

Community Supported Agriculture

**- blurring the boundaries between producers and consumers,
urban and rural, and furthering our commons and commoning
: furthering change!**

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Community Supported Agriculture

- blurring the boundaries between producers and consumers, urban and rural, and furthering our commons and commoning : furthering change!

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I. Intro

In the recent decades, the pressures of an expanding agro-industrial model of food production and the corporate control over many aspects of the food system has given rise to manifold responses globally by consumers and farmers, which are about the building of trust-based direct relationships between producers and consumers in order to enable people to have access to healthy food, and to ensure decent livelihoods for producers. The focus in this material is on one of those responses : Community supported Agriculture (CSA), or Kumpanuusmaatalous in Finnish.

The origin of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) concept, the partnership between consumers and farmers, is pinpointed to the mid -1960's in Japan. At the time, an increase in imported foods was noted, along with the giving up of farmlands and the migration of farmers to the cities. A group of women is mentioned to have approached a local farm family with an idea to address these issues and provide their families with fresh fruits and vegetables. The farmers agreed to provide produce if multiple families made a commitment to support the farm. And so the "*teikei*" concept was born, which translated literally means partnership, but philosophically means "food with the farmer's face on it." From there on the first CSA came to the US in the mid-1980s, in France there are the Association pour le Maintien de l'Agriculture Paysanne (AMAP) since the start of 2000's, and so also since 2012 Kumpanuusmaatalous in Finland.

Although there are now many variations, the basic CSA model is based on community members helping to provide a portion of the farmer's yearly budget through purchasing "shares" for a season's harvest in advance of the growing season.¹ Community Supported Agriculture is about bringing farmers and people who eat their produce closer to each other to share more of the risks and rewards of farming and give the farmer a helping hand. This social organisation forms a web of mutual support and helps foster a better sense of community. [The international grassroot network of all forms of regional and Local Solidarity-based Partnerships for](#)

¹ See <https://urgenci.net>

[Agroecology \(LSPAs\) Urgenci](#), has estimated that up to one million people are currently involved in CSA initiatives in Europe.

CSA schemes foreground the need to help farms and farmers practising sustainable agriculture, and this is a very important need to be acknowledged and acted upon. But there is further (related) significance and potential to capture and bring to the forefront as to why our CSA's matter.

In the following material, CSA's are first of all contextualised as being about the furthering of Food sovereignty. Thoughts are then shared on the value of CSA's as social and ecological pedagogical processes and on how CSA's are addressing the urban rural divide. Followingly CSA's and the possibility to realise their potential, are placed within a wider envisioning and building of solidarity economies of furthering our commons and the commoning around them. CSA's are then presented as having the potential to give headway to systemic change/transformation in our communities and society at large, locally and globally. Following this, Oma maa food cooperative is presented as an example of a CSA in Finland, which is unique in its building of year around food system change. The material ends with some reflections both for those wanting to join or start a CSA.

2. Food sovereignty

The concept of food sovereignty was put forward by La Via Campesina² in 1996 and brought to the public debate during the World Food Summit of the UN in 1996. Food sovereignty was defined as **“the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their food and agriculture systems.”** (see <https://viacampesina.org/en/food-sovereignty/>)

The food sovereignty movement grew as a response to the globalisation of agribusinesses and agricultural policies affecting peasant farmers in the South, who had to compete against cheap exports from hyper-productive, highly subsidised European and American agriculture. Small-scale farmers needed to develop a common vision and campaign – to defend their livelihoods and participate directly in the decisions impacting their lives. In response, the concept of food sovereignty put agricultural producers and consumers at the core of the debate. The movement became further organized globally and regionally in [the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty \(IPC\)](#), actively engaged in advocacy and policy at UN level.

Ten years after the World Summit in 1996, a landmark Nyeleni Food sovereignty forum was held in Mali in 2007, bringing together some 500 delegates from all continents and sectors, to strengthen and deepen the concept of food sovereignty. Outcome of the meetings was [the Nyeleni Declaration](#), laying out the contours for a vision and an action agenda around food sovereignty, to be shared internationally. In 2015, many of these same movements came together at the *Nyéléni Forum for*

² La Via Campesina is today the world's largest social movement, composed of some 200 million small-scale farmers' organisations, rural workers, fishing communities, and landless and indigenous peoples globally.

