



5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Short Supply Chains - Community Supported Agriculture

Gareth Davies





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



1. What are CSAs
2. Why CSAs
3. Two Horticultural Case Studies
4. CSA Network





5 Acre Community Farm

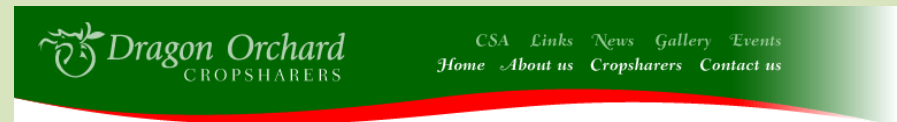


Canalside Community Food



What are CSAs

- CSAs are community supported agriculture schemes
- community-based organisations made up of farmers/growers (producers) and consumers
- a partnership between producers and consumers where the responsibilities, rewards and risks of farming are shared
- different types of CSA and in the UK include:
 - veg production
 - fruit production
 - poultry/egg production
 - meat production
 - and combinations of these!





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



What are CSAs

- can be traced back to Japan, 'teikei' groups ('putting the farmers' face on food')
- further developed in Europe (esp. biodynamic) as a reaction against the industrialisation of food production, which left consumers feeling increasingly detached from farmers and where their food was coming from
- taken to the US where neighbourhood CSA groups are common and popular and can be very large businesses
- re-imported to the UK in many different forms





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



What are CSAs

- many different CSA business models depending on the situation - but underlying idea the same
- consumers financially commit themselves to supporting a farm or food production system and providing a fair, secure income to the producers
- consumers (usually) receive
 - a share of the produce direct from the farm
 - opportunities to be more involved with the production
 - direct access to the land from where that food comes





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



What are CSAs

- often CSAs provide other less tangible benefits
 - involvement with a community of like minded individuals
 - training and learning opportunities (e.g. skills for employment)
 - social opportunities (tackling e.g. mental health and social isolation)
 - exercise and health (tackling e.g. obesity)
 - a guaranteed commitment to ecological stewardship (e.g. organic/ biodynamic)





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Why CSAs?

In the UK the CSA movement generally aims to:

- provide access to quality fresh, local food
- rebuild community around a farm or piece of land or enterprise

Other goals include:

- reducing financial risks for the producers by providing a committed 'market' for a farm
- increasing the quality of care given to land, plants and animals
- promoting alternative agricultural and ethical business models
- addressing land tenure issues
- addressing resource use issues
- reducing food losses



5 Acre Community Farm

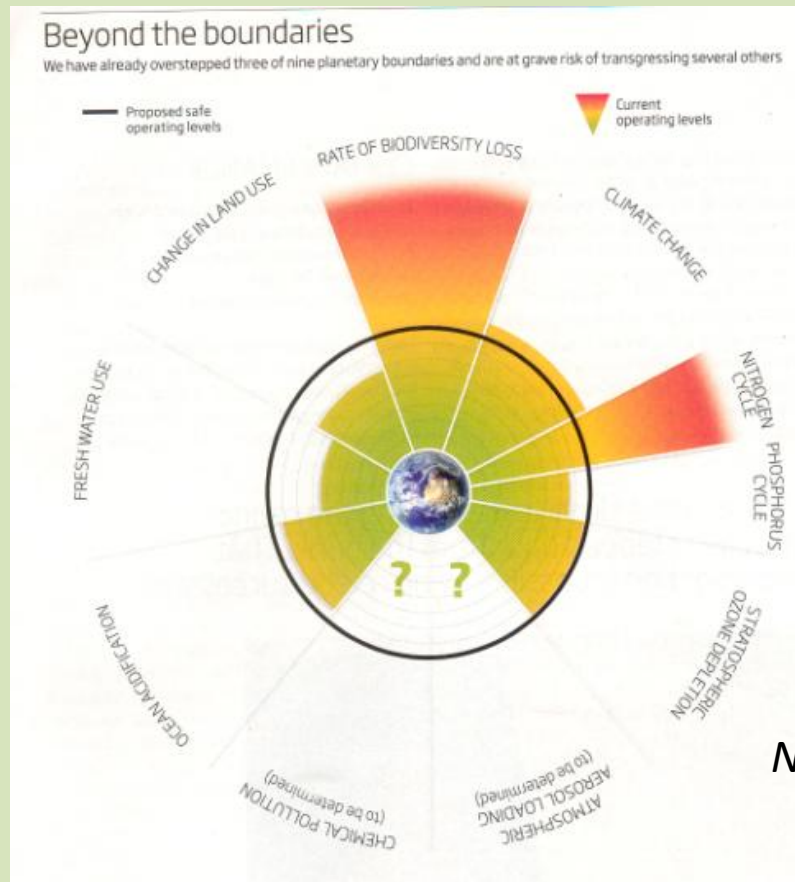


Canalside Community Food



Why CSAs?

