

“An involved city”



A journey along farms and food initiatives that connect citizens with the food system

Diana van Veelen Nsch 2022



Executive summary

For the Nuffield International Farming Scholarship I was awarded in 2022, I have travelled to over 50 farms and organizations that could tell me more about the relationship between legal structures and governance and the development of an involved community.

All of them were related to the food system and working on connections with citizens. Most of them have forms of shared ownership and have more than one person with decision-making power.

My first and most life changing conclusion was that our food system can be seen as a commons. Changing the perspective from food as a commodity into one where all people can join in production, processing, cooking and distribution of food opens up agriculture for engagement of citizens.

The second result of my peer-to-peer research is that ownership changes everything. Farmland that doesn't belong to farmer nor citizen opens up a new type of conversation. And shared ownership of food related activities and responsibilities like sustainability gives people options to be involved.

The third main conclusion is that building a community is people's work. Legal structures and governance help to make things clear and can distribute power more evenly. But building a committed community takes time and effort, in shifting perspectives and creating relationships.

This journey has helped me to turn my vision for a farm with an involved local community into a strategy with much clearer underlying concepts. In the coming pages I will share my insights with you, and I am happy to share more through personal contact.

The most relevant initiatives visited and some of their characteristics are listed in an [appendix](#).

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Introduction: My research question

A growing number of farmers is preoccupied with the question of how the agricultural sector can increase the involvement of the local community? A lot of companies want to improve the image of the sector, some to enhance their 'license to produce'. Others are looking into new business models, or even models of existence through engaging local citizens.

Burgerboerderij Oosterwold is our farm and its mission it is to create a community that is part of the local food system, to develop an agrarian commons. Traditionally the commons were about a piece of land, owned by the community, that was used by many members of that group. The people needed to agree on many practical things and cooperate quite closely to keep the land in good shape for many years.

Nowadays, a commons can be about any kind of resource, being it Wikipedia (a creative commons), a meeting place, energy or the food system. As long as there is a community that is concerned about it and is willing to take responsibility for it through creating their own set of values, customs and agreements around the management of that resource. Commoning is a process, a verb.

Before the start of my Nuffield scholarship I was already looking into the commons with some colleagues. We discussed a lot about agricultural land as a communal resource. By many new legal and financial structures were seen as an important tool to create participation of local people.

However, I wasn't satisfied with the idea that agricultural land should be the communal resource. Citizens whom are eating the products of the soil are not managing the land itself and usually farmers are -understandably- reluctant to give them decision making power over it. Also, I wasn't sure about the effects legal structures have for community development. When the opportunity for a Nuffield scholarship arose, I understood that this could bring a lot of insights for our farm and for frontrunners of the commons in The Netherlands.

The main question I took with me on my journeys is:

How does legal structure and governance of agricultural property influence the involvement of the local community?

My travels led me on a 4 week road trip through Northeast America and to Spain, Great Britain, Germany, France and Belgium. Everywhere I found precious initiatives and beautiful farms, most of them related to food and the commons. I've also had the opportunity to visit farms with a different focus and discuss with them about their future. It was interesting to hear that also large scale producers think about changing their process and product range and connect more with their customers.

It was a privilege to visit more than 50 companies and initiatives. Every entrepreneur had useful insights to share. It was amazing to hear about so much passion and learn about their choices and the reasoning behind it.

In this summary I will share three main conclusions, my personal journey and some recommendations with you. In the [appendix](#) some main points are summed up for the most important initiatives I talked with.



Visiting Susan Weaver Nsch2022 in North Carolina and learning about large scale tobacco and soy production. She is facing serious challenges due to the decreasing market for tobacco and needs to rethink the future of her farm.

Conclusion #1: Food itself can be seen as a commons

In order to connect the concept of the commons and agriculture in an effective way I needed a new narrative, which I found in the concept 'food as a commons'. When food production and therefore the product is owned by one person or company, food is easily reduced to a commodity. Throughout history, food always has been more than that. It is part of our heritage, can have a spiritual meaning and is a cultural determinant. By cultivating, processing, exchanging, cooking and eating together food gets a much richer role in our lives and the food-producing system turns into a commons again. Financial gain is exchanged for the joy of sharing and fellowship, for healthy food and healthy activity, for cultural growth and more equality. When food is the commons, all eaters should be involved and have decision making power to some extent.

[Frontier Kitchen](#) is a commercially shared kitchen close to Washington D.C. that is rented by 75 small food entrepreneurs. When Covid disrupted the existing large scale food production in the USA, owner Brenda Cromer developed her business from renting out kitchen space into a business incubator. She puts a lot of effort in developing a market for her customers, especially helping them to diversify their products and grow a thriving farmers' market. It is not organized as a commons, but it gave me a taste of what it can be like when a diversity of people play a role in the food system.



*Commercially shared kitchen
Frontier Kitchen facilitates dozens
of small food entrepreneurs.*

*This lady buys local meat from a
farmer and turns it into delicious
meals. It is sold frozen in the farm
shop and by her in the city.*

After Covid, many people returned to their old routines, but there is a group who realized how risk-prone the current food system is. In most initiatives I visited are people who want to be part of the food system and are motivated to build a food system that is built of many commons initiatives. David Bollier from the Schumacher Centre for New Economics made me realize that this exactly is what makes food a commons.

