs offer a full-size share or half-size share to shareholders. A share describes what shareholders receive for the season and what they receive for regular delivery (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). A full-size share should provide enough food for a family of four throughout the week (CSA Utah, 2016a). Full-sized shares are intended for more than two people, are priced at a higher rate, and are either delivered more often to shareholders or with more produce per share. A half-sized share is the amount of produce two people in a household receive every other week or each week.

Workshares allow shareholders to lend work on the farm in return for shares. This aids you as a CSA owner while allowing your shareholders to develop farming skills. You should try to maintain the same amount of delivered produce throughout the season. By planning, comparing crops from previous years, or by partnering with other farms, you should have a basic concept of what is an achievable goal. A large variety of distributed produce is key. Shareholders rate “variety” and “good price/value” as some of the most important factors of joining a CSA (The Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, 2003). A variety of produce may be achieved by growing different varieties of the same crop, for example, offering five separate varieties of potatoes instead of only two (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). Farms usually grow more than 40 types of crops, comprising



of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and even herbs, and try to provide at least eight to 10 varieties each week (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999). CSA owners who rely on a CSA as their main income try to distribute 80 to 100 shares (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999). CSA owners in Utah grow a variety of seasonal vegetables, fruits, and herbs such as lettuces, carrots, leeks, cilantro, tomatoes, and garlic.

Table 3.1 shows the average price of Utah CSA shares available as advertised on the CSA Utah website (2016b). This information has been gathered from six Utah CSA farms from the 2016 summer season. These farms each produce shares for around 20 weeks. The amount of produce offered ranges from six to 12 items depending on the farm. Visit the [CSAUtah.org](http://CSAUtah.org) website to find more information.

<i>SUMMER SHARE SIZE</i>	<i>WEEKLY PRICE</i>	<i>20 WEEKS TOTAL</i>
Half	\$16.40	\$328.00
Full	\$29.79	\$595.83

Table 3.1: Average Share Prices for CSAs in Utah

**DETERMINING THE CSA SEASON**

The length of time you provide shares is a significant factor when planning for a CSA. The growing season can vary depending on the location, climate, production, member

retention, and marketing of the CSA (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). For CSAs located in cooler climates, shares are offered during the growing season of warmer months. A typical share season is roughly from May through October (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999).

However, depending on the produce offered, CSAs may choose to distribute from June through October or May through September. Some CSA owners break seasons down more specifically by spring, summer, fall, and winter. In warmer areas, many CSAs operate year round (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). These CSA owners may make a higher profit from lasting distributions, but they do not have the winter months off to prepare crops or focus on recruitment.

### SHARE SEASON FOR UTAH CSAS

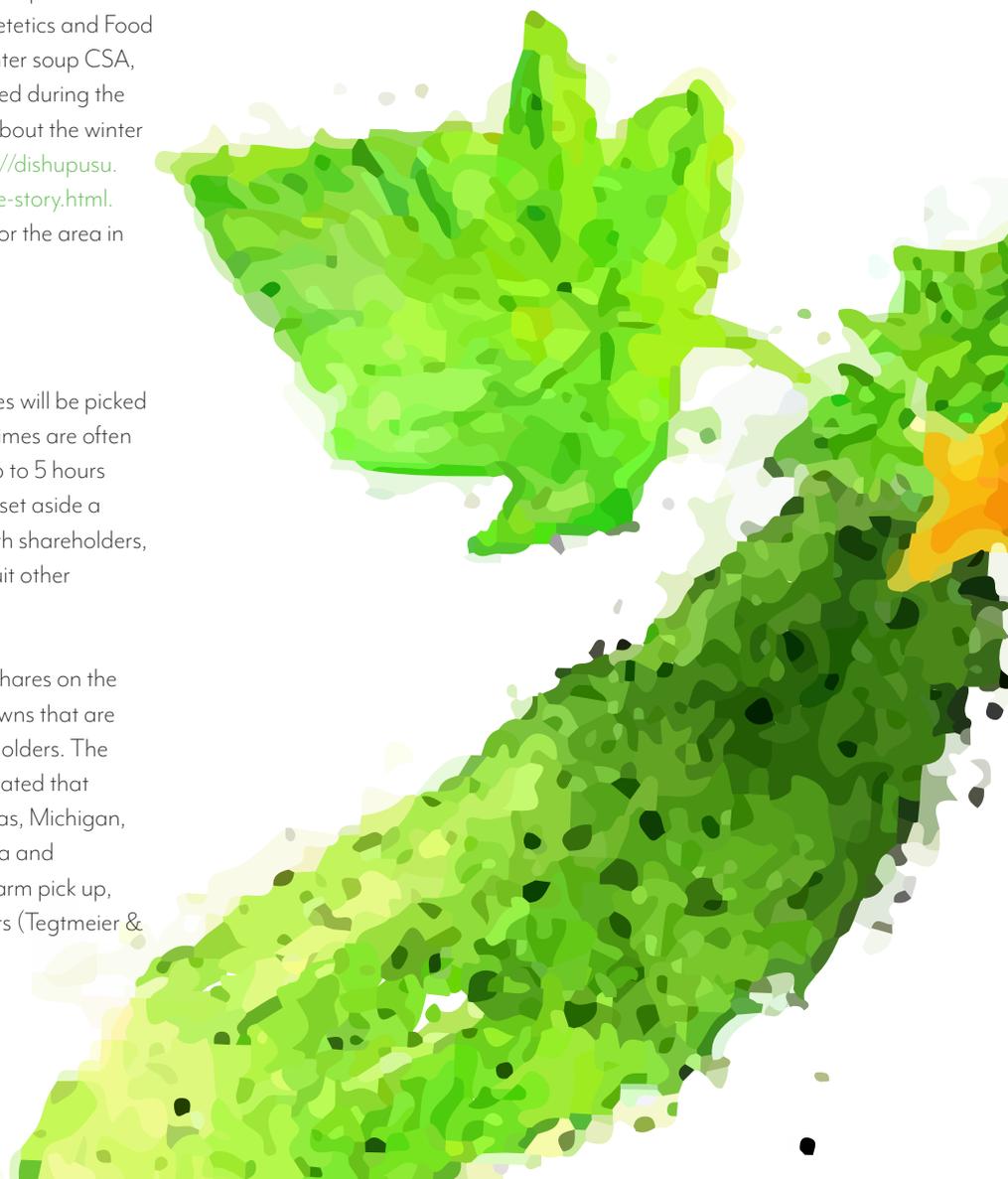
Shares are often distributed on a weekly basis throughout the season in Utah. Utah's summer share season usually starts in Mid-May or June and ends in October, averaging 18 to 20 weeks in length depending on the region. This is similar to the average season of 20 weeks (Strochlic & Shelley, 2004). Some Utah CSAs will offer a fall CSA veggie share that lasts 6 to 8 weeks or a winter CSA share. As an example of a winter share, the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences at Utah State University offers a winter soup CSA, using preserved herbs and vegetables gathered during the summer growing season. More information about the winter soup CSA can be found, at this website: <http://dishupusu.blogspot.com/2013/03/soup-connection-true-story.html>. Growers should learn what season is typical for the area in order to plan effective CSA production.

### DISTRIBUTING SHARES

You need to determine when and where shares will be picked up or delivered to shareholders. Distribution times are often during the middle of the day and may take up to 5 hours (Milstein, 1999). It may be smart for CSAs to set aside a distribution site manager to communicate with shareholders, oversee pick ups, handle payments, and recruit other community members (Milstein, 1999).

Many CSAs have shareholders pick up their shares on the farm, and some CSAs have pick up sites in towns that are within a reasonable travel distance for shareholders. The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture stated that Midwest CSA operations (Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska and Wisconsin) offered pick up sites in town, on-farm pick up, home delivery, and pick up at farmers' markets (Tegtmeier & Duffy, 2005).

On-farm pick ups are a great option for farms with shareholders close by. Shareholders get to see where their produce has come from and build relationships with you. It is also a cheaper alternative as it cuts the costs of transportation and travel. To sell your produce, you must obtain any required insurance or food licenses. Pick-up or drop off sites can include public places, workplaces, or members' homes where shareholders meet to pick up their produce. By having a pick-up location in a public area such as at a library, general store, farmers' market, church, or local park, you will also market your CSA operation and should bring fliers/brochures/cards to hand out to curious passersby. These areas can be indoors or outdoors, yet it is important that these sites are accessible by a truck and are large enough for groups of people (Milstein, 1999).



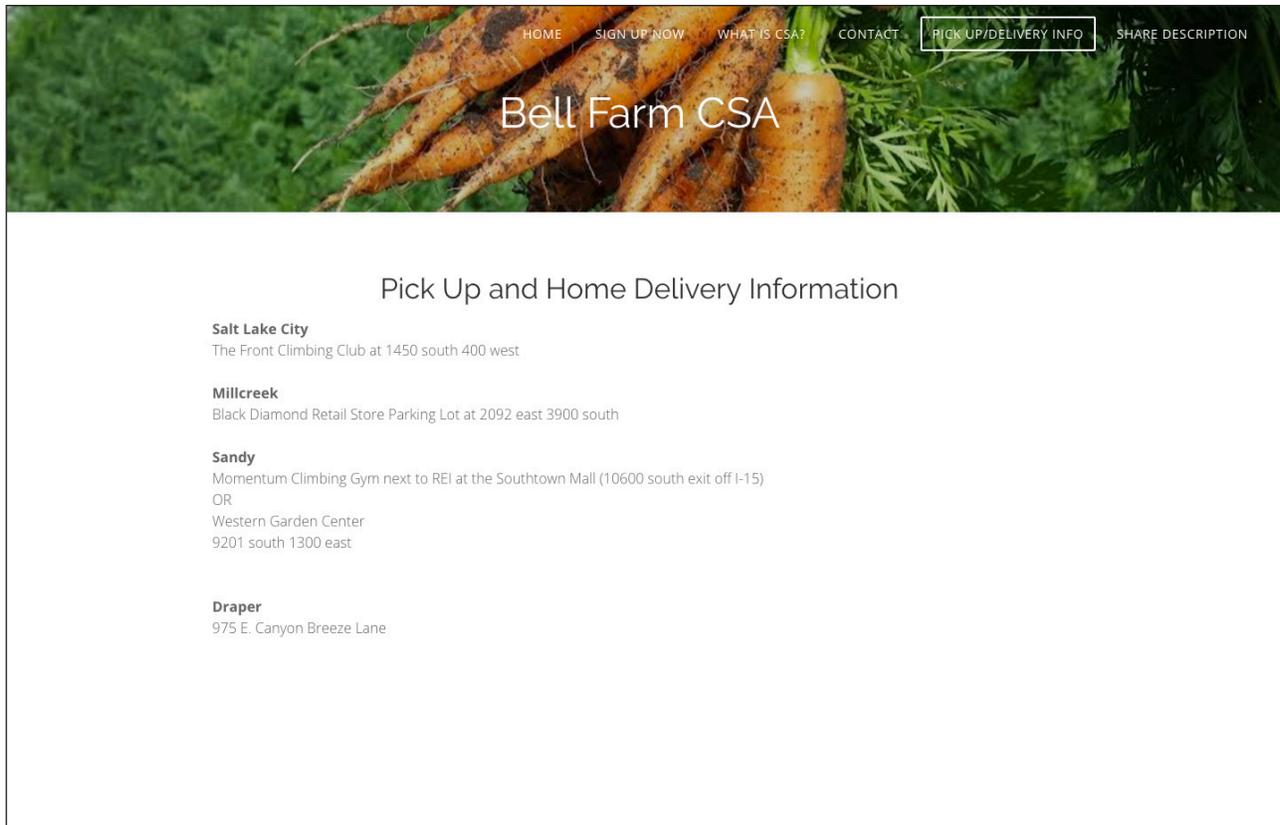
A shareholder's garage, porch, or yard could be enough space needed to distribute (Milstein, 1999). If the pick up site is located at someone's home, the proper insurance or seller's license is needed. Farm liability alone covers the farm site and the farmers' market stand, but not always the drop site (Armstrong, 2014). The shareholder's homeowner's insurance won't cover the share distribution because it's a business activity. In order to be safe, a commercial general liability policy should be secured in addition to farm liability (Armstrong, 2014). You should research the area before determining it a pick up site as some residential areas exclude commercial activity (Armstrong, 2014).

If the pick up site is at a workplace or business, their insurance may cover the CSA (Armstrong, 2014). Because this may cost the business more money on their insurance plan, you may have to pay the business directly (Armstrong, 2014). If this is not the case, you may have to purchase your own business insurance (Armstrong, 2014).

You must decide if a pick up option is best for you, especially if the location is a great distance away from the farm. Travel, transportation, and time must be accounted for. Many CSAs, such as Easy Bee Farms in Moab, UT, charge a higher share price when shareholders register for in-town drop offs to cover fuel, refrigeration, and labor costs. For further pick up locations, at least 50 members are needed in order to make traveling worthwhile (Milstein, 1999).

Home deliveries are another option offered by CSAs. When many shareholders are located in an apartment complex or area such as assisted living, this may be a smart alternative. This is especially helpful for shareholders not able to drive, including the elderly. Again, it would be more costly for the CSA. Shareholders would probably have to pay more for their share if registering for home delivery.

During interviews, select Utah CSA owners provided information about their pick up or delivery for shares (see Table 3.2).



The screenshot shows the website for Bell Farm CSA. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for HOME, SIGN UP NOW, WHAT IS CSA?, CONTACT, PICK UP/DELIVERY INFO (which is highlighted with a white box), and SHARE DESCRIPTION. Below the navigation is a header image of fresh carrots with the text "Bell Farm CSA" overlaid. The main content area is titled "Pick Up and Home Delivery Information" and lists four locations:

- Salt Lake City**  
The Front Climbing Club at 1450 south 400 west
- Millcreek**  
Black Diamond Retail Store Parking Lot at 2092 east 3900 south
- Sandy**  
Momentum Climbing Gym next to REI at the Southtown Mall (10600 south exit off I-15)  
OR  
Western Garden Center  
9201 south 1300 east
- Draper**  
975 E. Canyon Breeze Lane

	<i>SHARE SEASON</i>	<i>DISTRIBUTION DAY</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>TIMES</i>
CSA Owner in Northern Utah	20 weeks, mid May through the end of September	Tuesdays or Fridays	At the Farm or Campus	10 a.m.- 1 p.m.
CSA Owner in Northern Utah	18 weeks, usually June through October	Wednesdays	Tremonton or deliveries to Salt Lake City	Afternoon hours
CSA owner in Central Utah	First week of June to the last week of December	Mondays Tuesdays Wednesdays	Salt Lake City Draper, Millcreek Park City, Sandy Home Delivery Available	4 p.m.-7 p.m. 4 p.m.-7 p.m. 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.-6 p.m.
CSA Owner in Northern Utah	First or middle of July until the middle of October	Wednesdays or Saturdays	Local store or farmers' market Home Delivery on any Rosehill Dairy Route	Evening hours at the local store 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. at farmers' market

Table 3.2: Share Season and Distribution Information

### *ESTABLISHING POLICIES FOR SUBSTITUTING OR PURCHASING ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS*

You should establish policies for your shareholders to substitute or purchase additional products during the CSA share season. By establishing these policies in advance, you can prevent problems. A substitution policy might benefit shareholders by catering to their preferences, but it can

create packing and distribution difficulties if you have more than 15 or 20 shareholders. If you keep all shares consistent for your shareholders, then you don't have to change your substitution policy as your CSA grows in member size. You could also offer extra produce or fruit for shareholders to purchase, such as sweet corn, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and berries. One CSA in Northern Utah offers U-Pick raspberries to their shareholders.

