



Community Shared Agriculture

People want to know their Farmer

Community Shared Agriculture

- ▶ CSA in Alberta Overview
- ▶ Who am I and why do I like CSA's
- ▶ The CSA Concept
- ▶ Types of CSA Shares
- ▶ Logistics of Managing a CSA
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ How to Get Started
- ▶ More Details (time permitting)



How does a CSA Work

- ▶ Customers Share in risks & rewards of season
- ▶ Pay in advance of planting season
- ▶ Opportunity to visit & work on farm
- ▶ Weekly deliveries of “in-season” vegetables
- ▶ Typically 12-18 weeks
- ▶ Typically CSA's are Organic, or Chemical Free
- ▶ There is no set rules how to set up a CSA, it is up to each individual farm to decide how to set up their CSA

CSA - Seasonality

- ▶ Grow and delivery vegetables within season
- ▶ Grow vegetables suited to climate
 - Educate Families how to eat locally and seasonally
 - Use Newsletters & Facebook to share recipes for weekly deliveries



Community Shared Agriculture

- ▶ 12,500 CSA farms in USA
- ▶ Largest CSA has 13,000 subscribers
- ▶ 450 CSA farms in Canada
- ▶ Only Alberta 20



Why I like CSA's

- ▶ Farmers Markets Are Saturated
- ▶ Takes less people to support a farm through a CSA than a Farmers Market
- ▶ Secure Revenue for season
- ▶ Complimented Existing Farm Operations
- ▶ More Sustainable System of Food Production
 - Environmentally
 - Financially
 - Socially



Types of Shares

- ▶ Summer Vegetable Shares 12-16 weeks
- ▶ Winter Storage Vegetable Shares bi-weekly
 - Full Shares – Families of 4-5
 - Half Shares – Families 2
- ▶ Grain Flour Shares
- ▶ Fruit Shares
- ▶ Egg Shares
- ▶ Protein Shares



CSA - Payment

- ▶ **Summer Vegetable Shares**
 - 5% at registration (starting December)
 - 45% March 15th (filling up greenhouse/starting in field)
 - 50% July 1st (prior to first delivery)
- ▶ **Winter Storage Vegetable Shares bi-weekly**
 - 10% deposit (August)
 - Remainder September 15th
- ▶ **Egg Shares**
 - Sell 6 months worth of eggs, full payment due before delivery

CSA - Logistics

- ▶ Deliver once each week 5:00pm – 7:00pm
 - Summer CSA 14 weeks starting early July
- ▶ Use Community Centre Parking lots to drop off
- ▶ Deliveries with less shares are at farmers markets
- ▶ $\frac{3}{4}$ ton panel van
 - 50 full shares
 - 20 full shares & \$800 Market Sales
- ▶ Deliveries
 - 1 person for just drop offs
 - 2 people with a market



What to send each delivery

First Delivery	Late August Delivery	Late September Delivery
.5kg Potatoes Bunch of radish 250g bag of greens Bag of Kale 6 Garlic scapes Bunch of green onions Bunch of herbs	.8kg Potatoes 1kg Carrots Bunch of Beets 6 mini cucumbers Garlic Kohlrabi Spinach Summer Squash Bunch of Herbs	1kg Potatoes 1kg Carrots Cabbage Garlic Onions .8kg Parsnips Bunch of herbs .5kg Jerusalem Artichoke Mixed Greens

Projected Delivery “1/2 share”

Full Shares receive Double

Aim to have 7-9 items available each week

How to Get Started

- ▶ Start Small 10-30 shares
- ▶ Plan what you would like to deliver each week
- ▶ Calculate how much seed you need and when to plant
- ▶ Organize packaging, transportation & **delivery locations**
- ▶ Promote and sell your shares
- ▶ Plant, Grow, Delivery, Evaluate

**Be clear and open about the risks of supporting
a farm through the CSA model**

What's the Downside

- ▶ It can be emotionally stressful
 - Families have invested in your crop and it is your job to deliver
- ▶ Must be prepared to manage the customers
 - Many people will have different expectations than what you are offering or place a different value on food than you do. They will let you know...
- ▶ May be difficult & slow to build customer base
- ▶ Major Crop Failure may have devastating effects on continued CSA Family Support

Presentation Mid-Point

- ▶ What is CSA
- ▶ Types of Shares
- ▶ Payment
- ▶ Delivery Logistics
- ▶ Drawbacks

- ▶ Getting Started
- ▶ Promotion
- ▶ Communication

- ▶ Scaling up a CSA – Revenue – Profit - Production
- ▶ Steps to be successful



How to Get Started - Promotion

- ▶ Farmers Market are a great place to get started
- ▶ Promote on your website/internet
- ▶ Link to csaalberta.com
- ▶ Slow Food – 3 groups across Alberta
- ▶ Newspapers – Pitch the CSA idea for news articles