.....are reaching environmental boundaries.....



New Scientist 27 Feb 2010



5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Why CSAs?

..... and depend on cheap oil in our present food system for both production and delivery

1 barrel oil = 181.7 litres petrol = 6 billion joules of heat

This is the amount of energy expended by 5 agricultural labourers working 12 hours a day for 365 days non stop.



*New Scientist 28
June 2008*



South Warwickshire
Local Food



5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Why CSAs?

A future sustainable food system is likely to be:

- **local**- main markets to be within 15 miles of production
- **fresh**- reduced storage capacity (especially cold) and limited shelf life of products
- **seasonal**- work with seasons and reduced inputs
- **organic**- crop rotation, green manures to fix N, recycling waste nutrients
- **more labour intensive**- fuel inputs replaced by labour

In short the aspirations of the CSA movement share much in common with the transition town movement and the wider ecological movement and what the future of agriculture will look like!



5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Two Horticultural CSAs

Canalside Community Food and Five Acre Community Farm

- share a vision to provide fresh, organic, seasonal, locally grown fruit and vegetables and to involve local people in the process of producing the food they eat





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Two Horticultural CSAs

Both CSAs produce organic veg and have added fruit to their production systems

- all veg is seasonal (though staples are stored)
- don't buy anything in
- offer membership with option to take a veg share (small, medium, large in one case, small and large in the other)
- members pick-up once a week on farm (choice times/days depending on farm)





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Two Horticultural CSAs

Growers undertake to

- supply reasonable veg share throughout the year
- organise work mornings/ volunteers

CSA committee/staff undertake to:

- provide four large socials per year
- help organise work mornings and social opportunities
- take care wages and company admin including AGM

Members undertake:

- to pay standing order and give two months notice to leave
- to provide 3 work shares of 3 hours per year
- to support the farm in any other ways they choose





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Two Horticultural CSAs

- pick-up and socials provide opportunities for communication about the farm and production
- seasonality a focus for growers and members- what's available now and what do we do with it!
- social events are linked with the time of year (e.g. planting onions, harvesting potatoes)





Two Horticultural CSAs

- keeping members directly engaged builds community aspect so growers feel their role in producing food is valued and appreciated (perhaps) avoiding becoming a standard 'box scheme', members make friends and contribute to a community enterprise
- (hopefully) leads to lower turn over of members and more loyal members which in turn leads to other advantages of csa (steady cash flow etc.....)
- as well as good veg!





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



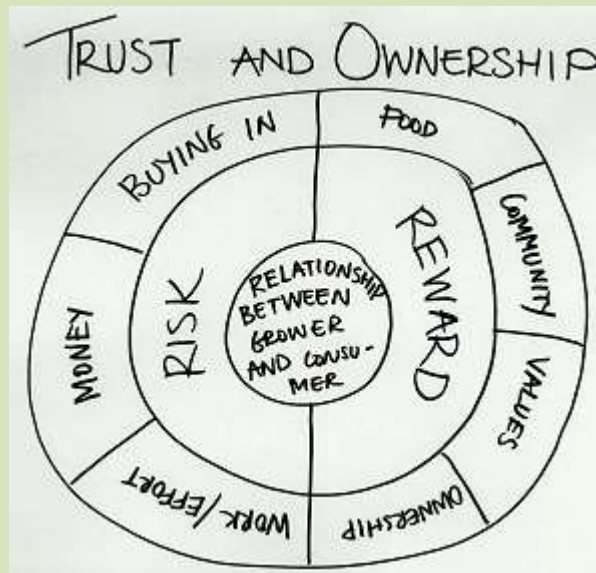
CSA Network UK

- CSA Network UK launched national network in December 2013
- aims to:
 - reconnect communities and farmers across the UK, creating a fairer, more open and sustainable food system
 - make it easier for people to find and join a CSA, and give real support to farmers, growers and communities who want to create a new scheme
 - provide practical information on running and marketing CSA to communities





- network is formed as a co-operative whose actions are defined by community supported agriculture groups
- memberships available as:
 - individual member at £25
 - CSA member, paying £1 per member of your group (minimum of £25 to a maximum fee of £200)
 - (larger) organisations can also join at £60.



For **Network Charter** go to:

<http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture/csanetworkuk>



5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



- aims to work as a number of regional hubs (Wales, West Midlands etc.) under the umbrella of a national network
- aims to employ a coordinator
- has already run a crowd funding project to set up a website as information hub including resources and case studies
- Facebook and Google group up and running
- a number of workshops and open days have already been attended, assisted or run





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



So why not.....





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



.... CSA network online.....



<https://www.facebook.com/CSACommunityUK/>

<http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture/csanetworkuk>

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/csanetworkuk>



5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



....or more information at



<http://www.fiveacrefarm.org.uk/>



<http://www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk/>





5 Acre Community Farm



Canalside Community Food



Thanks for listening