### PACKAGING SHARES

Shares may be packaged in bags or boxes prior to pick up. This makes for a quick and simple distribution of an equal and organized share. Appearance is an important factor when packaging shares, similar to ensuring a stand at a farmers' market looks creative, interesting, and organized. However, doing so may not be practical for you. An easier option may be to set produce in bulk and allow shareholders to take their share (Milstein, 1999). Some produce, like kale, can be bundled using elastic bands and placed in a cooler—this method is used by Youth Garden Project's CSA in Moab, Utah. Milstein (1999) wrote:

Many shareholders like digging their hands into the crates; it echoes in a small way your experience of the harvest. The bulk distribution (ask members to bring their own bags) also allows shareholders some selection, and it tends to lead to a

good deal of socializing at the site, a priority for some groups (Distribution Site and Managers section, para. 3).

Using this format, shareholders are encouraged to bring their own bag and follow the direction of the distribution site manager. The location would benefit from a sign telling shareholders how much of which produce they should take home. Shareholders could also trade produce with each other to cater to their personal taste. Youth Garden Project CSA in Moab, Utah, allows shareholders to leave any produce they will not use in a designated basket, and others are able to take this produce if they wish when they pick up their shares. If you choose to offer pick up in bulk distribution, you should make sure you are not liable for any safety problems that coincide with people packaging their own food.

## RECORD KEEPING

You should keep records in order to avoid organizational or legal issues (Armstrong, 2014). Recording data is also helpful as you have the capability of comparing information such as cost and profit from different seasons. The following shareholder information is beneficial for you to keep track of in the case of any disputes, refunds, or miscommunication:

- » Member contact information
- » Payment plan
- » Payments made
- » Share size
- » Location of distribution (pick-up location, home delivery, on-farm pick up)
- » When and where each share was distributed (date, time, location of pick up)





It is important for any business including CSAs to record inputs, outputs, and other variables. These include:

- » Variable costs (fertilizer, seed, pesticides, manure, fuel, worker salaries, etc.)
- » Fixed costs (property payments, etc.)
- » When these variables were purchased/used
- » Income from shareholders, farmers' markets, other partner farms
- » Amount of produce grown per crop
- » Amount of produce sold
- » Scheduling of crops (planting, watering, weeding, pruning, harvesting, packaging, etc.)

Records can be kept in Excel sheets, databases, or even by hand; however, we will discuss several management software programs that will organize and store your CSA records.

# USING CSA MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Management software allows you to edit, store, and share information essential to your CSA. These websites are available, so you can save time and energy on management. Shareholders can sign up, purchase shares, and gain information about the CSA. You can create lists, send newsletters, and create schedules.

## [Csatoolbox.com](http://Csatoolbox.com)

Csatoolbox.com offers several "tools" to aid you in maintaining management of your CSA. These include aids with membership management, pick-up site management, share management, email broadcasting, billing systems, and reporting systems.

## [Memberassembler.com](http://Memberassembler.com)

This site is a great database for shareholder information. Shareholders can sign up, pay, shop, and get sorted into pick-up sites by location.

## [Csaware.com](http://Csaware.com)

As a service of LocalHarvest, this website streamlines administrative tasks for you such as providing a place for online ordering and delivery scheduling for shareholders. It also has membership management software and financial reporting.

# FINANCING



Financing a CSA can be challenging, but there are many resources and creative solutions for you. Begin the financing process by looking at operating expenses and potential investments in order to decide the best options (Burke et al., 2012). Many CSA owners omit their labor when budgeting; do not make this error. Once a budget is established, there are several resources offering loans and financial services.

The Farm Service Agency is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that offers programs and services to growers, ranchers, and agricultural partners. The agency provides credit to growers and ranchers who cannot receive private, commercial credit. [The USDA Farm Service Agency](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index) has several beneficial financial services and loan programs. The Microloan Program is designed specifically for new direct marketing farms, such as CSAs (USDA FSA, n.d. b). More information can be found here: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index>.

The USDA Farm Service Agency also offers Beginner Farmer and Rancher Loans for small farms within their first 10 years of business, which can be found here: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-growers-and-ranchers-loans/> (USDA FSA, n.d. a). Other Farm Service Agency loan programs are the Direct Farm Ownership Loan and Down Payment Farm Ownership Loan. Find a Utah USDA Farm Service Agency office nearby by searching this website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Utah/programs/index>.

[Western Ag Credit](https://www.westernagcredit.com/products_and_services/young_beginning_small) is another financial service that offers loans and insurance to growers who are young (under 35 years old), beginning (under 10 years of business and farming experience), and small (make less than \$250,000 in annual sales) (Western AgCredit, 2016b). More information about their loan services can be found at this website: [https://www.westernagcredit.com/products\\_and\\_services/young\\_beginning\\_small](https://www.westernagcredit.com/products_and_services/young_beginning_small). Their AgStart program works with these growers to provide financial assistance (Western AgCredit, 2016a). More information on the AgStart Program can be found here: [https://www.westernagcredit.com/products\\_and\\_services/agstart](https://www.westernagcredit.com/products_and_services/agstart).

# SUMMARY AND WHAT'S NEXT

This module explained how to properly manage a CSA operation. Factors should be taken into consideration when planning a CSA operation: farm size, CSA type, land obtainment, share size and season, distribution and packaging of shares, record keeping, management software, and financing. There are a variety of options you can choose

from in order to develop the best CSA operation specific to you. In the next module, you will discover more details on how to price shares, view examples of shareholder agreements from other CSAs, and identify ways you can set up payment plans for your CSA shareholders.



# REFERENCES

- Armstrong, R. (2014). *Building the base of your CSA on solid legal footing* [Video file]. In *Vimeo*. Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/82409311>
- Biodynamic Association. (2016). What is biodynamics? Retrieved from <https://www.biodynamics.com/what-is-biodynamics>
- Bruch, M. L., & Ernst, M. D. (2010). *A farmer's guide to marketing CSAs* (PBI797). Retrieved from University of Tennessee Extension website: <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/pbi797.pdf>
- Burke, M., Anthony, I., Canella, M., Curtis-Murphy, E., Higby, A., Holtzman, B., . . . Yandow, C. (2012). *Guide to Financing the Community Supported Farm*. UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Vermont Extension website: [http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/business/finance-guide/Guide to Financing the Community Supported Farm\\_March2012.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/business/finance-guide/Guide%20to%20Financing%20the%20Community%20Supported%20Farm_March2012.pdf)
- CSA Utah. (2016a). Become a CSA farmer. Retrieved from <http://csautah.org/get-involved/become-a-csa-farmer>
- CSA Utah. (2016b). CSA Utah Directory. Retrieved from <http://csautah.org/find-a-csa>
- Garden City Harvest. (2015) Community gardens. Retrieved from <http://www.gardencityharvest.org/programs/community-gardens/>
- Milstein, S. (1999, February). How to start and run a community supported agriculture (CSA) group. *Mother Earth News*. Retrieved from <http://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/community-supported-agriculture-zmaz99fmztak.aspx?PagelD=3#ArticleContent>
- SPIN Farming LLC. (2016). What's SPIN. Retrieved from <http://spinfarming.com/whatsSpin/>
- Strochlic, R., & Shelley, C. (2004, May). Community supported agriculture In California, Oregon and Washington: Challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from the California Institute for Rural Studies website: <http://www.cirsinc.org/publications/category/9-food-systems>
- Tegtmeier, E., & Duffy, M. (2005, January). *Community supported agriculture (CSA) in the Midwest United States: A regional characterization*. Retrieved from Iowa State University, Leopold Center website: <https://www.leopold.iastate.edu/files/pubs-and-papers/2005-01-community-supported-agriculture-csa-midwest-united-states-regional-characterization.pdf>
- University of California Santa Cruz, The Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems. (2003). Community supported agriculture on the central coast: The CSA member experience (Research brief #1). Retrieved from [http://casfs.ucsc.edu/documents/research-briefs/RB\\_1\\_CSA\\_members\\_survey.pdf](http://casfs.ucsc.edu/documents/research-briefs/RB_1_CSA_members_survey.pdf)
- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency [USDA FSA]. (n.d. a). *Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Loans*. Retrieved from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans/index>
- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency [USDA FSA]. (n.d. b). *Microloan Program*. Retrieved from <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index>

University of Kentucky, Center for Crop Diversification. (2011, February). Glossary of alternative farming production and marketing terms. Retrieved from <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/intro.html>

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Integrated Agriculture Systems. (1999, March). Managing a CSA farm I: Production, labor and land. Retrieved from <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/managing-a-csa-farm-1production-labor-and-land>

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Integrated Agriculture Systems. (2004, January). Community supported agriculture farms: Management and income (Research brief #68). Retrieved from <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/community-supported-agriculture-farms-management-and-income/>

Western Ag Credit. (2016a). AgStart. Retrieved from [https://www.westernagcredit.com/products\\_and\\_services/agstart](https://www.westernagcredit.com/products_and_services/agstart)

Western Ag Credit. (2016b). Young, Beginning & Small. Retrieved from [https://www.westernagcredit.com/products\\_and\\_services/young\\_beginning\\_small](https://www.westernagcredit.com/products_and_services/young_beginning_small)



### Worksheet 3.1: Planning Land Obtainment

How many acres would be best for your CSA operation?

---

How many acres do you currently possess?

---

Have you previously acquired land?

Yes

No

If yes, how did you acquire land?

---

---

---

Please mark which of these options appeal most to you for obtaining land.

Buying

Renting

SPIN Farming

Community Plots

Other:

---

## Worksheet 3.2: Share and Season Planning

In which season(s) will you offer your CSA?

---

---

How many weeks will your shareholders receive their shares?

---

---

How many shares will you offer?

---

---

Will both full and half shares be available?

Yes

No

How many people will a full share feed?

---

Will you allow shareholders to substitute or purchase additional products during the CSA share season?

Yes

No

Will members be allowed to participate through volunteer labor?

Yes

No

## Worksheet 3.3: Distributing Shares

Determine which distribution method would work best for potential shareholders.

	Shareholder:
On-farm pick up	
Drop off at public location	
Drop off at shareholder's home	
Drop off at workplace/business	
Home delivery	

Who will deliver the shares?

---



---

When will you deliver shares (day and time)?

---



---

How long will pick up be?

---



---

How many pick-up sites will you have?

---



---

## Worksheet 3.4: Packaging Shares

Will you package shares?

Yes

No

What materials will you use for packaging?

---

---

Will you allow shareholders to package shares onsite?

Yes

No

Will shareholders participate in harvesting?

Yes

No

### Worksheet 3.5: Record Keeping

How do you currently keep records?

- Paper
- Electronically

Do you use a software program to keep records?

- Yes
- No

How often do you update your records?

---

---

Who keeps your records?

---

---

Please mark which of these record keeping methods appeals to you:

- Excel sheets
- Database
- By hand
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Worksheet 3.6: Financing

What money is already available to you?

---

Have you applied for a loan in the past?

---

What loans are you eligible for?

---

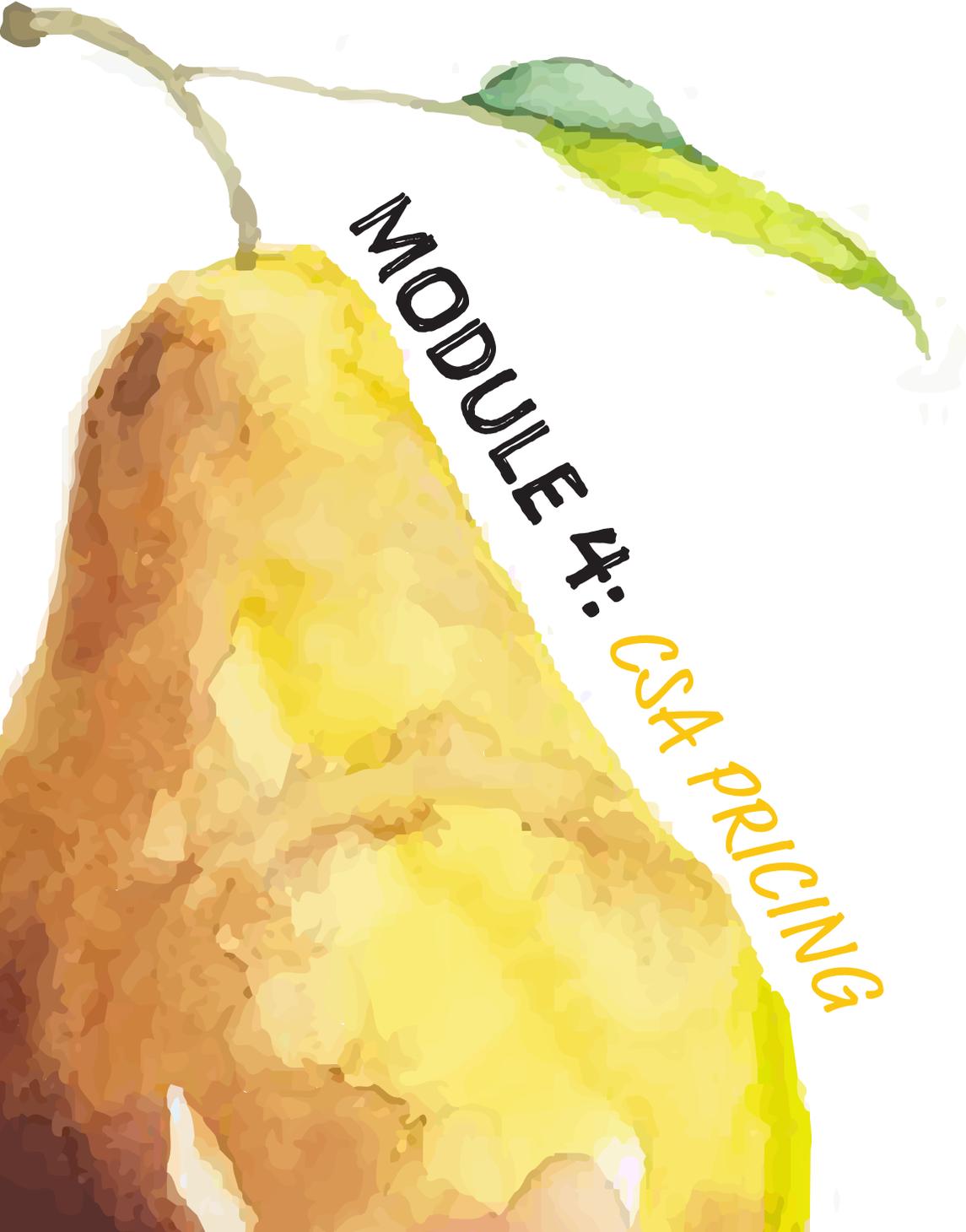
---

---

## MODULE OBJECTIVES:

This module will enable you to:

- » Discover how to price shares
- » Identify ways CSAs set up payment plans for their CSA shareholders



MODULE 4:  
CSA PRICING

# DEVELOPING A BUDGET

A budget is developed by first gathering the following information: costs, income, and desired profit. First, you must specify the following expenses and add them to determine the gross (total) cost (NC State and A&T State University Cooperative Extension, n.d.). From here, you can list the desired income and share prices needed to cover the gross cost.

