

UK Health and Wellness Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program

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OVERVIEW

- Why This Program Matters
- How it Started
- UK HR CSA Voucher Program: Details, Goals, Service Area, and Impacts
- Benefits
- Key Success Factors
- Conclusion

WHY THIS PROGRAM MATTERS

- Rising healthcare costs for Kentuckians
- Kentucky is a leader – the first Food is Medicine state
- A produce box subscription benefit for UK employees – a pilot
- Designing a successful program at UK that can be extended to other employers
 - 120,140 produce boxes delivered since 2015
 - \$3.8 million new CSA revenues for KY farms
 - Every \$1 invested generates \$3.17 for KY farms and lowers employee health care costs at least \$2.47
 - Keeps food dollars local
 - Piloted at UK but implemented in some part by over 30 different employers

HOW IT STARTED

- UK Horticulture Research Farm's CSA opened in 2007 with 40 shareholders
- Developed through USDA funding to demonstrate and document a diversified direct-marketed farming system
- Used for Farming Apprenticeship and KY Farm Launch (USDA-BFRDP) trainings
- Used to guide research and extension efforts to provide evidence-based solutions for KY farmers



Join UK-CSA
FOR OUR 2026 SEASON

The header image features a collage of fresh vegetables including a white melon, green cucumbers, red and yellow bell peppers, and green beans. Below the text are three circular inset photos: the first shows a group of people working in a field; the second shows a person on a tractor pulling a trailer; the third shows a close-up of colorful flowers.

UK-CSA DETAILS

- Every Thursday for 22 weeks, starts 5/21
- Receive 6-10 items each week: vegetables, some fruits, and herbs — all certified organic
- Choose farm or campus pick-up location
- Free you-pick opportunities: flowers, berries, okra, cherry tomatoes, hot peppers, herbs, and more!
- **Save up to 24% with a \$200 voucher**
- Around \$38/week
- On-farm potluck
- Curated recipes
- Gives you reasons to smile every week!



USE QR CODE TO REGISTER

WHAT IS CSA?

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture.

CSA is a partnership between a farm and supportive members of the community. The UK farmers provide the wisdom and labor needed to grow farm products and members receive fresh, local, and affordable food grown by people they know and trust.

At UK-CSA, we support the next generation of farmers! We are a UK educational & outreach focused project.

RECEIVE \$200 VOUCHER FOR UK-CSA

Eligible UK employees on a UK health plan have until **April 24th at 4pm** to claim a \$200 CSA voucher from the [UK Health & Wellness dashboard](#).

All vouchers must be redeemed no later than **April 26th** to purchase a CSA share with the farm.

USE QR CODE TO REGISTER

 Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

Sustainable Agriculture &
Community Food Systems

[More info: csa.mgcafe.uky.edu](https://csa.mgcafe.uky.edu)

SR-111

Economic Analysis of the University of Kentucky Community Supported Agriculture Organic Vegetable Production System

*Tiffany Thompson and Mark Williams, Department of Horticulture; Tim Woods and Carl Dillon,
Department of Agricultural Economics; Ric Bessin, Department of Entomology*

July 2017



<https://publications.mgcafe.uky.edu/sites/publications.ca.uky.edu/files/SR111.pdf>

HO-127

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Production Manual of the Organic Farming Unit at the University of Kentucky

Kristi Durbin, Mark Williams, Krista Jacobsen, and Rachel Rudolph, Department of Horticulture
October 2022



https://publications.mgcafe.uky.edu/sites/publications.ca.uky.edu/files/HO127_1.pdf

HOW IT STARTED

- **Model concept:** Madison, WI; FairShare CSA Coalition <https://www.csacoalition.org/>
- **Researched-based program design:** Woods and Rossi; USDA-AMS funding
- **University of Kentucky:** Flagship pilot employer
- **Farm-Employer coordination:** Kentucky Farm Share Coalition



**Bringing Community Supported Agriculture
to Kentucky workplaces and communities**

UK HR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Mission: To improve the health and well-being of the UK community through awareness, education and intervention.

