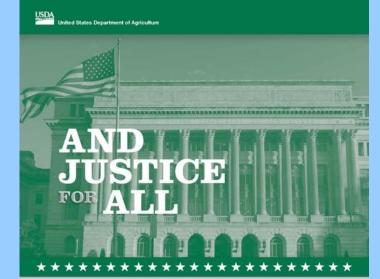
Community Supported Agriculture in Michigan

Garrett Ziegler, MSU Extension Community Food Systems Educator

2020 MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar – February 12th



MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.



accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race. color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, and American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD 3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;

program.intake@usda.gov. Form AD 475 A. Annexed Poster/Revised July 2019

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

onforme a la ley federal y las políticas y regulaciones de derechos civiles del Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA), esta institución tiene prohibido discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, discapacidad, venganza o represalia por actividades realizadas en el pasado relacionadas con los derechos civiles ino todos los principios de prohibición aplican a todos los programas).

La información del programa puede estar disponible en otros idiomas además del inglés. Las personas con discapacidades que requieran medios de comunicación alternativos para obtener información sobre el programa (por ejemplo, Braille, letra agrandada, grabación de audio y lenguaje de señas americano) deben comunicarse con la agencia estatal o local responsable que administra el programa o con el TARGET Center del USDA al (202) 720-2600 (voz y TTY) o comunicarse con el USDA a través del Servicio Federal de Transmisión de Información al (800) 877-8339.

Para presentar una que ja por discriminación en el programa, el reclamante debe completar un formulario AD 3027, Formulario de queja por discriminación del programa del USDA, que se puede obtener en linea, en cualquier oficina del USDA, llamando al (866) 632-9992. o escribiendo una carta dirigida al USDA. La carta debe contener el nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del reclamante, y una descripción escrita de la supuesta acción discriminatoria con suficiente detalle para informar al Subsecretario de Derechos Civiles (ASCR. por sus siglas en inglés) sobre la naturaleza y la fecha de la presunta violación de los derechos civiles. La carta o el formulario AD-3027 completado debe enviarse al USDA por medio de:

correo postal: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; o'

(833) 256-1665 o' (202) 690-7442; correo electrónico: program intake@usda.gov.

Esta institución ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

Presentation Outline

- The Michigan Statewide CSA Network
- Statewide CSA Farmer Survey
 - Results
 - Conclusions
- National CSA Innovation Network
- CSA Outreach and Marketing Strategies
 - CSAs and Food Access
 - Worksite CSAs
 - Communicating the value of your CSA



Michigan Statewide CSA Network

- Formed in 2016
- Have met regularly for the last 3+ years
- Originally supported and facilitated by Michigan Food and Farming Systems and Department of Health and Human Services
- Key goals:
 - Better understand CSA farms in MI
 - Increase collaboration across organizations supporting CSA farms
 - Develop and share models for increased CSA access

Michigan Statewide CSA Network Members

















Michigan Statewide CSA Survey

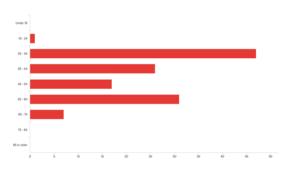
- Network Identified a need to better understand current "situation" of CSA farmers in MI
- Developed using input from several previously utilized CSA surveys from around the country
- Input from network partners and farmers
- Launched in spring 2018
- Distributed through statewide listservs, local contacts (MSUE), farm organizations
- Collected data through early summer 2018



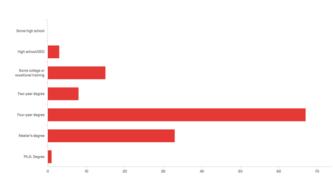


Results – Who are CSA Farmers in MI?

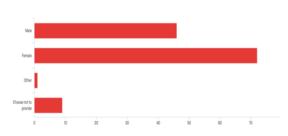




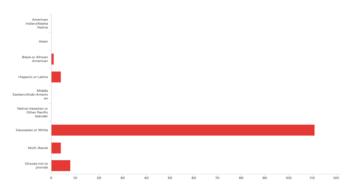
Q6 - What is the highest level of education you have completed?