There are several costs to consider when determining the gross (total) cost. Fixed costs, which do not change if the output changes, include capital expenses such as payment for land, equipment and tools (Allen, Curtis, & Slocum, 2015; NC State and A&T State University Cooperative Extension, n.d.). There are also variable costs, which do change with the amount of

output. These include labor expenses (grower and worker salaries) and operating expenses (seeds, fertilizer, fuel) (NC State and A&T State University Cooperative Extension, n.d.). There are also marketing costs to consider, such as money for advertising and events. These can be calculated by compiling data from previous years or by researching other local CSAs. An example of a budget for a 5 acre vegetable farm can be seen in Figure 4.1. Consider looking at USU Extension's crop enterprise budgets, which were developed for different crops.

The CSA Utah website (2016) states:

A grower draws up a budget reflecting the production costs for the year. This includes all salaries, distribution costs, investments for seeds and tools, land payments, taxes, machinery maintenance, etc. The budget is then divided by the number of people the farm will provide for and this determines the cost of each share of the harvest (Money, Members, and Management, para. 1).

	TOTAL UNITS	UNITS	PRICE/COST PER UNIT	TOTAL COST/VALUE	TOTAL COST/VALUE PER ACRE
<b>GROSS INCOME</b>					
Sweet Corn	30,000	Ears	\$0.38	\$10,830.00	\$2,166.00
Tomatoes	8,000	Pounds	\$2.20	\$16,720.00	\$3,344.00
Peppers	4,000	Pounds	\$1.40	\$5,320.00	\$1,064.00
Winter Squash	1,200	Each	\$0.65	\$741.00	\$148.20
Summer Squash	1,400	Each	\$0.55	\$731.50	\$146.30
Hardneck Garlic	43,000	Each	\$0.80	\$32,680.00	\$6,536.00
Onions	6,000	Pounds	\$0.85	\$4,845.00	\$969.00
Okra	5,400	Pounds	\$3.56	\$18,262.80	\$3,652.56
Beets	3,700	Pounds	\$2.40	\$8,436.00	\$1,687.20
Potatoes	1,200	Pounds	\$1.25	\$1,425.00	\$285.00
Leeks	2,300	Pounds	\$1.85	\$4,042.25	\$808.45
Carrots	500	Pounds	\$2.50	\$1,187.50	\$237.50
Leafy Greens	750	pounds	\$11.00	\$7,837.50	\$1,567.50
Pumpkins	1,000	Pounds	\$0.67	\$636.50	\$127.30
Melons	270	Each	\$4.05	\$1,038.83	\$207.77
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>				<b>\$114,733.88</b>	<b>\$22,946.78</b>
<b>OPERATING COST</b>					
Land Rental	5	Acres	\$1,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$1,000.00
Irrigation Water	1	Annual	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$400.00
Utilities	1	Annual	\$4,700.00	\$4,700.00	\$940.00
Farm Labor	3800	Hours	\$10.00	\$38,000.00	\$7,600.00
Packaging	1	Annual	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$120.00
Food Safety/Testing	1	Annual	\$1,042.00	\$1,042.00	\$208.40
Marketing	1	Annual	\$3,100.00	\$3,100.00	\$620.00
Herbicide	5	Acres	\$125.00	\$625.00	\$125.00
Fertilizer	5	Acres	\$500.00	\$2,500.00	\$500.00
Seeds	1	Annual	\$1,800.00	\$1,800.00	\$360.00
Plants	1	Annual	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$80.00
Insecticide	5	Acres	\$100.00	\$500.00	\$100.00
Drip Tape	5	Acres	\$1,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$1,000.00
Fuel and Lube	1	Annual	\$2,024.00	\$2,024.00	\$404.80
Maintenance	1	Annual	\$1,975.00	\$1,975.00	\$395.00
Miscellaneous	5	Acres	\$50.00	\$250.00	\$50.00
<b>TOTAL OPERATING COSTS</b>				<b>\$69,516.00</b>	<b>\$13,903.20</b>
<b>INCOME ABOVE OPERATING COSTS</b>				<b>\$45,217.88</b>	<b>\$9,042.58</b>
<b>OWNERSHIP COSTS</b>					
<b>CASH OVERHEAD COSTS</b>					
Liability/Crop Insurance				\$800.00	\$160.00
Accounting and Legal				\$500.00	\$100.00
Office and Travel				\$800.00	\$160.00
Annual Investment Insurance				\$236.43	\$47.29
<b>NONCASH OVERHEAD COSTS (Capital Recovery)</b>					
Buildings, Improvements, and Equipment				\$1,689.29	\$337.86
Machinery and Vehicles				\$4,680.00	\$936.00
<b>TOTAL OWNERSHIP COSTS</b>				<b>\$8,705.72</b>	<b>\$1,741.14</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>				<b>\$78,221.72</b>	<b>\$15,644.34</b>
<b>NET PROJECTED RETURNS</b>				<b>\$36,512.16</b>	<b>\$7,302.43</b>

Figure 4.1: Budget Example for 5 Acre Mixed Vegetable Farm (Curtis, Olsen, & Wagner, 2015)

# PRICING SHARES

## COST-PLUS PRICING

The price of shares should cover costs of production while allowing for a profit in return (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). This amount can be found through analyzing the farm's budget, as discussed previously, and dividing the total cost (desired income) by the number of shares offered (CSA Utah, 2016). This strategy of pricing is known as cost-plus pricing (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). It is important to remember to include a reasonable salary, which compensates for the value of the grower. Many growers underestimate their own worth when determining a budget (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

## COMPETITION-BASED PRICING

Another pricing strategy is to look at what the price of shares are for other CSAs. This is called competition-based pricing (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). By learning how much other farms are charging for their shareholders, you will be able to estimate how much people will be willing to pay and how much estimated worth your share has. You may set your share price

at a cheaper alternative, approximately equal, or greater price depending on the produce and services offered.

## CUSTOMER-BASED PRICING

You should also determine what customers are willing to pay for a share. This demand can be found by comparing prices offered by other local CSAs and by estimating the worth of your own offered produce (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). This pricing strategy can be referred to as customer-based pricing, when the willingness of customers to pay determines the cost (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). According to CSA Utah (2016), the average share prices in Utah ranged from \$300 to \$600.

WE JUST PRETTY WELL BASE IT ON HOW MUCH WE CAN GET OUT OF IT AT THE FARMERS' MARKET. IF WE CAN SELL THAT ITEM AT THE FARMERS' MARKET THAT'S KIND OF WHAT WE BASE OUR CSA OFF OF. WE GIVE A LITTLE BIT OF DISCOUNT BECAUSE THEY ARE GENERALLY PAYING UP FRONT AND OR AT A LARGER VOLUME. - UTAH CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH

WE LOOK AT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE SELLING THEIRS FOR AND TRY AND STAY COMPETITIVE AND HOPE THAT WE STILL MAKE MONEY OFF IT. I ALSO LOOK AT IT AS 'WHAT WOULD I BE WILLING TO PAY FOR IT.'  
- UTAH CSA OWNER IN NORTHERN UTAH

"WE FIGURE ABOUT \$30 A WEEK IS WHAT THE MARKET WILL BEAR SO THAT IS WHERE OUR PRICE IS AT. OUR FULL SHARE IS EVERY WEEK AND OUR HALF SHARE IS ALTERNATING WEEKS."  
- UTAH CSA OWNER IN CENTRAL UTAH



## CONTRACT & PAYMENT PLANS

You should be aware of specific contracts to ensure that your land will be legally protected. Shareholders may be unsatisfied with shares, may experience injuries, or may desire a refund. The proper legal contracts ensure that both parties are fully aware of any circumstances that could occur and how

these situations will be handled. This is essential, especially considering the shared risks that come with farming. Any legal documents that you agree to or distribute should be reviewed by a qualified attorney (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

# PAYMENT POLICY

A payment policy helps to simplify any confusion or issues dealing with fees. This policy establishes the amount, method, and deadlines of payments (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). Many CSAs require payments to be made by the beginning of the season in order to cover planting costs (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). You may offer a discount as incentive if this is the preferred option (Bruch & Ernst, 2010). For some CSAs, this discount may only be given if shares are paid for by a specific date, while the price increases after this deadline. It is also possible to set up a required initial deposit, followed by other installments throughout the season (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

The policy will also state whether cash, credit, or checks will be accepted by the CSA (Bruch & Ernst, 2010).

This policy may be included in the member agreement form. If you offer several payment options, shareholders can select the option best for them. If you offer only one payment option, such as paying the entire share before a specific deadline, this can be clearly posted on the website or marketing materials.

# SUMMARY AND WHAT'S NEXT

This module provided directions and examples on how to properly price and financially manage a CSA operation. You must gather information and develop a budget for your CSA operation. Different methods of share pricing include cost-plus pricing, competition-based pricing, and customer-based pricing. A membership agreement form is a necessary protection for the farm from legal issues and outlines both your and consumer's expectations of the business arrangement. A payment policy establishes the amount, method, and deadlines of payments and helps to simplify any confusion or issues dealing with fees. The next module discusses crop planning, including weekly and seasonal goals and the use of spreadsheets. The next module will also address season extension methods and the seasonality of fruits and vegetables in Utah.



# REFERENCES

Allen, K., Curtis, K., & Slocum, S. (2015) *Farm and food tourism: Exploring opportunities*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Extension. Retrieved from <http://www.westernsare.org/Learning-Center/SARE-Project-Products/Books-Guidebooks-and-Manuals/Farm-and-Food-Tourism>

Bruch, M. L., & Ernst, M. D. (2010). *A farmer's guide to marketing CSAs* (PBI797). Retrieved from University of Tennessee Extension website: <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/pbi797.pdf>

CSA Utah. (2016). *Become a CSA farmer*. Retrieved from <http://csautah.org/get-involved/become-a-csa-farmer>

Curtis, K., Olsen, S., & Wagner, K. (2015, August). Utah urban small-scale mixed vegetable production costs and returns - 5 acres, 2015 [Fact sheet]. Utah State University Extension, Logan, UT. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension\\_curall/763/](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/763/)

NC State and A&T State University Cooperative Extension. (n.d.). Community supported agriculture (CSA) resource guide for farmers. Retrieved from <https://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-csaguide/>



## Worksheet 4.1: Developing a Budget

## CAPITAL EXPENSES

Year:

	Estimated Amount:	Actual Amount:
Tractor Equipment		
1)		
2)		
Hand Tools		
1)		
2)		
Irrigation Equipment		
1)		
2)		
Other		
TOTAL Capital Expenses:		

## LABOR EXPENSES

Year:

	Estimated Amount:	Actual Amount:
Farmer (___ hours x \$ ___ per hour)		
OR Salary		
Farm Laborers		
1) ___ hours x \$ ___ per hour		
2) ___ hours x \$ ___ per hour		
3) ___ hours x \$ ___ per hour		
4) ___ hours x \$ ___ per hour		
Distribution		
Administration		
Medical Insurance		
FICA		
Other		
TOTAL Labor Expenses:		

## OPERATING EXPENSES

Year:

	Estimated Amount:	Actual Amount:
Seeds, Plants, etc.		
Land/Buildings (rent or payments)		
Water		
Electricity		
Natural Gas/Propane		
Gasoline		
Diesel		
Compost and Manure		
Greenhouse Maintenance		
Row Covers		
Equipment Repairs		
Building Repairs		
Packaging		
Scales		
Telephone		
Printing and Supplies		
Other		
TOTAL Operating Expenses:		

## Worksheet 4.2: Pricing and Payment Strategy

Please mark the pricing method that would work best for your CSA.

Cost-plus pricing       Competition-based pricing       Customer-based pricing

What are the price of shares for other CSAs?

---

How much would you charge for a share to “break-even” with original production costs?

---

Will there be reduced-price workshares?

---

Who will keep records?

---

How will these records be maintained (computer, forms, etc.)?

---

What is the cost of each share?

---

What is the payment deadline for the share?

---

Is there a discount for paying before the deadline?

---

Is there a fee for paying after the deadline?

---

What payment method(s) will you accept (cash, credit, checks, etc.)?

---

Will shareholders pay upfront or in increments?

---

How often will members make payments?

Annually       Two or three times annually       Quarterly  
 Monthly       Every 4 weeks       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## *MODULE OBJECTIVES:*

This module will enable you to:

- » Learn about seasonality
- » Identify how to extend seasonality through hoop houses
- » Discover how to keep a crop plan

A stylized, low-poly illustration of a green tree on the left and a purple flower on the right. The text 'MODULE 5: CSA CROP PLANNING' is overlaid on the image. 'MODULE 5:' is in black, bold, uppercase letters, arched over the top of the tree. 'CSA CROP PLANNING' is in a reddish-purple, cursive font, following the curve of the tree's trunk and the flower's shape.

# MODULE 5: CSA CROP PLANNING

# SEASONALITY

Seasonality affects the length of a CSA operation and the type and varieties of fruits and vegetables grown (Junge, Ingram, & Veerkamp, 1995). Certain fruits and vegetables are only grown at certain times during the year. You must know what fruits and vegetables are seasonal and at what times these fruits and vegetables are planted and harvested. CSAs should offer fresh, ripe produce at all times (Junge, Ingram, & Veerkamp, 1995). This will require planning to make sure food is grown at the appropriate time for the right season.

Due to freezing weather in winter, Northern Utah does not have a year-round growing season (Hunter, Olsen, Drost, Black, & Gunnell, 2016). The earliest month to begin growing cool season plants is March, which extends to November. Warm season plants are grown from May to the first frost, usually mid-October (Hunter et al., 2016). Parts of Southern Utah have longer growing seasons.



## HOOP HOUSES

Seasonality can be extended through the use of alternative measures. Hoop houses, also known as high tunnels, are structures that trap warm air inside the structure to stimulate plant growth. They are made using an arch-shaped frame covered in plastic that is tall enough for a person to drive a tractor through or stand up in (Bachmann, 2005). According to Utah State University Extension (2016), hoop houses “significantly increase earliness, total yield potential, and crop quality” (p. 7).

Several factors should be considered when building a hoop house. Location and site placement are important. Hoop houses should be oriented with the ends toward the dominant wind direction (Utah State University Extension, 2016). Sites should have maximum sun exposure in order to heat the inside of the structure (Upson, 2014).

