

CASE STUDY: BIG MEADOW

A HORTICULTURAL CSA IN THE GOWER IN RURAL WALES



Established: 2020

Type: Producer-led

Legal Structure: Part of Cae Tan CSA Ltd

Paid staff: 1.8 FTE (Two people)

Trainees: Aim to host two in future

Volunteers: 1.2 FTE (15 people including children)

Produce: Vegetables and fruit

Members/shares: 75 year-round

Member radius: 20 miles

CSA turnover: £48,567 including £25,800 of grant funding

Buy in to supplement produce: Yes

Land: Growing on 0.5 hectares on a .8 hectare site rented with a renewable annual cropping licence

Infrastructure: Three polytunnels, compost toilet, garden shed, veg shed

Approach: Registered organic, min till

And... Big Meadow got support to set up from established CSA Cae Tan. They have teamed up with other local suppliers to offer oyster mushrooms, organic fruit boxes and bread

The seed...

Abbi had been a trainee at Cae Tan and wanted to work with people, provide organic food and help create a more resilient local food system. The benefits of the CSA model made sense and she was also attracted by its financial stability. She decided she wanted to run her own CSA and Cae Tan offered to support her. So Big Meadow was born. Abbi says "I was so lucky because I literally copied Cae Tan - just being able to work for Tom for a year and then set up somewhere else was insanely valuable....People knew what CSA is and Cae Tan is really popular."



Grew...

Abbi was fortunate to receive Welsh RDP funding to support her salary for two years as well as £12,000 of funding from the Big Lottery Awards for All scheme and various other small grants. She started as the pandemic hit, which meant fewer volunteers, but a huge surge in demand. They have a core group of regular committed volunteers, and some are now on the management committee. Abbi says that managing her time to juggle admin, new members, and growing was a steep learning curve but once she reached membership capacity the workload dropped significantly.

And...

They ran a six-week programme for teens, focusing on food and well-being, and aim to make this an annual happening. Ten young people needing extra support visited twice weekly. They learned new skills, experiencing life at the field and gaining self-confidence, culminating in a two-night residential at the farm's bunkhouse. Big Meadow have also engaged local primary school children in finding out how their food is produced. Abbi now uses Square software to cut down her admin. Setting it up took some time but she finds it very helpful.