Agroecology, where they agreed upon a common definition of Agroecology as a key element for the construction of food sovereignty, [see the declaration](#). A new Nyeleni process is currently set in motion towards a forum in 2023.

In the last decade, as the agro-industrial model of food production has expanded and corporate control over many aspects of the food system increased (e.g. via corporations such as Monsanto and the World Trade Organisation), people working with food in the 'Global North' have come to realise that food sovereignty is also relevant to them, and the word food sovereignty has also become increasingly present in our corners.

3. Social and ecological pedagogical process

All our people's sized forms of organising, like our associations and cooperatives, are places of mutual learning and of exercising democracy, and so also our CSA's. Pending the characteristics of a given CSA, taking our food system to whatever extent into our own hands, gives us ample possibilities to rethink prevailing ideas and practices.

In a CSA producer and food members will discuss and decide together upon a host of issues as the farming plan, the budget and financing models, the ways in which the community at large will be involved in different cooperative activities, and ofcourse upon issues as board composition.

Mutual learning then takes place between members on social and economical, as well as importantly around ecological issues. **In these processes boundaries can become blurred between producer and food members, and instead of things being referred to as food members 'helping' producer members, a notion of co-production is developed.**

From a social perspective, our CSA's notably entail learnings with regards to how to facilitate processes of engagement, mutual learning, decision making and responsibility carrying.

From an economic perspective, collective learning takes place as to the drawing up of a yearly budget as well as what financial tools and methodologies can be developed to meet that budget. So a CSA can for instance start to carry out anonymous bidding rounds to meet the budget, in this way allowing each to contribute according to capacity, in a trust based and further trust building process.

From an ecological perspective, our CSA's can facilitate for us a process through which we can be rethinking and developing our relation to our food, to our land, to nature at large, and to develop our experience and understanding of us as a part of nature. As such we can learn about local ecosystems, experiment with both traditional and new species, and at large create open knowledge about food production in a local context.

When we order a food bag, we might come to learn to use new local produce and time spent (together) in the kitchen might change. When we go out to take part in the communal activities of the CSA, we will come to feel and learn about natural

processes of which our food production is a part, about what is necessary to take care of the land in order to come to sustainable agriculture, and about what beyond our ecological footprint, our ecological handprint (the positive way in which our agriculture can contribute to the vitality of our land and its ecosystem) can be in this.

In their most progressive forms, our CSA's are places where we collectively can ask ourselves the question ; What is it we want to do? What are our resources to do so? and What are our skills to realize this? – and to then learn how to do the math with regards to the material costs, financial costs and carbon foot or handprint of anything we do. The goal throughout these processes is to empower by doing and co-learning.

4. Connecting the Urban and the Rural

Our CSA's importantly also address the urban and rural divide. The current global food system has contributed to an alienation between city and countryside, which has also led to confrontation. Therefore, if we want to develop a new kind of ecological food system based on local resources, we have to promote the interaction between the urban and the rural.

A connecting problem between cities and countryside is: how to balance the relationship between man and nature? The relationship with nature is different in cities than in rural areas, but in both cases it is not unproblematic. A more balanced interaction between the countryside and the city is to be seen as part of sustainable development. The interaction between the countryside and the city is fundamentally shaped by the economy's global exchange system. However, its boundary conditions are changing. If ecological reconstruction and a new kind of economic system are realized, the spatial order of society will also change..(Rural research • vol 29 Theme (2021) • Hyyryläinen, Helenius, Schmidt-Thomé, Jumppanen, Rantanen).

Community supported agriculture increases the interaction between the city and the countryside. With the help of community supported agriculture, rural actors learn to understand the needs and wishes of urban inhabitants regarding what kind of nourishment they want to have and what kind of production methods they value.

As already referred to in the above, through a CSA, urban inhabitants can become acquainted with the realities of the countryside and can concretely participate in production, e.g. through communal works. City people in turn can learn to understand what the production of different plants requires and they can participate in the planning of the development of production together with farmers.