*Soul Fire Farm focuses on
including all BIPOC people and
connect them with food. It is a
place where activism is
practiced at the grass roots. In
addition they are capable of
telling their story well and with
this they meet support on
many levels.*



At [Soul Fire Farm](#) in Massachusetts the initiators chose to own and run the farm as a cooperative of all residents, where even the land itself is been given a (veto) voice. The residents are all involved in running the farm and education activities. They strongly feel their responsibility for providing food for city dwellers. They connect with marginalized groups and choose to equally distribute goods to them, including high end products that could make a fine price on the market. Many of their target group are enabled to travel to the farm and feel connected to nature and enjoy to be seen as people with a value instead of the stigma's.

Food sovereignty and the spiritual aspects of the land and food in connection to the indigenous people that lived on the land are subjects that were obviously present during the tour. Through their way of addressing different social issues and therefore connecting to NGO's and authorities, they are able to thrive financially. It is an interesting example on how food becomes more than a commodity when it is organised by a group of people that are not interested in financial gain.

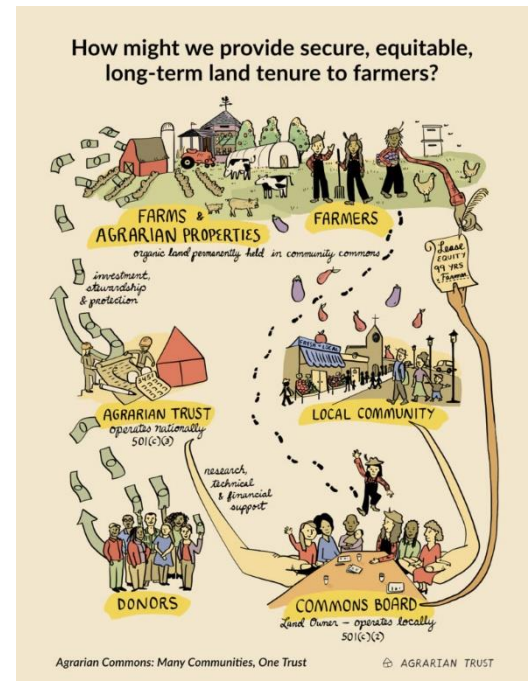
Conclusion #2: Ownership changes everything

Land ownership

The prevailing concept of ownership is absolute ownership in the sense that a person or entity owns a property title and has all the rights to decide over it. What is interesting to see is that most of the time the increase in land prices are caused by speculation of the title owner and external features such as location or road access. Land value increase is rarely defined by what is produced on the land.

In a growing number of areas in the US and The Netherlands the production of farm land cannot carry the costs of purchasing it anymore. Although there is a general call for more sustainable production, existing farmers that want to farm more extensive face growing difficulties in creating an economically viable business model due to the high costs.

All initiatives visited that want to change the private ownership structures chose to put the land in a trust or foundation structure. Most attempt to make the land debt-free or find investors that accept low interest rates. The entity holding the land usually has by-laws that talk about sustainability, long term goals such as being a good ancestor and ruling out the possibility of selling and mortgaging of the land. The phrase 'the land is owned by nobody' is heard often among the initiators and this can open up a more equal conversation with the community about the food system, landscape and biodiversity. I haven't found initiatives where the land is actually owned by the community resulting in voting rights over the use of the land.



Kim Kirkbride of Southwest Virginia Agrarian Commons explained that farmland is disappearing because it is legally possible to construct houses on farm land, which makes much more money than farming. The commons for her is a way to secure farmland for future farmers.

[Agrarian Trust](#) is an organization on national level in the USA that has started several local agricultural Community Land Trusts. It's role is to fundraise for obtaining farm land and sharing knowledge. Money comes in through crowd funding, from local authorities or impact investors. The advantage of having both local and national representation is the wider range of funders to address.

The specific goals of the local CLT may differ, but all are working on securing farm land, making it accessible to all and create financial space for sustainability. An important target group within the Agrarian Trust CLT's is Black and Indigenous People of Colour (BIPOC).

Many initiatives are too young to show clear results, but the equivalents in the housing sector such as Maggie Walker CLT and Forest Row CLT have promising effects. Houses that are long term off the market are sold for realistic affordable rates instead of for speculative prices and the community takes care of the continuation of the CLT.

I have visited two of the [Agrarian Trust CLT's](#); Southwest Virginia Agrarian Commons and Central Virginia Agrarian Commons and 7 of their partners. Both CLT's have a local foundation that holds the farmland and leases it long term to farmers that fit within its goals. Each has a CLT board to oversee that larger goals of the project, select leaseholders and to embed it properly for the long term. The board consists of representatives of the partners, farmers, the local community. Agrarian Trust is incorporated to have an extra independent vote to secure the principles of the movement, especially in the case of changes in land ownership.