Hoop houses require care and monitoring. Snow should be brushed off the top to prevent cold water leakage and sun blocking (Utah State University Extension, 2016). Ventilation is key to adjusting inside temperatures, especially when outside temperatures are hot (Penn State Extension, 2003).

If the inside of the hoop house gets too hot, extreme changes in humidity, plant diseases, and significant damage to crop production may occur (Utah State University Extension, 2016).

Hoop houses can provide protection against storms, increased pest management, a decrease in plant diseases, and an extended season length (Upson, 2014). They are beneficial to helping growers have an early spring and a late fall growing season but require care and planning.

**UTAH APPROPRIATE VEGETABLES AND FRUITS**

In Utah, the busiest season for crop production is between March and November. Each fruit and vegetable has a specific growing season, depending on whether or not you choose to use season extension methods.

Knowing when fruits and vegetables are grown will greatly assist in crop planning. You can plan for the most effective time to plant certain crops, map out the season and inform shareholders what they can expect in their shares throughout the CSA season.

This list shows the availability of fruits and vegetables during certain seasons in the Wasatch Front, which houses roughly 80% of Utah's population (Hunter et al., 2016).



Figure 5.1: List of Wasatch Front Fruit and Vegetable Availability

Vegetables	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
arugula			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
asparagus				X	X	X						
beans							X	X	X	X		
beets						X	X	X	X	X		
broccoli						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Brussels sprouts									X	X	X	X
cabbage							X	X	X	X	X	X
carrots						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
cauliflower						X	X	X	X	X		
chard						X	X	X	X	X		
cantaloupes							X	X	X	X		
cucumbers							X	X	X	X	X	
eggplant							X	X	X	X	X	
garlic							X	X	X	X	X	
herbs			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
kale			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
onion									X	X	X	
peppers							X	X	X	X	X	
peas					X	X	X	X	X			
potatoes						X	X	X	X	X	X	
pumpkins									X	X	X	
radish				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
spinach			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
rhubarb					X	X	X	X	X			
summer squash						X	X	X	X	X		
winter squash								X	X	X	X	X
salad lettuce						X	X	X	X	X	X	
sweet corn							X	X	X	X	X	
tomatoes							X	X	X	X	X	
watermelons							X	X	X	X		
Fruits	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
apples								X	X	X	X	X
apricots							X	X	X			
Asian pears								X	X	X	X	X
blackberries							X	X	X			
sweet cherries						X	X					
tart cherries							X	X				
currants						X	X	X				
gooseberries							X	X	X			
grapes								X	X	X	X	
nectarines								X	X	X		
peaches								X	X	X	X	
pears								X	X	X	X	
plums								X	X	X	X	
raspberries							X	X	X	X		
strawberries						X	X	X				

**WASATCH FRONT VEGETABLE AND FRUIT AVAILABILITY**

Information referenced from USU Extension resources and information from local growers. Main production months are divided between the first two weeks and second two weeks of the month.



# CROP PLANNING

CSAs often offer a large diversity of products and produce. Due to the nature of CSAs, crop planning “becomes an essential planning tool for creating and maintaining efficiency and timeliness of cropping in order to meet harvest goals” (Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, n.d.).

## *DEFINITION OF A CROP PLAN*

A crop plan is a tool that assists you in planning, organizing, harvesting, and recording crop production. The plan, usually created during the winter when harvest work is low, provides direction and planning for the planting, maintaining, harvesting, and organizing of crops throughout the season. This plan records vital information necessary for the planting and harvesting of crops, while also setting forth a timeline for crop production.

You must maintain several different varieties of crops, many of which need succession plantings (Good, 2012; Volk, 2011). It can be a challenge to balance the different crops, harvest and planting times, and information. A crop plan can help you deal with the unique needs of running a CSA. Crop plans can improve time management and execution

of the growing season (Penn State Extension, 2013). A crop plan can also help organize what can be planted based on the amount of land available, mapping out the harvest and ensuring effective land management (Volk, 2011).

A detailed crop plan can help minimize complications further in the growing season and make the process run smoother (Good, 2012; Penn State Extension, 2013). Crop planning also improves data collection which allows you to evaluate success at the end of the season (Penn State Extension, 2013).

## *HOW TO USE A CROP PLAN*

A crop plan can be specifically adjusted to fit your needs and preferred style. Although crop planning used to be done with a simple pen and paper, there are now many methods to crop planning. A lot of crop planning has moved to an electronic format through spreadsheets and software programs that localize all planning and recording to one location. Spreadsheets are “easy to edit, easy to store, and easy to sort and to make automatic calculations on” (Volk, 2011, para. 2).



There are many services and programs you can purchase to record and monitor data. However, there are also free options, such as spreadsheets and various free programs available online. A free software download can be found at GitHub, Inc. A free field planning spreadsheet and examples are available through Georgia Organics.

Other examples can be found on an online cloud that is downloadable and open to edit.

According to Small Farm Central (2007) and the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (n.d.), this plan should include at least the following information:

- » Planting Dates
- » Planting Info (greenhouse, direct sow, etc.)
- » Amount
- » Crops

- » Yield/Unit (lbs, pint, head, etc.)
- » Rows (amount and distance between each)
- » Extra Details (how deep/far apart to plant seeds, general crop information, etc.)

You should update this plan regularly, taking into account the performance of previous seasons and making necessary amendments for the upcoming season (Good & Good, 2012). You can take into account crops that did not work well, try new crops to include in shares, and plant more popular produce. When utilized effectively, a crop plan can become a major asset and a tool you can use to get the most out of your CSA operation.

### *WEEKLY AND SEASONAL HARVEST GOALS*

To begin crop planning, you must first determine what fruits and vegetables to include and how much of each crop to include in a single share each week of the season (Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, n.d.). This provides a base for crop planning for the season. You need to decide whether or not to offer certain fruits and vegetables each week, certain weeks only, or not at all. Once decided, you can plan how much and how often to plant seeds for desired produce.

For example, if you decided to include two heads of lettuce in a full share, and there are 50 full shares, then there is a need for 100 heads of lettuce total. However, a 20-25% buffer window should be established around the amount of lettuce to protect against crop losses or undistributable produce, so 120 to 125 plants per week should be ready for harvest (Hitt, n.d.). If there are 5 months in a season, or 22 weeks total, then 2,640 to 2,750 lettuce plants should be planted to ensure CSA success.

### *NUMBER OF PLANTS PER PLANTING*

After determining what type and amount of produce to distribute, you must determine when and how often to plant. To do this, you must know the amount of time a plant can remain on the vine and retain quality.

According to the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (n.d.), mature lettuce crops “in a cool, coastal climate will retain its quality in the ground for 14 days” (p. 11). This means one planting can reap a 2 weeks’ harvest. This

allows lettuce to be planted biweekly throughout the season. If you plan to harvest 188 heads of lettuce each week, you can plant double the amount every other week. This equals 376 plants per planting. Again, include a 25% buffer window for poor germination or other difficulties, thus needing 470 total plants for planting.

### *TOTAL NUMBER OF PLANTINGS REQUIRED PER SEASON*

After determining the frequency of planting, you may determine the total number of plantings required per season. You must calculate the total length of the season and the total length of time between plantings.

For example, if a CSA operates for 5 months out of the year, and produce requires three plantings per month, the total number of plantings required per season would be 15 (Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, n.d.). After determining the amount of plantings and the length of time between each, you can determine specific planting dates throughout the season to effectively achieve the overall harvest goals (Matthewson, n.d.). Matthewson (n.d.) stated that a planting schedule can help you keep an accurate schedule for planting/transplanting to meet harvest goals, track and confirm completion of plantings, maintain accurate records to help determine days to maturity in a specific region, and serves as a record of crop performance, harvest quality and quantity for later analysis (p. 6).

## SUMMARY AND WHAT'S NEXT

This module described the various steps of crop planning and how to develop an effective crop plan to increase productivity. There are various steps to crop planning, including setting harvest and planting goals. Crop plans are often developed electronically with the use of software programs and spreadsheets. A crop's season can be extended through hoop houses to increase a CSA's overall production, especially in Utah which typically has colder months in the winter. In the next module, we will discuss potential legal issues facing CSAs and how to minimize risk. We will also discuss the Food Safety Modernization Act and legal requirements of CSAs.



# REFERENCES

- Bachmann, J. (2005). *Season extension techniques for market gardeners*. Retrieved from ATTRA website: <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/viewhtml.php?id=366>
- Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. (n.d.). 4.5 CSA crop planning. *University of California*. Retrieved from <https://georgiaorganics.org/wp-content/themes/GeorgiaOrganics/Downloads/pdf/CSACropPlanning.pdf>
- Good, A. & Good, J. (2012). *A successful season begins with good planning*. Retrieved from Rodale Institute website: <http://rodaleinstitute.org/the-best-laid-plans/>
- Hitt, A. (n.d.). Crop planning part I [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://georgiaorganics.org/for-farmers/crop-production/crop-plans-and-rotations/>
- Hunter, B., Olsen, S., Drost, D., Black, B., & Gunnell, J. (2016). *Local fruit and vegetable availability along the Wasatch Front* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from Utah State University Extension website: [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2611&context=extension\\_curall](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2611&context=extension_curall)
- Junge, S. K., Ingram, R., & Veerkamp, G. E. (1995). Community supported agriculture: Making the connection. Retrieved from University of California Cooperative Extension website: <http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/files/143707.pdf>
- Matthewson, M. (n.d.). *CSA crop planning, harvesting/handling and distribution* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/sites/default/files/CSA\\_Crop\\_Planning\\_Harvesting.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/sites/default/files/CSA_Crop_Planning_Harvesting.pdf)
- Penn State Extension. (2003). *Extending the gardening season with high tunnels* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <http://extension.psu.edu/plants/gardening/fact-sheets/general-gardening/high-tunnels>
- Penn State Extension. (2013). *Crop planning for CSAs*. Retrieved from <http://extension.psu.edu/business/start-farming/news/2013/crop-planning-for-csas>
- Small Farm Central. (2007). Planting schedule 2007 for a 100 member CSA farm. Retrieved from [http://sfc.smallfarmcentral.com/dynamic\\_content/uploadfiles/942/Seeding%20Schedule%20CSA%20Farm.pdf](http://sfc.smallfarmcentral.com/dynamic_content/uploadfiles/942/Seeding%20Schedule%20CSA%20Farm.pdf)
- Upson, S. (2014). High tunnel hoop house construction guide. Retrieved from <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/bcjmw/downloads/54183.pdf>
- Utah State University Extension. (2016). Utah vegetable production and pest management guide. Retrieved from <https://utahpests.usu.edu/IPM/files/uploads/Publications/UT-veg-guide-2016.pdf>
- Volk, J. (2011). Crop planning - one farmer's approach. *Oregon State University Small Farms*, 5(1). Retrieved from <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sfn/wtr11/cropplan>

## Worksheet 5.1: Seasonality

What fruits and vegetables will you grow during your CSA season?

---

---

---

---

In your area, when is the first typical frost of the winter season?

---

Do you have experience using season extension methods? If yes, which ones?

---

---

---

Would you use a hoop house to extend your growing season?

Yes

No

Do you have an area where a hoop house can feasibly be built?

Yes

No

## Worksheet 5.2: Weekly and Seasonal Harvest Goals

How many weeks will your season run?

---

What are the total number of shares serviced by your CSA?

---

Choose five main crops and determine how much of each crop you want to include each week in each share.

CROP	WEEKLY AMOUNT/PER SHARE	MULTIPLY # OF SHARES
Ex. Lettuce	Ex. 2 heads	Ex. 2 heads X 100 shares = 200 heads

Based on that amount, add a 25% buffer window to account for possible crop loss. This is your weekly harvest goal of weeks in the season.

CROP		ADD TO THE ORIGINAL AMOUNT
Ex. Lettuce at 200 heads	$X .25 = 50$	200 heads + 50 heads = 250 heads
	$X .25 = [ \quad ]$	
	$X .25 = [ \quad ]$	
	$X .25 = [ \quad ]$	
	$X .25 = [ \quad ]$	
	$X .25 = [ \quad ]$	

Seasonal Harvest Requirements: Multiply the number by the number of weeks in your CSA season.

WEEKLY GOAL	# OF WEEKS IN SEASON	SEASON HARVEST GOAL
Ex. 250 heads of lettuce	$X [ 22 ]$	5,500 heads of lettuce per season
	$X [ \quad ]$	

## Worksheet 5.3: Number of Plants Per Planting Required to Meet Harvest Goals

What is the vine life (in days) of each of the five crops chosen on Worksheet 5.2?

CROP	VINE LIFE (IN DAYS)
Ex. Lettuce	Ex. 14 days

Taking into account the vine life of the crop and the frequency of produce pickup, calculate how many harvests you could reap for each planting of each crop.

CROP	NUMBER OF HARVESTS PER PLANTING
Ex. Lettuce	2 (14 day vine life, weekly pickup = $14/7 = 2$ )

Accounting for this, multiply each weekly goal by the amount of harvests you can obtain from each planting to ensure you plant the proper amount of seeds per planting. For example, if a grower had a weekly harvest goal of 250 heads of lettuce, and knew the number of harvests per planting was two, the plan would look as follows:

CROP	MULTIPLY BY # OF HARVESTS PER PLANTING	25% BUFFER	COMBINE COLUMN ONE AND TWO TO GET YOUR TOTAL NUMBER OF SEEDS PER PLANTING
Ex: Lettuce = 250	$X [ 2 ] = 500$	$500 X [.25] = 125$	$500 + 125 = 625$ heads of lettuce
	$X [ \quad ] = [ \quad ]$	$[ \quad ] X [.25] = [ \quad ]$	
	$X [ \quad ] = [ \quad ]$	$[ \quad ] X [.25] = [ \quad ]$	
	$X [ \quad ] = [ \quad ]$	$[ \quad ] X [.25] = [ \quad ]$	
	$X [ \quad ] = [ \quad ]$	$[ \quad ] X [.25] = [ \quad ]$	
	$X [ \quad ] = [ \quad ]$	$[ \quad ] X [.25] = [ \quad ]$	

### Worksheet 5.4: Calculating Total Number of Plantings Required Per Season

When is your estimated first and final harvest date?

First: \_\_\_\_\_

Final: \_\_\_\_\_

To determine the first planting date, first determine the amount of time it takes for each crop to fully mature. Using this number, count back from the planned harvest date. For example, lettuce requires 60 days to reach maturity. If the first harvest date is June 4, the first planting date would have to be April 5. Do this for each crop and write the answer below.

CROP	TIME(DAYS FOR PLANT TO REACH MATURITY)	PLANNED HARVEST DATE	FIRST PLANTING DATE
Ex. Lettuce	60	June 4	April 5

Fill out the chart below to determine the total number of plantings required per season.

CROP	DETERMINE THE PLANTING FREQUENCY PER MONTH	MULTIPLY BY NUMBER OF MONTHS IN THE SEASON	TOTAL
Ex. Lettuce	3x a month	3x a month X 5 months a season	15 plantings per season

## Worksheet 5.5: Develop a Crop Plan

Have you ever developed a crop plan?

Yes       No

Which of these methods appeals to you the most for crop planning?

