



CSA by the Numbers: Production Planning to Meet Your Financial and Market Goals



Developed by Ariel Agenbroad, University of Idaho Extension







Today's Topics

- Are you ready to start or grow a CSA?
- Setting CSA Goals for profit and yield
- What to grow, and how much
- Decision making
- Estimating seed and plant needs
- Scheduling production and successions
- Recordkeeping







What is CSA?

- <u>Community Supported Agriculture</u>
- "Subscription" farming
- The USDA defines CSA as a community of individuals pledging support to a farm operation
- Growers and consumers provide mutual support, sharing the risks and benefits of local food production







Is CSA right for you?

- ✓ I have experience in producing high quality, consistent products
- ✓ My community is interested in CSA
- ✓ There may be other CSAs in my community, but the market is not saturated
- ✓ I have enough land, water, and labor resources available to start and "grow" a CSA to meet my income goals







Know your limitations

- CSA size/profitability limited by:
 - Land
 - Labor and time
 - Water
 - Community interest
 - Production experience
 - Climate
 - Transportation







What are your financial goals?

What does it cost your farm to produce a share?

How many shares can you produce?







Common planning steps

- Set your season length
 What is practical and possible for you?
- Set your share price
 - What are your financial goals?
 - What does a share cost you to produce?
- How may shares can you provide?
 - What is your available labor, land and water?







Planning your production

- How much do people eat?
- How much do I plant to meet my goals?
- How much food can I fit on my farm?







Excel planning spreadsheets

- Originally developed as part of my graduate work, adapted over the years
- Predicts per capita vegetable needs from:
 - USDA vegetable consumption data from 1970s - present
 - Local, regional & national publications
 - Interviews with local growers who market through CSA







Needs paired with yield averages

- Common sources of information on yields per acre or per 100 ft. row
- Keep in mind, most averages are compiled from commercial operations in varying climates
- Organic yields may be up to 30% lower during transitional years
- Personal experience running a CSA farm







CSA Planning Table #1

How many CSA members do you expect?: What is your expected row length? (ft) How much % of a buffer do you want? You will need: 18 rows

100 10 (in whole numbers)

15

18 rows 100 ft long (for crops in this table)

rops Calculated by Pounds of Yield Required Per Person										
							Final Planned			
						Feet of Row per	Feet of Row for	100 foot rows per		
	Pounds per	Pounds per	Foot of Row	Pounds per 15	Feet of Row per	15 people WITH	15 people (+	15 people (based		
Vegetable	Person	Foot of Row	Per Person	people	15 people	10% BUFFER	10% buffer)	on final)		
Arugula	1.00	1.00	1.00	15.00	15.00	16.50	16.50	0.17		
Basil	0.35	0.25	1.40	5.25	21.00	23.10	23.10	0.23		
Beans	3	1.50	2.00	45.00	30.00	33.00	33.00	0.33		
Beets	5	1.00	5.00	75.00	75.00	82.50	82.50	0.83		
Bok Choy	3	0.75	4.00	45.00	60.00	66.00	66.00	0.66		
Broccoli	3	0.50	6.00	45.00	90.00	99.00	99.00	0.99		

- Table automatically recalculates when you change number of CSA members, bed row length, or buffer %.
- Can adjust all need and yield columns
- Buffer % for security or to allow for extra product for additional market outlets









CSA Planning Table #2

How many CSA members do you expect?: What is your expected row length? (ft) How much % of a buffer do you want? You will need: 3

	15	
	100	
	10	(in whole numbers)
 10		



3 rows 100 ft long (for crops in this table)