I was expecting a highly involved local community in the Agrarian Commons, but besides financing and consuming products there is not so much space for local citizens to participate. It turns out that securing land takes much effort, not in the last place because of the huge amounts of money needed to do it and the workload on legal aspects. The wish to involve communities deeper into agriculture is certainly present.

Often ownership is tied to power over the financial resources. It is wonderful to see that when land does not belong anymore to 1 person, the community can start to learn to take responsibility. In Sankofa Community Orchard (a farm of CVAC) and at Soul Fire farm, I saw urban residents full of enthusiasm figuring out to do 'the right thing'. They were creating a shared set of values to do agriculture and exploring their own needs at the same time. It was interesting to see that when there is no opportunity to gain large profits, people start working together for the common good.

This may also be the reason most initiatives have a focus on inequality, stronger than in Western Europe. Themes are securing land for new farmers, often BIPOC and/or regenerative farmers or making reparation payments to indigenous people, the original owners of the land.

Ownership of operation

Changing the ownership of land is a huge change for a farmer. Changing the ownership of the operation of the farm is relatively rare and mostly seen in initiatives that were started by new farmers, such as Soul Fire Farm.

Further in the food chain it appears to be easier for citizens to organize parts of it themselves, such as setting up cooperative supermarkets or food coops, processing activities like canneries and CSA food processing and logistics. Community initiatives are generally better at reaching specific groups of people such as BIPOC, LHBTIQ+ and people in poverty. One of the reasons for this is that these initiatives work with a model of existence instead of a business model and simply have the will to reach these groups.

I found that in all cases where there is commitment of a community, there was ownership of the operation in one way or another. Having decision-making power is important because it enables groups to find ways to meet their own needs and match their capacities at all times.

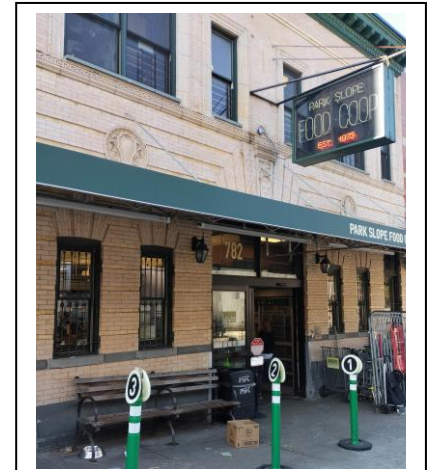


Sankofa Community Orchard in Richmond (CVAC) is exceptionally good at involving the community since it is located at the edge of the city and the farmer is dedicated to build it together with the neighbourhood.

On my list are quite a number of [cooperative supermarkets](#). There are different models, of which the Park Slope Food Coop model is best duplicable. It has been successful for 50 years and is copied to Paris, Brussels and London. PSFC has currently 18.000 members and owns a supermarket in Brooklyn New York.

Each member works 2,75 hrs per 4 weeks, in very well organized shifts. Shopping is member-only and results in 20-40% lower rates than in most supermarkets. Hiring less staff, no need for profits and the advantage of large amounts in buying contracts are the main drivers for this advantageous pricing. The model itself is quite simple and seems to be an economic transaction. On the other hand, in a cooperative everyone is responsible for the well-being of the group. Many members have their shifts organized in 'squads', a stable group that works together. In general, people know enough people to get a sense of community.

Other initiatives are mostly attracted to it because it activates the entire community and is quite egalitarian. Some were forced to choose a different model however, which has everything to do with population density. The denser an area is populated, the more likely is that the coop will find enough members that are willing to comply with the strictest model. This corresponds with their presence in capital cities.



Members of cooperative supermarkets understand the necessity of doing things for the common good. One example is that there is little loss due to expiry dates. People intentionally buy food close to expiring.



The Weavers Way Coop runs Henry's Got Crops. A CSA farm that welcomes members to pick their own harvest. It also delivers fresh vegetables to the cooperative supermarket.

Even in a large city like Philadelphia, Weavers Way Coop couldn't make the PSFC model work and chose to let it go. The coop still has members who have decision making power, but is also open to other customers. As a result it grew into a less active, but much larger community. The mass helps to get projects done, but the prices in the shops are higher because of the need for more staff members. In general it is a vibrant community, and its activities are more diverse than PSFC, such as running a farm. Weavers Way leaves it up to the responsibility of wealthier customers to share their income by paying more for the products. This works well, Weavers Way has 2500 people that pay extra in a program that offers 500 people a lower price.

During my travels I had the privilege to talk to a lot of initiatives that handle ownership differently and learn from their motivation, structures and results. I saw companies 100% owned by the farmer, cooperatives completely owned by communities and all sorts of combinations in between. There are quite some initiatives with a combined model that are organized around a farm, such as Schumacher Centre, the Agrarian Commons and a number of Dutch initiatives. They choose to give different groups of people and communities differentiated ownership and therefore decision-making power on specific aspects. In most of the combined models elements of steward ownership can be found, where it is important to give decision making power to people who actually run the place or are the beneficiaries. Instead of money driven, the initiative then becomes mission driven.

[Kattendorfer Hof](#) close to Hamburg Germany is an example of an older farm that has a combined model. The farm itself is organized as a company with several branches like dairy cows, pig, vegetables, arable land farming and meat and dairy processing. Each type of agriculture has its own responsible person and these together function as a management team. Some are also co-owner.

