

Alternative Models and the Future of CSAs

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Abbe Hills Farm



NB 2009



Abbe Hills Farm

Founded in 1996 (or '95?)
72 acre farm, 4-5 acres vegetables

120 equivalent family size shares,
about 200 families served

Family share \$500 / 20 weeks
Single share \$300 / 20 weeks

Annual gross CSA income = \$60,000



Week 4, June 26, 2017



Week 17, Sept 25, 2017

Weekly family size shares: enough for a family of four, or two good vegetarians

First CSAs in US = 1986

Indian Line Farm, South Egremont, MA

Temple-Wilton Community Farm, Wilton, NH

First Laura heard of it = 1993

First CSA in Iowa = 1994

Virginia Moser, Wildwood Garden, Garrison



Organic **FRESH FRUITS
AND
VEGETABLES**

AT MOSER'S
WILDWOOD GARDEN

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

PRACTICAL
FARMERS
OF IOWA



ON-FARM
RESEARCH





Shared risk

Community
involvement

Environmental
stewardship

After 30 years, CSA has evolved!

11 CSA models described by Small Farm Central

Traditional CSA
Seasonal box
Market-style
Buy-down CSA
Flexible-week CSA
California-style CSA
Full-diet CSA
Multi-farm CSA
Winter only
Distributor
Grocer





Abbe Hills is the most traditional model on this panel

We started:

- packing in used tomato boxes
- harvest to fill boxes
- pick up at the farm after work
- “community” only, 10 families

Now:

- pack your own bags
- some “free”, “choice” items
- pick up at the farm after work
- “community” grew, 200



Grocery landscape has changed

Millennials are primary grocery buyers

Like to know provenance of their food

Like to eat well

Don't know how to cook that well

Have to have **convenience, speed**

CUT VEGETABLES

BUY 10
\$5.49
SAVE 50¢





It's inconvenient to belong to Abbe Hills Farm CSA

Give me lots of money months
before you get any food
Come on the days I say
Come exactly at the time I say
Eat the vegetables I choose
for you
Deal with the amounts I
give you
Drive on a dirty gravel road
Trust me

Who is willing to do
all that?

