



**European Declaration on Community
Supported Agriculture (CSA)
Swiss Workshop
Café de l'Ancienne Gare, Fribourg, 28th
of November, 2015 ; 2 to 6 PM**

People attending :

Flavie Robert, Lumière des Champs, Granges ; Bettina Scharrer, Interfakultäre Koordinationsstelle für Allgemeine Ökologie (IKAÖ), University of Bern ; Mirjam Buehler, IKAÖ, University of Bern ; Julien Kauer, Isegeretoto project, Fribourg ; Julien

Vuilleumier, Notre Panier Bio, Fribourg, University of Neuchatel ; Gaelle Bigler, organiser, Notre Panier Bio, Paniers Engagés - Fédération Romande d'Agriculture Contractuelle de Proximité (FRACP), Urgenci

People who could not attend,:

Marie Brault, Jardin des Charrotons, Geneva ; Claude Mudry, Les Jardins de Cocagne, Geneva ; Flore Binggeli, Lumière des Champs, Granges, FRACP ; Lea Egloff, Solawi Switzerland, Regionale Vertragslandwirtschaft Verband (RVL) ; Christine Schilter, Les Jardins de Cocagne, Geneva ; Elisabeth Baudat, Lumière des Champs, Granges ; Rahel Duvoisin, Lumière des Champs, Granges ; Luc Bardet, Croqu'Terre, Romont ; Nicolas Bezencon, Panier Engagés, FRACP, Uniterre ; Sue Perkins, Croqu'Terre, Romont ; Sonja Korpeter, Biocò, Wettingen – Baden – Brugg ; Wummi, RVL, Wädischörbli, Wädenswil ; Olivier Olgiati, RVL, Zurich ; Bettina Dyttrich, Journalist, St Gallen ; Alain Reymond, Lumière des Champs, Granges

The general meeting turned out to be a workshop as so many people could not attend, as some climate demonstrations were being held the same day. Nevertheless the meeting was very rich and lively, and it is only the start of more collaboration. Many people expressed their willingness to organise a first national meeting in 2016, the next step will be connecting them.

We first got a round at knowing why people were interested in attending. In (very) short, Flavie is a member of a very successful CSA, Lumière des Champs, and is keen to participate in transnational projects. Bettina is working for the IKAÖ, an inter-faculties Centre for Ecology in Bern University and told us they are starting a big project about Community Supported Agriculture in Switzerland, France, Italy, Austria and Germany. They would like to work on the creation of a platform and on case studies. Mirjam is a University of Bern student interested in the questions of degrowth, and is willing to write her master thesis on CSA. Julien K has implemented a project of organic self-sufficient food production for a school of 300 children in Kenya and is willing to participate in Swiss projects. Julien V is finishing his PhD on CSA in Switzerland and is involved in several projects and networks. I, Gaelle, am a member of several working groups (Urgenci charter writing and research groups), the regional network steering committee FRACP and a member of the local CSA, Notre Panier Bio.

After this first round, we then had wonderful discussions based on what CSA meant to us, in Switzerland. Please find hereafter an overview.

➤ What does local mean to us ?

Being close to someone does not have to be geographical, the closeness can be relation-based or socially-based. Each CSA should define what local means to them, even though CO2 emission should be kept in mind.

➤ Certain soil + certain climate => adapted production

We, as CSA, should focus our energy on the potential of locally adapted goods. Products have an ideal production area, so varieties should be adapted to offer their full potential. We therefore support the use of old varieties and sharing of knowledge.

➤ Discussion on short circuits

Considering short circuits as the basis to CSA is not enough for us. There must be a common interest between the two persons in contact, as this common interest links them and differentiates CSA systems from other commercial systems. The link can be supported by financial, emotional and / or contractual matters such as a contract, as we believe that a contract is a firm commitment. Research has shown that the link comes often after the contract with the quality, the quantity and the frequency of the products.

➤ Ideal ? Good and bad systems ?

We believe CSAs are not static models but rather transition models to a new system. Even by “just” asking for fair, local, seasonal products people in CSAs are already participating in the change of a model of society.