Joint events in the countryside and in the city also contribute to the establishing of personal friendships by bringing together people who might otherwise not meet. As this interaction increases, it will be possible for us to collectively develop a more balanced relationship with nature and build a new kind of ecological economic system.

5. Solidarity economy and the Commons

Struggles for food sovereignty, including the extent to which they can be realising their potential, are useful to situate within a wider project of envisioning and building of solidarity economies.

The solidarity economy approach is an invitation to rethink the economy, starting from everybody's daily life and needs. It challenges the idea of the economy as a separate, abstract area of society dominated by the role of a small number of experts (economists, bankers, financial advisors). Instead, solidarity economics suggests that we can see the economy as a much broader set of diverse relations and activities and as something that everybody can and should play a role in envisioning and enacting.

Contrary to mainstream economic thinking, according to which the value of financial profit-making predominantly guides economic activity, solidarity economies have a shared and interdependent commitment to a different sense of economic values based instead upon diversity, autonomy, equality, shared power and ecological sustainability. These values – values that are shared by the food sovereignty movement too – are at the core of economic relations within solidarity economies, where the main objective of economic activity is not profit but sustaining life.

The building of a Solidarity economy is then seen as firstly being a process of identifying and making existing solidarity economy initiatives visible, through which they will be increasingly used and thus strengthened. Secondly, the increased visibility enables existing solidarity economy actors (those involved) and their practices to find each other, create links and relationships, and through this, develop new practices and in this manner expand the spaces of the developing solidarity economy. Importantly, solidarity economy building is not a proposal for a more socially and environmentally friendly sector separate from an otherwise predominantly extractivist economy but concerns, in fact, a paradigm shift in thinking for the whole of the economy.

The commons are an important part of a Solidarity economy. The commons refers to cultural and natural resources being held "in common", co-produced and accessible to all members of society. The commons, whether this is a forest, food, ideas or currency, are best understood through the social practices of commoning, a term coined by historian Peter Linebaugh (Linebaugh 2008). Commoning is the process of co-producing, co-governing and co-managing of commons – not just the resources or goods needed to live well but also the social structures, relationships and processes – by a community or network of users, by commoners, following the principles of sustainability, fairness and direct democracy. As such, there are no commons without the commoning by commoners.

Commons are the antithesis of capital and market commodities - with a commons economy referring to the circulation of commons, not commodities, operating beyond but not necessarily without State or market – as the late Silke Helfrich described things (see Bollier and Helfrich 2012).

The development of a solidarity economy, the increased linking up of solidarity economy actors and practices, can be seen as leading to more commoning and commons. When our food cooperative links up with an energy cooperative and for instance a community currency, the food we produces becomes even more of a commons, empowering the involved commoners.

Looking at different global struggles for food sovereignty then, we can situate those involved as solidarity economy actors, working at co-producing our agricultural/food commons and the commoning around them – of working towards a transformation of the economy and global food justice

6. Systemic change

Our CSA initiatives, where besides a financial partnership, participants are also encouraged to create a relationship to their farmer, to the whole ecosystem around the land and to become a co-producer, are importantly about systemic change.

“Food is a core societal thing. Food is, first of all, what joins all of us. And in whose hands the control of our food system is, including, of course, water, in those hands the control of society lies. In other words, people can better govern their own lives if food (and the food system) is in their control. In that sense, all efforts to get food under the control of people are significant for the development of society, and only by addressing this can we change our society into being more just and fair.” Jukka Lassila (farmer of Oma Maa food cooperative, in an interview with Jukka Peltokoski for KSL in 2014)

Brought to the forefront here are three important and related insights: firstly, **by changing our basic needs systems – by changing the production, distribution and consumption of our basic needs such as food and energy – we can develop pathways towards more socially, ecologically healthier communities and society locally and globally.** These basic needs are such daily, pervasive societal issues; changing how they are managed can change many things.

