

Headingley Pig Co-operative: a community supported agriculture project.

Pilot: November 2008 – January 2009

As a result of its successful piloting of the Fowl Co-op, Headingley Development Trust is setting up a community supported agriculture (CSA) project with the focus on organic free range pork. This will be on a pilot basis and a small number of members are sought. The CSA project will be piloted in conjunction with Swillington Organic Farm, with which HDT already has a good relationship through the farmers' market. CSA is a growing movement and is a way of communities working closely with local farmers to ensure their livelihoods, as well as accessing a source of high quality produce they can trust.

A visit has been made to the farm to see how the pigs are reared (fully free range and organic). Arrangements and pricing have been discussed and agreed with Jo Cartwright who runs the farm. The pigs are slaughtered in a Soil Association licensed abattoir 2 miles from the farm .

It is proposed to pursue this venture on a pilot basis from November 08– January 09 October, and if it is successful on all sides to extend it to more members.

How the pilot will work:

- Members join an unincorporated food co-op under the auspices of HDT at a one-off joining cost of £5 to cover any administration and costs. The members will sign a short application form which will set out the terms of the fowl co-op.
- Each member pays £90 for which they receive per month for three months the following:
 - One leg joint
 - Diced pork 1 pack
 - Either 4 pork steaks or 4 pork chops or 4 gammon steaks (first there first choice basis)
 - One pack of sausages to be chosen from the selection on the stall
 - One pack of bacon.
- Each month November – January, the pig co-op members – or representatives - collect their pork from Jo at the farmers' market (2nd Saturday 9.00-12.30). Each member (or representative) will sign on collection. (Any uncollected packs of pork go back with Jo and people have to collect them from her out at Swillington by 16.00 the following day). Pork uncollected will be lost to the member.
- All Headingley pig co-op members and their families are invited to take part on a farm visit, provisionally Saturday 1st November.
- There will be a review of arrangements after three months and if successful both for HDT members and Swillington Organics the co-operative will be extended.

Why should we do this?

Pigs are some of the worst victims of factory farming and abusive practices. Members will have access to high pork, humanely reared and killed at a fair price, cutting out the middleman and the supermarket. Critically, members will know the provenance of their meat and will know that the scheme helps to give Jo Cartwright and her family a decent living and supports local organic farming. She can plan ahead and is assured of a market for her produce, while we get food we can trust.

Sharing the risks

The scheme is one of mutual benefit to the member and to Swillington Organic Farm. The other aspect of this is that we share the risks, so in the event of a major catastrophe, such as disease, then we will have to be prepared to lose out. The farm is unable to insure against this and we therefore cannot expect Jo to bear all the devastating loss. She has agreed that if disease were to affect supply she would refund 50% of the payment for the remaining period. This is a very fair solution. However, this eventuality is highly unlikely!

Next steps – membership

Numbers for this pilot CSA are strictly limited, so membership will be accepted on a first come first served basis.