The business model is Community Supported Agriculture, in this case meaning that the price of products for 1000+ share-holders is determined by sharing the costs and their benefit is an equal share of the harvest.

The Kattendorfer Hof is more than 30 years old and once started delivering products to small food coops. At some point these reached a size that more space was needed and they decided to start a shop together. This resulted in 7 shops nowadays. The shops and contacts with food coops are organized in a different entity.

Citizens have relatively little to say about the food production, but feel empowered because they need to actively organize their own group. At one point I asked how they decide what type of meat they give to groups. The farmer responded that for them it is normal to divide all types of meat over all the groups. And within the group people need to figure out who gets the steak, the minced meat or the tail. Kattendorfer Hof encourages people in these small ways to take their own responsibility.

Conclusion #3:

An involved community is peoples' work

One of the surprises I encountered was [Gedeelde Weelde](#), which is a multi-stakeholder cooperative supermarket run by a group of entrepreneurs and voluntary membership of consumers and suppliers. When I studied their business plan and bylaws of the coop, it showed not so much emphasis on the involvement of the community. While being there I experienced a great commitment of the entrepreneurs to involve people through different initiatives and a high appreciation of the volunteer-members. Volunteer-members are visibly involved in different work-groups and Gedeelde Weelde is well embedded in the local community. Every member that works in the shop gets rewarded with coupons called 'Weeldes' that can be used as a payment token in the shop. In that way the impact of working for a better food system brings instant results and this motivates a lot.

Also, Gedeelde Weelde has made it policy to work on affordable organic food and they succeeded by introducing 'biobasics'. Through an ingenious pricing mix, choosing different brands and smart buying they created a basic affordable assortment. This coop is a great example of how peoples' work is even more important than organisational structures for growing a community.

During my trip in the USA, I had the privilege to learn from Susan Witt, head of [Schumacher Centre for New Economics](#) for 43 years. Together with her partner Bob Swann, she developed the Community Land Trust model. Schumacher Centre developed into a revered place for gathering knowledge and application of concepts. They applied the CLT model to a housing project, to the large rural property the centre is located on and to a couple of farms. Also, they host a successful local currency, the Berkshares.

Although Schumacher certainly focuses on taking land off the market, their main activities are always directed towards community development. For them, the CLT is a tool to build a new economy or society, a means to an end.



Old food coops form a large part of the customer base of Kattendorfer Hof. They have in their DNA already the idea imprinted that they should form a group to access quality food from local farms. They have a long cultivated (25+ years) and deep felt need to be connected to Kattendorfer Hof.

Certainly a lot can be learned from Schumacher about legal structures and governance, but what struck me most is the continuous work of Susan in the community. We have spent on several days our free time together which gave me the time to observe. Every entrepreneur we met during lunch or shopping was elevated a bit by her, highlighting their efforts for the community or the effects of Berkshares on local businesses. Every occasion possible to reinforce community focused thinking was used well by encouraging people to use local products or share capital to fund more local businesses.

Her fun and creative way of interacting worked wonders, but in conversations it was also clear that all this was deliberate and incessant lobbying. I could experience every day that the work of Schumacher Centre had a place in the daily life of local people and it was made clear to me that this was the result of forty years of building by dedicated people.



The yearly cider pressing community event hosted by Schumacher Centre for New Economics is a local phenomenon.

Not everyone agrees a full 100% with the statement that an involved community is people's work. The representative of [Mondragon Corporation](#) explained that a well-designed and simple structure makes it possible for large numbers of people to join, regardless of their ideals and beliefs. The massiveness of what is reached in Mondragon Corp with 70.000+ people in the federation of worker owned cooperatives and many more outside the Corporation seems to underpin this. At the same time they put a lot of effort in the representation of members on all levels of the companies in order to give everyone a voice in the coops. This shows that without a dedicated community this can't work.

We visited Behi-Alde, a cooperative dairy farm that is a member of Mondragon Corporation. When asked why the workers didn't decide to sell the impressive farm belongings for their own gain, the director answered in disbelief. For him and his colleagues this is out of the question, because then the cooperative would be destroyed. The cooperative structures are everlasting in itself and the cornerstone of their society.



Mondragon cooperatives have an impressive system of supporting each other. They are organized in sub-groups that take care of each other in bad times, but also check whether coops are managed properly.

There are examples of cooperatives that were financially doing not so well for a decade because of the markets. They were supported by others that were more fortunate. When the market changed, Mondragon had the industry running to take advantage of it. The long term thinking within the cooperatives prevents the area for collective crises and therefore everyone is educated in the cooperative thinking and the history of economic crisis Mondragon has been in before.

It is not the legal structure that determines the community, although it certainly can hamper or catalyse the community development. The structure makes clear who has power and ownership. The governance regulates the division of power, how policies are drawn up and executed and shows the real influence the community can have. But in the end it is the work of humans to give people in a group a voice that is heard. Only when all three work together a dedicated community grows.