Crops Calculated by Plants	Required Per P	erson						
						Final Planned		
					Feet of Row per	Feet of Row for	100 foot rows	Yield (in
	Plants per	Plants per	Plants per 15	Feet of Row	15 people WITH	15 people (+	per 15 people	Pounds) per
Vegetable	Person	foot of row	people	per 15 people	10% BUFFER	10% buffer)	(based on final)	foot of row
Eggplant	4.00	1.50	60.00	40.00	46.00	46.00	0.46	50.00
Garlic	5.00	4.00	75.00	18.75	21.56	21.56	0.22	40.00
Parsley/similar herbs	2.00	1.33	30.00	22.50	25.88	25.88	0.26	37.50
Potatoes	12.50	1.00	187.50	187.50	206.25	206.25	2.06	125.00
Sweet Pepper	3.75	1.00	56.25	56.25	<mark>61.88</mark>	61.88	0.62	50.00
Hot Pepper	1.25	1.00	18.75	18.75	20.63	20.63	0.21	50.00
Tomato	2.50	1.80	37.50	20.83	22.92	22.92	0.23	150.00
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	20.00	4.80	300.00	62.45	311.67	311.67	3.12	







Planning bed feet

- Table will suggest estimated feet of row or number of 100-foot rows
- This can be linear, single rows or adjusted for raised beds or wide row plantings with multiple rows























Planning successive harvests

- Plant a single crop repeatedly
- Plant cultivars with varying maturation rates
- Repeat crops at beginning and end of season
- Listen to your customers are they getting what they need and want?







VEGETABLE	CULTIVAR(S)	SUCCESSIO N INTERVALS	DATE(S) TO TRANSPLANT	DATE(S) ACTUALLY TRANSPLAN TED	DATE(S) TO DIRECT SOV	DATE(S) ACTUALLY SOVN	FEET OF ROV (TOTA	PLANT SPACIN G	ROV SPACING	ESTIMATED FIRST HARVEST DATE	ACTUAL FIRST HARVEST DATE
Arugula											
Arugula											
Basil											
Basil											
Basil											
Bean, Bush											
Bean, Pole											
Beets											
Beets											
Bok Choy											
Broccoli											
Cabbage											
Cabbage											
Cabbage											
Cabbage											
Carrots											
Chard											
Chives											
Cilantro											
Collards											
Cucumber											
Cucumber											
Eggplant											
Eggplant											
Eggplant											
Kale											
Kale											
Lettuce (Heads)											
Lettuce (Mix)											
Leeks											
Onions											
Onions											
Onions											
Onions											
Online											







Ordering seed

- Ideally order only the seed you need for one season
- So many ways seed can be sold
- Figuring out how much seed you need can be a puzzle
- The following workbook can convert the seed needed for a 100-foot row to grams, ounces, or pounds by crop







Seed Estimate Worksheet



Vegetable	Number of 100 ft. Rows Planned	Quantity of Seed per 100 ft. of row (lbs)	Seed Required (lbs)	Quantity of Seed per 100 ft. of row (oz)	Seed Required (oz)	Quantity of Seed per 100 ft. of row (grams)	Seed Required (grams)
Arugula		0.022	0	0.35	0	9.9	0.0
Basil		0.001	0	0.017	0	0.5	0.0
Beans		0.500	0	8	0	226.8	0.0
Beets		0.063	0	1	0	28.4	0.0
Bok Choy		0.008	0	0.13	0	3.7	0.0
Broccoli		0.008	0	0.13	0	3.7	0.0
Cabbage		0.008	0	0.13	0	3.7	0.0
Carrots		0.031	0	0.5	0	14.2	0.0
Chard		0.031	0	0.5	0	14.2	0.0
Chives		0.002	0	0.035	0	1.0	0.0







HARVEST CHART

WEEK OF ____

VEGETABLE	CULTIVAR	# POUNDS	# BUNCHES	NOTES

COLLECTED BY ____

CSA RECORD SHEET WEEK OF

VEGETABLE	CULTIVAR	LBS/ PECK	BUNCHES/ PECK	LBS/ BUSHEL	BUNCHES/ BUSHEL

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Why keep records?

