

Food, sustainability and alternative food networks

Session 3: Rural food social enterprises: CSAs, the 'third' sector and cultural landscapes

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Environmental SEs

Alter 2007 – Hybrid spectrum of SE



Mission motive
Stakeholder accountability
Income reinvested in social programmes or operations

Profit-making motive
Shareholder accountability
Profit redistributed to shareholders

SEs have a wide range of definitions and organisations forms (Teasdale 2010). Today I'll suggest that they are:

enterprises which trade principally to fund a 'social' mission, requiring them to balance a range of commercial and non-commercial objectives (Keech 2016).

Some SEs have primarily, or substantially environmental (as well as social?) goals.



The 'mission'



Pictures: Buechele/Dagenbeck; BUND.

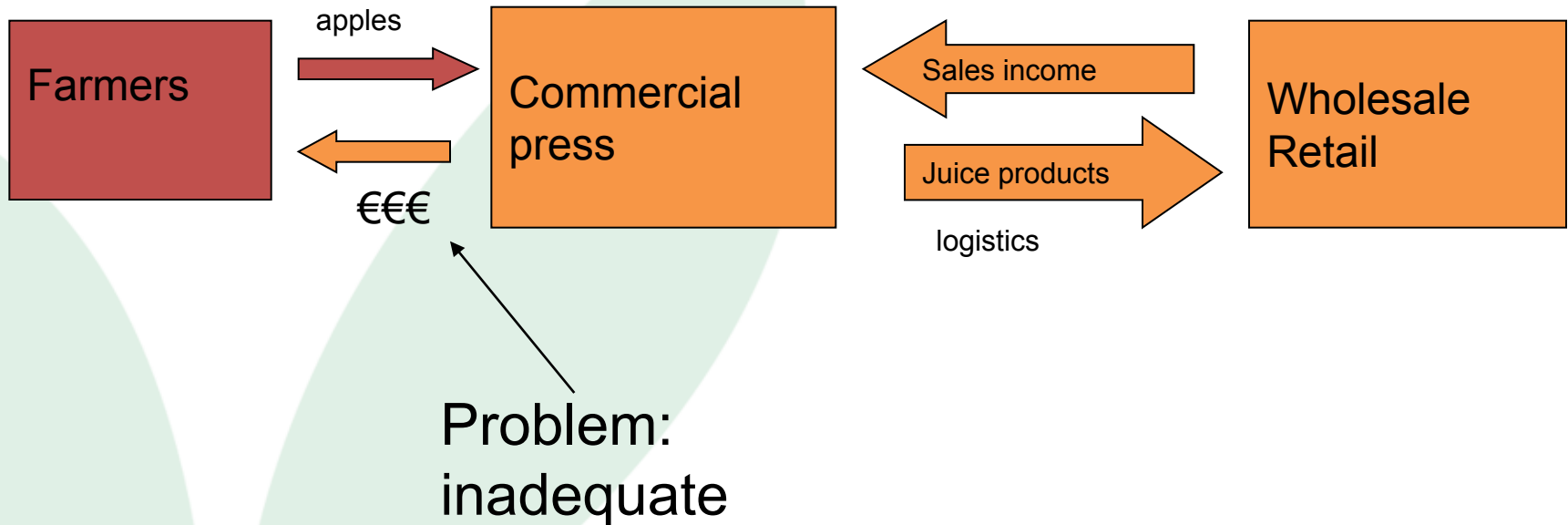
Decline of 70%
in area since
1960s.

Juice price is
around
€6/100kg.

