

Community supported agriculture (CSA)

A photograph of a rural landscape in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The foreground is dominated by a large field of golden rice stalks, some of which are being harvested or processed into bundles. A dirt path runs through the middle ground, and there are several trees and bushes scattered throughout the scene. In the background, more fields and some distant buildings are visible under a clear sky.

**A local food system in Chiang
Mai, Thailand**

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Fair Earth Farm**

Community supported agriculture (CSA)

Directly linking small
farmers with ...

... consumer families



How the CSA works

- Network established
 - (5 farming families and 30 consumer families)
- Weekly deliveries of fresh produce to drop-off points
- Advance payment for food
- Regular communication with farmers
 - Cannot pick and choose
 - Can request farmers to grow certain crops
- Farm visits
- Donation to temple when consumers cannot pick up



Fair Earth Farm's role

- Helped connect farmers and consumers in network
- Farmer-consumer liaison
- Disseminate knowledge of CSA innovation
 - TV programs/articles
 - Food fairs/conferences
 - Farm visits



CSA and natural farming

- Industrial food systems are incompatible with natural farming
- Natural farm systems need alternative trading systems
- CSA trading system needs natural farming systems



CSA and poverty

Livelihood security

- farmers paid in advance (10 weeks)
- continuous support
- produce according to seasons
- system can absorb increase in labor
- farmers also consume organic food
- niche in green food movement



Constraints to spread of innovation

- Recruiting consumers is NOT the problem
- Conventional farming practices ARE the problem
- CSA can reward farmers for organic conversion, but takes awareness, time, skills

Conclusions

- Significant **trend** in natural food consumption
- Trend is **reaction to ills** of industrial food
- Trend has **little influence** on small farmers
- Big **gap** between extension and farmers
- Gap is being **bridged** in diverse ways
- “**green consumption**” is one such bridge
- High **potential** for consumers to support natural farmers

Further research and action

- Study existing CSA in Chiang Mai using agronomic and ecological approaches
 - Challenges? New opportunities?
 - Sustainability?
- Promote and assist in the establishment of new CSAs
 - Other communities
 - Other innovations
 - Farm to restaurant; farm to school