Q9 - Please specify your gender:

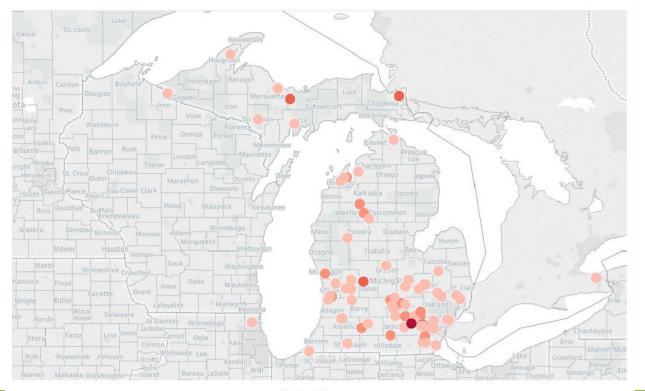


Q8 - Please indicate your race/ethnicity:





Map of 2018 CSA Survey Responses (MI County Level)



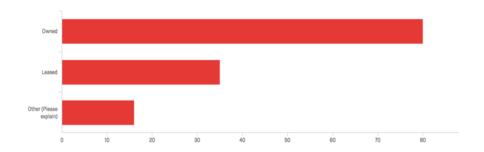


Results – What do CSA Farms in MI look like?

It varies....a lot!



Q12 - Do you own or lease the farmland you are growing on? (you can choose both)





Results – What do CSA programs in MI look like?

- Price of full share ranged from \$0-\$1200, with average being \$523
- 10 farms indicated they offer work share CSAs
- Definition of a standard share = 8-12 items (or 10lbs) with a value of \$20-\$30/week
- 63% of respondents offer share "add-ons"

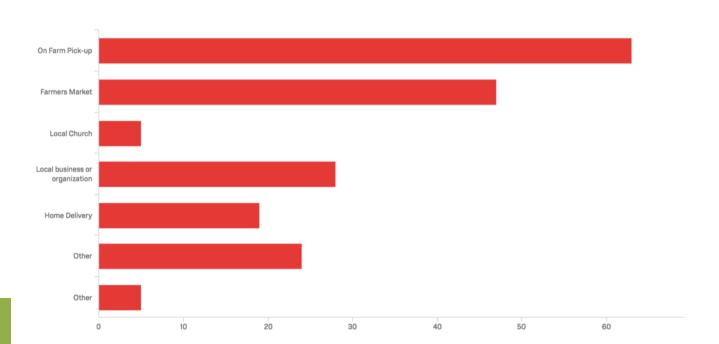




Results – What do CSA Programs in MI look like?

Q19 - Tell us a little more about your CSA distribution. Select all drop-off/pick-up locations

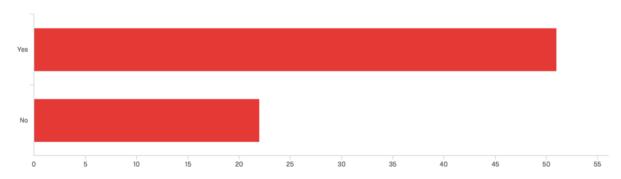
that your farm has.



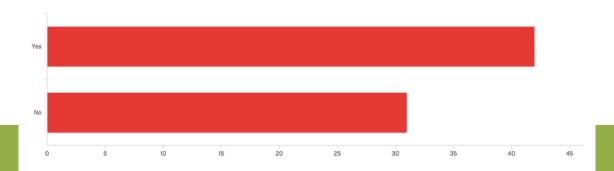


Results – How do CSA farmers view business viability?

Q31 - Do you consider your farm to be a viable business?



Q35 - Does your farm/CSA program depend on off-farm income for support?





Results – How do CSA farmers view business viability?

