

Sustainable food and food security

Session 3 – Community Supported Agriculture

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Session 3

In this session we will:

- Review the emergence of local food initiatives (as a response to national food security concerns)
- Explore some CSA models

Alternative and community-led projects as responses to concerns about food security

In this session we will begin looking at food security from a UK and ideological perspective.

- What is the historical backdrop to food security (with reference to the UK)?
- Why did food security concerns spur alternative responses?
- How is local/community food perceived as improving food security?

Emergence of alternatives

In session 2 we heard how some of the consequences of the modern food system stimulate concern among citizens:

- about the disconnection between consumers and producers
- about who controls the food chain
- about health and environment linked to the industrial food system ('externalities' – Lang & Pretty 2004)
- the idea that some of these challenges are 'locked in' to the places and the ways that we live and work

In this session and s 4 we will hear about a two civil society responses to these concerns – CSA and Farmers' Markets.

Food security policy in the UK

- Increasing reliance on imports since Industrial Revolution
- Colonial, later Commonwealth trading networks
- Interruptions of food supply during Second World War
- Consequently policy of state intervention in agriculture
- Reduction in local diversity (standardisation)
- Increase in output productivity ('green revolution')
- Increased dependence on imported agricultural resources (oil and fertilisers) – 1973 oil supply crisis
- From 1970s EEC/EC/EU membership – 90% self-sufficient
- Global trade liberalisation during 1980s – we can buy/trade our way out of trouble
- New interest in national food security in 2000s as input costs rise dramatically and food price spikes occur.

UK balance of trade for food, drink and feed at 2011 prices in £s (source: Defra 2012)

Year	Imports (£ million)	Exports (£ million)	Balance of trade (£ million)	Self-sufficiency in indigenous foods
1943	21,705	660	-21,045	n/a
1953	31,131	3,515	-27,616	n/a
1963	27,847	4,276	-23,571	54%
1973	30,736	7,728	-23,009	62%
1983	22,086	10,281	-11,805	76%
1993	22,991	13,652	-9,340	74%
2003	27,170	12,819	-14,351	64%
2011	36,715	18,159	-18,556	62%

1986
78%

CZ in EU

54% of the land in CZ is agricultural and 30% is forest. The balance is tipping from agriculture towards forestry (15,000 ha. from ag → forest since mid 1990s).

Arable land has declined and permanent pasture has increased, partly with support from with LFA grants.

Agriculture represents about 3% of CZ jobs.

(Source: Embassy of the Czech Republic http://www.mzv.cz/telaviv/en/economy_and_trade/agriculture_in_the_czech_republic/index.html)

In 1989, 500,000+ agricultural workers, in 2013 100,000.

Gap between agri and national average income widening.

CZ exports more high-value food than ever, but imports food traditionally grown domestically.

Source: <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/131722/Czech-self-sufficiency-threatened>

CZ 80% self-sufficient in cereals, maize, oilseed. Potatoes increasingly imported (Kotyza and Slaboch 2014)

Local food movement emerges in UK from the Third Sector

Soil Association Food Futures programme

Sustain and food links federation

Foot and mouth/Curry Commission – local and regional food as different forms of rural development

Lottery support:

- Food for Life
- Making Local Food Work
- Local Food programme (largely urban – remember Deverre and Traversac in s 2)
- Negligible contribution in terms of food output but social innovation and new enterprise models.
- www.localfoodgrants.org/foodetube ‘more than just the veg’.

Local food projects presented as:

- Innovative (try and solve entrenched problems?)
- Convivial (social, labour intensive, inclusive?)
- Educational (about learning and sharing skills)
- Therapeutic (mental well-being and physical exercise)
- Green/healthy (Low-input, fresh, veg, 'primary foods')
- Building relationships (networks of organisers, regular)
- Successful (they work)
- Alternatives (different)
- Etc... (Not just about food)

1. CSA - What is it?

CSA has a number of characteristics which may include:

- Shared risk between farmer and consumer (member)
- Advanced, or regular payment for food
- Co-operative/democratic management
- Contribution by members to labour
- Access to the farm for education, relaxation... etc.

Essentially, it is a way of planning cash-flow and cropping; and *may* renegotiate the distinction between farmer, landholder, customer – **this is a political/conceptual challenge in the EU.**

Current models include:

- Share in the harvest (a proportion of the harvest)
- Committed market (a minimum, or informal commitment)
- Support group around a farm (events, festivals, markets)
- Rent a tree (for fruit – can be non-local)
- Do the work yourself (labour for food)
- Shares or gifts in the farm capital
- Community owned enterprise (see shares above and later)

We'll discuss some of these. Main point is to think about breadth – one size will not fit all, all schemes are different.

