

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Community Supported Agriculture Project 2008 Season

What is the UK-CSA Project?

The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Program is operating a Community Supported Agriculture Project (CSA). This project is an integral part of the Sustainable Agriculture Undergraduate Curriculum and links local community members (shareholders) with the Organic Farming Section located at the UK Horticulture Research Farm.

The Program's CSA project is not a commercial farm and is not managed for profit. The Program operates the CSA as a working classroom where UK students and interested community members come together to learn the fundamentals of sustainable agricultural production and marketing. The CSA will also serve as a demonstration project for farmers looking to establish similar operations.

All financial proceeds from the sale of CSA shares support the production of food during the growing season and student educational activities at the Horticulture Research Farm.

You can learn more about the UK Sustainable Agriculture Program at:

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/SustainableAgCurriculum/index.html>

What is Community Supported Agriculture?

Robyn Van En helped introduce the CSA concept to the United States and described it as "food producers + food consumers + annual commitment to one another = CSA and untold possibilities."

Food production and consumption have largely become impersonal and anonymous actions. Personal relationships are important in a CSA and there is actually a web of relationships that exists. There is the relationship of the farmer with the shareholder, shareholders with each other, and the relationship of everyone with the Land. These relationships develop community and nurture a deeper appreciation for food production.

CSA is a *mutual* commitment and partnership between a farm and supportive members of the community. The farmer(s) provide the wisdom and labor needed to nurture a harvest of produce, and shareholders provide adequate financial support needed for the farm to operate in an economically sustainable manner. The farm benefits from having a reliable market at an equitable price, and shareholders receive fresh, local, and affordable produce grown by people they know and trust.

How does a Community Supported Agriculture Project work?

The CSA is essentially a season-long contract between shareholders and the farm. The shareholders commit to a pre-determined price for an equivalent portion, or share, of the farm's total production. The farm harvests vegetables, herbs, and flowers at the peak of readiness, divides them into shares, and delivers them to shareholders at a central distribution point on a periodic (usually weekly) basis. The farm selects seed varieties and coordinates planting dates to provide, with Mother Nature's cooperation, abundant, diverse, and fantastically flavorful shares. Shareholders know that they are receiving premium seasonal produce from a local farm in a conveniently packaged share at a fair price. It's all of the pleasures of the farmers market, but with all your produce ready when you arrive!

Who is eligible to join the UK Sustainable Agriculture Program's CSA?

All members of the UK community including students, staff, and faculty are welcome to become shareholders in the Program's CSA. *Shares will be sold on a first come, first served basis.*

When does the season begin and how long does it last?

This year's season will be 26 weeks. The first share distribution date is scheduled for Thursday May 15th and the last will take place on Thursday, October 30th.

How much does it cost to join the CSA and how do I join?

The cost of a share is the product of the average amount of produce in the share and the number of weeks for which the season lasts. The cost of a share includes the once a week share for 26 weeks and access to u-pick crops at the farm. For non-students the cost of a share is \$546. Students receive a 25% discount for a share cost of \$411. The CSA Program is committed to engaging students, and the reduced share prices offered to students are in recognition of their limited financial resources. To join the CSA, you must fill out the CSA registration form and mail it, along with your payment to the CSA manager. Additional instructions are in the CSA registration form. To receive the form e-mail ben.abell@uky.edu.

Can I pay for a share under an installment arrangement?

Although full payment at the start of the season is encouraged and appreciated, you may spread your payments over three equal payments during the season. The initial payment is

due immediately to reserve your share, the next on May 1st, and the final payment on July 1st. For non-students, \$182 per payment. For students, \$137 per payment. Please remember, prompt payment of installments is necessary for the farm to operate.

What can I expect to find in a weekly share?

Because shares contain the freshest produce available and because there is no way to precisely predict growing conditions during a season, we won't know the actual content of a share until it's time for the weekly harvest. That being said, the **average** weekly share will be: a variety of 8-12 items, 3/4 bushel in size, weighing between 6-16 lbs (avg. 12 lbs). This amount of produce should provide for a small family (2-3) of non-vegetarians. Based on a typical growing season, you should expect to find these items in your share:

May: salad mix, broccoli, radishes, cabbage, spinach, Chinese greens

June: beets, broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, flowers, lettuce, peas, spinach

July: basil, beets, broccoli, corn, carrots, tomatoes, cauliflower, greens, melons, onions, garlic, eggplant, bell peppers, hot peppers, yellow squash and zucchini

August: basil, beans, beets, broccoli, carrots, corn, melons, onions, garlic, bell peppers, hot peppers, thyme, rosemary, yellow squash and zucchini

September: salad mix, basil, beets, broccoli, corn, carrots, melons, onions, potatoes, snow and snap peas, tomatoes, yellow squash and zucchini

October: salad mix, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, onions, potatoes, spinach, yellow squash and zucchini

*Please keep in mind that a core principle of the CSA concept is the shared commitment between the farm and shareholders. This means that shareholders not only share in the bounty of the farm but also in potential problems that may arise during the growing season. For example, an extended period of drought or a serious insect infestation may mean that the quantities of certain produce are reduced or even eliminated from a weekly share. *The farm production team will attempt all reasonable strategies to avoid such situations but shareholders should be aware that there are no "refunds" or "rebates" of share prices.**

In addition to your share of produce, you will also receive a periodic flier containing seasonal recipes, updates on local food issues, and information about the UK Sustainable Agriculture Program.

Where do I pick-up my share and what happens if it rains?

Shareholders can pick-up their shares in the parking lot of the E.S. Good Barn between 4:00 pm and 6:00 p.m. every Thursday during the season. This is the only time that weekly shares will be available and produce will not be stored by for later distribution.

Share distribution will take place, *rain or shine*, unless genuinely catastrophic weather or another natural disaster intercedes. You will be notified in advance (preferably through e-mail) should distribution be cancelled.

What does organic certification mean?

Organic certification provides independent verification that all produce from a farm has been raised and handled in compliance with the USDA organic standards. There is much more involved in organic farming than the common misunderstanding that it means “no pesticides were used”.

The USDA defines an organic farm as one that responds to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Organic production is a pro-active, environmentally sensitive approach to farming that builds a healthy, vibrant soil as the foundation for crop and livestock vitality. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture conducts organic certification for the CSA.

To learn more about Organic farming, visit the **ATTRA resource page**:
<http://www.attra.org/organic.html#overview>

Want to learn more about Community Supported Agriculture?

Please visit these websites:

The Robyn Van En Center at Wilson College
<http://www.wilson.edu/wilson/asp/content.asp?id=804>

Local Harvest
<http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>

Community Supported Agriculture, an ATTRA publication
<http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/summaries/csa.html>