



Key stats:

- 38 responses, 98% have land; 87% already trading; others starting in a few years
- Average total land area: 13.4ha with an average of 1.4ha used for horticulture
- Feeding on average 68 households but with a significant number feeding over 100 households. 18% have a waiting list; 82% don't
- Average staff: 1.6FTE
- ⅓ will apply for SFI; ⅓ not eligible; ⅓ outside England
- Producing: veg & salads: 82%; fruit: 50%; flowers: 24%; meat: 11%; eggs: 8%
- Additionally, 60% provide training and education; 40% provide social prescribing; 20% offer camping/accommodation and 90% offer community activities
- 80% actively support food access through mechanisms like sliding scale payments, subsidised shares or food donation

Climate:

Many CSAs experienced drought or extreme heat, resulting in increased water bills and the loss of some crops or reduced yields.

Several CSAs reported damage from high winds, including ripped polytunnels and wind damage to crops, and a few mentioned issues with flooding or waterlogging.

As a response our resilient CSAs are planning or investing in improved irrigation systems (including sumi soaker and boreholes), increased rainwater harvesting/collection, and other measures such as adding shelterbelts, increasing cover cropping, green manures, mulching, and increasing soil organic content.

"Growing is a challenge & chaotic weather demoralises participants. However, we are 15 years in with our members becoming quite expert & many local householders involved."

"Our polytunnel ripped due to high winds."

"We had minor damage and expect this to get worse. Not sufficient income to reinvest and maintain tunnels."

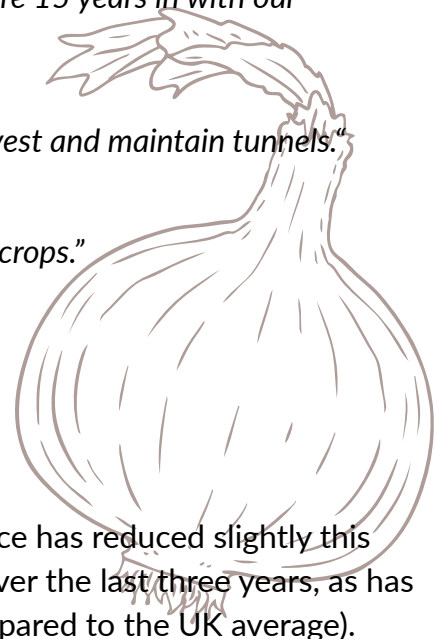
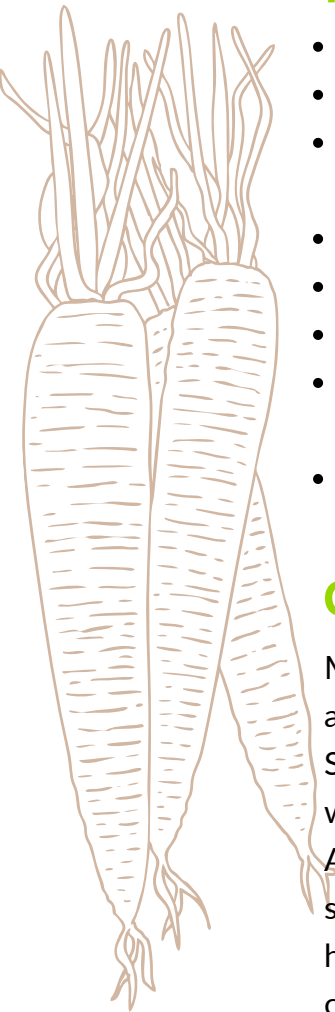
"We are planting wind breaks because the wind in our veg field is absolutely crazy."

"We are adapting all the time to the local climate and how best to protect the fruit crops."

Wellbeing and Resilience:

CSAs are feeling more robust and able to adapt to unexpected changes than ever - with just under 50% feeling completely robust and just under 50% feeling partially robust (as opposed to a 30/60% split in the last few years).

Whilst social and environmental resilience have stayed high, economic resilience has reduced slightly this year compared to previous years. Despite this, life satisfaction has improved over the last three years, as has happiness and sense of what you do being worthwhile (which is very high compared to the UK average).



Greatest Achievements:

Key achievements included: achieving financial stability; gaining new infrastructure; continued operation despite challenges (surviving droughts/high temperatures and difficult years); and maintaining or increasing membership numbers. Community Engagement and Diversity was also mentioned by a significant number of CSAs, for instance working with asylum seekers and refugees; hosting hospital patient groups, implementing steps to welcome a more diverse range of volunteers and hosting groups who otherwise wouldn't have access to community growing spaces.



Concerns for the year ahead:

Key concerns included: loss of financial viability due to further inflation of costs and lack of back-up funds; retaining members; trying to make food accessible to all; the impact of climate change, especially drought, high winds and flooding; workload and burnout.

What our existing CSAs would love is:

- Financial Support & Funding for: critical infrastructure; organic conversion; payment for the social and environmental benefits delivered; providing shares at lower costs to those on low incomes; in line with other farms, central financial and accounts support
- Training & Mentoring: a coherent, fully funded training scheme for head growers; more mentoring, masterclasses, and support for apprenticeships
- Peer to peer support and cooperative work: support for peer-to-peer learning and farm visits and to bring CSAs together into cooperatives to increase routes to market
- Equipment & Infrastructure: Support to access small scale appropriate equipment and infrastructure that could be shared amongst CSAs
- Policy & Advocacy: policy changes to support subsidies; small-scale and organic growing; prioritise local & sustainable in procurement; simplify planning/access to land
- Marketing & Outreach: central marketing support; regional & national campaigns



What would help new CSAs is:

- Financial support: start-up grants and capital, basic income for farmers
- Training: more start-up courses, mentoring, CSA incubator schemes; governance support, funded on-farm training schemes and apprenticeships, example models at varying scales, masterclasses, business planning and financial support
- Peer to peer: regional networks, links to existing CSAs, local events

Resilient community farms for a resilient community future

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