North American and European divergence

In its modern form, CSA emerged in the US, under Trauger Groh. In general, the literature suggests the US and Europe have slightly different approaches:

North America	Europe
Peri-urban horticultural model prevails – access to markets	More mixed produce and locations (dairy, meat etc)
May be oppositional and linked to the construction of communities (cf. Lyson)	Some opposition; city self-provision; also supporting producers and connecting to the land (rural development and social solidarity)

Soil Association (2007) *Cultivating Communities – Reconnecting food and farming*. SA, Bristol.

Henderson, E. & Van En, R. (2007) *Sharing the Harvest – A citizen's guide to Community Supported Agriculture*. Chelsea Green Publishing Co, White River Jct.

CSA No 1 Stroud Community Agriculture

- Community Owned Enterprise

- Operates solely to further a set of principles (mission-led)
- 2 farmers paid wage c.£20k
- 46-acre organic mixed farm, 2 locations
- A rich community life around the farm

IPS members represent 200 households
£80,000 turnover (2009)*

*Ave. farm household income 2011: £63,000 (Defra, FBS 2011/12)



What is it for? What are their principles?

- To support organic and biodynamic agriculture.
- To pioneer new economic model and ensure the farmers have a decent livelihood.
- Low income shall not exclude anyone. Practical involvement on all levels encouraged.
- To be transparent in all affairs and make decisions on the basis of consensus.
- To offer opportunities for learning, therapy and re-connecting with the earth.
- To network with others to promote CSA to other communities and farms.
- To encourage members, in co-operation with the farmers, to use the farm for their individual and social activities and celebrations.

How does it work?

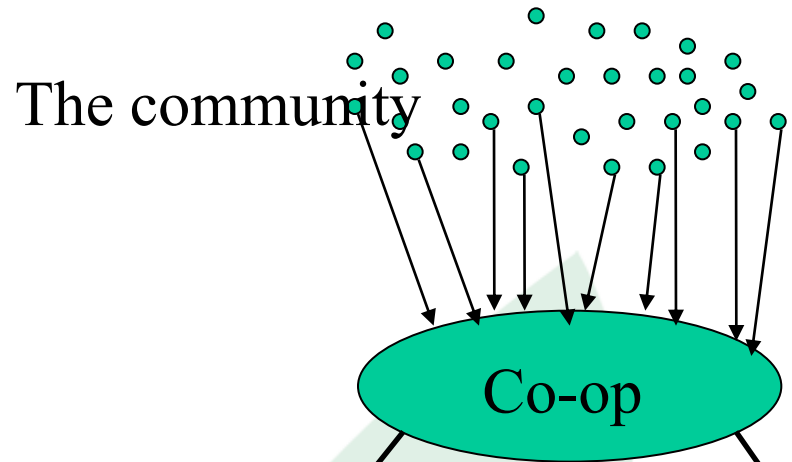
- Members pay £2 subscription, plus £8 per week for a vegetable share, which they collect.
- Members can buy meat from freezer, and eggs – honesty box and swap box.
- Members decide all matters, delegated to a core group, many volunteers.
- Farmers have delegated responsibility for farming.
- No compulsion for members to be active.
- Open access to the farm.
- Two rented sites, one very close to Stroud.

No 2: Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch CSA

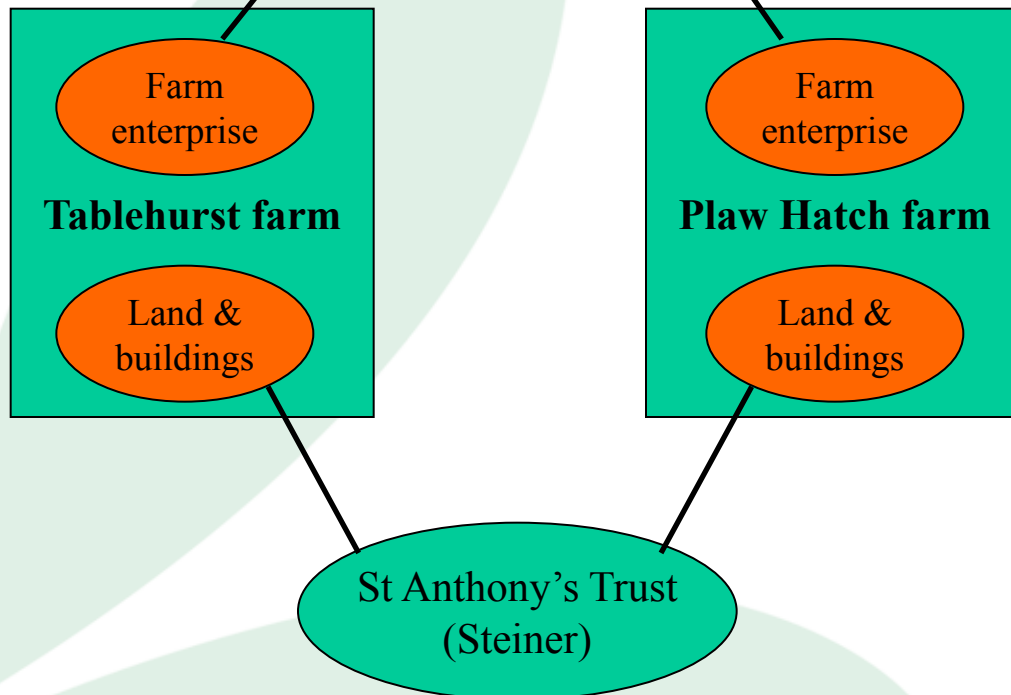
- Tablehurst (125 ha.) is arable and stock, Plaw Hatch (50 ha. acres) is dairy and horticulture
- Both are biodynamic. T'hurst was a loss-making college farm put up for sale in 1994. Local people raised capital to buy it.
- A co-op (IPS) owns both farms, with shares held by local members. Membership does not give entitlement to food.
- Together employ 20 f/t and 40 p/t and voluntary staff – inefficient or rural job creation? **Several staff live on the farm – community inside the farm & links to social care.**
- Annual turnover £1.3 million