Strong and weak points of the commons

Some strong points and chances of working with the commons concept as a farmer are:

- The input per person might be small, but the numbers make it incredibly powerful. In terms of financing, network, practically on the farm and having a community gives a voice to farms that cannot be ignored. If there is something that needs to be fought for, communities can be surprisingly effective.
- It brings city and country side closer, more understanding of processes and the challenges farmers meet.
- Having common interests with a large group of people is a great risk coping strategy.
- The commons is a appreciated perspective on the future at the moment, for example the policies of the municipality of Amsterdam call commons projects an important part of stimulating democracy.
- Regenerative farming is not only about regenerating farm land, but also about regenerating our society. These go hand in hand and reinforce each other.
- In these challenging times it is interesting to see that people want to work shoulder to shoulder when they see the farmer struggling.
- It is fun and life changing to work with people, to love each other, be supported and enjoy the many small blessings in life.

Weak points and challenges:

- With many people come also a lot of 'projects' and people that need guiding and attention. This is often added to the normal farm work. It is a skill to let the commons work for the good of the farm, find good concepts that work for everybody.
- Finding common ground with citizens asks from a farmer that the goals of the farm are not only to benefit the family. This also requires trusting the community, which can be betrayed.
- Having a lot of people on the farm requires different management. It is a real challenge to navigate betrayed trust, negativity and conflict and it is easy to become bitter and negative. Depending on who is the initiator, it is necessary to work on skills to work with decision making models and conflict resolving.
- A model that is built on a community also risks to lose that community. The size of the risk depends on the size, diversity, agreements and how long the community has been involved.
- Society and people changes over time and it might be that your direction of interest at some point stops matching the groups interests.

Development of Burgerboerderij Oosterwold

The travels for Nuffield have influenced our farm a lot. We are in a pioneering phase, with few examples we knew of. We farm on what possibly is the most expensive land on the world with hectare prices of now exceeding €200.000. Farming exclusively can never bring in enough revenues to make the farm viable. We want to stay largely in agro-ecological food production, so activities such as a large scale camp site or childcare are not an option. A small scale version will not bring enough income. Besides that the world around us changes and we want to be a catalyst of that change. Therefore we need to base our farm on different principles.

In the years before Nuffield we got convinced that only the commons has enough power in it to overcome our challenges. It gave us a direction, a purpose, but only the contours of a strategy. Nuffield has helped us to make the purpose much more specific towards 'food as a commons' and fill in most of the gaps for the strategy. Also, seeing all these initiatives gave me simply more courage to start our own and provides me with examples to explain our vision to stakeholders.

There is not one model that we choose, but there are certainly concepts we will incorporate in our own model.

- My travels made me realize how crucial it is for our initiative to offer access to local food. Professionalizing our shop and becoming a hub for local food was somewhere in our plans, but we decided to start to develop this next year.
- At the moment we consider to use the multi-stakeholder model of Gedeelde Weelde for our new farm shop.
- We want to introduce an existing local currency (like Berkshares) to the farm, to make trade between the 20 entrepreneurs on our farm easier and to reward citizens who take up responsibilities in the food systems (similar to Gedeelde Weelde).
- As for customers for our products, we decided to put our effort in growing the community, not in marketing. We are building up connections with food initiatives like Kattendorfer Hof did. These groups are organizing themselves and grow independently, which helps a lot in making impact.
- I see developing cooperative supermarkets such as Park Slope Food Coop in the city as a good option to grow the consumption of local food, offering also higher volume deliveries to farmers.
- Burgerboerderij Oosterwold is a place that offers options for citizens to join the food system. I've seen various examples, but was especially enthusiastic about [Polyface farm](#) offering workshops in all sorts of agricultural processes. The way they did it made people really part of it.



On Polyface farm Joel Salatin's team regularly butchers chicken with citizens. People felt enabled and motivated to do this in their community after this session.

My personal journey

As a person I am more of a strategist and I love thinking about the concept as a whole. From my scholarship I learned that I need to develop a simple system that addresses short term needs. This should act as a catalyst to achieve the bigger goals, but the whole picture takes time and a personal journey for the community members. For now, our focus needs to be to make the concept understandable and relatable.

One of the challenges on our farm is that we invite different enterprises and initiatives, all with already their own local customer base. The question arose on how to connect these communities and give them logically shared benefits for being part of the bigger picture. At first we wanted to copy the model of Park Slope Food Coop to the farm, but by visiting La Louve in Paris I realised that the population density is way too low for such a closed system.



Everybody is welcome, let's connect and solve our own problems. The neighbourhood of Sankofa Community Orchard understood this and soon was involved.



Now we are exploring local currencies. I learned a lot from the Berkshares and the 'Weeldes' from Gedeelde Weelde, both working with a local currency. It is possible to create a shadow economy on the farm, that still is sufficiently in touch with the prevailing economy. Money circles several times among the community and entrepreneurs before value escapes to other entities that are often not locally based. Circuit Nederland has a built in technology that allows for the circular money to be exchanged for euro's only after 6 months.