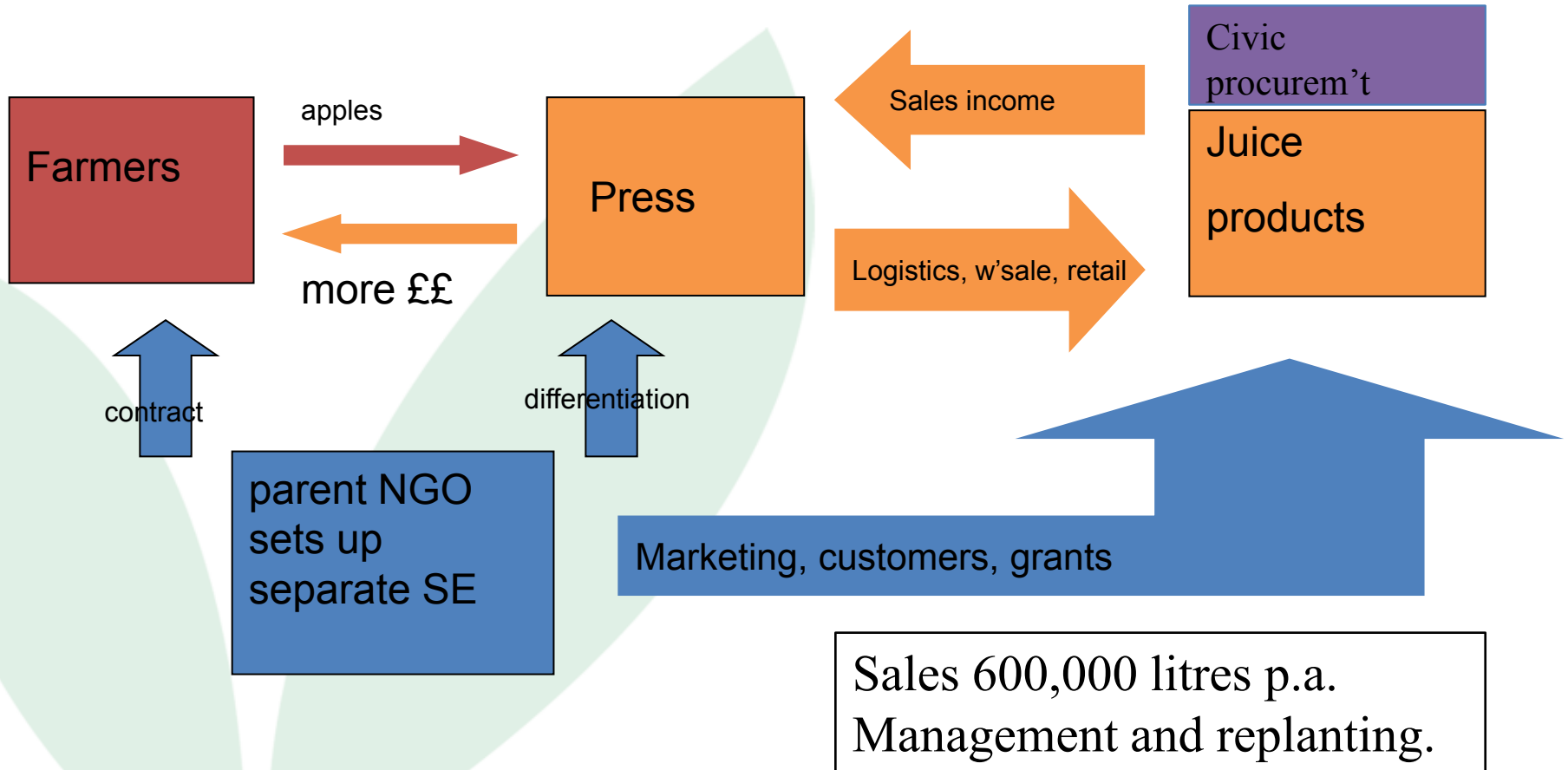
Result =
unviable.

Loss of precious
biodiveristy.