Tablehurst members' meeting





Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch structure



Tablehurst & Plaw Hatch - Farming for farmers?

- Shares cost £100 and there are 600 members. No yield or trade.
- 1,000 customers a week in farm shop and bakery.
- Occasionally members are asked to provide loan capital – for buildings (incl. homes) or loans equipment (over 5 years)
- Total capital stock is c.£250k
- In exchange for that capital and that goodwill, farmers undertake to farm well. They do.
- Farmers appreciate the strong sense of community, faith in their professionalism and freedom from burden of inheritance. They farm for the future, not for their own wealth (it's fixed) or for their children.

Short film

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqLUasaHLuA>
- **Growing Communities in London**

Community development finance instruments



Buy your bit of Somerset



Securing Land for Food for the Future

You are invited to invest in a new Community Benefit Society which will make land available to communities across Somerset for food growing. You will be contributing to your children's and grandchildren's future by ensuring that there is land that's owned and managed by the community to help meet their own food needs. With the widespread disposal of public assets, such as the proposed sale of Somerset County Farms, there is an urgent need to acquire land that can be permanently dedicated to growing food in Somerset.

Somerset Land for Food community share issue

- People buy shares in CBS
- That investment provides capital for groups to buy land
- Land is rented by growers
- Rental income pays dividends (2%) and secures more land purchase
- Option for growers to buy after 5 years

More info: www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk

Group exercise: CSA critique

Divide into 2 groups. Think about the CSA story.

Group 1 – Consider general strengths of the CSA models we have described as you see them. What main benefits do they offer?

Group 2 – CSAs seem a good idea but they are not the mainstream of farming. Please provide 3-5 critical points about associated difficulties or weaknesses of CSA.

10 mins and 5 mins feedback per group.

Some critiques of CSA

- CSAs are marginal do not really change the food 'landscape'
- Their pricing policies may be exclusive for some citizens – often educated and wealthy
- They can be complex and hard work – relies on high degree of farmer and business skills
- Land is very expensive if you want to start up
- Farmers may appreciate the support of their communities but find the limited/fluctuating sales volumes hard to accommodate
- Potentially risky; have to eat what grows – choice?

Summary

- CSA takes many forms but most expect consumers to share production risks with farmers
- CSAs may be ideologically led but are businesses
- CSAs have made successful links with other alternative food projects – farmers' markets, organic box schemes and have produced innovative methods and financial models
- Potentially transferable? – housing and energy generation
- Community supported agriculture or agriculture supporting the community?

Some further reading

- Butler Flora, C. and Bregendahl, C. (2012) *Collaborative Community-supported Agriculture: Balancing Community Capitals for Producers and Consumers*. International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food Vol 19 No 3 pp. 329-346.
- DeLind, M. (1999) *Is This a Women's Movement? The Relationship to Gender of Community Supported Agriculture in Michigan*. Human Organisation Vol 58 No 2 pp. 190-200
- Franklin, A., Newton, J., and McEntee, J. (2011) *Moving beyond the alternative: sustainable communities, rural resilience and the mainstreaming of local food*. Local Environment, Vol. 16, No. 8, pp. 771-788.
- Guthman, J., Morris, A. and Allen, P (2006) *Squaring Farm Security in Two Types of Alternative Food Institutions*. Rural Sociology Vol 71, No 4, pp. 662-684
- Keech, D., Alldred, S. and Snow, R (2009) *An analysis of seven CSA enterprises*. Making Local Food Work Discussion Paper. Soil Association, Bristol.
- Schnell, S (2007) *Food with a farmer's face: CSA in the United States*. Geographical Review Vol 97 Iss 4, pp.550-564.