Foodlinks

Using knowledge networks to promote sustainable food

Short Food Supply Chains as drivers of sustainable development

Evidence Document

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ISBN 978-88-90896-01-9

The authors gratefully acknowledge funding from the European Community under the Seventh Framework Programme theme "Environment" for the collaborative project ENV.2010.4.2.3-3 FOODLINKS.

Cite as: F.Galli, G. Brunori (eds.) (2013) *Short Food Supply Chains as drivers of sustainable development. Evidence Document*. Document developed in the framework of the FP7 project FOODLINKS (GA No. 265287). Laboratorio di studi rurali Sismondi, ISBN 978-88-90896-01-9.

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The Foodlinks project: using knowledge networks to promote sustainable food

- *The Foodlinks project aims at developing and experimenting with new ways of linking research to policy-making in the field of sustainable food consumption and production.*
- *Three Communities of Practice (CoP) are established:* ***Short food Supply Chains****, Revaluing Public Food Procurement and Urban Food Strategies.*
- *Researchers, policy makers and civil society actors sharing a common interest, a practice, a concern or a passion together build up learning communities that expand and evolve over time.*

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Foreword

The present *Evidence Document* is written to provide evidences on the diversity of short food supply chains in Europe and their contribution to sustainable rural development. It is aimed for a broad audience, but particularly for those willing to involve in and support more sustainable food production and consumption practices. This document is the result of a joint collaboration among practitioners, policy makers and scientists who joined in the Short Food Supply Chains Community of Practice, established within the Foodlinks project. Any opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily represent the views of all co-authors and/or their organizations.

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Executive summary

Short food supply chains as a policy tool

Short food supply chains (SFSCs) are an alternative to long globalised food chains and play an increasingly important role in food supply networks.

SFSCs are very varied in nature and practice and exist all over the world in a wide variety of forms, in both commercial and non-commercial settings.

Photo by T & S Middleton

SFSCs are increasingly taken into consideration by policy and decision makers in government, industry and civil society organisations.

Examples of policy areas in which SFSCs can be a useful tool

- **Local and regional development**
- **Integrated food strategies (incl. urban and regional strategies)**
- **Public procurement**
- **Business development and entrepreneurship**
- **Food democracy**

Examples of SFSCs include box schemes, farmers' markets, on-farm sales, consumer cooperatives, direct Internet sales, community supported agriculture, community gardening, Grow Your Own and wild food foraging.

"Short" can only be fully defined within each particular policy context.

Characteristics of short food supply chains

- „Short" refers to both **physical and social distance**.
- Social distance refers to the opportunity for the producer and the consumer (where they are not the same person) to **interact** and share information. There are no or **very few intermediaries** in SFSCs.
- **Information** exchanged includes details about the origin, production method and sustainability of the product, but also about the identity, values and ethics of both the producer and consumer.
- Physical distance covers the **distance a product has travelled** between points of production and sale. Its limitation varies and depends on each particular policy context and situation as well as consumer expectation.
- There is **openness** by the supplier about both the social and physical distance of the product.

Photo by K Berlin

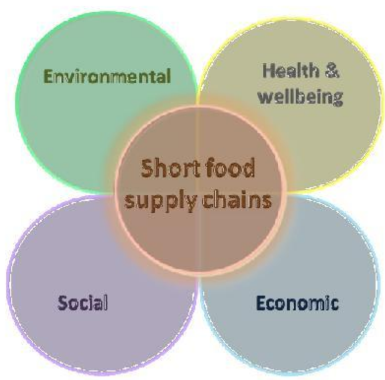
Foodlinks

Using knowledge networks to promote sustainable food

Short food supply chains as a policy tool

Short food supply chains (SFSCs) can act as a driver of change and a method to increase sustainability, trust, equality and growth in agricultural, food, business, social, health and rural policy areas.

Short food supply chains can increase sustainability in all its dimensions



Examples of how SFSCs have increased sustainability:

Environmental: Many SFSCs have minimised the use of fossil fuel or packaging, and/or use less polluting methods of production.
Health & wellbeing: Some SFSCs have increased knowledge and concern about food amongst consumers and led to the adoption of healthier diets.
Social: The direct relationship between producer and consumer has ensured fairness and trust in many SFSCs .
Economic: SFSCs to which consumers are committed long-term have reduced economic uncertainties that result from varying production and sales volumes.

Short food supply chains can increase food supply resilience

- **They complement longer food chains and diversify food supply networks.**
- **They are based on a wider range of producers.**
- **Traceability can be more easily checked.**
- **They are generally more flexible and adaptable to new situations and consumer needs.**

Photo by M Erhart

Policy support mechanisms for short food supply chains

- **Flexible regulation (e.g. on hygiene)**
- **Local facilities (e.g. storage, processing)**
- **Financial and political support**
- **Research, knowledge, skills and training**

This policy brief is based on a wiki evidence report with references and case studies which can be publicly accessed at: http://tinyurl.com/SFSCs

This is an output from the FOODLINKS project supported by

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Section 1

Chapter 1 - Identification of SFSCs

- What are SFSCs and how are they defined in theory and practice?
- How different definitions link to related concepts, such as 'local food', 'local food systems'?
- How are SFSCs understood and defined in different spheres of action (consumption, policies, science, etc.)?
- What are the implications of different definitions and meanings?