Secondly, such social and ecological systemic change in society is to be rooted in community/peoples’ processes around their daily needs. These need to be co-produced, co-governed and co-managed according to collectively held values and are not to be decided upon by profit-seeking markets, for they will not deliver the desired change. In other words, **struggles for food sovereignty can be a systemic change maker when the processes of change are in the hands of the people – when food becomes a commons.**

And thirdly, this reaches beyond the local. Food sovereignty isn’t a one-size fits all approach but is, in fact, specific to people and places. However, **whilst the circumstances in which struggles for food sovereignty often seem to differ substantially, these struggles can be seen as engaged together and interdependently for the right to see things as a commons.**

This right to be able to see things as a commons, the right to achieve food sovereignty anywhere, and to be able to stop, for instance, having to overtly focus on growing for export, implies that we must everywhere take up in our own corners the struggle for our own food sovereignty, which is then ultimately also a struggle for global justice. It is the answer with which farmers in India responded to Oma maa member Niklas Toivokainen when he asked them in 2013, after listening to their stories of extensive hardship, of suicides, what it is we here in Europe, in Finland, should do: “Grow your own food!”³

³ See, <https://commons.fi/2013/01/12/kasvattakaa-oma-ruokanne/>

The above insights have important ramifications when we seek solutions to our climate and biodiversity crises. The debate about how to deliver systemic change in society is often framed by way of juxtaposing the responsibility of government to be designing and enacting effective policy with the responsibility of citizens in the form of consumer choice – and the conclusion is often that real responsibility and power lies with the big policy of government. However, through this framing a fundamental insight that Oma Maa also puts to the forefront is overlooked: that in response to today's challenges, community processes are not to be seen as small, insufficient and irrelevant actions, but are in fact cornerstones to systemic change.

The work we do as part of Community Supported Agriculture initiatives is an invitation for all of us to explore the potential for social and ecological systemic change through our engagement with agriculture and food.

Today in Finland, struggles for food sovereignty have, among others, manifested in a push for organic and local products. In addition, different groups and initiatives now exist to take out the middlemen, for example, various food exchange groups organised through social media. Currently there are then some 15 CSA initiatives, with in this text one of them presented, Osuuskunta Tuusulan Oma maa.

7. Oma maa food cooperative - an example of year around Community supported agriculture/food system change building

Oma Maa is a food co-operative based on community-supported agriculture (CSA) and ecologically and socially sustainable food production methods. Oma Maa supports an all year around ecological community process around good agriculture. Here agriculture refers to the cultivating and developing of the land to fulfill people's need for food as well as other basic needs, and to make good, ecological life possible.

(from Food cooperative Oma Maa's Plan of Action 2021–25)

Osuuskunta Tuusula Oma Maa – 'Our Land' cooperative – in Tuusula (30 km from Helsinki, Finland), was founded in 2009 and is building an all-year-round ecological community process around Good Agriculture. Agriculture for Oma maa refers to the caring, cultivation and development of the land to fulfill the community's needs in food, as well as (in the future) other basic needs such as energy in order to make good, ecological life possible. At the time the cooperative was founded by its farmer producer members and others to support their collective farming and selling of produce. Since 2014, the cooperative has been working according to community-supported agriculture principles.

The coop has currently several active producing members working daily on the farm, some 80 active food bag ordering members, of whom some are having central roles in the coop for instance carrying out administrative and distribution tasks. In addition there are also 'try-out members' who after a 3 month period decide whether or not to join the coop.

Oma Maa's activities are rooted on the Lassila farm (in the Lassila family since 1697) and Kauko farm in Tuusula, with product distribution and activity points reaching out

to the cities of Järvenpää and Helsinki. Through its cooperation with both farms, Oma Maa has been developing and taking care in 2022 of some 100 hectares of arable land, of which 2-3ha was used for horticultural crops; 30 hectares of forest of which some 1.5 hectares is a forest garden. And in addition, there are 3 hectares of natural pastures, where the Lassila farm's three cows graze in summer and fall and fulfill their role as guardians of biodiversity.

The cooperative is still in the process of achieving financial sustainability. With a hundred weekly foodbag orders the coop would be at a break even point with regards to income and costs, whereas the land of the farms in the coop could be catering to the providing of weekly foodbags for some 200 households.