Imagine community members doing tasks in one of the enterprises on the farm and getting paid €5/hour in local currency. The community members can only use their earnings in the cooperative shop, where it effectively gives them a discount on local products. The cooperative shop can use these earnings to buy goods from suppliers on the farm that are also in the same shadow economy. Suppliers can (partly) pay their staff and community members with the local coin and the circle is round. After 6 months of circulation each unit can be exchanged for euro's if necessary.

What we see now is that the community loves to be around on the farm, but buys too little products. Out of habit and because it is more expensive than they are used to. We hope to encourage them with the described mechanism to buy more on the farm. Larger volumes help a lot in making food more accessible and affordable.

Recommendations

Some recommendations for farms that start to work with local communities:

- Consider to let some of your focus on your own (farm) needs go and open up to the needs of the community, ideally developing some common goals and shared interests.
- If you want a real connection, get to know your community. For deep connections and a community that supports you, you need to put in time and effort.
- A good reason to get organized and fight for activates a community.
- Having fun time and celebrations matter, as well as regular get-togethers.
- Make sure a decision making model is implemented and the community decides on how to handle conflict.
- Let legal structures be a result of what you want to accomplish.



Other helpful actions to encourage better relationships between city and countryside:

- We experience that the gap between city and countryside in reality is similar to that in policies. Incorporating the connections between them in policies makes it a topic on the agenda and encourages entrepreneurs to start thinking about it. Also, it helps to make the commons a topic in policies like Amsterdam Municipality did.
- For example, the Metropole Region of Amsterdam in which Almere and Lelystad are partners has a food policy, but hasn't really worked together with Zeewolde, the largest food producing municipality at its borders, which technically is not a partner in the consortium.

- More openness in destination or zoning plans for activities that involve larger amounts of people or establishment of impact entrepreneurs that are good at connecting the city and countryside.
- Most entrepreneurs that pioneer in this type of farms need to deal with even more topics than other farmers. Most subsidies now are built around hiring advisors for all sorts of plans, while initiators need qualified people to execute their usually well thought through plans. Most subsidies unintendingly add more projects and plans to the workload, even creating a danger to the entrepreneurs' health.

In the table below you can find a list of the most relevant initiatives and farms that were visited with some characteristic features.

Appendix 1: Overview and characteristics of visited initiatives

Initiative	Description	Juridical structure	Governance	Non-formalised decision making power	Community involvement, learning points
Park Slope Food Coop (New York, 18000 members) La Louve (Paris, 5000 members) Bees Coop (Brussels, 2500 members)	Cooperative supermarkets in which each owner-member obligatory works 3 hrs a month, shopping is exclusively for members. Staff is hired. Sales price=purchase price + 20% costs, no margin mix. Work with distributors.	Consumer cooperative	Voting power in GM incl. election of board and bringing in agenda items.	Suggestion of products by individuals, different work groups that influence buying policies, organisation of group activities, buying behaviour influences assortment.	The supermarkets' existence is completely based on the community and therefore they take a lot of responsibility. It is a clear economical and quite individual transaction, so additional work is required to form a group. Each suggested product is tried out, boosting inclusivity.
Gedeelde Weelde (Maastricht, 300 members)	Cooperative supermarket formed by a group of entrepreneurs, some suppliers and a part of the community. Volunteers get a small settlement in the form of a local currency that can only be used in the shop.	Multi-stakeholder cooperative, 2 types of members: entrepreneurs and stakeholders	Daily board chosen from entrepreneur-members, GM	Workgroups for all assortment divisions and practical matters, activities.	Customers from outside the coop are very important for the shop itself. The community seems to form a warm group that has intrinsic motivation to make the coop succeed.
Weavers Way cooperative supermarket (Philadelphia PA, 11000 members), Henry's Got Crops (farm owned by Weavers Way)	Cooperative supermarket that started with the Park Slope model. Now membership and working is not obligatory anymore, but earns a discount. Work with hundreds of local suppliers. 3-tier pricing model. The CSA farm is owned by the coop.	Consumer cooperative	Voting power in GM incl. election of board.	Member committees, request for WW to endorse advocacy action.	Large number of clients, many are dedicated. Forming of a group doesn't happen automatically because of the loose structure. Over the years many activities developed, creating a local ecosystem.
Rolling Grocer 19 (Hudson NY)	Community-driven grocery shop that focuses on providing affordable local food for everyone. Three tier pricing system.	LLC	Strongly community driven	Strongly community driven	In the shop it was clear that everybody is taken seriously, all are included and allowed to learn. Impressive to see what prices are offered, but also clear how much effort it takes to fundraise the differenc
Egg processor Euskaber (producer coop), meat group KMO Baserria (2 worker + 2 producer coops), Behi-Alde dairy farm (worker coop), Mondragon Corporation (huge federation of workers coops)	Mondragon is an area in Basque country (Spain) where most of the economy consists of cooperatives. Most are worker cooperatives.	Cooperatives	Voting power in GM incl. election of board.	Influencing structures throughout the whole organisation.	Mondragon corp is large and well organized with a relatively simple concept. It is suitable for all sorts of people. It has a lot of power and regulations of its own and there is a considerable amount of coops that choose not to be part of the federation.
Common ground Community (Lexington VA), Heathcote Community (Freeland MD)	Small communities of people living together, securing the land, homes and democracy long term through the CLT concept.	Intentional communities that lease land from School of Living CLT	Communities have their own rules, leasecontract from the CLT has a few limitations on land use.	Both communities have their own set of rules.	The communities that live there are happy, but small. It is difficult to find new members and one important reason is that the ownership rules are too rigid. For example, people have trouble selling their house because they don't own the land. Berkshire CLT came up with a solution to that, but somehow this change was not acceptable in these groups.

