


COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE * 101

A STEP-BY-STEP LOOK ON HOW SHARING THE RISKS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AMONG PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS CAN HELP FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE .



VALORIZATION IS KEY

Today, consumers have lost touch with where their food comes from. Through reconnecting with growers, they'd become more prone to understanding that a fair price is one based on what the grower invested rather than the norm-compatibility of their yield. Community supported Agriculture (CSA) is a way to genuinely reward farmers for good agricultural practice, and protect them against the market that currently pressures them into soil exploitation. Once consumers take a step towards sharing the responsibility of the soil that feeds them and commit to rendering farms stable and independent, the first step has been made towards a transparent economy where agriculture regains its cultural value.



THE BIG PICTURE: WHY SMALL FARMS INCREASE RESILIENCE

Worldwide small-scale farmers feed the majority of the world with a quarter of the farmland, but their livelihoods are in danger everywhere. The *IPCC* reminds us that community resilience to climate change is inevitably tied to everyone's collaboration in food production.* The consequences of a bad harvest should never be carried by the farmer alone. A short supply chain ensures consumers don't forget that their food isn't made in the supermarkets, but that it's based on an agreement with nature that we're currently violating. CSA starts a conversation about what concerns us all: **responsible consumption.**




HOW PRODUCERS BENEFIT

The farmer gains planning security by being independent of market constraints, becoming motivated as they now know whom they work for. They might diversify their production by taking up old forgotten crops after being able to check that there is demand from their clients, with whom they share the responsibility for their livelihood, soil, and potential consequences of bad harvest due to harsher weather conditions.



HOW CONSUMERS BENEFIT



A study showed that shoppers have more than 3 times as many social and informational interactions at Farmers' markets than they do at supermarkets. ** Consumers would buy nutritious, seasonal, and fresh food with a better conscience and would benefit from knowing exactly where it comes from, while taking a stand to prove that a more solidaristic structure IS economically viable. Also, they get access to spaces of innovative education, learn about how food is produced and how that is evolving and could be improved.



HOW THIS BUILDS A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

CSA is characterized by transparency, self-sustenance, peace and love. Only 6% of Irish people consume the daily recommended intake of fruit and veg. CSA could involve people in a way that is bound to make them realize the value (and tastiness) of sustainably sourced vegetables.

Information source

*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC (2021)

** www.community-wealth.org

*Community Supported Agriculture based on shared risks of agricultural production among producers and consumers

HOW CATERING CAN INCORPORATE CSA*

A STEP-BY-STEP LOOK ON HOW TRINITY CAN SUPPORT SMALL IRISH FARMERS



A CONVERSATION WITH FARMER COOP'S



Currently, Trinity's canteen *The Buttery* has big food company suppliers that entail huge favor margins. Growers rarely have accurate representation and little advocacy or decision power regarding the supply chain. Trinity's procurement could start talking to farm co-ops delivering to Food Hubs to arrange a supply without go-betweens. Initially, it would have to be discussed how many growers can supply what and how much produce during harvest seasons. Once the scope of what is realistic is determined (e.g: 70% of vegetable supply from farm co-ops during spring months), a trial period can be launched.



A CONVERSATION WITH STUDENTS AND STAFF



Initial conversations between farmers and procurement could be extended to zoom-calls with cooks, staff, and students. How to adapt and reform the meal plan could be collectively planned, to better incorporate Irish seasonal vegetables, and reduce waste on all levels (e.g: arrange for surplus produce to still be used to make soup). This would be a huge added value to the Buttery and would prove that they listen to students' suggestions and actually change accordingly.



THE BUTTERY'S POWER TO EMPOWER

By contract, Trinity would pay a fixed amount based on estimates of agricultural production. With Trinity as a sort of anchor client, the grower doesn't see their livelihood endangered by increasingly harsher climate conditions, much rather they gain unprecedented independence from market constraints, which allows them to regain control over their own work. Trinity secures the grower financially and commits to value their work regardless of external mitigating conditions.



BENEFITS FOR COLLEGE FOOD-OUTLETS



Sourcing locally would contribute hugely to a cut in college greenhouse gas emissions, and surveys in Trinity have shown that Buttery customers would welcome the most eco-friendly meal becoming the norm. Catering staff would be glad to see new varieties of Irish vegetables to work with and use in new meals. It would be a great learning experience for the college to "relearn" how diverse Irish vegetables can be, what's in the season when, and ultimately how easy it is to adopt a greener diet.



REVISE AND ADAPT

After a trial period, Trinity revises the initial contract with the farmers' co-op: each partner voices how they think the contract could become fairer, whether they see a possibility for greater efficiency, and which ways they would see it gradually extended. Ultimately, it would be amazing if during harvest season 10 small farmers would directly supply Trinity with all the fruit and veg they need!

Information source
PCC 2021

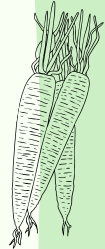
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INCREASING ACCESS TO GOOD VEGETABLES THROUGH CSA*

A STEP-BY-STEP LOOK ON HOW TRINITY CAN SUPPORT
SMALL IRISH FARMERS ALONGSIDE ITS STUDENTS

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Huge farms practicing monoculture dominate the vegetable market and provide cheap choices in supermarkets. They currently define the norm so that anyone who actually wants sustainable produce finds them often inaccessible AND unaffordable. It takes a lot of effort to continuously be conscious about our consumer responsibility, particularly as a student on a limited budget.



WHY A FARMERS MARKET AND VEGGIE-BOX SCHEME MIGHT BE A SOLUTION

Farmers' markets keep local economies alive and those involved are generally very concerned about preserving soil quality. They do great work that a lot of students are oblivious of. The farmers' market and veggie-box scheme would allow them to retrace the origin of their food. The box would be delivered weekly and could be shared among flats, the produce would be right on campus and open to anybody. People wouldn't have to go out of their way anymore, the sustainable option would simply come to them.



MAKING SUSTAINABLE NORMAL

Once students and staff have heard about and talked to farmers coming in, they're incentivized to rethink their current shopping habits. It would be very convenient for students to grab groceries after class. They'd discover all there is to cook with Irish vegetables, and would most likely be positively surprised about the affordability. They would engage in a learning experience about the real value of food, learn to know what's in season, and have a good time cooking it with their family or flatmates...



WHAT THE GROWERS GET OUT OF THIS

They'll be sure that all of their products will be sold, the veggie-box consumer would be "anchor clients" that would secure their income for the entire season. They would be under less pressure to supply and would get more enjoyment out of applying good agricultural practice in the bounds of the environment. The interaction with the consumer valorizes their work. They can receive questions or feedback and depend less on subsidies, ultimately the community support makes them more resilient both against market fluctuations and climate change.



TRINITY AS A LEADING EXAMPLE

By taking this communal effort to increase availability and accessibility, Trinity would be creating additional value to life on campus and college accommodation. It would recognize and respond to the struggle of many students to live sustainably while in college. It would even go beyond and make it easier than living unsustainably!

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