UK HR CSA VOUCHER PROGRAM: DETAILS

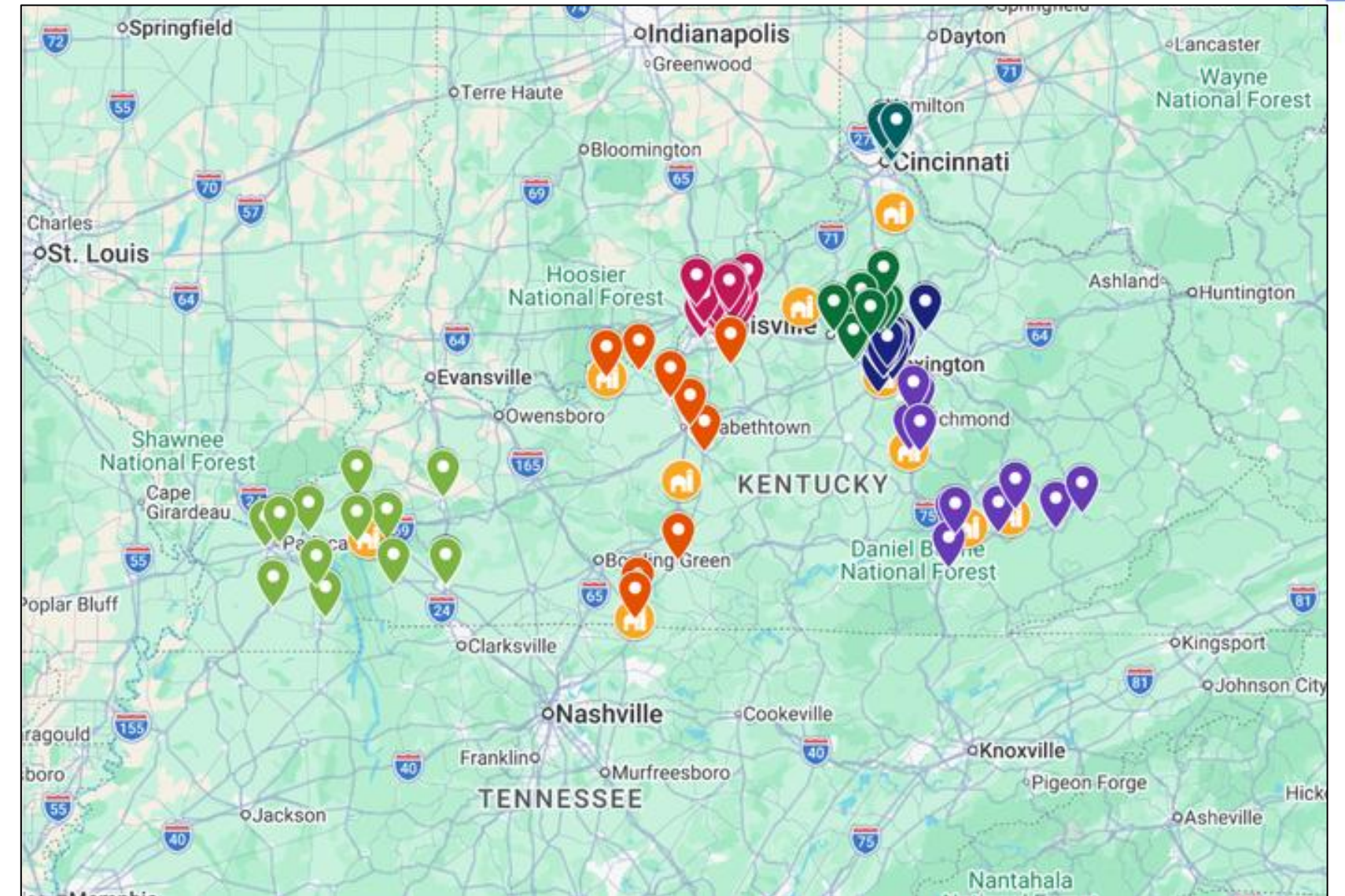
- UK HR Health and Wellness offers a \$100 OR \$200 incentive (voucher) for a weekly box of local vegetables during the main growing season
 - 20+ weeks
 - 13 partner farms
- Open to employees and retirees on a UK health insurance plan
- Sign-up window: January – April

