

SEA CHANGE RESOURCE CENTER  
CSA REPORT 1997

19 LNE 96-77

Sea Change Farm is an urban Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative established this season and located in Philadelphia. The CSA's main objective is to establish a member supported, organic farming enterprise that grows vegetables, herbs and flowers for residents of the Philadelphia community. In addition to selling CSA shares, Sea Change also sold produce at a farmer's market this season, as well as to local restaurants. This report presents the results of the project's first year.

### **CSA Concept**

The Sea Change Farm CSA project is part of a growing movement of community based farms that have developed across the United States in the past decade. A CSA is an economic partnership that fosters a working relationship between farmer and consumer. CSAs are supported financially by a group of consumers who pay for the farm's operating costs in exchange for a "share" or a portion of the harvest. In making a financial commitment, CSA members also participate in making decisions about the farm's management and long term growth. As investors, members share the rewards of crop surpluses while the risk of crop failure or damage is spread among all participants. While each CSA evolves to serve the particular needs of its members, all share a common goal: to create a farm that is economically viable, environmentally sound and socially oriented, and that allows the grower to produce good, safe food on healthy land.

### **Sea Change's CSA**

With funding from SARE, Sea Change began it's first year as a CSA farm by utilizing one half acre of raised beds (Pennsylvania certified organic) as well as one half acre of land at Awbury Arboretum, producing over 37 varieties of vegetables, herbs and flowers. A harvest totaling close to 2,000 pounds (see appendix A).

The majority of CSA farms are located in rural and suburban settings. Sea Change is unique in that it is one of the first urban CSAs in the country and the only CSA in Philadelphia. In addition to soliciting community members to purchase shares in our CSA for personal use, we also encourage those who are able, to donate or subsidize shares so that each weeks harvest of fresh vegetables may benefit low income families in the community.

During our efforts to market our CSA, we found that being certified organic was crucial. Sea Change completed its certification application in April, 1997 and became certified organic (May, 1997). Sea Change had been practicing organic growing for over three years and was able to provide its growing data to Pennsylvania Certified Organic.

We experienced some problems during the later part of the year. Our Farm Manager who also had a CSA in Lancaster, PA began to pursue the development of his CSA again. Mr. Thomas was focused on teaching during the fall semester, which

wasn't an original arrangement with Sea Change. These activities created a slow start in our marketing efforts. However, we were determined to push forward and indeed were able to develop some membership for the first year. This season, 6 members purchased shares at a share price of \$550.00 per full share (\$300.00/half) for the season. A value of over \$560.00 per full share for the season. Patrons donated a total of 3 half shares for low-income residents. Sea Change distributed these weekly shares (a total value of over \$1,000.00 for the season) to residents of Cambridge Plaza housing development (see appendix B). Because surplus produce was often donated in addition to these shares, close to 30 families were served by this produce. In addition to donating food, Sea Change staff provided nutrition education and cooking demonstrations for the recipients of the produce, and began developing value added products such as zucchini bread and catnip bags with youth in an effort to promote entrepreneurial opportunities.

At the end of the season, shareholder feedback which was elicited through a shareholder survey (see appendix C) was very positive. Shareholders enjoyed choosing their own vegetables at Sea Change each week but it was suggested that a pick-up spot be established in the Mount Airy for shareholders residing in that area. Shareholders also seemed interested in increasing their level of involvement with the CSA both in terms of having more member events such as our picnic potluck dinner in October (see appendix D) as well as core group development.

### **Harvesting and Distribution**

Sea Change staff, along with the help of youth participating in our summer programs, neighborhood youth, and volunteers, harvested produce on a weekly to bi-weekly basis in order to provide our shareholders with same day picked produce. Throughout a 20 week period, beginning July 10 with a share containing mustard greens, beans, squash, lettuce and herbs and ending November 25 with a share of spinach, broccoli, carrots, and cabbage, 3 shareholders received a total of close to 380 pounds of vegetables per share for the season. Shareholders came to the Sea Change site to pick up their weekly share. Upon arrival, shareholders would find produce harvested earlier that day along with weight guidelines for each item. Shareholders were responsible for choosing and weighing their share.

Donated shares were originally picked up by children of Cambridge Plaza accompanied by an adult. During these weekly pick-ups, children were given an educational tour of our gardens, thus connecting them on a deeper level to the food their families would later cook and eat. However, as the season progressed it became more efficient for Sea Change staff to deliver produce and, at the same time provide cooking and nutrition workshops.

Crop surpluses beyond donated shares were donated to social service agencies such as MANNA (an HIV/AIDS nutrition program) and the Ludlow Social services Center.

