

Topic		Community supported agriculture on dairy farms
Socio-economic Resilience	Society friendly	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p><b>Community-supported agriculture (CSA)</b> is a contract based <b>partnership between farmers and consumers</b>. The basic idea is that a fixed circle of consumers finances a farm and thus ensures their own supply of sustainable and high-quality food. It is <b>an alternative socio-economic model of agriculture and food distribution that allows producers and consumers to share the risks of agriculture</b>. The members advance money to the farmer for seeds, wages and agricultural equipment, decide together with the farmer what and how to produce and in return receive their share of fruit, vegetables, dairy products and meat.</p>

### Advantages for the farmers

- **Planning security** - production for a fixed number of consumers.
- **Share the risk of agricultural production** with private households (e.g. in the case of a bad harvest due to weather).
- **Secure income, protected from changes in the market.**
- **Possible support from private households** with respect to distribution of products or when extra work on the farm needs to be done.
- Producers gain **more enjoyment from their work** because they know who they are growing the food for.
- Greater scope for further development of the farm -> e.g. more animal-friendly husbandry, sustainable cultivation.
- **Opportunity** for young farmers who have not inherited a farm.

### Advantages for the customers

- **Fresh, diverse, untreated, regional and seasonal products directly from the farm, no third party is involved.**
- **Transparency:** where, how, who grew the food at what cost.
- **Promote regional sustainability** -> build economically stable structures, local agriculture is strengthened.
- **Customers obtain knowledge about the production and cultivation of food and its care from a direct source.**
- **Participation** in the cultivation and development of the farm products.
- **Customers can express wishes with respect to products** allowing a more target-orientated production on the farm.

### Advantages for the environment and region

- **Minimal transport routes** -> lower energy consumption
- **Less waste through packaging**
- **Less food is thrown away** (no EU standards with respect to form and sizes of e.g. vegetables have to be respected)
- In a local cooperation there is higher focus on **preservation of locally adapted types of breeds, vegetables and fruits.**
- **The region can experience an economic stimulus as value creation increasingly remains in the region.**

### Quote of the farmer:

*“Community-supported agriculture frees us from the pressure of market prices and allows us to devote ourselves to farming that lives up to our responsibility towards employees, soil, animals and the landscape”*

### The four main types of CSAs:

- Farmer managed:** A farmer sets up and maintains a CSA, recruits subscribers and controls management of it.
- Shareholder managed:** Local residents set up a CSA and hire a farmer for production while shareholders control most management.
- Farmer cooperative:** Multiple farmers develop a CSA programme with a larger range of different products.
- Farmer-shareholder cooperative:** Farmers and local residents set up and cooperatively manage a CSA.

### Challenges and opportunities

The **time required for external communication, recruiting members and organizing food distribution should not be underestimated**. How a CSA develops depends not least on the commitment of its members.

**There are a number of legal and tax issues** to be clarified. **It is helpful to look at best practice examples and contact existing CSA initiatives** in order to benefit from their experiences and insights and then build an own sustainable model.



This photograph is borrowed from “CSA Schinkeler Höfe”, 1 of Germany’s 500 CSAs (<https://www.schinkeler-hoefe.de/>)

### Assessment of method

