

CASE STUDY: CAE TAN

A HORTICULTURAL CSA IN THE GOWER IN RURAL WALES



Established: 2014

Type: Producer-led

Legal Structure: Co. Ltd by Guarantee

Paid staff: 2.5 FTE (Four people)

Trainees: 1.5 FTE (Three people)

Volunteers: 0.6 FTE (Database of 40,
two to ten attend each week)

Produce: Vegetables and fruit

Members: 128 receiving year-round
shares

Member radius: 10 miles

Buy in to supplement produce: Yes

CSA turnover: £60,079

Non CSA income: £49,046 (grants,
trainees, salad sales and consultancy)

Land: 3.2 hectares rented in two parts
from the Ecological Land Coop and a
local private landowner who receives
a share of the profits

Infrastructure: Five polytunnels,
packing shed and a bigger barn

Approach: Permaculture,
agroforestry, biodynamic

And... Leading the way in supporting
new nearby CSAs to start up

The seed...

Tom worked on lots of different farms and was growing to love farming but he was discouraged by the isolation and poor pay that seemed to go with traditional farming. He completed a dissertation on converting to CSA and immediately found it socially, environmentally and economically much more appealing. After much searching, Tom found a piece of rent-free land on the Gower Peninsula and got support from another CSA in Wales. Tom was fortunate to get £5k funding for polytunnels from UnLtd Foundation and three years' of wages from Environment Wales.



Grew...

Members are involved through contact at weekly pickups, annual survey, AGM and events. Cae Tan has brought schools and youth groups onto the land since inception and has found funding for an educational post to develop this work. Cae Tan has also developed an online training course for new CSAs. Abbi, one of Tom's trainees, was keen to start her own CSA and the team successfully supported her. Cae Tan's CSA business is now financially self-sustaining. They use grant income only to support education and training or to set up new CSAs.

And...

Tom and the team at Cae Tan have led the way in demonstrating the "growth by proliferation" model which works so well for CSAs. It offers a sustainable alternative to the standard business model of growth by size. Apart from supporting Abbi at Big Meadow, Cae Tan have gone on to help foster four additional local CSAs and are keen to develop CSA in local urban areas. Tom says that the most important thing of all is good people management. He wished he'd known that even when one thing fails enough else will work.

