

Key Findings:

- 88% of the *current members* report eating healthier because of CSA
- Over half of CSA members take advantage of flexible options to help minimize food waste
- 80% of *current members* believe that because of CSA, they make a positive impact in the world

CSA Benefits:

- With CSA, members know their dollars are helping local farmers
- CSA members get recipes and advice from their farmers
- Flexible share options may include small share sizes, every other week delivery, and rescheduling boxes.

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What is CSA?

CSA stands for “community supported agriculture.” Members join a CSA by paying a local farmer before the harvest season begins to “subscribe” to the farm. Then, CSA members receive boxes of fresh and local food (a “share”) throughout the growing season. An estimated 100,000 households in Wisconsin participate in CSA. Many businesses participate in CSA by being a CSA pick-up site, which helps make CSA more convenient and helps employees encourage each other to eat healthy.

CSA Research

FairShare CSA Coalition represents a group of about 50 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms from Wisconsin. FairShare worked with researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Wisconsin-Extension to develop and distribute a survey to Wisconsinites that are *current* CSA members, *former* CSA members, or had *never* bought a CSA share before. The final survey was distributed and data collected between November 2016 and January 2017. A total of 3,227 individuals responded to the survey. This brief shares some key findings.

People Buy CSA for Healthy Food and to Support Local Farmers

Two main reasons why Wisconsinites participate in CSA are to eat healthy and support local farmers.

The survey found that 88% of current CSA members agreed that because of CSA, they eat healthier. CSA can support healthy eating because:

- CSA members eat more servings of fresh fruit and vegetables
- CSA members try a greater variety of foods
- CSA members get recipes and advice from their farmers

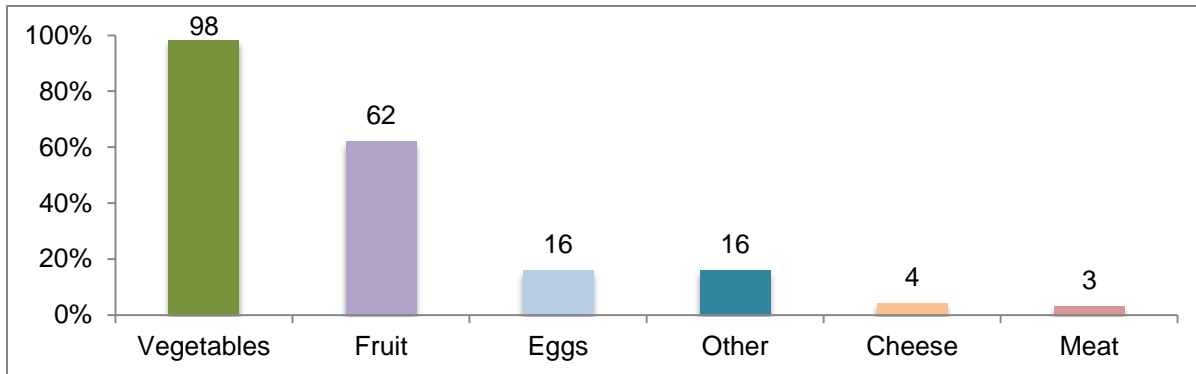
The survey also found that CSA members like to buy CSA because they know their dollars are helping local farmers. CSA membership is a reliable source of income for local farmers when they need it most – at the beginning of the growing season. Additionally, many CSA farms are committed to buying locally themselves. Overall, most Wisconsin CSA members (80%) believe that because of CSA, they make a positive impact in the world.

Minimizing Food Waste

The survey found that a top concern about CSA is food waste. Fortunately, there are several ways CSA members can avoid food waste. Over half of CSA members take advantage of one of these strategies:

- Buy a half-size share instead of a full-size share
- Buy a share for every other week, instead of every week
- Reschedule boxes for when you are out of town
- Join a CSA with another household and share the food

What's in Your Share? (% answered "yes")



Most current CSA members get fruits and vegetables in their share. On the survey, these categories were not mutually exclusive.

Selecting CSA Items

While many people enjoy having a farmer select a variety of seasonal food for them, the survey found that some people would prefer to individually select their own CSA share items. For people who prefer to select their own items, some farms offer a "market share." With a market share, instead of all members receiving the same selection of food in their box, members pick their own items for their share at a pre-specified time at their CSA farm, or when their CSA farmer is at the farmers' market.

More About How CSA Works

In general, members sign up with a CSA farm between December and April (or until a farm fills up) for the coming growing season. Members pay for their share of food up front. Some farms offer installment payment plans, but many require full payment at enrollment time. Then members receive a weekly or bi-weekly delivery of food through the 20 to 28 week high growing season from May to October. CSA farms drop off CSA boxes at a pre-determined pick up location, such as a business, a house of one of their members, a coffee shop, or a farmers' market. Some CSA farms also offer on-farm pick up.

Visit the FairShare CSA Coalition website to learn about CSA farms near you:

<http://www.csacoalition.org/>