Initiative	Description	Juridical structure	Governance	Non-formalised decision making power	Community involvement, learning points
Southwest Virginia Agrarian Commons (SWVAC) (Roanoke VA, visited partners: New River Land Trust, Catawba Sustainability Center, farmer Kim Kirkbride)	SWVAC is a local organization that uses Community Land Trust (CLT) as a tool to change the ownership and financial structure around farm land. Goals are access to land for local farmers for sustainable agriculture. The second step is community building.	Community land trust (CLT) supported by national foundation Agrarian Trust	CLT board, entrepreneurs over their own companies within the limits of the lease contracts.	Local communities are mostly customers	SWVAC is in the process of fundraising. The project is mostly driven by the partners, with full support of some local farmers. Repairs are paid to indigenous groups. The build up of some private equity for the farmers is an important topic. Vision for community involvement needs to be developed.
Central Virginia Agrarian Commons (Richmond VA, visited partners: Maggie Walker CLT, Sankofa Community Orchard)	CLT project for farmland. One neighbourhood farm/orchard involving residents in getting together and growing small quantities of healthy food. A second farm on an hour distance aims to supply the city with local food.	CLT supported by national foundation Agrarian Trust	CLT board, entrepreneurs over their own companies within the limits of the lease contracts.	In SCO the neighbourhood influences daily activity a lot. In the other farm the community are mostly customers.	Aiming to give BIPOC farmers access to land. Interestingly an involved person questioned this aim since it doesn't give BIPOC people access to property, which is the key to building wealth.
Berkshire Community Land Trust (Great Barrington MS, visited initiatives: Schumacher Centre for New Economics, Forest Row, Indian Line Farm, Berkshares Inc.). Food Coop in Great Barrington	Schumacher is known for inventing CLT and has done practical learning for decades. Their projects include farms, an estate, housing project and a local currency involving the wide local community.	CLT	CLT board, entrepreneurs and residents over their own estate, Berkshares has shareholders	Every community member is empowered to participate in some way or another, in which the Berkshares are particularly powerful.	Example of involving the wide community with projects of all kinds. Impressive to see how attention for relationships go hand in hand with applied research and good structures.
Kattendorfer hof (Hamburg Germany)	Large CSA farm (450 ha) with 1000 members that share the costs of the farm and eat the yield. Collaboration with several food coops and runs 7 stores. Divided in two companies; the farm and shops.	Limited Liability Company	Team of entrepreneurs decides on farming.	Customers have influence on the shops through their coops. Coops organise the customer base themselves.	Kattendorfer hof chooses to put all agricultural branches under one company, to keep the freedom to exchange goods more freely and divide profit and loss better. The shops each started with a group of customers that were buying food and developed their own cooperative separately from the farm. This makes them strong. Up to today some of them get a part of a cow and agree how to divide it among them.
Ecolonie (Hennezel France)	Association that owns and maintains a property where a small group lives and works. Includes a farm, large campsite and a nature reserve.	Association	Decisions are made by residential members.	Longer term volunteer have a say in how things are run.	Hundreds of volunteers are involved yearly. There are quite strict rules, stricter than most people would accept normally (i.e. no phones allowed). Their focus on creating an environment for learning and developing as a person is experienced as liberating and very attractive.
Café Euphoria (Troy NY)	Transgender and gender non-conforming worker-owned and operated cafe and restaurant. All worker-owners earn \$18/hr and can decide to work for shares. The building is currently owned by the initiator.	Worker cooperative / LLC	Team of workers have voting power in GM and run the business on a daily basis.	Community involvement matters a lot.	Three-tier pricing system for all economic backgrounds and no alcohol for more inclusivity (youth/alcoholics). Dedicated to be a safe space for queer people, seems to be very effective through indepth knowledge of the target group.