Farmer Financial Satisfaction:

- 56% somewhat or extremely satisfied with financial ability to meet annual operating costs, 31% somewhat or extremely dissatisfied
- 36% satisfied with farmer/owner compensation, 42% dissatisfied
- 24% satisfied with financial security including health insurance, retirement, 58% dissatisfied



Michigan CSA Survey Results – exploring CSA Labor

- Seasonal farm labor more common than year round labor
 - Year round employment also add seasonal employees
 - Difficulty with incentivizing return for seasonal farm labor
- Few took advantage of interns, apprentices or woofers
- Roughly 25% of farmers responding to labor questions used CSA Workshares for part of their labor
 - 2-25 workshares
 - Discounted labor cost, earned income for Market share,



CSA Labor – less common practices

- Many don't consider themselves paid labor
- Using contracted crews for occasional large harvests
- Non-traditional (or traditional) workers High school volunteers, 4H/FFA clubs, children
- Groups of volunteers nonprofit status allows local businesses and organizations to host volunteer days on farm, other community focused events
 - Volunteers thrive on easy, monotonous, large scale tasks – not for highly specialized labor
 - Important to assess cost v benefits



Primary labor challenges

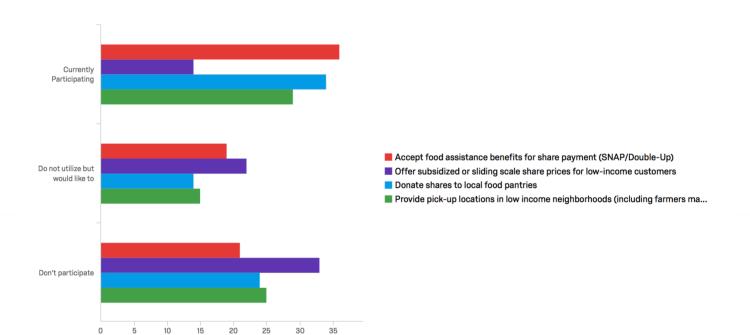
- Inconsistent pool of skilled labor
- Difficulty retaining quality labor from year to year
- Creating pathways for growth for labor (education, promotion, increased pay, side hustles)



Results – Working to improve food access through CSAs

Q25 - Please select any strategies that your farm utilizes to improve food access in your

community.

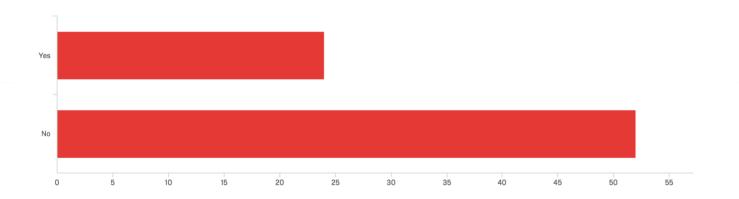


Results – Working to improve food access through CSAs

Opportunities exist to greater connect CSA Farms and food access organizations!

Q27 - Are you currently working with any external organizations to develop strategies for

food access through CSA's (Ex. Growers Groups, Non-profits, Extension, etc.).



Broad Survey Conclusions

- There are many diverse CSA farms in Michigan working at all sizes and scales.
- Opportunities exist for organizations like non-profits, extension and other community organizations to connect CSA farms to work on food access.
- Farmers use a variety of definitions for farm viability and there are a variety of goals that farmers have for their CSAs. This is reflected in their labor practices.
- Farmers see a need to grow the pie of local eaters and understand they are working in a very competitive marketplace that requires large changes in the way we eat.



CSA Innovation Network Purpose



Photo by: NOFA-NY

The CSA Innovation Network is a resource base of programs and tools built by and for individuals and organizations supporting Community Supported Agriculture development. The purpose of the CSA-IN is to generate and facilitate idea sharing across the CSA community and to build awareness of the value of CSA to consumers.



CSA-IN Participating Organizations





























Linking Food Access and CSAs

Food Access (from USDA):

- Accessibility to sources of healthy food, as measured by distance to a store or by the number of stores in an area.
- Individual-level resources that may affect accessibility, such as family income or vehicle availability.
- Neighborhood-level indicators of resources, such as the average income of the neighborhood and the availability of public transportation.



