



COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE AND FARM-TO-TABLE PROGRAMS

By: Janet Kaminski Leduc, Senior Legislative Attorney

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)

There is no state statutory definition of CSA. But it is commonly understood to be a system through which community members (i.e., consumers or "shareholders") pledge support to a farm operation and agree to share the benefits and risks of a farmer's food production.

Typically, a shareholder commits at the beginning of the growing season to purchase a share of the farmer's crops. By paying in advance, the shareholder helps cover the farmer's operating costs. In return, the shareholder receives portions of the farmer's crops throughout the growing season. But CSA shareholders also share in the risks of farming, including poor harvests due to inclement weather.

For additional information about CSA, see the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [website](#).

ISSUE

This report addresses the following questions concerning community supported agriculture (CSA) and farm-to-table programs:

1. Are there any state laws specifically relating to CSA programs in Connecticut?
2. Does the state law on advertising Connecticut-grown products ([CGS § 22-38](#)) apply to CSA programs and how is this law enforced?
3. In meeting his statutory requirement to promote Connecticut-grown products ([CGS § 22-38a](#)), does the agriculture commissioner promote CSA programs offered by Connecticut farmers?
4. Are there any state laws regarding the definition or use of the term "farm-to-table" that restaurants must follow?

The Office of Legislative Research is not authorized to issue legal opinions and this report should not be considered one.

Are there any state laws specifically relating to CSA programs in Connecticut?

No, there are no state laws that specifically address CSA programs in Connecticut.

Does the state law on advertising Connecticut-grown products apply to CSA programs and how is this law enforced?

Yes. Products labeled as "Connecticut grown," whether advertised or sold through a farm stand, CSA program, grocery store, or other venue, are subject to the requirements of [CGS § 22-38](#), according to the state Department of Agriculture (DoAg). "Connecticut grown" refers to produce and other farm products that have a traceable point of origin within Connecticut ([CGS § 22-38\(a\)](#)).

By law, only farm products grown or produced in Connecticut may be advertised or sold as "Connecticut grown." Additionally, farm products grown or produced in Connecticut or within a 10-mile radius of the point of sale may be advertised or sold in Connecticut using the terms "native," "native-grown," "local," or "locally-grown" ([CGS § 22-38\(b\)](#)).

DoAg's Bureau of Inspection and Regulation enforces this law. When DoAg receives a complaint regarding the advertising or sale of Connecticut-grown products, a bureau inspector investigates to determine the product's point of origin.

The law requires anyone advertising farm products with the terms "Connecticut grown," "native," "native-grown," "local," or "locally-grown" to give DoAg, upon request, written proof within 10 days of the sale of the products that they were grown or produced in Connecticut or within a 10-mile radius of the point of sale, as applicable. Anyone found to have violated the law is subject to a fine of up to \$100 for each product label in violation ([CGS § 22-38\(b\)](#)).

In meeting his statutory requirement to promote Connecticut-grown products, does the agriculture commissioner promote CSA programs offered by Connecticut farmers?

Yes. DoAg maintains on its website [a list](#) of CSA programs in Connecticut offering Connecticut-grown products. Inclusion on the list is voluntary. Farmers wanting to be included on the list must complete [an application](#) available on DoAg's website.

Are there any state laws regarding the definition or use of the term "farm-to-table" that restaurants must follow?

No, there are no state laws that specifically address the definition or use of the term "farm-to-table." DoAg does not regulate farm-to-table advertising by restaurants. Rather, the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) has jurisdiction over false food advertisements ([CGS § 21a-113](#)). According to DCP, the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (CUTPA) may apply in situations where a restaurant

falsely advertises that it is a farm-to-table operation, but because there are no laws defining the term or requiring that farm-to-table programs source food from a Connecticut farm, enforcement may be difficult.

CUTPA prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices. Among other things, it allows the DCP commissioner to issue regulations defining what constitutes an unfair trade practice, investigate complaints, issue cease and desist orders, and accept voluntary statements of compliance ([CGS §§ 42-110a to 42-110q](#)).

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