### **Farmer's Market**

This season Sea Change participated in a community farmer's market established by Reading Terminal Farmer's Market Trust located at The Village of Arts and Humanities in north Philadelphia. Every Saturday from 10am to 2pm, beginning

on Saturday, July 12 and extending through October 4, Sea Change sold a variety of vegetables such as greens, lettuce, squash, tomatoes, okra, beans, corn and herbs to North Philadelphia residents, the majority of whom were WIC recipients.

Sea Change harvests were rounded out with produce purchased from a local, sustainable farm called Greensgrow. (See appendix E).

Sea Change staff along with the help of Tyheera Sanders, a young woman from Cambridge Plaza, operated these markets. There was a focus on educating consumers about the importance and benefits of eating fresh, seasonal, locally grown, pesticide free produce. This farmer's market also featured weekly nutrition education/cooking demonstrations as well as health screening and information.

### **Restaurants**

Efforts to market our produce to local restaurants were met with great enthusiasm. Baskets containing samples of a variety of vegetables and herbs were delivered to such establishments as: The White Dog Cafe, Jack's Firehouse, Tequila's Mexican Restaurant, Pattaya Grill, and Fresh Field's/Whole Food's Market. The White Dog Cafe and Tequila's purchased our fiery habanera peppers. All of these establishments expressed interest in purchasing our produce in greater quantity next season.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

After a promising first year, Sea Change looks forward to an even more prosperous 1998 season. With the establishment of a core group, Sea Change will have essential input from shareholders, community members, restauranteurs and other individuals interested in urban C.S.A. Some issues that will need discussion are: types and varieties of vegetables to plant, recruitment of new shareholders and volunteers, implementing working shares and other payment arrangements for low-income residents and adopting a distribution system that is both efficient for Sea Change and convenient for members.

## APPENDIX A

### 1997 Vegetable Varieties

Arugula  
Beans: Green, Yellow, Lima, Cowpeas  
Beets (and beet greens)  
Broccoli  
Cabbage: Green, Red, Chinese  
Carrots  
Corn  
Cauliflower  
Cucumber  
Greens: Collards, Kale, Mustards, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Turnip  
Herbs : Basil, Cilantro, Dill, Oregano, Parsley, Thyme  
Lettuce: Boston, Green Leaf, Red Leaf, Romaine  
Okra  
Onions  
Peas: English, Snap, Snow  
Peppers: Bell, Jalapeno, Habanero  
Radishes: Easter Egg, Red, White  
Summer Squash: Zucchini, Yellow, Crookneck  
Tomatoes: Jersey, Plum, Yellow  
Turnips  
Winter Squash: Acom, Butternut, Hubbard

### 1997 Harvest Totals

Week of:	Pounds
7-7-97	30
7-14-97	65
7-21-97	96
7-28-97	55
8-4-97	84
8-11-97	120
8-18-97	122
8-25-97	143
9-1-97	241
9-8-97	107
9-15-97	134
9-22-97	108
9-29-97	77
10-6-97	139
10-13-97	61
10-20-97	115
10-27-97	60
11-3-97	40
11-10-97	35
11-24-97	34
Total	1886

\*Total does not include flowers and produce unsuitable for market.

**APPENDIX B****1997 CSA Share Record**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Quantity (lbs/share)</b>	<b>\$Value</b>
7-10-97	12	\$18.00
7-17-97	16	\$24.00
7-24-97	18	\$27.00
7-31-97	17	\$25.50
8-7-97	13	\$19.50
8-14-97	17	\$25.50
8-21-97	18	\$27.00
8-28-97	30	\$45.00
9-4-97	16	\$24.00
9-11-97	25	\$37.50
9-18-97	17.5	\$26.25
9-25-97	32	\$48.00
10-2-97	28	\$42.00
10-9-97	22	\$33.00
10-16-97	19.5	\$29.25
10-23-97	17	\$25.50
10-30-97	21	\$31.50
11-6-97	11.5	\$17.25
11-13-97	15	\$22.50
11-25-97	13	\$19.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>378.5</b>	<b>567.75</b>

\*Value calculated using a conservative \$1.50/pound estimation.

**Donated Shares**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Quantity (total lbs/week)</b>	<b>\$Value</b>
7-15-97	24	\$36.00
7-22-97	24	\$36.00
7-29-97	33	\$49.50
8-4-97 *	50	\$75.00
8-5-97	34	\$51.00
8-12-97	42	\$63.00
8-20-97	35	\$52.50
8-27-97	43	\$64.50
9-2-97	32.5	\$48.75
9-9-97	85	\$127.50
9-16-97	50.5	\$75.75
9-23-97	39	\$58.50
9-30-97	50	\$75.00
10-7-97	54.25	\$81.00
10-14-97	27	\$40.50
10-21-97	17.5	\$26.25
10-28-97	36.5	\$54.75
11-4-97	12	\$18.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>689.25</b>	<b>\$1,033.50</b>

\*Produce donated to the Ludlow Family Center

**CSA SHAREHOLDER SURVEY**

On behalf of Sea Change I want to extend my deepest thanks to you for supporting our project this season. Considering that it is a new program and the first model of its kind that we know of (urban CSA) there was considerable risk involved (beyond the inherent risk of CSA in general). So thank you, thank you for being brave and pioneering souls, for believing in us and being committed to sustainable agriculture, clean food and urban renewal. I believe we had a successful first season. We couldn't have done it without you. There is always room for improvement however so please share your ideas, suggestions and comments freely.