'Disorder' (Beckert 2007) in the juice market



Networked market



<https://www.bund-ravensburg.de/naturschutz-planung/streuobst-saft/> and
<https://www.nabu.de/natur-und-landschaft/landnutzung/streuobst/>

Local food movement emerges in UK from the **Third Sector**

- Negligible contribution in terms of food output but social innovation and new enterprise models - 'more than just the veg' films:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcGdJqrlmRM&list=PLGLfXygsryTD_r3poB2dXDvNpgj4KLPW_&index=2

The project created **195 jobs** and utilised **24,000 volunteers**.



89 tonnes of fruit and veg were produced



15,000 community gardens were created

Local Food

235,000 people attended events, teaching **99,000** people new skills



3,640 food bearing trees were planted

For every £1 invested in Local Food **£6-8** was returned to society



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.

<https://www.asociaceampi.cz/co-delame/komunitou-podporovane-zemedelstvi/>

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)

Main point is breadth – one size will not fit all, all schemes are different.

Stroud Community Agriculture - Community Owned Enterprise

- Operates solely to further a set of principles (mission-led)
 - F/T Farmer + grower paid c.£27,000 p.a. (CzKr 810,000), + 4 day worker, + 3 seasonal (summer staff)
 - 30 ha. organic mixed farm, 3 locations
 - IPS members represent 320 households
- £200,000 turnover (CzKr 6,000,000) (2021)*

*Ave. farm business profit for mixed farms in 2020 £22,711 (Farm Business Survey, England).

Films:

<https://www.stroudcommunityagriculture.org/>

<https://www.agricology.co.uk/file/chagfoods-community-supported-agriculture-csa-chagford-devon>



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 £3/10CzK subscription, plus £41/1200CzK per month 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.
- Three rented sites, one very close to Stroud town.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaTE9RkqLo8>

CSA - Some critical reflections

- Too small to affect food system performance
- Pricing policies exclusive for some citizens? CSAs used by the educated, wealthy and white (Gutman et al 2009, Gutman 2007)
- They can be complex and hard work – relies on high degree of farmer and business skills
- Land is 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
- Customers must manage limited choice, seasonality, neophobia (Hanson et al. 2018, 2017)
- The ‘othering’ of CSAs. Instead, integrate them within lower-risk agricultural new entry options and including small farms in AES would help a lot.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2018.1537869>



 Check for updates

Subscription to a Fresh Produce Delivery Program Increases Intake and Variety of Vegetables at no Added Cost to Customers

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ABSTRACT

Field Goods® is a subscription-based, weekly delivery service of fresh produce that operates year-round. To determine the impact of program subscription on diet quality, new customers were asked to complete a survey that included a fruit and vegetable semi-quantitative food frequency questionnaire at baseline and again at 3–5 months after their first purchase. Grocery shopping habits, satisfaction with their own diet and their family's diet were also assessed. Findings revealed a significant increase in satisfaction with program subscribers' diet quality and their family's diet quality ($P < 0.001$) at follow-up. Subscribers who ordered bags weekly ($n = 105$) reported consuming five more servings of vegetables per week compared to baseline ($P = 0.05$) and saving approximately \$20 per month. A weekly subscription to a fresh produce delivery program may be an effective intervention to improve vegetable intake and variety in adults without adding undue costs to participants.

KEYWORDS

Fruit and vegetables; vegetable variety; program evaluation; community supported agriculture; access to food; worksite wellness

Positive Summary CSA

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

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



The End: Na sdravi

Some further reading

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Franklin, A., Newton, J., and McEntee, J. (2011) *Moving beyond the alternative: sustainable communities, rural resilience and the mainstreaming of local food*. Local Environment, 16 (8): 771-788.

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Henderson, E. and Van Eyn, R. (2008) *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*. Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction.

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DeLind, M. (1999) *Is This a Women's Movement? The Relationship to Gender of Community Supported Agriculture in Michigan*. Human Organisation 58 (2): 190-200

Group exercise: CSA critique

Divide into 4 groups. Think about the CSA story.

Group 1 & 2 – Consider three key general strengths of the CSA models we have described as you see them. What main benefits do they offer?

Group 3 & 4 – 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.