

Case Study: Stroud Community Agriculture

ABOUT STROUD COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE

Stroud Community Agriculture (SCA) is a community-led enterprise, an established local farming business that produces fresh organic and biodynamic produce for its members. Members pay a small membership fee and a monthly payment in order to receive produce including vegetables, with lamb, pork and beef available in addition. They are currently diversifying into other produce to expand the range. The farm grows on 3 sites, part of which are certified organic and biodynamic.

THE MODEL

SCA launched the Starter Farm 3 years ago when two people who had been working at SCA wanted to set up their own farm. They applied for funding (in SCA's name) for a polytunnel and some tools and equipment, and rent around 0.5 acre off SCA (0.25 acre plus a polytunnel), with the plot moving as part of SCA's rotation. SCA helped getting the project off the ground, including assembling the polytunnels, laying water pipes etc. SCA undertake an initial cultivation of the plot each year, and they share tools and equipment (including being allowed to borrow the tractor if they can demonstrate competence) and have access to farmyard manure. Originally SCA bought the produce grown for their veg scheme but the starter farm now sell independently and operate as an independent business. The current tenant has been on the land for 3 years but think it'll be a two year opportunity going forwards.

MARKETS

Originally SCA bought all the produce but the starter farm is now an independent business and sells some of their produce through their own routes to market and some through SCA outlets. They feel like this is the best option as it makes sure people learn how to run a business, sell produce etc, which are important skills when they move off the plot.

TRAINING

The Starter Farm tenants are presumed to have previously undergone an internship/traineeship/apprenticeship before moving onto the site - there is no training provided, but some informal mentoring from SCA.

COST

- Tenants do not pay rent on their plot of land to SCA, but they pay for water and utilities, potting compost and packaging bags (that SCA buy in bulk) and petrol for the rotavator
- There is rent-free seasonal accommodation available on site for one person (in a caravan, so not available during winter months).