1.) Please rate your satisfaction in terms of varieties, quantity and quality for each vegetable on a scale of 1 - 3. 1= very satisfied, 2 = moderately satisfied and 3 = unsatisfied.

VEGETABLE	VARIETIES	QUANTITY	QUALITY
Arugula			
Beans			
Beets			
Cabbage			
Carrots			
Com			
Cucumber			
Eggplant			
Greens			
Herbs			
Lettuce			
Melons			
Okra			
Onions			
Peas			
Peppers			
Pumpkins			
Radishes			
Summer Squash			
Tomatoes			
Turnips			
Winter Squash			

2.) Please indicate any vegetables that Sea Change did not supply you with this year but that you would like to receive next season. \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix C

3.) Please comment on Sea Change's method of distribution, i.e. were you satisfied with choosing your own share each week--did you like being given a choice or was it too much work, would you have preferred a pre-packaged share each week, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4.) Please comment on Sea Change's distribution site. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.) Please comment on the convenience of the pick-up day and time. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6.) Were you satisfied with your level of involvement with Sea Change or would you like to be more involved, i.e. more member events, work opportunities, CSA newsletter, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7.) Would you like to renew your membership for next year at \$300/share? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please fill out attached renewal form.

8.) If you plan to continue supporting our farm would you like to be more involved in terms of being part of a "core group" whose function would be to help with CSA decision making and organization? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE JOIN US**  
for a picnic potluck  
in celebration of Sea Change Farms'  
bountiful harvest and our first  
successful season of Community  
Supported Agriculture!

**WHEN: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9 AT 5:00 PM**

**WHERE: SEA CHANGE URBAN  
HORTICULTURE CENTER,  
1608 NORTH CARLISLE STREET**

- Family and friends are welcome
- Please bring your favorite dish (incorporating Sea Change vegetables if possible), along with a copy of the recipe. We will use your recipes to develop a CSA cookbook.
- Meet others who share your love of fresh food and enjoy new and wonderful tastes in one of north Philadelphia's most beautiful and inspiring green spaces.

**R.S.V.P. Call Jennifer: 978-5930**



**APPENDIX E**

**1997 Farmer's Market Totals**

DATE	GROSS	COMMENTS
7-12-97	\$45.00	
7-19-97	\$30.00	
7-26-97	\$31.00	
8-2-97	\$40.28	
8-9-97	\$66.80	
8-16-97	\$90.16	
8-23-97	\$113.00	
8-30-97	\$87.63	
9-6-97	\$69.49	
9-13-97	\$63.07	
9-20-97	\$46.68	
9-27-97	\$53.44	
9-28-97	\$77.00	Taste the Harvest- Reading Terminal Market
10-4-97	\$41.12	
Total	\$854.67	
Greensgrow	\$281.30	Produce purchased from local farm
Profit	\$573.37	

**Restaurant Sales**

Date	Item	Quantity (lbs)	Unit Price	Total	Restaurant
10-2-97	Habanero Peppers	3	\$5.00	\$15.00	White Dog Cafe
10-11-97	"	2.5	\$5.00	\$12.00	Tequila's
10-17-97	"	4	\$5.00	\$20.00	Tequila's
Total	"	9.5		\$47.50	



**PENNSYLVANIA  
CERTIFIED ORGANIC**

**ORGANIC  
CERTIFICATION**

Pennsylvania Certified Organic certifies that the following producer has used production and documentation methods which comply with or exceed Pennsylvania Certified Organic's strict Organic Standards and has had an on-site inspection by an independent organic inspector.

Producer: **Rosalind Johnson**  
Sea Change CSA  
1608 North Carlisle Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19121

Area or Product: 1 acre - all crops  
Member #: 0024-97  
Certificate #: 97-24  
Expiration Date: **May 31, 1998**

*Michael S. Brownback*

Michael Brownback  
Certification Committee Chair

*5-24-97*

Date

Question regarding the verification of this certificate or requests for a copy of certification standards should be directed to Leslie Zuck, Pennsylvania Certified Organic, PO Box 452, Centre Hall PA, 16828, phone (814) 364-1344, fax (814) 364-2330.

*Assuring Integrity of Organic Products in the Marketplace*