

SHARED HARVEST ORGANIC FARM

CATEGORY:

POLICY | RESEARCH | **FIELD** | CLIMATE | BUSINESS

LOCATION/SCALE:

China (Local)

FOUNDER:

Shi Yan

PERIOD:

2012 - now

IN A NUTSHELL

Shared Harvest is a public-interested, service-oriented social enterprise devoted to the promotion of ecological agriculture and mutual trust between producers and consumers. The enterprise does not aim at maximizing profits, but rather aims at the comprehensive development of society, ecology and economy. To do so, they adopted a Community-Supported-Agriculture (CSA) model to cooperate with the local farmers in Beijing producing local, seasonal and organically grown vegetables and other food products. The CSA model consists of a community of individuals who pledge to support a farming operation, making the farmland community-owned. While growers and producers provide mutual support and share the risk of food production, members pay a fee and then receive a share of the harvest. The farm itself consists of 60 acres of vegetable planting base and 110 acres of forest land breeding base in a village in the Tongzhou District. In addition, they cultivate 50 acres of vegetable planting base in a town of the Shunyi District as well as 230 acres of fruit tree base and 60 acres of rice planting base in Heilongjiang. Besides that, they connect youth to agriculture and support them in learning about crop sharing by cooperating with eight schools and universities where they also advocate for healthy eating and food education.

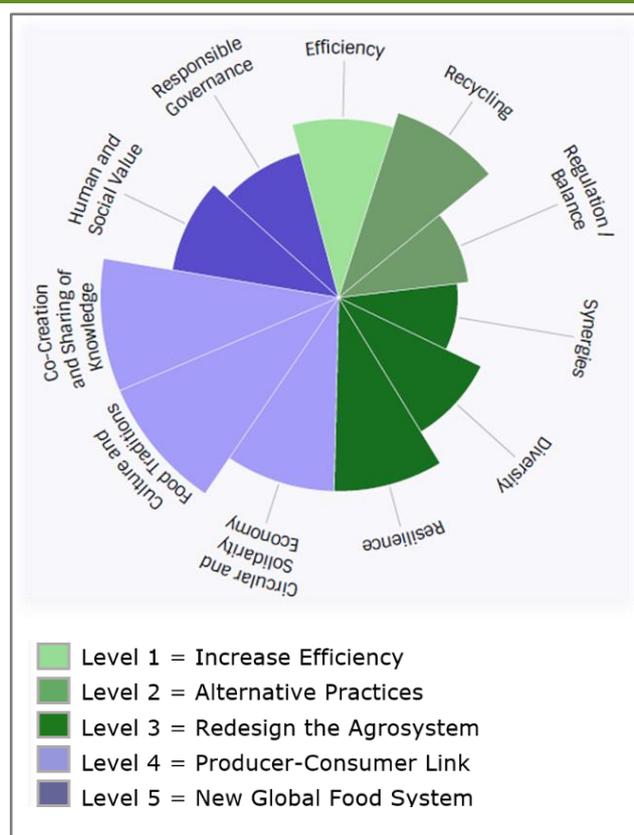


Figure: Assessment of Share Harvest Organic Farm based on FAO Elements of Agroecology and Gliessman's five levels of food system change

CONTEXT

Agriculture is a vital industry in China, employing over 300 million farmers and ranking first in worldwide farm output. Agricultural modernization, as implemented in China since the seventies, is largely responsible for air pollution and soil degradation through the usage of fertilizers and pesticides. Despite the rapid growth in output, the Chinese agricultural sector still faces several challenges as farmers often struggle to sell their agricultural products to customers. The long chain of intermediaries between the producing farmer in the countryside and the end-consumer in the cities often leads to a lack of trust and difficulties for farmers to foresee the demand and prices for different types of fruits and vegetables.

OBJECTIVE

Shared Harvest Organic Farm targets three core goals: strengthening the relationship between citizens and farmers, protecting the income of farmers in ecological agriculture, and improving the status of food security. They are committed to build a bridge of trust, allowing consumers to enjoy healthy and safe food, while producers get a fair and reasonable income.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

FARM LEVEL:

- Trained 50,000 farmers about CSA by providing 200 trainings and 500 services as advisors while spreading CSA techniques to more than 1,000 Chinese farms
- Farmers get paid a similar salary as white-collar workers in second or third tier cities

REGIONAL/NATIONAL LEVEL:

- Reduction of 2,500 thousand tons of synthetic pesticides and cutback industrial-sized processing of animal waste by 25,000 thousand cubic meters
- Increased family income of over 100,000 farmers who are part of the CSA farms and convinced more than 500,000 families to source their food directly from organically grown farms
- Active participation in social welfare undertakings and introduction of education public welfare courses in multiple schools in order to train a large number of youths across the country
- Hosting the 6th International Community Support Agriculture Conference in, the 7th China Social Agriculture Conference and the 8th China Social Ecological Agriculture Conference which was co-hosted by the District Government of Lishui City
- Created an internet platform & app for CSA farms in order to exchange information and to recruit new members

LESSONS LEARNED/CHALLENGES

The project has been self-financing since the beginning while the income in 2018 was around USD 1.5 million with a profit of 10% used to build new green houses and to start new projects. Although the new CSA business model helped farmers to sell directly to consumers, individual farmers are still struggling with how to reach consumers and gain their trust. In addition, especially young farmers who are returning to villages after receiving university education are under great pressure due to the low social status of farmers and the social biases against villagers. Although the farm does perform well in socio-economic measures potential is seen in the optimization of the biological synergies and a more complex crop rotation system.

RELEVANT LINKS & REFERENCES

- Shared Harvest Organic Farm Homepage
<https://bit.ly/2S42K26>
- Award from World Future Council for "Outstanding Practices in Agroecology 2019"
<https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/p/opa-2019/>
- Article from China Social Enterprise and Impact Investment Forum (CSEIF)
<https://www.caixinglobal.com/forum34/index.html>

