Frequently Asked Questions on CSA

How do I find out about land available in my area?

- Register with land agents
- Tell everyone you know and ask them to do the same
- Be clear what sort of land you want
- Get into farming networks, befriend a well networked farmer
- Ask organic farms directly
- Ask farms who already sell direct eg at farmers market
- Ask non private land owners eg parish councils, other local authorities, National Trust, Schools, private schools and hospitals, your local water board, Network Rail, housing associations.
- Look on the Landshare website.
- If you live in an urban area, consider setting up a decentralized farm CSA – approach garden owners. In many towns, the local Transition Town group is operating a Garden Share scheme, making under-used gardens available for growing. Do you have cityfarm or community garden in your area check the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens.

See Soil Association website for more information on land, tenancy and planning.

How do we recruit a farmer/ grower?

- Tell the Soil Association
- Tell the Biodynamic Association
- Tell other growers that you know
- Appoint an amateur grower and a very skilled consultant to support them
- Tell agricultural colleges
- Advertise on Gumtree, and other social networking sites.
- Talk to your local allotment associations.
- Get in touch with organizations like the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, Permaculture Association , Garden Organic, Organic Growers Alliance and the Community Land Advisory Service

How do I find a community group?

- You might need to create one. Start with a well publicised public meeting. help with setting up group through Co-op UK
- Approach existing groups eg transition, Friends of the Earth, Green Party, WI, city farms and community gardens, workplaces, schools (parents and staff) churches, play groups, reading clubs, sports club – any group which is already well-established and can communicate to a wide range of people.

- Find a core group of people willing to lead a process and people with community development skills

See Soil Association website for more information on building your membership.

How do we get set up funding?

- Seek a grant from local sources such as Council and also grant giving bodies Big Lottery Awards for All, UnLtd
- Start small and plan to make a surplus to invest
- Ask for donations
- Ask members to pay up front for food
- Find out about community investment

See Soil Association website for more information on funding

How do we attract people from low income/ under represented groups?

- Understand their needs and seek to meet those
- Work with members of those groups on your core group, involve people
- Reduce barriers to access eg cost, transport, language
- Reducing the cost of membership – this could be done through sponsored shares, 'share-a-share' or work share approaches – see Action Manual for more details…
- Invest time, build relationships
- Think about your messages and atmosphere, make it comfortable and accessible to all
- Apply to accept Healthy Start vouchers
- Link up with Credit Unions

See Soil Association website for more information on building your membership.

How do we decide what arrangement to have for our CSA?

- Be clear what each party wants
- Be clear what you are trying to achieve
- Make sure each party is properly rewarded for their contribution

How do we recruit members?

- Understand what people want
- Tell them how you meet their needs
- Get feedback and respond to it
- Expect to invest in promotion and publicity
- Make full use of existing networks, through parish /council newsletters, community forums and development trusts city farms and community gardens ,CVS/RCCs and other Voluntary sector infrastructure organizations to get your message out.

See Soil Association website for more information on building your membership.

Is there a similar project we can visit?

- CSAs are diverse, think about what sort of project you really want to see
- Look on SA website and ask directly if you can visit – but remember they are a working farm and you would probably more welcome on one of their work days.
- See SA events list for networking events (in 2012 only)

See Soil Association website for more information on CSA projects

What shall we grow? How many people can we feed?

- This depends a lot on your land, people and location
- The Soil Association has a cropping tool which gives a rough indication of quantities of veg you might produce from your land
- There are successful CSAs producing cheese, meat, veg, fruit, bees/honey, eggs, bread and wood

See Soil Association website for more information on crop planning.

How do I work out how much to charge?

- Compile a list of your estimated outgoings for the whole year – include all wages, equipment, consumables, insurance and depreciation on equipment – divide this by the number of shares you can supply to reach a figure for the cost of a share. You may then want to consider sliding scales for differing income levels, but remember your basic costs **must** be covered.

How do I stay in touch?

Sign up to:

- **CSA Facebook** : http://www.facebook.com/CSACommunityUK

- **Discussion forum**: http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture/forum

- **Join the Google Group**: https://accounts.google.com/ServiceLogin?service=groups2&passive=1209600&continue=http://groups.google.com/group/CSAnetworkUK&followup=http://groups.google.com/group/CSAnetworkUK

- **Is your CSA on the map?** Make sure your CSA is listed in : http://www.soilassociation.org/inyourarea

Read the CSA Action Manual : A Share in the Harvest