- Harvest records provide more accurate values of expected yield
- Use your own yield averages to adjust your planning tools
- Some crops may vastly underperform or exceed predicted values
- Cultivars may perform differently as well







Tracking share value

- At least a few times per season, estimate the value of your shares
- Base values on local market equivalents
- Are you charging too much? Too little? Just right?
- Would you earn more at market? Less?







More resources for Idaho

small



CONTENTS

CSA DEFINED
DIRECT MARKETING FARM PRODUCTS
IS CSA RIGHT FOR YOUR FARM?
GETTING STARTED/SUCCEEDING
RESOURCES

" an experienced market grower with	
excellent planning skills, low operational of	:05
a cooperative climate, and plenty of local	
interest could feasibly support from 50 to	
75 families or more on less than 5 acres fro	m
May through November and potentially	
make a small profit."	

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COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA): A marketing strategy for small acreage producers in Idaho

by Ariel Agenbroad, Cinda Williams, Lydia Clayton, and Robert Tripepi

As the line between urban and rural areas increasingly blurs, new and/or downsized farms of 1, 5, or 10 acres are common in many parts of Idaho. According to the 2007 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture, 49 percent of Idaho's farms and ranches comprise less than 50 acres. New and experienced growers seek to make their small acreages profitable while caring for the land and preserving quality of life. At the same time, many urban consumers' appetites and values are leading them to search for high quality fresh, local, organic or sustainably grown food and products in their communities.

One increasingly viable marketing option for sustainable small farms is a Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA program. CSA can connect farmers to consumers in a mutually beneficial partnership through a produce subscription or shareholder program.

WHAT IS CSA?

The USDA defines CSA as a community of individuals pledging support to a farm operation so that the land becomes "legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Members or shareholders of the farm or garden pledge or pay in advance to cover anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land. Members also share in risks, including poor harvest due to unfavorable weather or pests."

HISTORY AND GROWTH OF CSA

The CSA concept is believed to have originated in Japan in the 1970s in response to the growing industrialization of the Japanese food production and supply systems. A group of women concerned about the increase in food imports and the corresponding decrease in the farming population organized a direct growing and purchasing relationship between their group and local farms. This alternative distribution system, independent of conventional



"Farm fresh CSA products are typically available weekly, but also bi-monthly or monthly. Most Idaho CSAs provide farm season and many also provide fruit, flowers, eggs, meat, poultry, dairy products, honey, and so on. Individual CSAs are designed and consumers "



COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) IN IDAHO:

Seasonal eating week by week

CIS 1187



Community supported agriculture—CSA—is a collaborative, shared-risk approach to local food production that encourages consumers to purchase food products directly from producers in a partnership of mutual commitment and benefit.

Consumers pay up-front early in the year for a subscription or 'share' of the farm. As the name implies, 'Community Supported Agriculture' means that customers or shareholders support the farm by assuming some of the operating risk. They also share in its rewards with plentiful fresh-from-the-field produce throughout the season.

CSA originated in Europe and Japan in the 1960s by people concerned with the increase of imported foods; by 1985 the concept had arrived in the United States. CSAs have grown in popularity across North America, with current estimates suggesting more than 12,500 in operation throughout the United States. In 2012, Idaho had at least 60 farms offering CSA shares, everything from range-fed lambs or beef to a broad array of fruits and vegetables.

WHY SUPPORT CSA?

There are plenty of reasons one might choose CSA. First of all, for good health! The USDA urges American consumers to eat more fruits and vegetables and to choose a healthier, more varied mix of these foods.

CSA also benefits local family farms and regional food systems. Many feel that CSA significantly contributes to a strong local economy. In addition to receiving farm fresh products on a regular basis, members frequently receive the benefits of reconnecting with the land and participating directly in their local food system.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM A CSA?

Most Idaho CSAs provide farm fresh produce weekly throughout the local growing season. Many producers are diversifying their CSA options to also include fruit, flowers, eggs, meat, poultry, dairy products, honey, or other products. Some innovative producers are creating CSAs of various sizes for different sized families or offering monthly or bi-monthly deliveries rather than weekly. Individual CSA structures are designed to meet the needs of both the producer and consumers.