UK HR CSA VOUCHER PROGRAM: GOALS

- Improve employee nutrition and health behaviors
- Improve health outcomes and reduce health risk
- Reduce healthcare costs
- Enhance employee well-being and engagement
- Increase access to healthy, local foods
- Support Kentucky agriculture

UK HR CSA VOUCHER PROGRAM: SERVICE AREA

- UK HR Health and Wellness is currently partnered with **13 Kentucky farms**
- Participants can choose from more than **130 pickup options**
- Employees and retirees can select from **community sites, on-farm pickups or home delivery options**



UK HR CSA VOUCHER PROGRAM: IMPACT REPORT



Celebrating over a decade of bringing weekly fresh produce shares to employees and retirees



"I love this program! My entire family is now cooking more, eating a better variety of foods, and eating more at home instead of ordering out. The quality of produce was great. It also feels good to know where my food comes from!"

- CSA Voucher Participant Feedback

"Great opportunity to support a local farmer and knowing in exchange I'll be eating healthier."

- CSA Voucher Participant Feedback

Farm Gate Impact



\$1.2 million invested in vouchers
\$3.8 million in local farm revenue

For every \$1 invested in this wellness benefit, \$3.17 went to Kentucky farms.

Program Reach



12 years of CSA vouchers offered
15 partner farms impacted
36 counties served
6,269 vouchers redeemed
120,140 produce shares delivered