Handwritten       Spreadsheet  
 Software program       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

With the same five crops used for previous worksheets, develop a practice crop plan for the upcoming season.

CROP	FULL SHARE	HALF SHARE	TOTAL/ WEEK	SPACING	#ROW FEET/ PLANTING	PLANTING PERIOD EVERY ? DAYS
Ex: Lettuce	100 heads	50 heads	250	10 in	208 ft	14

What additional information would you include in a crop plan?

---

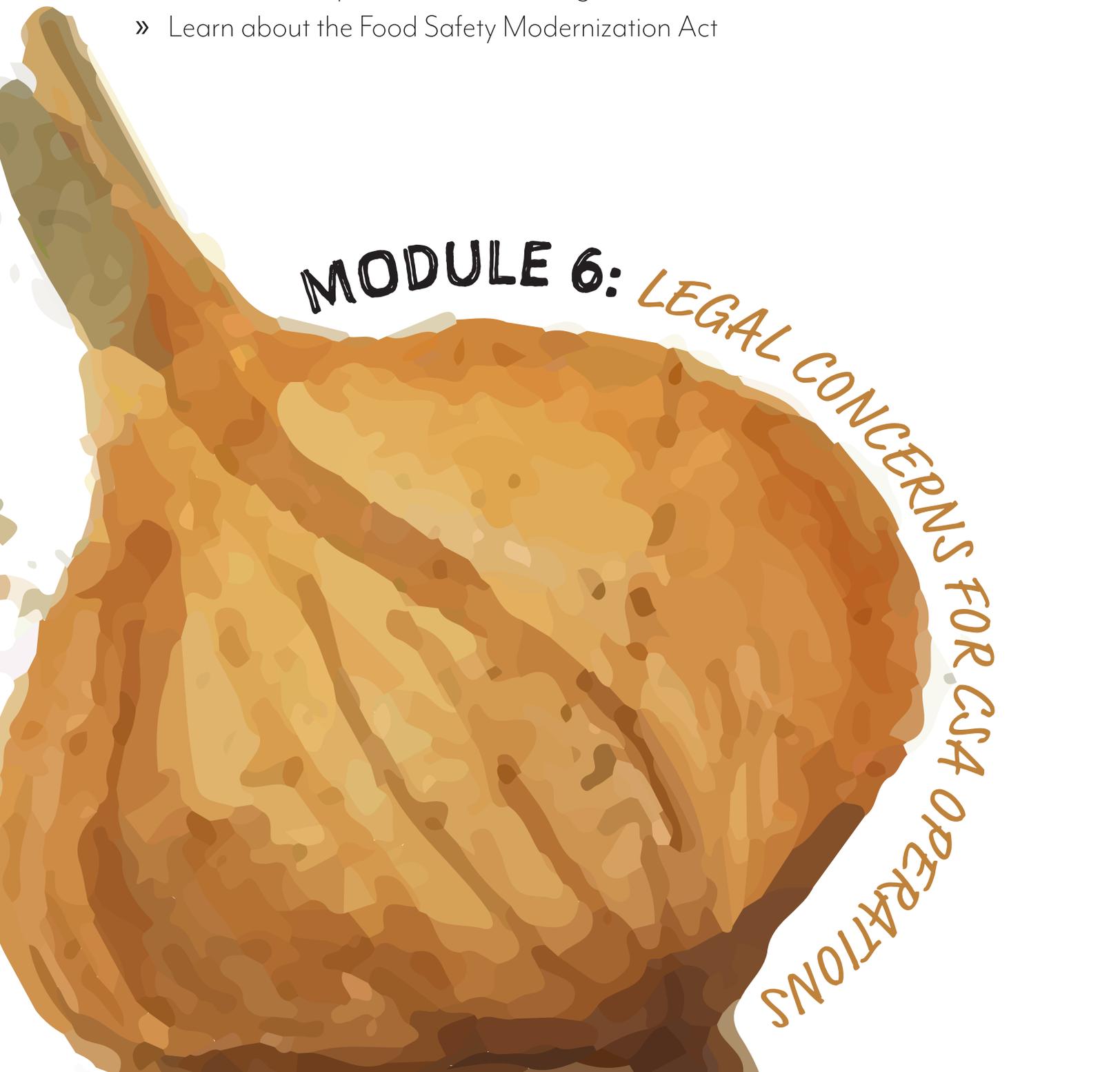


---

## MODULE OBJECTIVES:

This module will enable you to:

- » Discover potential insurance needs
- » Discover examples of shareholder agreements from other CSAs
- » Learn about the Food Safety Modernization Act



## MODULE 6: LEGAL CONCERNS FOR CSA OPERATIONS



# LIABILITY INSURANCE

Liability is a part of all businesses. Risk management should be included in the business plan for the community supported agriculture (CSA) operation (Penn State Extension, 2013). Liability insurance is an important part of risk management. Seventy-two percent of farmers reported they had product liability insurance in 2010 (Markley, 2010). You may be required to increase your product liability insurance (Penn State Extension, 2013). In order to fully protect a CSA business, all activities and risks must be fully disclosed and included in the insurance policy (Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, 2012).

CSAs provide a unique opportunity for community members and you to work on a closer basis than most agricultural practices. While this arrangement allows members to gain experience, fresh produce, bond with others, and provides many other benefits, there are places or situations where risk is increased. These can include:

- » Member involvement
- » Product/packaging liability
- » Distribution sites
- » Facilities

## MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

According to Pennsylvania State Extension (2013), involving members in work on the CSA “creates a higher risk for you due to the increased liability should a member be injured” (p. 3). Whether or not an insurance provider views members working on the farm as employees will affect the cost of workers’ compensation insurance (Pennsylvania State

Extension, 2013; Maryland Department of Agriculture, 2016). A possible tactic to counter this risk is to count members working on the farm as volunteers, depending on the situation. However, no choices should be made without consulting with an insurance provider (Armstrong, 2014). In order to fully cover liability, you should first consult with an insurance provider and develop a risk management plan (Penn State Extension, 2013; Maryland Department of Agriculture, 2016).

## PRODUCT LIABILITY AND HANDLING

There are many regulations mandating the safe growing, handling, transportation, etc., of produce. It is important to know these regulations and operate accordingly. According to the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (2012), insurance for food borne illness is not included in business and general farming policies and should be covered with a product liability insurance policy. Depending on the packaging method, you may or may not be more liable for food safety.

## DISTRIBUTION SITES

Drop-off sites pose another potential liability risk. Because drop-off sites are off the farm, typical farm liability policies won’t cover the off-farm site (Armstrong, 2014). For most drop-off sites, a commercial general liability (CGL) policy is needed. This policy will help cover any incidents that occur off the premises and make sure the drop-off site is protected.

When picking a drop-off location, you should speak with zoning authorities and community members before choosing a location. Some drop-off locations may be located in residential zoning areas. A solution to many drop-off site complaints from community members is to choose a site located in commercial zoning areas (Armstrong, 2014).

### FACILITIES

It is also important for you to insure CSA facilities and equipment (Penn State Extension, 2013). This will help protect the CSA from problems that occur on the premises or with machinery. This type of liability is covered under property insurance (University of California Cooperative Extension, 1995).

The best way to guarantee you have proper insurance is to meet with lawyers and farm insurance agents (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, 2008). An expert's opinion and consultation with the operation will help the farm make an individual plan that covers each of the activities included in the CSA operation.

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) is a single insurance policy that covers all crops and livestock on a farm (Kongs, 2016). The policy, provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, makes it easier for small-scale farms to purchase crop insurance. To learn more or apply for insurance coverage, please go to the website at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/Policies/WFRP.html>.

# MEMBER AGREEMENT FORM

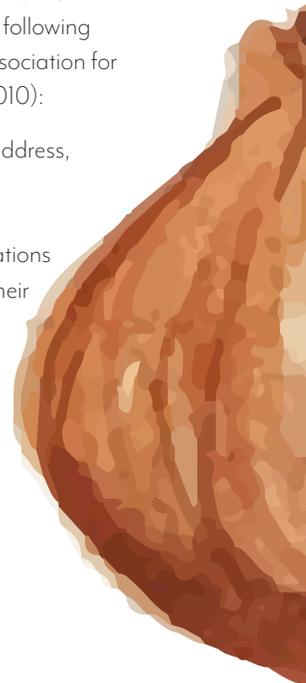


A member agreement form is a written contract that shareholders must agree to before buying a share. This form will let them know what to expect as a shareholder, and will protect the CSA from legal issues. Although a complete signature may not be needed, shareholders should at least

initial or check a box stating they understand and agree to the conditions (Armstrong, 2014).

A member agreement form can dramatically cut down on risk and consumer confusion (Maryland Department of Agriculture, 2016). This form should include the following information (Armstrong, 2014; Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, 2012; Bruch & Ernst, 2010):

- » Shareholder contact information - name, address, phone number, & email
- » Contact information for farm
- » Distribution information - dates, times, locations
- » Notification if shareholders need to bring their own bags or boxes
- » Responsibility of collecting shares, and the effects of failing to do so
- » Produce information - growing practices, types of produce, amount of produce expected
- » Payment information - price, deadlines, method(s) of payment
- » Length of membership (Ex: one or season)
- » Refund policies



This form must also state the shared risk that the shareholders are signing up for (Armstrong, 2014). Because distributing produce is a risk for you and shareholders, shareholders must know they may not receive what they expect. Crops may suffer due to environmental conditions, which could lead to less produce in their shares. Shareholders should be clearly aware of potential issues entering into the agreement (Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, 2012).

Item availability is also a key point to acknowledge within the contract (Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, 2012). Because some shareholders may not have prior farming knowledge, they may not be aware of produce availability. You can share a list of what produce

shareholders can expect throughout the season. This aims to ensure that shareholders are content with what they receive.

Listed below are examples of contracts from various CSAs:

EverGreen Farm offers a contract for the purchase of a workshare: <http://evergreenfarm.typepad.com/files/2011-workshare-contract.pdf>

Mustard Seed Farm offers a CSA agreement form on its website: <http://www.mustardseedfarmer.com/#!csa-shares/c2lr>

Red Acre Farm has an online member agreement form: <http://www.redacrefarmcsa.org/member-agreement/>

# FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT

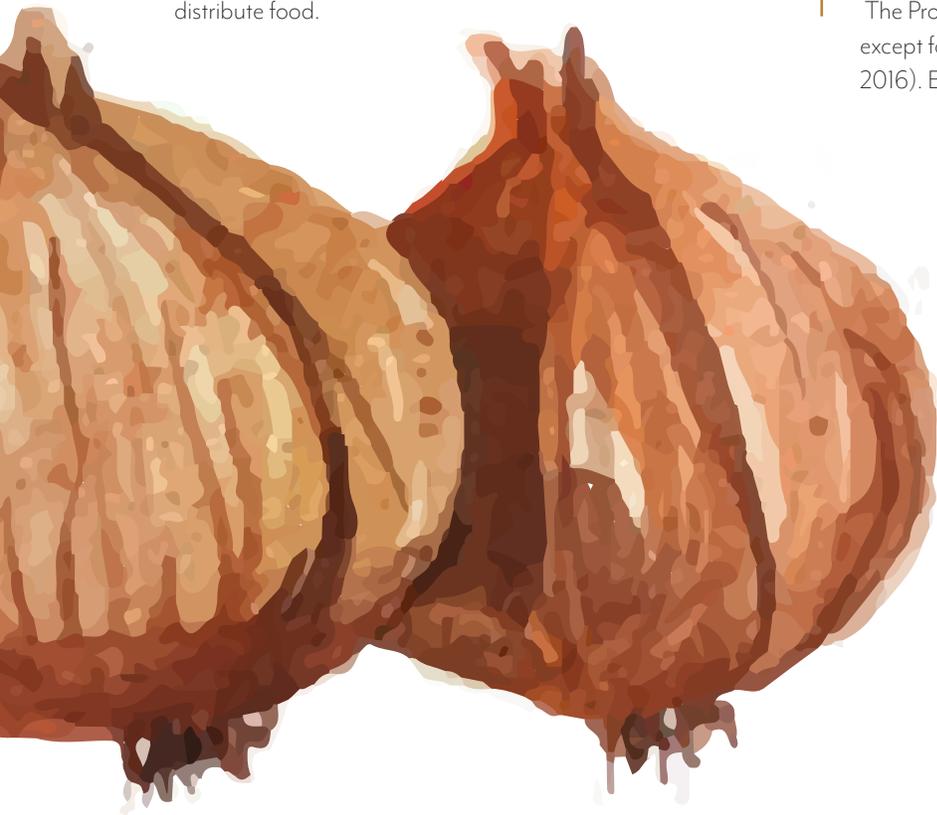
CSAs must adhere to all state and federal regulations regarding food production (Ploetz, 2014). The Food Safety Modernization Act, signed into law in January 2011, is an action to help prevent foodborne illness. This act affects how farm operators handle, package, store, prepare, and distribute food.

The final rule for produce for human consumption was established in November 2015 (Allen, 2016).

## EXEMPTIONS

The Produce Safety Rule covers all farms and produce, except for produce that is “rarely consumed raw” (Allen, 2016). Exemptions includes the following produce:

- » Asparagus
- » Black, great northern, kidney, lima, navy, and pinto beans
- » Garden and sugar beets
- » Cashews
- » Sour cherries
- » Chickpeas
- » Cocoa beans
- » Coffee beans
- » Collards
- » Sweet corn
- » Cranberries
- » Dates
- » Dill (seeds and weed)
- » Eggplants
- » Figs
- » Horseradish
- » Hazelnuts
- » Lentils
- » Okra
- » Peanuts
- » Pecans
- » Peppermint
- » Potatoes
- » Pumpkins
- » Winter squash
- » Sweet potatoes
- » Water chestnuts



Another exemption to the standards is farm size. If a farm generates less than \$25,000 total produce sales annually, the CSA is exempt from the produce safety rule. However, even if CSAs are exempt from the standards, buyers and or the state may still hold the CSA to the same requirements. According to the Food and Drug Administration (2015), food intended for personal or on-farm consumption is also exempt from the act. Certain farms may be eligible for a qualified exemption if they meet the following requirements (United States Food and Drug Administration, 2015):

- » The farm must have food sales averaging less than \$500,000 per year during the previous 3 years; and
- » The farm's sales to qualified end-users must exceed sales to all others combined during the previous 3 years. A qualified end-user is either (a) the consumer of the food or (b) a restaurant or retail food establishment that is located in the same state or the same Native American reservation as the farm or not more than 275 miles away.

There is still a lot of uncertainty concerning the produce rule and how the Food and Drug Administration will enforce requirements. When it comes to CSAs, standards remain unclear. According to Karin Allen, assistant professor and extension food quality and entrepreneurship specialist at Utah State University (K. Allen, personal communication, October 10, 2016),

“If a CSA is run by a farm and includes produce from other farms in the CSA box, they meet the FSMA definition of a primary farm and don't have to register as a food facility. If the CSA is run by a separate group (not a farm) and they go onto the farms to harvest the produce included in the CSA box, they meet the FSMA definition of a secondary farm and don't have to register as a food facility. If the CSA is run by a separate group (not a farm) and the farmers drop off their produce to be put into the CSA box, they won't meet the either farm definition and will have to register as a food facility. That means getting licensed as a food establishment through the Utah Department of Ag and Food and working in a commercial kitchen (or other approved processing space).”

