



# Different models for Community Supported Agriculture

Our definition of CSA is a partnership between farmers and consumers where the risks and rewards of farming are shared. There are many different ways of arranging for 'the rewards and responsibilities of farming to be shared between consumers and farmers'. Each circumstance will generate an individual response.

There are several examples and case studies available from the Soil Association and below we have outlined some example models.

## **Do it yourselves**

The farm work, planning and costs are shared by the consumers, with no distinct farmer. Typically a small group of people, possibly neighbours, get together and arrange to share the costs and work of raising some animals, keeping laying hens, growing vegetables or planting an orchard and they share the produce between them. The arrangement is often informal and friendly.

## **A community owned business**

The community group own and control the farm business and the farm finance and may elect a board and employ a farmer, and own or rent land themselves. Community members may sign a membership agreement and commit to making some contribution and may then have voting rights in the business. They may or may not own dividend paying shares in the business.

## **A community group – farm partnership**

A separate farm business with a partnership agreement with a formal community group. The farm remains in private ownership and food production is controlled by the farmer. There is a separate organisation of community members who organise themselves and join a community group and agree to make some contribution. There is a partnership agreement between the community group and the farm which might cover how much food will be provided, what labour the community group will provide, whether the community can use the farm land, how much they will pay and whether they will pay up front. The community group may source food from more than one origin, eg may also buy in wholefoods, or may even be a community owned shop. The community group may buy a share in the overall harvest rather than an amount of food. The farm may have other markets.

### **Informal community support to a farm**

A farm runs its own production business but welcomes informal, often friendly support and involvement from customers in the form of voluntary labour, social events, farm walks, camping, etc

### **Institution led**

An institution which is neither a community group nor a farm sets up a CSA, usually for some social purpose, perhaps on council or institution owned land (eg a college, Groundwork, or council). The institution typically encourages community involvement but makes the proposal about how the project will run.

### **Multi –farm CSA**

A group of farms work together to supply a loose or formal community, and collectively provide offers of community involvement. The farms may specialise in different crops. They may be separate CSAs with a co-operative arrangement between them.

### **Food production by a defined community that exists for other purposes**

A community that already operates for other purposes undertakes to produce food as part of the community activity. They will typically be a commune that owns land, or a care provider who grows food for therapeutic purposes.

### **Community food production hosted by a farm business**

A community group, perhaps small and informal, produces food on a piece of land that is part of a larger farm business and is nursed or assisted by the farm. For example, a small box scheme renting a plot of land on a farm, with use of farm machinery, manure, and farming expertise. The host farm might be motivated by values but might also receive some benefit, eg increased custom to a farm shop, or a more committed market for other farm produce.