Photo: WMGG/Full Hollow Farm

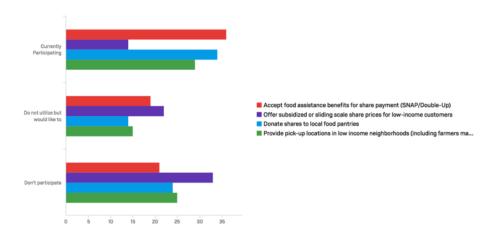


CSAs as a Tool for Food Access

The CSA Model lends itself to utilization as a tool for healthy food access.

Programs designed to bring new customers to CSA market, increase farm viability and provide greater access to healthy, local food.

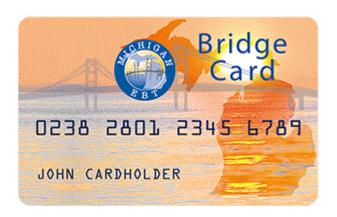
Q25 - Please select any strategies that your farm utilizes to improve food access in your community.



Currently ⅓ of CSAs in MI working with community orgs on food access programs



Federal/State Nutrition Incentive Programs





- Supplemental Nutrition
 Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Women Infants and Children (WIC)
- Project Fresh
- Double-Up Food Bucks
- Prescription for Health
- Gus Shumacher Nutrition
 Incentive Program (GusNIP)



Food Access/CSA Case Studies



New City Urban Farm

- Utilize Bridge/Double-Up Food Bucks for share purchase
- On-site pick-up only
- Offer several different share types to accommodate different new members



Access WM and the WMGG

- New unique partnership development between charitable food organization and local farmer group
- Connecting CSA farmers with local food pantries
- Gaining "access" to a wider more diverse audience
- Grant funded effort to start but still working on long-term sustainable funding models





Work Place Community Supported Agriculture

- Benefits to the workplace
- Benefits to the farmer
- Important things to consider
- Strategies for success
- How Extension can help





Benefits to the workplace

- Improved dietary patterns
- Camaraderie and community among employees
- Convenience
- Can lower healthcare costs
- Attractive employee benefit
- Increase job satisfaction and employee retention



Great story!



Benefits to the farm

- Guaranteed sales
- Reduced burden of finding members and coordination logistics
- Develop lasting relationships





Things to Consider



- Timeline
- Minimum share # requirements
- Drop-off/pick-up site and logistics
- Communication
- Missed share pickups
- Payroll Deduct



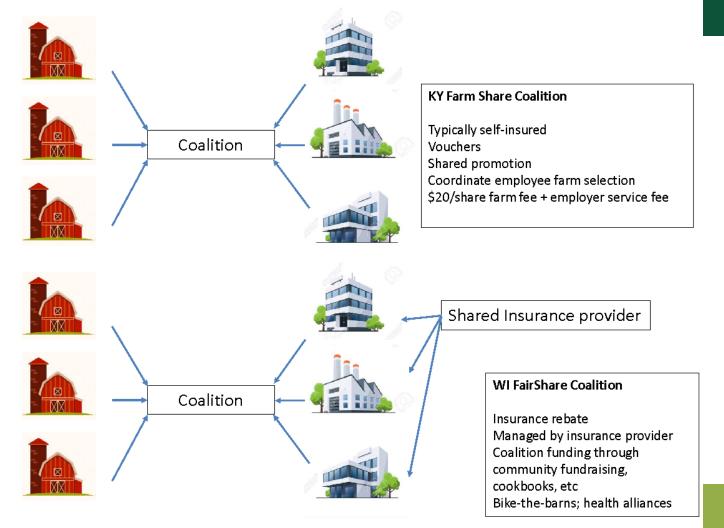
Choosing the Right Farm

- Farm location
- Season
- Share size/type
 - Crop Mix
 - Cost
- Communication style
- On-farm activities, events for worksite or CSA members?











Strategies for Success

- Survey employees
- Payroll Deduction
- Incentives through wellness programs (bags, \$, etc.)
- Drawings for \$ off shares
- Matchmaker for share splitting
- Cookbooks
- Cooking with your CSA Chef Demo
- Utilize social media
- Volunteer at the farm
- Share potluck at work







REFLECTION



Photos: Eva Deitch for the Hudson Valley CSA Coalition

Who is your target CSA member? Do your new and current members match that profile?