### ACT COVERAGE

Regulations included in the Food Safety Modernization Act include (Allen, 2016):

- » Agricultural water quality
- » Biological soil amendments
- » Domesticated and wild animals
- » Worker training and health/hygiene
- » Equipment, tools, and buildings
- » Sprout-specific regulations

Packaging is also covered under the act. Labeling, mixing, and bagging all provide potential complications.

## SUMMARY AND WHAT'S NEXT

This module discussed liability issues regarding CSA operations and how to minimize risk through the use of insurance policies, member agreement forms, and knowledge of food safety laws. CSA operators should consult an insurance provider and lawyer regarding their CSA operation to ensure all laws and regulations are met. CSA operators should adhere to the Food Safety Modernization Act, although many aspects relating to CSAs remain unclear. Module 7 will focus on training and educational resources available to learn more about CSA management, planning, trainings, and possible funding sources.





## REFERENCES

Allen, K. (2016, March). *Final rule on produce safety: Food safety modernization act* [PowerPoint slides].

Armstrong, R. (2014). *Building the base of your CSA on solid legal footing* [Video file]. In Vimeo. Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/82409311>

ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture. (n.d.). Question of the week: I'm interested in starting a community supported agriculture (CSA) operation, are there any permits or insurance requirements I should be advised of? Retrieved from [https://attra.ncat.org/calendar/question.php/i\\_m\\_interested\\_in\\_starting\\_a\\_community\\_s](https://attra.ncat.org/calendar/question.php/i_m_interested_in_starting_a_community_s)

Barnet, M. (2012, July 13). Legal issues confronted by community supported agriculture agreements. Retrieved from <http://www.denverlawreview.org/dlr-onlinearticle/2012/7/13/legal-issues-confronted-by-community-supported-agriculture-a.html>

Bruch, M. L., & Ernst, M. D. (2010). *A farmer's guide to marketing CSAs* (PBI797). Retrieved from University of Tennessee Extension website: <https://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/pbi797.pdf>

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture. (2008). *Community supported agriculture for the workplace*. Retrieved from <http://www.buylocalfood.org/upload/resource/WorkplaceCSAManual2008.pdf>

Just Food. (n.d.) Section 2: Workplace CSA for farmers. Retrieved from [http://www.justfood.org/sites/default/files/section\\_2\\_workplace\\_csa\\_for\\_farmers\\_0.pdf](http://www.justfood.org/sites/default/files/section_2_workplace_csa_for_farmers_0.pdf)

Kongs, J. (2016). Farm insurance now available for smaller and more diverse operations. *Mother earth news: The original guide to living wisely*. Retrieved from <http://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/sustainable-farming/farm-insurance-zmgz16fmzsto>

Markley, K. (2010, December). Food safety and liability insurance: Emerging issues for farmers and institutions. Retrieved from [http://foodsecurity.org/pub/Food\\_Safety\\_and\\_Liability\\_Ins-EmergingIssues.pdf](http://foodsecurity.org/pub/Food_Safety_and_Liability_Ins-EmergingIssues.pdf)

Maryland Department of Agriculture. (2016). Legal risk management solutions for community supported agriculture in Maryland. Retrieved from <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/MD%200007%20FSMIP%20Report%20final.pdf>

Penn State Extension. (2013). *Agricultural alternatives: Community-supported agriculture* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <http://extension.psu.edu/business/ag-alternatives/marketing/community-supported-agriculture-csa>

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture. (2012). *Guide to legal issues in community supported agriculture: The road to membership agreement*. Retrieved from [http://www.wilson.edu/sites/default/files/uploaded/guide\\_to\\_legal\\_issuesin\\_csa.pdf](http://www.wilson.edu/sites/default/files/uploaded/guide_to_legal_issuesin_csa.pdf)

Ploetz, K. (2014, May 12). Dear Modern Farmer: How do I legally start a CSA? Retrieved from <http://modernfarmer.com/2014/05/dear-modern-farmer-legally-start-csa/>

United States Food and Drug Administration. (2015). *Key requirements: Final rule on produce safety* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/UCM472887.pdf>

University of California Cooperative Extension. (1995). Community Supported Agriculture: Making the connection. Retrieved from <http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/files/143707.pdf>

## Worksheet 6.1: Liability Insurance

Is your operation currently covered under an insurance policy?

Yes

No

If yes, what insurance do you possess?

---

---

Will members be allowed to work on the CSA operation?

Yes

No

What safety measures do you have in place?

---

---

Where will be your drop-off location for shares?

---

---

Is this location zoned for commercial or residential use?

---

## Workshop 6.2: Membership Agreement Form

### THINGS TO INCLUDE:

What is the contact information for the farm?

---

What is your shareholders' contact information?

---

What is the date, time, and location of your distribution?

---

What is the effect of failing to claim shares?

---

What are your growing practices?

---

---

What is the type and amount of produce expected?

---

---

What is the price, payment deadline, and method of payment?

---

---

What is the length of membership?

---

What is the refund policy?

---

---

What are possible shareholder risks?

---

---

### Worksheet 6.3: The Food Safety Modernization Act

What produce do you grow for your CSA operation?

---

---

Are any of these foods considered “rarely consumed raw”? If yes, which ones?

---

---

Does your farm generate less than \$25,000 total produce sales annually?

Yes

No

## MODULE OBJECTIVES:

This module will enable you to:

- » Describe the benefits of accepting SNAP payments
- » Identify SNAP-eligible foods CSAs could offer
- » Describe how to accept Double Up Food Bucks
- » Discover ways to advertise a CSA to SNAP participants
- » Identify ways to price shares for SNAP participants
- » Discover policies and verbiage used in shareholder agreements from CSAs accepting SNAP payments



# WHAT IS SNAP?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is one option for individuals with low income to use their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for buying local, seasonal fruits and vegetables. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) authorizes businesses to accept SNAP benefits, which includes direct marketing farmers and non-profit food buying cooperatives operating a CSA (USDA FNS, 2019).

SNAP is the largest federal nutrition assistance program, formerly known as food stamps. Eligible individuals and families with low income use an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, similar to a debit card, to purchase eligible food at SNAP authorized vendors. In Utah, the EBT card is known as the Horizon EBT Card.



## *BENEFITS OF ACCEPTING SNAP PAYMENTS*

Many benefits exist in accepting SNAP payments as part of your CSA. Expanding your CSA customer base, expanding to new locations, and adding revenue increases the viability of your CSA (Sitaker et al., 2020). SNAP also improves food access and food security for your community, adding to its health and well-being by providing greater access to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables (Seguin et al., 2019). Many farmers have offered cost-offset shares, described as shares sold at a 25% to 50% discount, because they value civic agriculture and want their food to reach people that have “a harder time providing fruits and vegetables to their families” (Sitaker et al., 2020, p. 34). Additionally, the relationships with SNAP participants build a stronger sense of community (Sitaker et al., 2020).

## *SNAP-ELIGIBLE FOODS*

The SNAP-eligible foods are consistent each year. SNAP-eligible foods include fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, breads, cereals, snack foods, and nonalcoholic beverages (USDA FNS, 2013b). Seeds and

plants producing food for the household to eat are also eligible. SNAP individuals cannot use SNAP benefits to buy beer, wine, liquor, tobacco, vitamins, medicines, supplements, prepared foods fit for immediate consumption, hot foods, inedible flowers, decorative pumpkins or gourds, pet food, or live animals (except shellfish, fish removed from water, and animals slaughtered prior to pick-up from the CSA or store) (USDA FNS, 2013b).

## *ALLOWABLE CHARGES*

You collect SNAP payments on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis, which depends on the frequency of your CSA pick-ups. SNAP benefits may not be used to pay any administrative, delivery, or membership fees, nor taxes or down payments associated with operating your CSA (Zenger Farm, 2013). If you include fees in the cost of your share, you must arrange for your SNAP participants to pay their fees through other means or waive the fees.

# DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS

Your CSA can participate in Double Up Food Bucks (Double Up), a nutrition incentive program that helps SNAP participants purchase more fruits and vegetables with their SNAP benefits. The incentive program works by matching SNAP benefits dollar-for-dollar, up to a specific amount, such as \$10 or \$20. Find information on how to apply to participate in the incentive program at <http://doubleuputah.org>.



**DOUBLE UP  
FOOD BUCKS™**

### MODELS FOR PARTICIPATING IN DOUBLE UP

Implementing the Double Up program for CSAs differs across the nation. In Arizona, SNAP participants who joined a CSA that accepts SNAP and Double Up pay for the first two shares of the month with their EBT cards, then take home

produce during weeks 3 and 4 with the Double Up program (Double Up Food Bucks Arizona, n.d.). Double Up programs in Colorado and Michigan suggest that SNAP participants pay for a CSA share every other week with the EBT card and use the Double Up program in between to get a CSA share (Double Up Food Bucks Colorado, n.d.; Wills, 2014).

# MARKETING & OUTREACH

Informing customers that your CSA accepts SNAP benefits is important. You can update your website and other advertising materials by adding information, such as “We welcome SNAP/EBT customers” or “Horizon EBT Card Accepted.” USDA FNS has SNAP graphics you can use, and you can order SNAP posters and decals from USDA FNS by calling (877) 823-4369. The SNAP logo is recognizable and trusted by SNAP participants, so using unofficial logos or alterations of the federal logo could create confusion.

Information on using the SNAP logo is available at [https://](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/ SNAP-Logo-Guidance.pdf)

[fns-prod.](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/ SNAP-Logo-Guidance.pdf)

[azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/ SNAP-Logo-Guidance.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/ SNAP-Logo-Guidance.pdf).



### ADVERTISE

#### WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Lack of awareness is one barrier to joining a CSA (Howard & Goodrum, 2018). Consider advertising the acceptance of SNAP benefits at your CSA through community-based organizations, such as food pantries, churches, libraries, neighborhood groups, community health clinics, and after school programs. Other contacts that could help with outreach include your county Extension office, health department, Head Start, Boys & Girls Clubs, regional or county SNAP-Education (SNAP-Ed) contact, Utahns Against Hunger, local Department of Workforce Services, and Urban Food Connections of Utah. Community-based organizations can provide resources, such as volunteers to help process SNAP payments or serve as a CSA pick-up location for members (Howard & Goodrum, 2018).



**UCSC Organic Farm  
Now Accepting EBT  
for Fresh, Organic  
Fruits & Vegetables**

#### Did you know?

- ◆ UC Santa Cruz has a non-profit farm that produces affordable, certified-organic fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ You can apply as a low-income member of the Farm & Garden Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program to receive a weekly box of produce for just \$11/week.

#### How it works:

- ◆ Call the Farm & Garden CSA office at (831) 459-4661 or email [farmcsa@ucsc.edu](mailto:farmcsa@ucsc.edu) to find out if there are still low-income shares available and to get an application.
- ◆ Once accepted, you will pick up your weekly produce shares on Tuesday or Friday afternoon starting the first week of June 2019!
- ◆ You can also use SNAP/EBT benefits (Food Stamps) to purchase delicious, fresh fruits and vegetables every week at our Farm Stand starting Tuesday, June 1. Our Farm stand is conveniently located at the corner of Bay and High Streets, accessible on the Santa Cruz Metro #10 bus and is open Tuesdays and Fridays from 12 noon–6 pm



The University of California Santa Cruz advertises SNAP shares using a flier (Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, 2014).

### ADVERTISE USING WORD-OF-MOUTH BY CSA MEMBERS

Let your current CSA members know that you are accepting SNAP benefits as a payment option. Most CSA members share news about the CSA they belong to because they believe in your business. New members joining a CSA can find the experience intimidating, so you could offer a discount to SNAP participants referred by a current CSA member (Howard & Goodrum, 2018).

### USE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Your social media platforms are affordable communication

tools that raise awareness of your SNAP and Double Up incentive programs. By using your social media platforms, you can increase fundraising to support SNAP shares through your followers, request followers to contact local legislators or community decision-makers about SNAP and Double Up incentive programs, or offer useful information about your CSA (Wholesome Wave, n.d.).

### NOTIFY LOCAL MEDIA

You can notify the local newspaper, TV station, or radio station to discuss how SNAP participants can purchase CSA shares. Consider framing the story in a way that highlights the positive reasons for buying a CSA membership using SNAP benefits and Double Up and how it provides a way for residents with limited income to gain access to fresh, healthy, locally grown food (Howard & Goodrum, 2018).

### INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH SNAP PARTICIPANTS

Marketing information to SNAP participants could highlight quotes from current members, outline how their participation in the CSA supports the local economy, supports a local farmer, promotes environmental stewardship, and offers fresh, healthy, locally grown food (Howard & Goodrum, 2018). Let the SNAP participants know about your CSA, how your CSA works, and the membership agreement form. You should use a detailed membership agreement and have a conversation with SNAP participants at the time they sign up to make sure the CSA is a good fit for their lifestyle. A face-to-face or telephone conversation will help you learn about their family, lifestyle, eating habits, and their previous participation in a CSA (Zenger Farm, 2013). Discuss your CSA's pick-up time and location because transportation is one of the main reasons that SNAP participants drop out of a CSA (Zenger Farm, 2013). Is the CSA location conveniently located? Is the CSA location near public transportation? Can the SNAP participants pick up their shares after work?

The screenshot shows the Wilkerson Farm website with a green header and navigation menu (HOME, CSA, FALL FAIR, JOBS, HISTORY, BLOG). A green banner at the top states: "This program is funded on a year-to-year basis. All the 2019 funding has been used. Stay tuned for updates on whether this program will be available in 2020. Questions? [info@wilkersonfarm.com](mailto:info@wilkersonfarm.com)".

Below the banner, a green box titled "YOU GET FREE FRUITS & VEGGIES!" contains the following text:
 

**Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB)** is a matching program that gives food stamp customers free fruits and vegetables when you spend their SNAP Card dollars at participating Utah farmers markets. It's a win-win-win: helping (1) local farmers, (2) local families, and (3) local communities. **For every dollar you spend, you are given a free dollar to purchase fruits and vegetables!**

- we can only match up to \$20 per day (the program limit in 2018 was only \$10 per day)
- you must purchase fruits and vegetables with free dollars (bread, eggs, meat, etc. can be purchased with EBT dollars but not DUFB dollars)
- your DUFB dollars cannot be split & change cannot be given (for example, if something normally costs \$3.50, you would use 4 DUFB dollars)

A green button at the bottom of the box says "SEE ALL THE PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS IN UTAH".

To the right of the text are two graphics:
 

- A "UTAH HORIZON" EBT card with "XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX" on it.
- A graphic that says "Spend \$10 on your EBT Card" with a \$10 bill background.
- A graphic that says "with DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS™ Get \$10 FREE Fruits & Veggies" with a carrot icon and a \$10 bill background.