Good Agriculture

Oma Maa's process around Good Agriculture is strongly motivated by the aim to work towards systemic change in society, as elaborated upon in the previous section of this material, and is in this guided by a number of values and working principles.

Whilst working together according to the principles of permaculture and polyculture, Oma maa members together as a coop take care of the land of Lassilan and Kauko tila farms in order to increase its vitality : to strengthen its upkeep of biodiversity, which importantly includes also its capacity to offer for its animals (there are three Lapland cows and chickens on the farm), insects and birds a safe place to live and feed; to strengthen its capacity with regards to carbon sequestration, and to strengthen its efficiency with regards to the recycling of nutrients. For example, Oma Maa has a contract with the Tuusula municipality to remove excessive water plants as well as fish from the eutrophic Tuusula lake and feeds this into the compost of the Lassila farm.

In this manner, Oma Maa's activities are designed not just to reduce our ecological footprint, but to enlarge our ecological handprint.

And it is through first of all this caring for the land, that Oma Maa then strives towards self-sufficiency and food sovereignty, including importantly self-sufficiency of seeds.

Good Agriculture -> Good Food

Oma maa's food is a direct expression of Oma maa's good agriculture, and by ordering the coop's foodbag one is supporting and enabling Oma maa's caring for its land – including its animals, i.e. its ecosystem, in its totality and all year around. All this in turn supports our health. We are learning all the time more and more about how our soil's microbiomes are connected to our gut's microbiomes, and this in turn to our overall health.

Oma Maa works towards the production of diverse and tasty food which provide for all the nutritious needs of its members. On the lands of Lassila farm and Kauko farm, Oma Maa cultivates grains, raps for oil, and legumes, garden plants such as potatoes, pumpkins, tomatoes, cucumber, salad greens, radishes, roots, onions, fava beans, hemp, and corn, as well as strawberries and black currant berries. Cooperation continues to take part regarding grains with local surrounding farmers in Tuusula.

In its food production, Oma Maa wants to contest profit-based notions of what can and can not be grown in Finland, and thus eaten as local produce. The coop has been experimenting with different grains and is developing a food forest, where different fruit, berries, and other perennial garden plants such as pears and plums are grown according to permaculture principles. Oma Maa intends to expand the food forest every year, in order to come to every year yet longer periods of fruits. In the coop's self-built greenhouse (warmed in the winter by bioenergy) and covered tunnels made from a lot of recycled material, the coop grows seedlings and a variety of different experimental plants such as figs and citrus fruit.

And in this manner Oma Maa wants to enable food sovereignty for up to 200 households, which is seen as the capacity of the land. The produced food is distributed to Oma Maa members throughout the year in the form of food bags.

Good Agriculture -> Good Food bags & Farm dining

The food bags contain seasonal products, but also products that are conserved, refined, and processed by Oma Maa to better suit members' needs, as also to contribute to financial sustainability. Such ready-made products include wheat and rye bread, falafel, seitan, and oat yogurt, various fermented and dried produce, and different grains, groats, and flakes.

In addition other items will be made for the bag pending on seasonality. For instance, we have been adding wild herbs and nettle pesto with our hemp seeds to the baggs. Additional items also depend on what produce has been able to be conserved over winter, which is linked to the harvest and to our collective capacity to harvest. This can lead to for instance a fruitroll or a berry cream of wheat being added to the foodbag.

Every month also, the aim is to have the following "dry products" in the bag : 1kg groats (which can use like rice), 1.5kg flakes, 1 kg flour, 500 gr Bulger, 1 kg crushed favabeans. In addition, whole beans and pulses find their way regularly to the bags.

Oma Maa wants to integrate local and traditional methodologies of both efficient and ecological resource use with global practices and tastes and with this process address the issue of what can and should be the food of the future. Through its practices, Oma Maa gives a whole new ring to the sound of what future food actually could really be about.