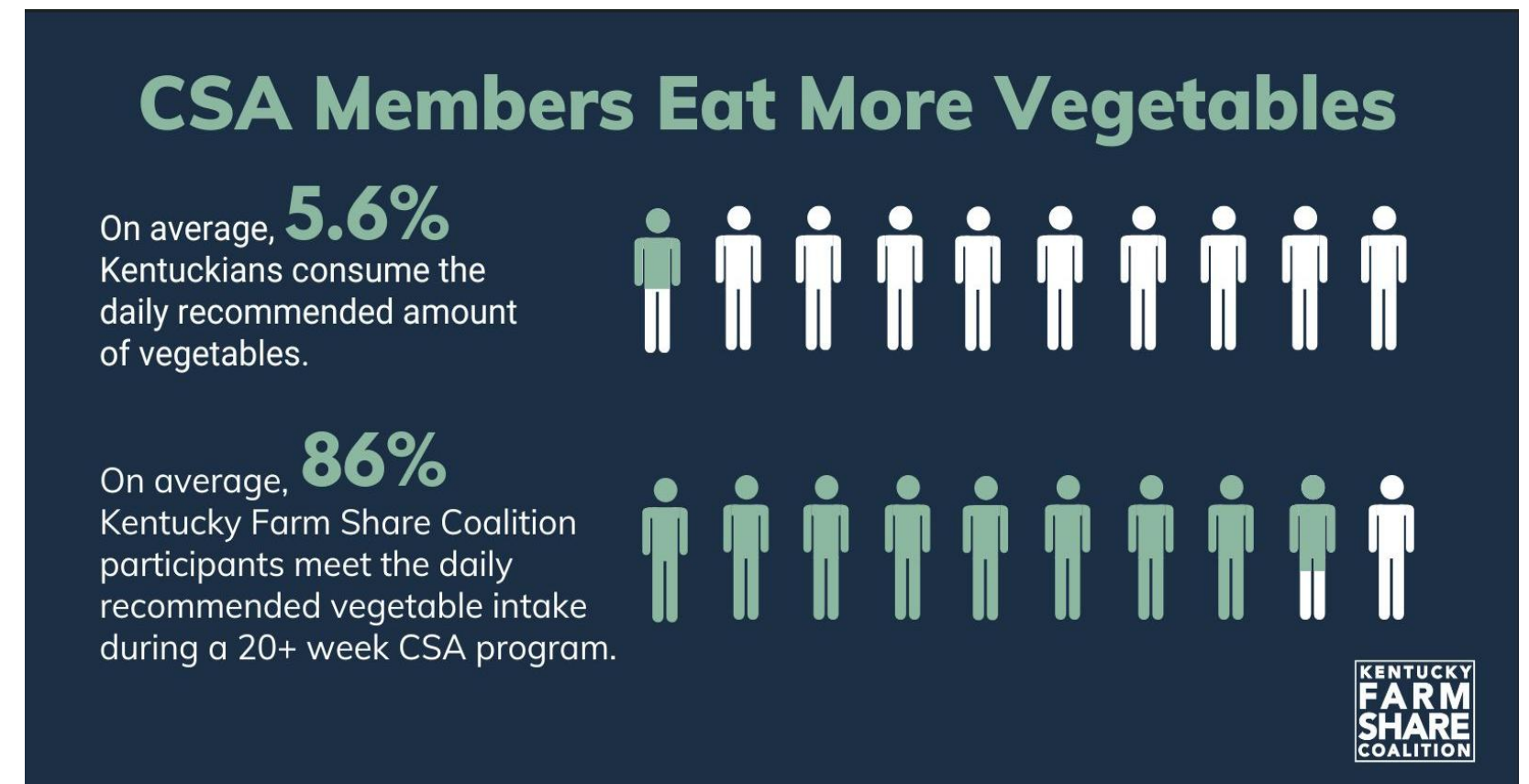
Program Satisfaction



91% had a good or great experience
89% ate two to three servings of vegetables per day
93% would recommend the CSA program
86% likely to participate again

BENEFITS: HEALTH

- **CSA promotes healthy habits:**
 - Increased frequency of cooking at home
 - Less processed foods consumed
 - Less trips to the doctor
 - Less spent on prescriptions
 - Feeling healthier overall
- **CSA improves biometric indicators:**
 - Lower systolic blood pressure
 - Increased carotenoid levels (an indicator of vegetable consumption)