At the bottom right of the screenshot, contact information for Wilkerson Farm is provided:
 

WILKERSON FARM  
710 WEST 2000 SOUTH, OREM UT 84058  
(385) 219-0077  
[INFO@WILKERSONFARM.COM](mailto:INFO@WILKERSONFARM.COM)

Website advertising SNAP and Double Up at Wilkerson Farm (Wilkerson Farm, 2019).

The Facebook post features the Zenger Farm logo (a green house icon) and the text:
 

**Zenger Farm is at Lents, Portland.**  
April 4, 2019 · Portland, OR · 🌐

**CSA veggie boxes for all! We accept SNAP payment on a wide sliding scale. Swipe for a photo of a spring share and signup today! @ Lents, Portland**

Below the text are two images:
 

- A graphic of a green shopping bag with "SNAP" written on it, containing icons for a carrot, a tomato, a leafy green, and a blue container.
- A photograph of a fresh vegetable share box filled with various greens, including leafy lettuce, spinach, and radishes.

Facebook post advertising SNAP CSA shares with Zenger Farm (Zenger Farm, 2019).

# PAYMENT MODELS

SNAP participants cannot afford payment for an entire growing season up front, unlike members of the traditional CSA model. As a SNAP authorized vendor, you may not turn down members who want to use SNAP payments. USDA FNS (2019) recognizes this challenge, so FNS-registered CSAs can accept SNAP payments up to 14 days prior to the delivery/availability of a CSA share. The challenge with the requirements for weekly or bi-weekly payments is that occasionally SNAP participants may not have sufficient funds in their SNAP accounts at the time of distribution. SNAP benefits cannot be used to pay for items bought on credit. You cannot waive the CSA fee one week (as credit) with the intent to accept payment the following week (Zenger Farm, 2013). To accommodate this situation, you could include a provision in your CSA membership agreement whereby a SNAP participant pays a cash deposit in exchange for the share or forfeit the share until the SNAP participant can make payments again. Or, your CSA could participate in the Utah Double Up program to reduce the number of EBT payments made by your SNAP participants.

## SLIDING SHARE PAYMENT MODEL

The sliding scale payment model is a tiered pricing system based on combined household income (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Local Food Research Center, 2013). The sliding scale payment model is frequently used in mixed-income communities to set CSA share prices. You would set the price per share and then offer shares above and below the share price. The ability of your CSA to offer discounted shares is dependent on the sale of a higher priced share. Target share numbers for each tier can be set in advance or can be flexible during recruitment and enrollment.

For example, a farmer sets the price at \$328 for a half share offered for 20 weeks. For each Tier 1 share sold, the CSA can offer a Tier 2 share because, on average, the CSA will meet the share price:

- » Tier 1 share price: \$428 for higher-income members
- » Tier 2 share price: \$228 for SNAP participants

## SCHOLARSHIP OR LOAN PROGRAM

You can incentivize shares by partnering with a community-based organization to create a loan fund or scholarship to help individuals with low income afford a CSA membership (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Local Food Research Center, 2013). Another approach is to ask CSA members to donate to a fund that offers CSA shares to eligible individuals (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Local Food Research Center, 2013).

### 2014 CSA Low-Income Pledge Form

*In becoming a member of the UCSC Farm CSA, I understand the following:*

- I am making a financial commitment for the 2014 farm CSA season. As the designated primary shareholder, I understand that my share payment is non-refundable.
- I recognize that due to the inherent risks of farming, there are no guarantees on the exact amount of produce that I will receive.
- that my share comes from an educational farm and that apprenticing farmers are producing my food.
- I understand and accept this commitment and assume responsibility to contact the staff if there are any questions or concerns.

**Please note that in order to complete your reservation for the 2014 CSA Program, you must submit payment with a signed pledge form to the address listed below.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Shareholder \_\_\_\_\_ Co-Shareholder \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Address \_\_\_\_\_ Street / City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Cell # \_\_\_\_\_ Home or Work # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Co-share Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Co-share Phone \_\_\_\_\_

#### Payment options

##### FULL SEASON:

- payment in full: **\$280**
- Two checks: **\$140**  
today's date and post-dated June 1
- Four checks: **\$70**  
today's date and post-dated June 1  
post-dated July 1  
post-dated Aug. 1

##### Pick-up site

- Tuesdays at the Farm (noon-6:30 p.m.)
- Fridays at the Farm (noon-6:30 p.m.)
- Fridays at Bay & High (2:30-6:00 p.m.)

##### NEW PICKUP SITE:

- Westside (Tuesday only 2:30-5:30 p.m.)  
Location: Westside Farm & Feed  
817 Swift St., Santa Cruz 95060

Payment by Check only Money order or Cashier's check OK  
 payable to "UC Regents"  
**Send with this pledge form to:**  
 CASFS / UCSC Farm  
 1156 High Street  
 Santa Cruz, CA 95064  
 Attn: CSA

**You may also pay with an EBT benefit card (SNAP).**  
 Please present your card to the CSA attendant and **sign and date the EBT voucher** when you pick up your share.

Office Use Only:  Payment enclosed

Check payment amount: \_\_\_\_\_

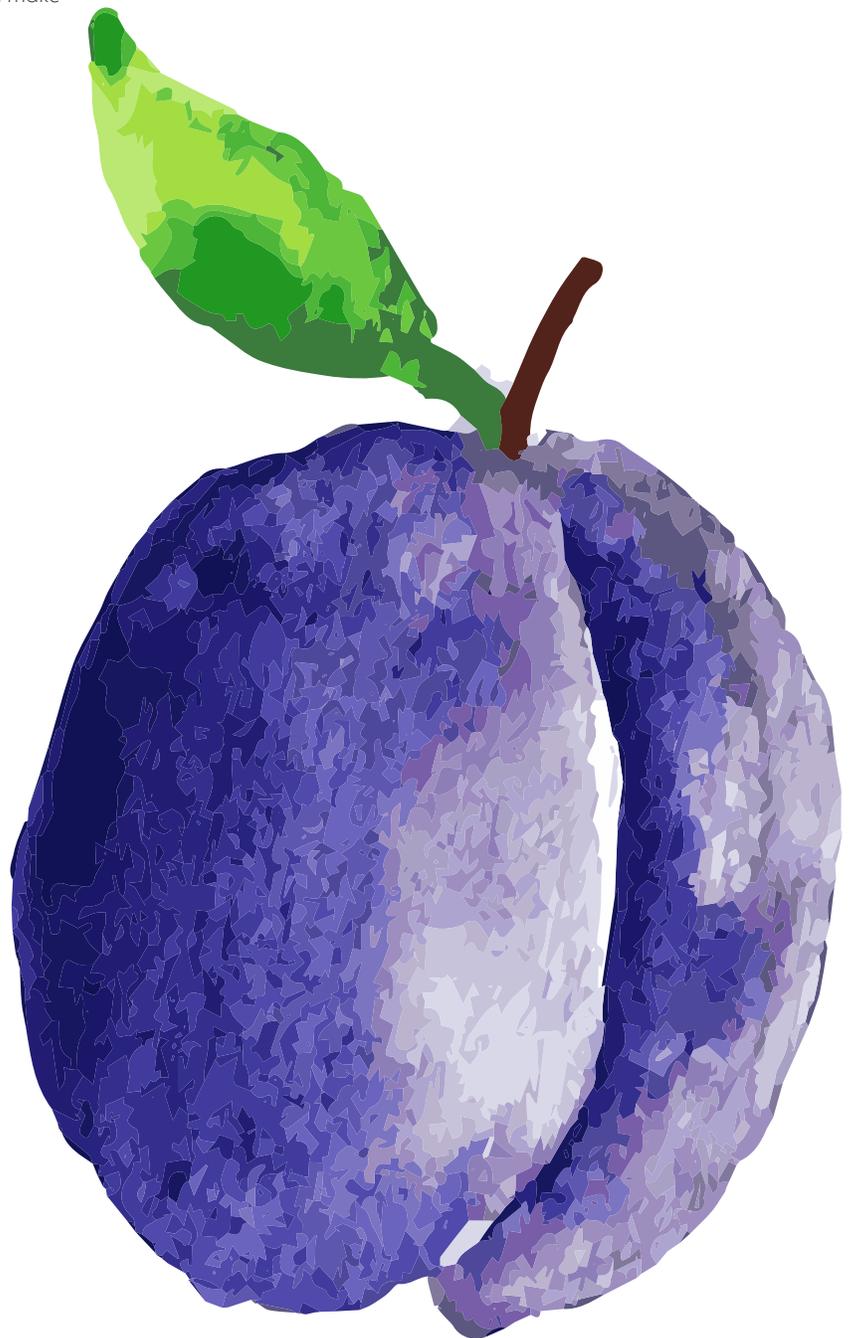
Date rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_

The University of California Santa Cruz encourages members to donate to support low-income shares for SNAP participants (Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, 2014).

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACCEPTING SNAP

When you accommodate SNAP participants with pay-as-you-go plans, you should reduce or eliminate the risk placed on you to ensure your CSA can cover the entire cost of the shares your members purchase. Consider these tips when you create your payment plans:

- » Break down your low-income shares as a weekly, biweekly, or monthly cost, making the payment more manageable for SNAP participants (Wholesome Wave, n.d.).
- » Ask when SNAP benefits are deposited into SNAP participants' accounts, helping you to understand at what point during the month SNAP participants can make payments (Wholesome Wave, n.d.).
- » Refer to the discounted share as an "incentive" rather than "subsidy." These discounted shares make the CSA more affordable for individuals with low income, enabling them to join a local food business. Even though both subsidy and incentive are correct terms for referring to a discounted share, incentive is a more positive term, encouraging SNAP participants to take advantage of a service that they may not otherwise afford (Wholesome Wave, n.d.).
- » Create a member waitlist in case a SNAP participant can no longer participate or make payments on their share (Wholesome Wave, n.d.).
- » Consider how to market your CSA to create a specific ratio of SNAP participants (e.g. 10%-30%) to non-SNAP members (Wholesome Wave, n.d.).



# MODELS FOR ACCEPTING CSA SNAP PAYMENTS

You can use a wired or wireless terminal to process the EBT cards.

## WIRED TERMINAL

If you have face-to-face contact with your SNAP participants at pick-up, as well as electricity and a phone line at your pick-up location, you can use an EBT-only wired machine supplied by USDA FNS for free. By law, states must supply no-cost options for direct marketing farmers to accept SNAP, but the law does not require the options to be wireless. You could purchase a point-of-sale machine that accepts EBT cards, debit cards, and credit cards.



## WIRELESS TERMINAL

If you have a cell phone with good reception at your pick-up location, you can use a wireless terminal to process the payment. The wireless terminal works well if you make home deliveries. Wireless terminals can be EBT-only or can also accept credit and debit cards. You can purchase an attachment for your smartphone, tablet, or other hand-held device to process the EBT transactions. You can obtain wireless terminals from a third-party vendor. USDA FNS provides a list of third-party processors at this website: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/SNAP-EBT-TPP-guidance.pdf>. The National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs worked with Novo Dia Group to create TotilPay Go, a point-of-sale system that is compatible with Apple and Android devices (<https://totipay.com/>). TotilPay Go has a package available for direct marketing farmers to purchase equipment to accept credit, debit, and SNAP payments (<https://totipay.com/totipay-go-pricing/>).

Using either the wired or wireless terminal, you process the CSA share payment by having the SNAP participant hand you the Horizon EBT card to pay for SNAP-eligible food items. Use your terminal to process the SNAP payment for the amount of the CSA share. The funds transfer from the SNAP participant's account to your bank account tied to the terminal. Once approved, provide the SNAP participant with a printed or electronic receipt for the transaction, which serves as a record of the purchase.

## PROCESSING CSA PAYMENTS AT FARMERS MARKETS

If you sell at a farmers market that accepts SNAP benefits, your SNAP participants could pick up their shares at your booth. You should discuss this option with the farmers market manager in advance because it creates extra work for the market, but the SNAP participants would use the market's existing SNAP payment system. One factor to consider is if your booth will be overwhelmed with share boxes, affecting the aesthetics of your booth and your time spent talking to farmers market shoppers and other CSA members.



# SNAP MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENTS



Utah State University Extension's fact sheet and CSA Manual (Module 6) on the legal concerns with CSAs include resources for how to draft a membership agreement, found here: <https://extensionsustainability.usu.edu/food/>. Most CSA membership agreements are not tailored for SNAP participants (Zenger Farm, 2013). Therefore, you can start with a basic membership agreement and tailor information about payments, refundable deposits, missed pick-ups, and late pick-ups to develop a SNAP membership agreement.

## PAYMENTS

Occasionally, SNAP participants will have insufficient funds on their Horizon EBT Card toward the end of the month. Therefore, the CSA membership agreement needs to offer other options for SNAP participants to pay for their shares (Zenger Farm, 2013).

- » If you meet with your SNAP participants face-to-face, cash payments work well.
- » If SNAP participants pick up their shares from an unmanned drop site, the membership agreement form should request card information and explain how SNAP participants will have their credit or debit card charged if their Horizon EBT Card has insufficient funds.
- » If you do not meet the SNAP participants at the drop site, designate someone as cashier to collect a cash payment for later delivery to you.

## REFUNDABLE DEPOSITS

Friends of Zenger Farm in Oregon recommends that SNAP members submit a deposit at the time of signing up for the CSA (Zenger Farm, 2013). This deposit serves as an incentive to stay in the CSA and to compensate you if the SNAP participant drops out or misses a CSA share pick-up. Consider a deposit amount of one month's share or 5% to 10% of the total cost of the CSA share. The deposit amount needs to be reasonable because SNAP participants do not have much expendable income, but the amount should be

large enough to encourage full participation in the CSA. The deposit is paid by cash, check, credit card, or debit card, but the Horizon EBT Card cannot be used for the deposit. On the membership agreement form, include information on when the SNAP participants will receive their deposit back and the reasons they would lose their deposit (either partially or totally) if they drop out or miss a certain number of pick-ups. SNAP participants should receive the deposit back in cash at the end of the CSA season.