BY THE NUMBERS

In the Hudson Valley, 300 current CSA members were interviewed. Their

demographic information was as follows:

- 90% had at least 2 years of higher education
- 83% were white
- 82% were homeowners
- 82% were female
- 74% were employed
- 74% were married
- 53% lived in suburban regions
- 50% had an income of \$100,000 or more
- 47% had children (mean household size: 2.9)



Eva Deitch for the Hudson Valley CSA Coalition



RECRUITMENT MESSAGING

• Start by defining **CSA**.





CSA: SAMPLE EXPLANATION

Community Supported Agriculture, CSA for short:

- Connects consumers closer to farmers by allowing people to subscribe to a farm or group of farms
- In return for subscribing to a harvest, members receive either a weekly or bi-weekly box of produce or other farm goods selected by the farmer based on what is in season

CSA Members:

- Pay upfront to purchase a "share" of a farm's seasonal harvest, which provides cash flow for the farm to purchase things like seeds and equipment when it is most needed
- Receive a regular selection of freshly harvested food, picking up their shares at the farm itself or at another designated location
- Benefit from enjoying the freshest possible food at the height of the season and studies show that they adopt healthier eating habits than non-members



RECRUITMENT MESSAGING CONT'D

Next, emphasize the following aspects of CSA:

Fresh, high quality produce (or meat)

- Prices compare favorably to farmers markets and grocery stores
- Supporting local economies
- Encouraging healthy eating habits/improving health



COMMUNICATING COST

- Consider advertising the price of your share per week or per pickup rather than by lump sum.
 - \$650 per season
 - \$46 per week (~\$1100 per season)



COMMUNICATING COST CONT'D

- Pricing models are important, too:
 - In the Hudson Valley study, potential members found payment plan options to be more appealing than upfront payments.
 - Younger and lower income individuals in particular are more likely to prefer payment plan options, insurance incentives, subsidies, and/or working shares.
- Communicate member satisfaction!



Glynwood study: The Comparative Value of CSA



- 24-week CSA
- 50 kinds of vegetable
- ~250 lb of produce
- Compared to prices of equivalent produce at 3 nearby grocery stores
- Overall takeaways: Glynwood's
 CSA was more expensive than
 conventional produce options, but
 was cheaper than organic/regional
 options at grocery stores.



NET PROMOTERS AND CSA AMBASSADORS

- Net Promoter Score (NPS): metric used worldwide to measure customer loyalty
- Range of scores -100 to +100
- Positive score (above 0): Good
- +50-70: Excellent
- Above +70: World Class



Hudson Valley CSA Score: +77



REFLECTION

What should be your core marketing message(s) to recruit your target CSA member?





RETENTION

- Of the current CSA members interviewed in the Hudson Valley CSA research, 90% expressed satisfaction with their shares and intend to continue their farm memberships. Aspects of CSA that current members valued most include:
 - Quality of food (98%)
 - Variety of food in the shares (83%)
 - Growing practices at the farm (84%)
 - The amount of food in each share (67%)
 - Payment options/structure (21%)



RE-RECRUITMENT

- Incentives, discounts, or other types of a "special deal" can make all the difference when people are on the fence
- Remind them why they signed up for CSA in the first place





CONTINUED COMMUNICATION



- Frequent updates (newsletters)
- Communicating the contents of each share
- Social media
- Ask members to share their stories!

Key Takeaways

- The CSA model is experiencing changes due to changing food buying habits and a turn to convenience
- Opportunities exist for CSA farmers to access new and different customers by partnering with local employers
- Opportunities exist for CSA farmers to work with food access nonprofits who are looking to increase local food choices and options for their constituents
- It is important to know who your customer is, so that you can develop messages and marketing strategies that reach those "ideal CSA members"



Resources:

- National CSA Innovation Network <u>https://www.csainnovationnetwork.org</u>
- National CSA Day February 28th, 2020 https://csaday.info/farmers/
- MSU Extension Community Food Systems Team <u>https://www.canr.msu.edu/community_food_systems/</u>



Questions?

For more information contact:

Garrett Ziegler

zieglerg@msu.edu

