



## Community Supported Agriculture as a Collaboration Model of Food Production in Agroforestry

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Newly established Lill-Nägels Agroforestry Pilot farm (Photo: Tanja Kähkönen).

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is a collaboration model for food production, distribution and consumption involving farmers and consumers. In CSA, the consumers can be individual people and families, and other consumers such as restaurants, schools or kindergartens. CSA can be led by consumers or by farmers. In the consumer-led model, consumers organize themselves and find a farmer to produce food with CSA model or start community farming themselves with CSA model. In farmer-led model, CSA is organized by the farmer who also seeks for customers.

In CSA, farmers and consumers make an agreement on food production, i.e. the consumer purchases in advance a certain amount of production and the farmer agrees on producing the food to be delivered to the consumer based on agreements without the exact amount of production (kg) being known at the time of the agreement. In CSA, consumers and farmers share risks related to uncertainties as the purchase by the consumer can be based on a share of a harvest no matter what the amount of harvest is due to for instance weather conditions. It is a method to increase farm resilience linked to changing market conditions.

As a business model for farmers, CSA offers a way to do direct selling to consumers without being dependent on industrial buyers. In addition, CSA offers reliable income based on advance purchases by consumers, and reliable price for the products as agreed with the consumers before the production season. For consumers, CSA offers an opportunity to buy locally produced healthy food which may not be available otherwise. At community level, CSA contributes to local and regional food security and resilience. The trend of direct selling from all types of farms has been increasing in Finland since the 2000s.

In Finland, one example of CSA in the agroforestry context can be found at Lill-Nägels Agroforestry Pilot in Kirkkonummi, Southern Finland. Lill-Nägels Agroforestry Pilot is a successional agrisilvicultural agroforestry system where cash crops such as garlic are grown together with fruit trees and berry bushes, rhubarb and some other vegetables in a relay cropping system.

### References

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