**[FACE-TO-FACE PICK-UP] PAYMENT: THE COST OF EACH SHARE IS [\$ \_\_\_\_]. YOU MUST PAY FOR YOUR SHARE AT EVERY PICK UP. YOU CAN PAY WITH YOUR EBT CARD OR [CASH/CHECK/CREDIT/DEBIT/ETC.]. IF YOU HAVE INSUFFICIENT FUNDS ON YOUR EBT CARD TO MAKE A PAYMENT, YOU STILL NEED TO PAY FOR YOUR SHARE WHEN YOU PICK IT UP WITH [CASH/CHECK/CREDIT/DEBIT/ETC.].**

**[UNMANNED DROP SITE] PAYMENT: THE COST OF EACH SHARE IS [\$ \_\_\_\_]. YOU MUST PAY FOR YOUR SHARE AT EVERY PICK UP. BEFORE WE DROP-OFF YOUR SHARE, WE WILL VERIFY YOU HAVE SUFFICIENT FUNDS ON YOUR EBT CARD. IF YOU HAVE INSUFFICIENT FUNDS, YOU STILL NEED TO PAY AND THE ONLY ALTERNATE PAYMENT WE CAN ACCEPT IS A CREDIT/DEBIT CARD. BY COMPLETING AND SIGNING THE SECTION BELOW, YOU ARE AUTHORIZING US TO CHARGE THE FOLLOWING CREDIT/DEBIT CARD: [COLLECT INFORMATION].**

**REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT: A DEPOSIT OF [\$ \_\_\_\_] IS REQUIRED [BY A CERTAIN DATE OR WITH THIS SIGNED AGREEMENT]. YOU MAY MAKE YOUR DEPOSIT WITH [CASH/CHECK/DEBIT/CREDIT/ETC.] YOUR DEPOSIT WILL BE REFUNDED TO YOU [AT THE LAST PICK-UP/BY MAIL] AS DESCRIBED IN THE MISSED PICK-UP POLICY.**

### MISSED PICK-UPS

Do not process a SNAP payment for a share that a SNAP participant does not pick up. If you accept a SNAP payment for food that was not delivered at the time of the transaction, you could risk trouble with the USDA FNS. Given their financial situation, consider being flexible about missed pick-ups and set a specific number of pick-ups they can miss before you deduct payment from their deposit or cancel their membership. For example, the Zenger Farm permits SNAP members to miss two out of 23 pick-ups (Zenger Farm, 2013). In the membership agreement, you could ask for members to give you notice if they will miss a pick-up so that food is not unnecessarily harvested.

### LATE PICK-UPS

In the membership agreement form, clearly explain your policy and procedures for late pick-ups of CSA shares. A late pick-up can complicate payments from SNAP participants because you state your pick-up times when you apply to be a SNAP vendor (Zenger Farm, 2013). You need to consider how you will collect payment from SNAP participants who come after hours.

### APPLY TO ACCEPT SNAP BENEFITS

In order to accept SNAP benefits, you first need to apply for a SNAP license. Direct marketing farmers operating a CSA are considered retailers when they apply for a permit from USDA FNS to accept SNAP benefits (USDA FNS, 2013a). You complete the online application available on this website:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply-to-accept>. You do not pay a fee for processing the application. USDA FNS can take 45-60 days to approve the completed application; you might be contacted to answer additional questions or provide additional documentation. To receive answers to questions about the SNAP authorization process, or eligibility to accept SNAP, contact USDA FNS at (877) 823-4369.

**MISSED PICK-UPS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PICK UP YOUR SHARE AT THE DATE AND TIME OF THE SCHEDULED PICK-UP. YOU MAY ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO PAY FOR AND PICK UP YOUR SHARE IF YOU CANNOT.**

**[NO FLEXIBILITY] IF YOU MISS A PICK-UP, THE COST OF A SHARE [\$ . . . ] WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR DEPOSIT. IF YOU MISS MORE THAN [ ] PICK-UPS, WE MAY CANCEL YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**

**[SOME FLEXIBILITY] YOU MAY MISS UP TO [ ] PICK-UPS DURING THE CSA SEASON WITHOUT LOSING YOUR DEPOSIT. IF YOU MISS MORE THAN [ ] PICK-UPS, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR ENTIRE DEPOSIT AND WE MAY CANCEL YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**

**[REQUIRING NOTICE] YOU MAY MISS UP TO [ ] PICK-UPS DURING THE CSA SEASON WITHOUT LOSING YOUR DEPOSIT IF YOU CONTACT US AND TELL US THAT YOU WILL MISS THE PICK-UP AT LEAST [ ] HOURS/DAYS IN ADVANCE. IF YOU DO NOT GIVE US ENOUGH NOTICE, THE COST OF A SHARE [\$ . . . ] WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR DEPOSIT. IF YOU MISS MORE THAN [ ] PICK-UPS, EVEN IF YOU GAVE NOTICE, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR ENTIRE DEPOSIT AND WE MAY CANCEL YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**

## SUMMARY AND WHAT'S NEXT

This module provides information about the SNAP and Double Up nutrition incentive programs you can offer through your CSA. You can now apply various useful communication tools for recruiting SNAP members and draft the information SNAP participants need to join a CSA. Different methods exist for how to set your SNAP share price, particularly scholarships, loans, and the sliding scale

price model. You can use either a wired terminal or wireless terminal to process the EBT cards. You can minimize your risk and let SNAP participants know what to expect by using a SNAP membership agreement form. The last module will focus on training and educational resources available to learn more about CSA management, planning, trainings, and possible funding sources.

# REFERENCES

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Local Food Research Center. (2013). *CSAs as a strategy to increase food access: Models of success*. Retrieved from <https://asapconnections.org/downloads/csas-as-a-strategy-to-increase-food-access.pdf/>

Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. (2014). *The Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) UCSC Farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program*. Retrieved from <https://casfs.ucsc.edu/research/ucsc-csa-overview.pdf>

Double Up Food Bucks Arizona. (n.d.). *Everywhere else*. Retrieved May 21, 2020 from <https://www.doubleupaz.org/everywhere-else-how-it-works>

Double Up Food Bucks Colorado. (n.d.). *How it works*. Retrieved on May 21, 2020 from <https://doubleupcolorado.org/how-it-works/>

Howard, T., & Goodrum, A. (2018). *Outreach tips for farms that accept SNAP payments for CSAs* [Marketing tip sheet]. Retrieved from the ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture website: <https://attra.ncat.org/viewhtml/?id=607>

Seguin, R., Ammerman, A., Hanson, K., Kolodinsky, J., Jilcott Pitts, S., & Sitaker, M. (2019). NP3 Farm fresh foods for healthy kids: Innovative cost-offset community-supported agriculture intervention to prevent childhood obesity and strengthen local agricultural economies. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 51(7S), S10-S11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2019.05.327>

Sitaker, M., McCall, M., Belarmino, E. H., Wang, W., Kolodinsky, J., Becot, F.,...Seguin-Fowler, R. A. (2020). Balancing social values with economic realities: Farmer experience with cost-offset community supported agriculture. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 9(4), 29-43. doi: 10.5304/jafscd.2020.094.004

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service [USDA FNS]. (2013a). *SNAP retailer service center*. Retrieved July 15, 2019 from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/RSC>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service [USDA FNS]. (2013b). *What can SNAP buy?*. Retrieved May 14, 2019, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service [USDA FNS]. (2019). *Definitions for farmers markets, direct marketing farmers, and CSAs*. Retrieved May 14, 2019, from <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/snap/farmers-markets-definitions>

Wilkerson Farm. (2019). *CSA*. Retrieved on February 2, 2019 from <https://wilkersonfarm.com/csa>

Wholesome Wave. (n.d.). *How to start a CSA nutrition incentive program: A toolkit for Wholesome Wave's national nutrition incentive network*. Retrieved from [http://www.maine farmersmarkets.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/How-to-Run-a-Nutrition-Incentive-Program-Toolkit\\_FINAL-8.11.15.pdf](http://www.maine farmersmarkets.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/How-to-Run-a-Nutrition-Incentive-Program-Toolkit_FINAL-8.11.15.pdf)

Wills, K. (2014, December 4). *Creative ways farmers are growing with Double Up Food Bucks*. Michigan State University Extension. Retrieved from [https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/creative\\_ways\\_farmers\\_are\\_growing\\_with\\_double\\_up\\_food\\_bucks](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/creative_ways_farmers_are_growing_with_double_up_food_bucks)

Zenger Farm. (2013). *The CSA farmer's nationwide guide to accepting SNAP/EBT payments*. Retrieved from the eXtension website: <https://articles.extension.org/pages/67390/csa-farmers-guide-to-accepting-snapebt-payments-webinar>

Zenger Farm. (2019, April 4). *CSA veggie boxes for all! We accept SNAP payment on a wide sliding scale. Swipe for a photo of a spring share and signup today! Lents, Potland* [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/zengerfarm/>

## *MODULE OBJECTIVE:*

This module will enable you to:

- » Identify online resources, trainings, and funding sources that relate to CSAs



# WEBSITES

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center:  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa>

Biodynamics.com: <http://www.biodynamics.com/csa.html>

CSA Utah: <http://csautah.org/>

FairShare CSA Coalition:  
<http://www.csacoalition.org/our-farms/resources-for-farmers/>

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

Local First Utah: <http://localfirst.org/>

Robyn VanEn Center: <http://www.csacenter.org>

SPIN Farming: <http://www.spinfarming.com/buy/>

Utah State University Small Farm Program:  
<http://smallfarms.usu.edu/>

# MANUALS

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) Local Food Research Center. (2013). CSAs as a strategy to increase food access: Models of success. Retrieved from <http://asapconnections.org/downloads/csas-as-a-strategy-to-increase-food-access.pdf>

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) Local Food Research Center. (2013). Workplace CSAs: A summary of models. Retrieved from <http://asapconnections.org/downloads/workplace-csa-models.pdf>

Barrentine, P., Donovan, C., & Berman, F. (2010). Small farm & direct marketing handbook. Retrieved from Washington State Department of Agriculture website: <http://agr.wa.gov/fp/pubs/docs/056-SmallFarmAndDirectMarketingHandbook-Complete.pdf>

Bruch, M. L., & Ernst, M. D. (2010). A farmer's guide to marketing through community supported agriculture (CSAs). Retrieved from University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture website: <https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/documents/pb1797.pdf>



Burke, M., Anthony, I., Canella, M., Curtis-Murphy, E., Higby, A., Holtzman, B., . . . Yandow, C. (2012). Guide to financing the community supported farm. UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Vermont Extension. Retrieved from [http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/business/finance-guide/Guide to Financing the Community Supported Farm\\_March2012.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/business/finance-guide/Guide%20to%20Financing%20the%20Community%20Supported%20Farm_March2012.pdf)

Curtis, K., Slocum, S., & Allen, K. (2015). Farm and food tourism: Exploring opportunities. Retrieved from the Western SARE website: <http://www.westernsare.org/Learning-Center/SARE-Project-Products/Books-Guidebooks-and-Manuals/Farm-and-Food-Tourism>

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. (2003). Building a sustainable business: A guide to developing a business plan for farms and rural businesses. Retrieved from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education website: <http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/SARE-Program-Materials/National-Program-Materials/Publication-Catalog>

Paul, M. (2015). Community supported agriculture: A model for the farmer and the community. Retrieved from [http://futureecon.com/wp-content/uploads/MP\\_Final\\_PDF.pdf](http://futureecon.com/wp-content/uploads/MP_Final_PDF.pdf)

Perry, J., & Franzblau, S. (2010). Local harvest: A multifarm CSA handbook. Retrieved from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education website: <http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/SARE-Project-Products/Northeast-SARE-Project-Products/Local-Harvest>

## BOOKS

Adam, K. L. (2006). Community supported agriculture. ATTRA - National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. Available from <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/csa.html>

FairShare CSA Coalition. (2004). From asparagus to zucchini: A guide to farm-fresh seasonal produce. MACSAC.

Groh, T., & McFadden, S. (1998). Farms of tomorrow revisited. Kimberton, PA: Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association.

Henderson, E., & Van En, R. (2007). Sharing the harvest: A citizen's guide to community supported agriculture. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

University of Vermont Extension. (2012). Guide to financing the community supported farm: Ways for farms to acquire capital within communities. Retrieved from University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture website: [http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/business/finance-guide/Guide%20to%20Financing%20the%20Community%20Supported%20Farm\\_March2012.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/business/finance-guide/Guide%20to%20Financing%20the%20Community%20Supported%20Farm_March2012.pdf)



McFadden, S. (2015). Awakening community intelligence CSA farms as 21st century cornerstones [E-reader version, if applicable]. Retrieved from [https://www.amazon.com/Awakening-Community-Intelligence-Century-Cornerstones/dp/1512158356/ref=sr\\_1\\_l1?ie=UTF8&qid=1433160944&sr=8-1&keywords=awakening+community+intelligence](https://www.amazon.com/Awakening-Community-Intelligence-Century-Cornerstones/dp/1512158356/ref=sr_1_l1?ie=UTF8&qid=1433160944&sr=8-1&keywords=awakening+community+intelligence)

McFadden, S. (1990). CSA: Farms of tomorrow: Community supported farms, farm supported communities. Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association.

Van En, R. (1992). Basic formula to create community supported agriculture. Great Barrington, MA: Robin Van En.





## FACT SHEETS

Utah State University Extension publishes online fact sheets providing information about community supported agriculture, marketing, vegetable production, fruit production, plant problems, insects and more. To find a specific publication, search this website: <http://extension.usu.edu/publications>. This module provides a sample list of USU fact sheets that may assist you:

Brain, R. (2012). The Local Food Movement: Definitions, Benefits & Resources [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/Sustainability\\_2012-09pr.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/Sustainability_2012-09pr.pdf)

Curtis, K. (2010). Direct Marketing of Local Foods: Food Safety Considerations [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension\\_curall/99/](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/99/)

Curtis, K. (2011). Direct Marketing Local Foods: Differences in CSA and Farmers' Market Consumers [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension\\_curall/100/](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_curall/100/)

Curtis, K., Chakreeyarat, V., Dominique Gumirakiza, J. (2012). Community Supported Agriculture Programs: A Sustainable Approach to Local Foods [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from: [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/Applied-Economics\\_2012-22pr.pdf?utm\\_source=Copy+of+Extension+Updates++December+10%2C+2012&utm\\_campaign=Updates+Dec.+17&utm\\_medium=email](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/Applied-Economics_2012-22pr.pdf?utm_source=Copy+of+Extension+Updates++December+10%2C+2012&utm_campaign=Updates+Dec.+17&utm_medium=email)

Curtis, K., Chakreeyarat, V., & Dominique Gumirakiza, J. (2013). Enhancing Direct Marketing Opportunities for Local Foods [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from <http://extension.usu.edu/html/publications/publication=15322&custom=1>

Dominique Gumirakiza, J & Curtis, K. (2013). Farmers' Market Consumer Preferences & Premium Pricing for Organically Grown & Local Fresh Produce [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/AppliedEconomics\\_2013-08pr.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/AppliedEconomics_2013-08pr.pdf)

Olsen, S. & Allen, K. (2017). Farm Food Safety Laws: FSMA vs. GAP [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2770&context=extension\\_curall](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2770&context=extension_curall)



# TRAININGS

Biodynamics Conference: <https://www.biodynamics.com/>

Urban and Small Farm Conference hosted by Utah State University Extension: <http://diverseag.org/htm/2016-conference>

# GRANTS

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- » Farmers Market Promotion Program: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>
- » Local Food Promotion Program: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>

Organic Certification Cost Share Programs: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/occsp>

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbpg>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Funding Opportunities for Growers: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/?cid=stelprdb1048817>

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

- » Farmer/Rancher Grant: [https://wsaregrants.usu.edu/grants/docs/CFP\\_PG.pdf](https://wsaregrants.usu.edu/grants/docs/CFP_PG.pdf)
- » Professional + Producer Grant: [https://wsaregrants.usu.edu/grants/docs/CFP\\_PPG.pdf](https://wsaregrants.usu.edu/grants/docs/CFP_PPG.pdf)







EXTENSION   
UtahStateUniversity

