

COME TO THE TABLE

People of faith relieving hunger and sustaining local agriculture in North Carolina

Featured Project Type: Congregation-Supported Agriculture

Community-Supported Agriculture projects (or CSAs) let people buy a share of the produce from a local farm. CSA members usually receive a box of fresh fruit and vegetables every week during the growing season.

Congregations can buy shares too. They can pool resources to offer fresh food to members throughout the spring and summer. Many CSA churches also buy shares for limited-income families or the local food pantry.

CSAs offer a great way to access fresh, healthy, sustainably grown produce, meats, eggs, and other foods. If your household cannot use an entire box of produce every week, ask about buying a half-share or consider splitting a box with a friend.

CSAs offer farmers security because members invest in the farm at the beginning of every growing season. They also provide direct benefit to the local economy by keeping more of your food dollars in your community. North Carolina led the nation in the number of farms lost in 2006. CSAs support North Carolina's farmers directly.

CSAs are a great way to get to know the people that grow your food. Church dinners can be a great opportunity to invite your CSA farmer to be your guest and to talk about issues on the farm. The average piece of food in America travels 1,500 miles before it is eaten. With a CSA share, your food can come directly from the hands of your neighbors.

More information:

Local Harvest offers a national listing of farms with CSA programs - www.localharvest.com.

Leaflight buys CSA shares for food pantries in central North Carolina - www.leaflight.org, (919) 619-8119

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association publishes a guide to local food and farms in North Carolina - www.carolinafarmstewards.org, (919) 542-2402

Come to the Table offers resources, helpful links, an electronic newsletter and technical assistance to congregations in North Carolina that start projects to relieve agriculture and sustain local farms - www.cometothetablenc.org, (919) 542-1396

That's My Farmer! Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon hosts this successful CSA program in Washington state and offers resources for new programs - www.emoregon.org/food_farms.php

Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture, by Elizabeth Henderson with Robyn Van En is available from Chelsea Green Publishing - <http://www.chelseagreen.com>

Come to the Table is a project of the Rural Life Committee of the Council of Churches with support from the Duke Endowment. www.cometothetablenc.org. (919) 542-1396