



**KENTUCKY
FARM
SHARE
COALITION**



Workplace Wellness Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program Impact on Diet-Related Medical Claims

Over the past three years, a group of farmers have developed [Kentucky Farm Share Coalition](#), a workplace wellness CSA program that partners with employers to offer employees increased access to healthy produce. Through this program employers provide incentives (typically \$200 per employee) to a subset of their employees towards the purchase of a CSA share from a participating farm. Then, for 20-22 weeks the employees enjoy convenient workplace pickup of their own box of locally grown, organic vegetables. When only 6.3% of Kentucky adults meet the daily vegetable intake recommendation and so many struggle with diet related illnesses, this is a low-cost way to invest in employees' health, while amplifying the impact of wellness programs.

Through this program, our research partners at the University of Kentucky (UK) have explored two years of medical claims data for UK CSA participants and non-participants. One of the most remarkable findings is the statistically significant cost savings for those CSA participants who start the season with a history of high diet-related medical claims expenditures. The November 2018 staff paper, "Diet-Related Medical Expenditure Impacts of a CSA Voucher Program"¹, highlights:

- **CSA participants who start the season with a history of high diet-related medical claims expenditures showed a significant decrease in diet-related medical claims (2015--\$900; 2016--\$1300) as well as a significant decrease in pharmacy expenditures (2015--\$180; 2016--\$230) over 12 months following the start of intervention.**
- **Total decrease in medical and pharmacy claims for those with high diet related claims = \$1080 (2015) and \$1,530 (2016)**
- There was no change in the low-expenditure group.
- This is a conservative estimate, looking only at the employee medical claims, not the household, though presumably everyone in the household consumed vegetables from the CSA share.
- The researchers recognize these are short term impacts and look forward to continued data collection to measure long-term impact. In the future they will also run matching

¹ "Diet-Related Medical Expenditure Impacts of a CSA Voucher Program", Department of Agricultural Economics Staff Paper No. 497, University of Kentucky, November, 2018.

www.uky.edu/ccd/sites/www.uky.edu.ccd/files/Rossi%26Woods_CSAVoucher_StaffPaper_11092018.pdf

analysis to address the issue of how this study is non-randomized since participants are actively choosing to purchase CSA shares. Furthermore, the researchers will use new analysis to account for the consistent increase in cost of medical care. Overall medical expenditures per 6/months have risen at UK from \$2797 in the first part of 2014 to \$6216 for that same period in 2018, diet-related medical/pharmacy have risen proportionally, so it seems reasonable to expect impacts of programs like this to be increasing.

Previous research based on CSA participant self-reported data shows that those who are CSA members report ²:

- **Decrease** in annual doctors' visits
- **Decrease** in pharmacy expenditures
- **Increase** in F&V intake
- **Increase** in perceived health

In 2018

- Our employer partners encouraged over 500 employees to purchase CSA shares with an employer incentive of \$100-\$200 toward the \$450-\$650 share
- This resulted in more than \$300,000 direct farm gate impact to our participating farms.

In 2019:

- We expect the program to move more than 800 shares, totaling nearly \$500,000 in CSA sales for participating farms

Employer partners:

- Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government
- University of Kentucky
- Valvoline Global Headquarters
- Louisville Metro Government (active in 2018, currently requesting funding for 2019)
- EC Matthews Construction
- Sekisui
- Genscape
- Lexington-Fayette County Health Department

Farm partners:

- Elmwood Stock Farm
- Rootbound Farm
- Lazy Eight Stock Farm
- Sustainable Harvest Farm

² Allen, James, IV, Jairus Rossi, Timothy Woods, Alison Davis, "Do community supported agriculture programmes encourage change to food lifestyle behaviours and health outcomes? New evidence from shareholders," International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability, May 2016. doi: 10.1080/14735903.2016.1177866. <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/14735903.2016.1177866>

- University of Kentucky CSA
- As share sales increase the Kentucky Farm Share Coalition will accept new farms offering certified organic CSA into the program.

For more information about the [Kentucky Farm Share Coalition](#) contact Brooke Gentile, Executive Director of the [Organic Association of Kentucky](#) at brooke@oak-ky.org or 502-219-7378.

Workplace Wellness CSA Research Related to the Kentucky Farm Share Coalition:

Allen, James, IV, Jairus Rossi, Timothy Woods, Alison Davis, “Do community supported agriculture programmes encourage change to food lifestyle behaviours and health outcomes? New evidence from shareholders,” *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, May 2016. doi: 10.1080/14735903.2016.1177866.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/14735903.2016.1177866>

“Diet-Related Medical Expenditure Impacts of a CSA Voucher Program”, Department of Agricultural Economics Staff Paper No. 497, University of Kentucky, November, 2018.
www.uky.edu/ccd/sites/www.uky.edu.ccd/files/Rossi%26Woods_CSAVoucher_StaffPaper_11092018.pdf

Rossi, Jairus, James E. Allen, Timothy A. Woods, and Alison F. Davis (2017), “CSA Shareholder Food Lifestyle Behaviors: A Comparison Across Different Consumer Groups”, *Journal of Agriculture and Human Values*, doi:10.1007/s10460-017-9779-7,
<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-017-9779-7>

Rossi, Jairus J., Timothy A. Woods, and James E. Allen IV (2017), “Impacts of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Voucher Program on Food Lifestyle Behaviors: Evidence from an Employer-Sponsored Pilot Program”, *Sustainability* <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su9091543>

Woods, Timothy, Jairus Rossi, James Allen, and Graham Soley, “Comparative Wellness Metrics – CSA Shareholders versus Everybody Else”, Selected paper presented at the WERA-72 Regional Research for Agribusiness annual meeting, Las Vegas, NV, June, 2015.