Idaho CSA Directory 2020

REGION 1

GREEN TREE NATURALS Sandpoint, ID (208)263-8957 www.gree

LONE MOUNTAIN FARM Rathdrum, ID (208)597-6086 www.lonemountainfarms.com

MOOSE MEADOW FARM Clark Fork, ID (208)304-6492 www.moo wornanic co

MOUNTAIN CLOUD FARM Clark Fork, ID (208)266-0303 www.mountaincloudfarm.com

REGION 2

DEEP ROOTS FARM Moscow, ID (406)461-8467 www.deep-roots-farm.com

HOMESTEADER FARMS Wilder, ID (208)761-5910 Facebook

HOLY GREEN GARDENS

REGION 3

Nampa, ID

(208)954-7883

fb.me/HolyG

NEW CHOICES FARM Emmett, ID (208)365-4658 www.newchoicesfarm.com PEACEFUL BELLY FARM Caldwell, ID

(208)345-8003

www.peacefulbelly.com WISSEL FARMS: HARVEST CLUB Nampa, ID (805)514-4958

www.facebook.com **REGION 4** BOISE BACKLOT FARMS Boise, ID boisebacklotfarms.

EARTHLY DELIGHTS FARM Boise, ID (208)284-3712 www.earthlydelightsfarm FIDDLERS GREEN FARM Boise, ID

(208)954-9332 www.fiddlerso ncsa.com FIELD GOOD FARMS

Boise, ID (208)908-8049 fb.me/fieldgoodsfa GLOBAL GARDENS

Boise, ID (208)336-4222 www.globalgardensboise.org

HARPER VALLEY RANCH Kuna, ID (208)371-5321 www.harpervalleyranch.com

HEN AND HARE Boise, ID (208)863-6949

henandhare.com

OHANA NO-TILL FARM Meridian, ID (208)322-9069 www.ohananotillfarm.

SPYGLASS GARDENS Meridian, ID (208)991-7317 www.spyglassgardens.com **REGION 5**

ONSEN FARM Buhl, ID

(208)720-0673 www.onsenfarm.com SQUASH BLOSSOM FARMS Bellevue, ID

(208)720-3542 www.squashbloss

THE COUNTRY GARDENS Hazelton, ID (208)751-9510

www.th TWIN FOWLS FARM

Buhl, ID (208) 450-3276 www.twinfowlsfarm.com

Idaho State Department of Agriculture P.O. Box 7249 • Bolse, Idaho 83707 • P: 208.332.8500 • F: 208.334.2170 • www.agri.idaho.gov

REGION 6

SWORE FARMS Pocatello, ID (208)238-7466 www.sworefarm

REGION 7

COSMIC APPLE GARDENS Victor ID (208)787-2082 www.cosmicapple.con

SHELLEY'S FRESH PRODUCE & CUT FLOWERS Shelley, ID (208)390-6140 www.shelle-

SWIFT RIVER FARM Salmon, ID (208)221-8390 www.swiftriverfarm.org

TETON FULL CIRCLE FARM Victor, ID (208)201-1593 www.tetonfullcirclefarm.org



Idaho CSA Directory

CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) are farms which allow consumers to purchase local food products directly from the producers by paying up-front early in the year for a subscription or "share" of produce from the farm. A CSA can be a single farm, or a group of farms and other agriculture businesses.

A subscription (or share) usually provides an assortment of seasonal produce throughout the year which can also vary based on the CSA. Depending on the CSA. you may pick up the produce yourself, or they may even deliver it to you.

Price for a produce CSA typically ranges from \$300 to \$600 per season and may vary from 12 weeks to 6 months depending on the growing season.

A CSA will try to sell all of their shares before they begin production, so the best time to subscribe or buy your share of a CSA tends to be late winter or early spring.

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Supported Agriculture Directory





updated April 2020





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Community