Oma Maa offers the same foodbag for all and there are solid reasons for doing so. The bag is wanting to promote comprehensive food system change and is thus not to be seen as 'pick and choose shopping'. The foodbag also wants to holistically address health related issues resulting from our no longer eating of local, organic produce. In addition the bag wants to comprehensively address the carbon footprint as also handprint of food production. Oma Maa's food bag is about a change of food culture, challenging the illusion of freedom when buying from a grocery store. Last but not least, our food bag is also about the democratising of our food production and with this also importantly a democratisation of our work. The latter then relates to for instance how many days in the week anyone will be wanting to be working in the co-op's Rannankoukku kitchen, in order for other people not to work in their own

kitchens.

With Oma maa foodbags being presently Oma maa's main income bringing activity, the coop estimates the ordering of 100 foodbags per week as it's sustainability threshold, enabling daily operations, and enabling a strong enough core team on the farm. Currently (October 2022) the coop has some 80 (whole) bag orders (meaning the total sum of every week (whole) and every other week (half) orders counted together). A tight fit posing challenges the coop is addressing constantly.

Besides Oma maa foodbags, Oma Maa does also offer and develop its three-course Farm Dining dinners (all ingredients from the farm, and produced by the cooperatives farmers and cooks) in its member and restaurant space in Helsinki on Kaarlenkatu 15, or sometimes on the farm. The dinners are typically accompanied by joint discussions around issues of the cooperative or broader societal issues and are open to members and friends. They have been nice and informative moments to get up to date but also introduce Oma Maa to new friends.

In the future Oma Maa wants to open its Farm Dining to the general public, Also in the future a wish is to hold Farm Dining dinners at the farm. This will require developing the cooking facilities on the farm. A future project is for example the building of an artisanal oven.

Good Agriculture -> Good Community Co-working, learning and decision making

Oma maa is importantly a peoples, a community process. Earlier in this material it has already been brought to the forefront as to how a CSA as Oma maa sees this as the basis for the ecological and social systemic change it wants to be working towards.

Oma Maa therefore has a continuous open call for members to join in the learning and co-production around all that is done. Besides occasional specific talkoots, or participating in food bag distribution, people can drive along to the farm on any given day to work along with the farmers. The cooperative is also open to members wanting to learn and co-produce on a more permanent basis. So there have been food members staying for a certain period on the farm and bringing in also their skills with regards to for instance food bag content. The coop is also interested to develop its pedagogical coproducing processes into a more institutionalised form.

Needless to say, besides bringing the ecological and social pedagogical angle of Oma maa's process to the forefront, everybody's participation is also important as to in how far Oma maa can be realising its potential, whilst at the same time it is understood not everybody can be taking part in all of this, nor to the same extent. In any case, how well coop members collectively manage to be for instance weeding when weeding is really necessary, or harvesting when harvesting really needs to happen, of course matters and affects.

Oma Maa coop has a board, producer members, and food members, and different working groups such as communications, administration, and financial issues, foodbag handout, and talkoot (communal works).

The board meets about once a month in meetings all members can attend, whilst the different working groups are organised in different ways, using different tools like whatsapp groups and other media.

An important annual meeting is the presentation and discussion regarding the year's farming plan, and every year there is also the co-op's annual meeting. No ecology without democracy – whereas also in Oma Maa coop, the exercising of democracy is a constant process in need of evaluation and development, and importantly will need to entail space and willingness for learning.

The working and learning of Oma Maa does not happen in isolation, but has been happening in cooperation with local farmers and partners such as Eetti, Ehta Raha and other Finnish CSA's, five of which together in 2019 founded Kumpanuusmaatalous ry (more on Kumpanuusmaatalous ry in the following section), and importantly also as part of a global movement. Over the years a good number of comrades have been visiting us or doing things at Oma Maa's premises in the city as part of different movement process, such as around solidarity economy building and the commons (mm the RIPESS network, Cooperation Jackson) whilst the coop also participates in Urgenci's community supported agriculture european and global network.

Oma Maa's Good Agriculture is a process in a full fledged developmental phase.

When ordering an Oma Maa foodbag, one is ordering importantly a local organic vegan foodbag, which is bound up with its production – with the coop's capacity to make for a good harvest in summer and to then conserve produce for winter, as well as with the available time and resources to experiment and develop secondary production.

Important is also to look at the bag not from a singular bag perspective, but to look all season long and see along the line the moments of abundance and of the periods when there is less so.