BENEFITS: COST SAVING

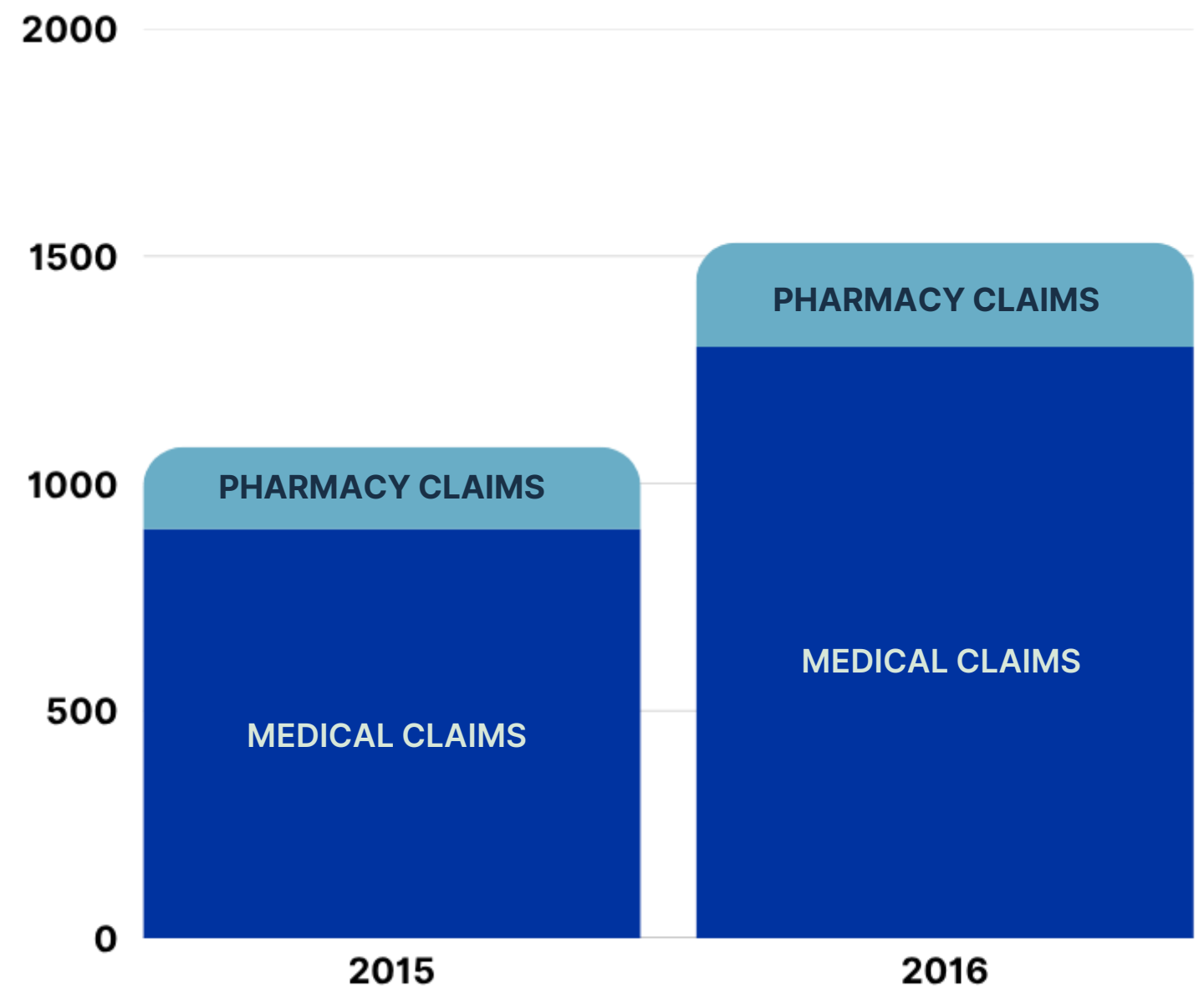
RESULTS FROM UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS RESEARCH STUDY

Diet-related medical claims

- 2015: Decrease of **\$900** after first year of CSA for high-medical expenditure employees
- 2016: Decrease of **\$1,300** after first year

Diet-related pharmacy claims

- 2015: Decrease of **\$180** after first year of CSA high-medical expenditure employees
- 2016: Decrease of **\$230** after first year



2015 ROI
\$2.47 per \$1 invested

2016 ROI
\$3.34 per \$1 invested

[Rossi, Jairus J., and Timothy A. Woods, \(2018\), "Diet Related Medical Expenditure Impacts of a CSA Voucher Program," Agricultural Economic Staff Paper #497.](#)

BENEFITS: OTHER

- Access to nutrient-rich produce every week
- Convenient pickups near work or home
- Knowing your farmer and how your food is grown
- Ensuring food dollars are kept in your community
- Opportunities to try new foods and recipes
- Enjoying the health benefits of a vegetable-rich diet



KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- **Well-defined CSA employee 'intervention'** with healthy products and period of support
- **Strong incentive for employees** to start the program and sustain participation
- **Consumer nutrition** (and other CSA values) **education** for those new to CSA
 - Initial promotion and on-going engagement
- **Local farm network capacity building and coordination** for employers
- **Commitment to measurement of impacts** – employees and farms

CONCLUSION

- 1. Improves employee health**
- 2. Supports Kentucky farmers**
- 3. Keeps food dollars local**
- 4. Demonstrates measurable ROI**
- 5. Serves as a national model**

Questions?