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Virginia Food System Council (VA)	Network of experienced food professionals that aim to re-think the future of the regional food system, including the social aspects of it.	Think-tank	Structure is under development. Members have all decision-making power.	No involved community yet.	Despite good intentions it didn't have much activity yet. It is hard to get together with busy people and even harder to decide on activity. Ondanks goede intenties loopt het nog niet echt. Lastig om de mensen bij elkaar
Boxerwood (Lexington VA)	Nature Center and Woodland Garden delivering environmental education programs to the community.	501(c)3 Boxerwood Educational Foundation	Board, staff.	The community in the form of volunteers and schools play a major role.	Small, but very nicely developed. Embedded in and supported by the community. Good collaborations with Klein, maar ontzettend goed ontwikkeld. Gedragen door community die goed gebruik maken van andere NGO's
Rodale Institute (Kutztown PA)	Practical research, farmer training and awareness programs on regenerative agriculture in 7 locations.	501(c)3 nonprofit	Board, staff.		Co-developed the new quality mark 'Regenerative Organic Certified'. Is a partner in many different institutions in the USA, started as a private initiative.
Healthy Harvest Farm & Giving Gardens (Long Island NY)	Two acres of market garden, growing food for the local food bank. Run by a staff member and many volunteers. Educational activities.	501(c)3 nonprofit	Food bank decides on bigger topics.	On the land staff member and longer term volunteers decide.	Part of Island Harvest Food Bank. Extremely enthusiastic volunteers and staff, motivated to go an extra mile for the people in their village.
Soulfire farm (Petersburgh MS)	Afro-indigenous centered community farm. Housing cooperative (multi stakeholder) that includes all residents in decision-making using a one member, one vote structure. The Soul Fire Farm Institute, Inc. is one of the resident members and tenant of this cooperative. The land has a veto right in the coop.	Soul Fire Farm Land Stewardship Collective LLC., and SFF Institute, Inc. (a 501c3 nonprofit educational organization)	Voting right in GM, chosen board. Land has a veto in the cooperative.	All input is highly esteemed, visit was too short to estimate the level of decision-making power.	Goals are aimed at social values such as ending food apartheid. They have great impact and audience for a relatively small farm and it is interesting to see how well they are connected to NGO's and authorities in the city. Probably this is a combination of the social issues they address and their skills in storytelling. Another interesting aspect is the efforts they put into giving the land itself a voice, through rituals, spokespersons and the indigenous people.
Camphill Village Kimberton Hills (Phoenixville PA)	An integrated community where people with developmental differences are living a life of dignity, equality, and purpose. Different professional activities are undertaken to offer vocations to residents, like dairy production and a CSA garden.	Combination of entities, foundation/501c3, LLC's	Board, resident-staff.	Broad community is involved through financing, buying products, education, volunteering and through (family) relationships.	Old initiative, throughout the years a worldwide community was built. People with a handicap are treated as equals, being present in all aspects of the village, such as the board.

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Frontier Kitchen (Washington DC)	Commercially shared kitchen renting space, equipment and storage to 75 small food-entrepreneurs. Well organised with training and certifications.	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides		The owner puts a lot of effort in business development with and for the small scale entrepreneurs. She is very active with creating a diverse and attractive farmers' market and succeeds in it.
Dragon Fly Farms (Louisa VA)	Regenerative beef cattle farm in and around nature preserves. On farm selling of meat.	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides		Owner has had multiple businesses, wife is a vet and rents out horse stables. This allowed them to buy their neighbours' farm. Skilled beef grower. Little connection with the community, other than customer relationships.
The Carters Farm (Orange County VA)	Third generation farm owned by a black family, each family has their plot, Michael Carter dedicates himself to a Afro-Indigenous centered community farm involving BIPOC people in	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides, family owned		Chooses not to put land in a commons since it makes it more difficult to pass on the access to land and ownership is more secure.
Weaver Farm (Kenly NC)	Owned by Nuffield Scholar Susan Weaver-Ford, large scale tobacco and soy beans.	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides		Traditional farm, Susan has a wonderful impact on her village, partaking in all sorts of boards and community efforts.
Ozark Akerz Farm (Coleridge NC)	Small regenerative farm, Pineywood meat cattle in a forest, food & medicine forest, lobbyist. On farm selling of meat and products.	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides		Doesn't choose for profit, but for ideals. While wanting to make products available for the community, isn't active in community building.
The Stuart Land and Cattle Company of Virginia Inc. (Rosedale VA)	Large scale Angus beef cattle in a mountainous landscape, top 100 oldest farms in the world. Shifting to regenerative practices where this is profitable.	Corporation	Shareholders decide, mostly family owned, Fortune 500, advise of managers		The (hired) managers feel themselves entrepreneurs, the owners are on a distance and demand high accountability. No space for community building.
Goshen Homestead (Elk Garden VA)	Homestead type of farm which sells dairy products and vegetables in a farm shop. Strong believers, ideology is communicated boldly.	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides, family farm		Religious background is important to and visible in the company. Is locally well embedded through long term farm sales and CSA.
Polyface farm Inc. (Swoope VA)	Regenerative farm with several small scale branches, originally poultry. Home of the famous speaker/writer Joel Salatin and family, who is a strong inspirator for making small scale regenerative farming economically viable.	Corporation	Shareholders decide, family owned, has several subcontractors to encourage entrepreneurship		On the farm citizens can learn things like butchering chicken and the team takes a lot of time for that. People felt inspired to continue this work at home. The team shows what it means to work together and build community.
Amish (Lancaster PA)	Religious group with many professional family farms, good traders. Functions as a tight community with their own set of values.	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides		Little use of technology, much labour available in the community. The social safety net of the church and families is not formally organised, but very functional and strong.
Red dog market (Coventryville PA)	Shop owned by Nuffield Scholar Aaron de Long with products of local growers, building a healthy ecosystem.	Limited Liability Company	Entrepreneur decides, advised by growers and customers		Aaron lives on a Land Trust that encourages small scale farmers through low rental prices.