But beyond its foodbags, Oma Maa is a process of people taking (a part of) their food system into their hands and to try to realize the potential for transformation that it can give in different areas. Efforts in this process should be viewed from a short term but importantly also long term perspective, as also from the perspective that a sufficient level of engagement is core to realizing this potential.

8. Kumpanuusmaatalous ry - CSA Finland

[Kumpanuusmaatalous ry – CSA Finland was founded in 2019](#). The organisation aims to develop cooperation between partner farms, increase visibility and empower those working towards a more ecologically sustainable and equitable food system.

In its rules, the association specifically mentions to be relating itself to Urgenci, “the international grassroots network of all forms of regional and Local Solidarity-based

Partnerships for Agroecology (LSPAs), of which Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is the best-known iteration". On Urgenci's website one can find a large range of texts and other useful (audio- and video-) material for anyone establishing or joining a CSA, see <https://urgenci.net/>. Urgenci in particular also engages in movement and alliance building, as well as advocacy work on EU and international level.

With the support of the "Kumppanuusmaataloudella kestävyttä, kilpailukykyä ja maatalouden arvostusta" Kumakka hanke, webpages have been put up for the new association : <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/kumppanuusmaatalous/>. On the pages for instance a listing and a map with all the current CSA's existing in Finland (19). Whilst the number of CSA's in Finland is still small, also when comparing to the situation in Norway, which could be compared as a similar sized country with similar conditions, but where some 100 CSA initiatives form together a strong platform - the interest in CSA's - both from producer as well as food members, also in Finland is rising!

The CSA Finland platform has engaged in some joint action. So notably this year a first [CSA week 20-27.2.2022](#) was organised. On the linked to page, you can find the full program and results of that week. In particular, the network came out with a [Food Manifesto](#).

9. Some reflections for when join or starting your local CSA

When you are joining a CSA as a food member, it is important to become acquainted with the characteristics of the CSA, so as to understand and appreciate the food bag you will be receiving and to be able to support the developmental process of the CSA in question.

Because all CSA's will be different. They will have their own characteristics, developmental stage and process, strengths and weaknesses; be operational for half of the year or around the whole year; do solely vegetables or do also secondary production; rent a plot or be founded by producer farmers and their farms. Be it as it is, it is important to keep in mind when joining a CSA, that the founders and other people involved have most probably been going through considerable efforts to be where the CSA is today, and when you join, you will want to do so in appreciation and in constructiveness regarding the process. For as you will soon come to learn as you join your CSA, creating another food system is not easy!

It is also important to realise when joining your CSA, that your participation matters! The realisation of the potential of any CSA depends for a great deal on the capacity of its members, whilst of course also external factors will play a role. It is only by way of ownership taken by producer and food members members of a CSA that a CSA can develop itself - CSA's as Oma maa are all in all all about each and everyone of us becoming more of a co-producer around our basic needs as food, in order to work towards societal change. With all the wonderful benefits that brings us all!

Not everyone will be able to participate in a similar manner in the workings of a CSA - also this will be understood in any given CSA. It will be understood that different periods or situations in life make it so that participation in your CSA's activities is simply not (much) possible. Your CSA will also be a place in which this can be

shared, without this needing to give rise to feelings of guilt, nor to feelings of being inadequate leading to the conclusion that your local CSA is after all not something for you. For this would be of no benefit to your CSA nor its objectives.

For a farmer, The forming of a CSA around a farmer's operations can be empowering, both in terms of financial as well as human resources, when the objective is to strive towards both social and ecological sustainability. The practising of good agriculture, seeing to the upkeep of biodiversity and good social conditions - and catering through this to food system change, in some cases around the year - requires substantial human as well as financial resources. Good agricultural practices carried out according to permaculture and polyculture principles calls for more hands-on work than large scale mainstream monoculture, and so also the diversification of activities on a farm. Needless to say this has its own financial demands. To put it differently : there is plenty of room for the development of good work/good jobs and positive investments through our CSA's!

The opening up, allowing others in, can also be very demanding for a farmer. There might be differing opinions on how things are to get done. But if one sees this through, over time, important strengthening relations can be built, which can be making all the difference.