➤ Consumers versus producers

The gap between consumers and producers should not be, we are all citizens giving functions, delegating some tasks to some people, who are our partners. We must therefore share risks !

➤ Key word : knowledge

To us knowledge is a basis to our work. If the consumer / eater (however we want to call them), understands the situation, he or she can make smarter choices. And, also, the producers has to understand the consumer needs and wants. As a gardener in a Swiss CSA once said “vegetables are an excuse for people to meet”. Knowledge is stronger than a contract, contract can be a pre-condition, as it can facilitate the direct link between consumers and producers. With knowledge people do not have crazy expectations, but knowledge is usually kept in only a few hands, that must change !

After all these discussions, I showed them the Declaration Draft. Please find our comments are on the right column.

Comment from the Swiss working group to the European team :

The Swiss participants were impressed by the work done by the European Charter Writing Group. As they did not see the draft when discussing the concepts, they were pretty impressed to see how their discussion mirrored discussions in other European countries.

Report written by Gaelle Bigler, on the 10th of December, 2015.

For further information or comments please contact me gallebiglersengage@gmail.com

Draft of a European Charta on CSA

Comments made by the Swiss team

Preamble

1 All over Europe, people are coming together to regain control of their food, from production to distribution to consumption.

2 We are building systems centered on our local communities.

3 We are joining forces to achieve food sovereignty, by reclaiming our right to define our own food and agricultural systems.

4 The time is ripe to address the disastrous effects of the industrial food system.

5 Food is too important to merely treat it as a commodity.

6 The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement can bring about a wide range of benefits for all.

7 We are many, varied and united.

8 We are stepping up in solidarity – taking responsibility – to create socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sustainable food systems.

9 Already in Europe hundreds of thousands of people have proven that CSA works, by creating a variety of practices, initiatives and networks based on common values.

Building upon the existing charters and

There are exceptions ! What is the definition of local communities ? Local communities can be based not only on geography.

Food systems : not clear enough.

10 experiences, this declaration aims to lay
down the common ground for this CSA
movement to flourish.

Definition

11 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is
a direct partnership based on the human
relationship between a group of consumers
and one or several producer(s), whereby the
risks, responsibilities and rewards of
farming are shared, through a long-term,
binding agreement.

CSA guiding principles

12 CSA is not a static model.

13 Like a garden it is dynamic: it evolves
and grows through daily care.

14 However, we agree on some basic principles
as our common ground to grow the CSA
movement.

15 • Responsible care for the land and other
commons through Agroecology

16 • Food as a common good rather than a
commodity

17 • Human scale farming and production
adapted to local realities with fair working
conditions

18 • Respect for the environment and animal
welfare

19 • Fresh, local, seasonal, healthy and diverse
food accessible to all

20 • Community building through direct and
long term relationships with shared
responsibility, risks and rewards

*Discussion on the use of the word agroecology,
suggestion “for example through Agroecology”. We
think the word needs to be defined and specified.*

Missing : fair salaries and incomes

FYI : To us this translates to contract ...

*20 bis : knowledge exchanges and co-construction
in order to contribute to the development of a
sustainable food system*

21 • Active participation based on trust,
understanding, respect, transparency and
cooperation

22 • Mutual support and solidarity
Build / Develop / Empower

23 We want to build a strong coalition of CSAs
and CSA networks across Europe to:

24 • Show the benefits of CSA for the whole of
society

25 • Strengthen the CSA movement and help
new CSAs to flourish

26 • Act as a voice for CSA communities to
bring about change in European policy and
agriculture to benefit above mentioned
principles

27 • Work together with other social and
solidarity economy movements

28 • Enable sharing of knowledge and skills
between CSAs in different countries

29 • Link up organisations and individuals that
are working to support CSA

30 • Empower and educate people to act and
develop the movement.

31 We are a grassroots movement: we believe
that the power of CSA is in pragmatic,
everyday action and face-to-face
relationships.

32 We are connecting with each other, with the
farmers in our communities and with the
living soil beneath our feet: this is our
Common Ground.