CSA – Logistics – Managing Families

- ▶ Registration and payment is all online
 - E-commerce site
 - Paypal
- ▶ E-newsletter
 - Once a family registers (starting December) we send regular e-mails starting bi-weekly
 - increasing to twice weekly during delivery season
- ▶ Dedicated Facebook page for CSA Families
 - 2-4 post a week
- ▶ Use twitter to send up dates and reminders
- ▶ Respond to no less than 5 e-mails a day, up to 50
- ▶ **Cull Problem Share Families**
- ▶ Survey Families at end of season


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Survey Families at End of Season



Communication

- ▶ Keep share families up to date with
 - Everything good
 - Everything bad
 - Any growing troubles
 - Delayed crops
 - Disasters
 - Most definitely all successes
 - ▶ Facebook can be used to interact with families
 - Receive feedback, share receipies
 - ▶ E-newsletters are essential for communication
 - ▶ Communication makes families feel involved and apart of the farm
- 

CSA – Vegetable Production

- The idea of the CSA is to supply all of or the majority of the share families veggie needs
- 40+ types of veggies
- Decide how much of each to grow
- Project when they should be ready
- Hope to have enough each week for deliveries

4	Crop	Unit	Value (\$)	4-Jul	11-Jul	18-Jul	25-Jul	1-Aug	8-Aug	15-Aug	22-Aug	29-Aug	5-Sep	12-Sep	19-Sep	26-Sep	3-Oct	Total units	Total \$
5	Arugula	kg	\$2.50	0.5	0.5										0.5		0.5	2	\$5.00
6	Bean	kg	\$6.00						1			1		1				3	\$18.00
7	Beet	kg	\$3.00		1		1				1		1	1				5	\$15.00
8	Black Radish	kg	\$2.00															0	\$0.00
9	Bok Choy	kg	\$1.50		2		2							1			1	6	\$9.00
10	Broccoli	pc	\$1.75					2				2		2				6	\$10.50
11	Brussels Sprout	kg	\$5.00												2			2	\$10.00
12	Cabbage	pc	\$3.00									2					2	4	\$12.00
13	Carrot	kg	\$3.50		1		1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	22	\$77.00
14	Cauliflower	pc	\$2.00						2				2		2			6	\$12.00
15	Celeriac	pc	\$2.50											1				1	\$2.50
16	Celery	pc	\$2.00								1							1	\$2.00
17	Corn	pc	\$0.75							6	6	6						18	\$13.50
18	Cucumber	pc	\$1.25			2				2								4	\$5.00
19	Cucumber mini	kg	\$7.00		0.5		0.5		0.5		0.5							2	\$14.00
20	Eggplant	kg	\$3.00										1					1	\$3.00
21	Flour	kg	\$5.00			0.5												0.5	\$2.50
22	Flowers		\$4.00	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			2	12	\$48.00

CSA – Scale

- ▶ What Size is the Right Size?
 - Small vs Large
- ▶ Hobby Farm/Supplemental Income
 - 20 shares
- ▶ Farm Fresh to You – Napa Valley California
 - Farm Started in the 70's
 - Started CSA's in late 80's
 - 5000 families by 2005
 - Now supplies produce to 13000 families

CSA – Scale - Revenue

- ▶ First step is to decide how much revenue you need
 - Will the size of CSA you project pay a wage
 - Will the CSA be supplemental revenue
 - Do you have available labour
- ▶ Will the local market support your projected CSA

# of Shares	20	50	100
Revenue @ \$600/share	\$12000	\$30000	\$60000

CSA – Scale - Capital

▶ Tools

- Hoes/Forks
- Push planters
- Bagger

▶ Machinery

- Tractor/Cultivator-Rototiller
- Potato digger
- Seeder
- Harvesters

▶ Storage/Coolers



CSA – Scale - People



CSA – Scale - Profitability

- ▶ A Small CSA may be profitable, but not generate huge income
- ▶ A Large CSA may generate large revenue, but can struggle profit margin
- ▶ Obstacles to profitability
 - Maintaining efficiency with hired staff can be difficult
 - Limit to premium price for produce
 - Farms making a profit at premium organic prices have much higher scales of efficiency

Johns views How to make CSA's work

- ▶ Master the production on a small scale
- ▶ Build a core of CSA Families
- ▶ Cooperate with other farmers to share risk and work load & to increase products offered
- ▶ Look for innovative ways lowering cost of production
 - Build customized machinery
 - Search for used machinery
- ▶ Use a CSA to Diversify income



Why are Customers Attracted to CSA's?

People choose a CSA because they want a greater connection to the farm

They want to support local agriculture

They want to know their Farmer



Love What you Do!

People choose a CSA because they want a greater connection to the farm

They Continue with a CSA because they like the farmer!



Have Fun!

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