

## **Impacts of Relationship-Based Online Marketing and Social Media Use on Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Programs**

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At the most abstract level, Community Support Agriculture (CSA) refers to a particular approach to community engagement and participation. Less philosophically, CSA efforts can involve on building interpersonal relationships among participants, producers, and CSA operators (i.e. 'building community'). More concretely, CSA programs are characterized by particular contractual and logistical practices. While there is a growing body of advocacy writing and descriptive cases, less is known about how different elements of CSAs relate to their operational, financial and behavioral outcomes. As a result, it is unclear how CSA operators are to make decisions about how to run their programs.

Social media and the Internet present similar issues. At the most abstract, "social commerce" is a fundamental shift from production, product, and consumers to interaction, relationships, and active participants. More concretely, social media technologies are tools that can be used to address logistical, communication, and transactional problems. However, like CSAs, while there is advocacy and examples, little is known about how adopting social media capabilities significantly affect operational, financial, and behavioral outcomes of CSAs.

In this presentation we will describe initial results from a national survey of CSA operators designed to address questions of how specific CSA practices and use of social media technologies interact to affect multi-dimensional performance of CSA programs.