1.1 Introduction

Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) have established in parallel to conventional food chains, playing a key role in the emerging food networks that are continuously arising as an alternative to the globalized agri-food model. The diversities and particularities of the experiences existing all over the world (box schemes, farmers' markets, on-farm selling, consumer cooperatives, Internet sales, business cooperatives, Grow Your Own, retailing etc) have attracted a growing interest from academia and policy-makers due to the nature of these initiatives, as well as for the socio-economic, territorial and environmental scope (See Annex for more examples).

SFSCs can represent traditional and/or alternative ways of producing, distributing, retailing, and buying food and they have served as niches for those food system actors, mostly producers and consumers, who look for alternatives to the dominating agro-industrial model.

The very concept of SFSCs emerged at the turn of the century in the context of the broader debate on 'Alternative food chains' (Ilbery & Maye, 2005), 'Alternative food networks' (Goodman & Goodman, 2009) or 'Sustainable food chains' (Roep & Wiskerke, 2006). The point of departure of this debate is that, given that the prevailing trend in the agro-food system is the development of 'global value chains' dominated by retailers (Gereffi, 1994) and characterised by unequal distribution of power between the different actors, long distance trade and industrialised food, SFSCs are analysed and interpreted as a strategy to improve the resilience of the family farms with the support of concerned consumers, local communities and civil society organisations. Short food supply chains are increasingly taken into consideration by rural and food policies as a driver of change towards sustainability both in agro-food system and rural areas. For instance see European Commission conference on "Local agriculture and short food supply chains" (Brussels, 20/04/2012, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/small-farmers-conference-2012_en.htm).

1.2 Meaning associated to SFSC

What do we understand by Short Food Supply Chains? It is a common specific characteristic of SFSCs that they are highly value-laden and meaningful for their participants. The direct relationship between the producer and the consumer involves construction of knowledge, value and meaning about the product and its provenance, production and consumption, the producer and the consumer themselves, rather than solely an exchange of a product (Ilbery &

Maye, 2005; Marsden et al, 2000). The actual meaning of SFSC differs across various social groups, institutional settings and regional contexts. It involves certain characteristics of SFSCs and values associated to them. In general, SFSCs are perceived as re-establishing authenticity in production and consumption (Lamine, 2005; Wittman et al, 2008).

For LavkaLavka (St. Petersburg, Russia) consumers – see case study 1 - "short" means transparency and traceability - products come to consumers embedded with information about method of production, etc. On the project's website each farmer has a page describing farmer's biography, farming experience and ideology, production methods, location of the farm, etc. It is also possible for consumers to visit some of the farms as LavkaLavka tries to develop agro-tourism.

As indicated by the manager of Zolle (Rome, Italy) – see case study 10 - the main criteria for selecting the products are essentially three: the techniques of production used and the environmental health of the product, the proximity of the production site, the taste. "The latter is very important and inseparable from the place of production. In fact, we prefer not to sell a local product that does not also taste good (and it happens often!)".

Oregional (The Netherlands) – see case study 4 - talks about 'regional food'. They associate regional food with physical (50km range of Nijmegen) and social (transparency) aspects. They talk about regional (and not local) food because they want to offer their customers enough variety of products that requires sourcing from a regional instead of a local area. Key issues for them: Delicious and healthy; Seasonal; Freshness (within 24 hours from farm to plate); Supports local economy; Corporate social responsibility (reduction Co2, food miles); Transparency – know your farmer, know your food.

When purchasing food products, consumers may decide to engage into SFSC due to a variety of reasons.

The origin of products and the identification of the farm and the farmer (name, location, etc.), as a compromise with the local and regional development. The concepts of locality and territory, closeness (lower distance and fuel requirements) and fewer emissions are on the basis of this issue, but also the ideas of cultural identity and food heritage are embedded.

Food quality features: hygienic and sanitary guarantees, especially after the food crisis outbreaks related to highly intensified production systems.

Healthier and safer composition, regarding the content with higher quality ingredients (less saturated fatty acids), less additives and preservatives.

Organoleptic features (taste, flavour, etc.).

Management practices (traditional, organic, extensive, pasture-based systems, etc.) and utilisation of inputs (usually lower utilisation of herbicides and pesticides) linked to more sustainable food systems.

Values and ethics (biodiversity, local breeds and vegetal varieties, GMO free, tradition, seasonality, landscape preservation, etc.).

Governance of the food system (i.e. transparency, food sovereignty, fair prices, etc.). It is assumed that the closer relationship established between producers and consumers in SFSCs, results in fairer prices and added value that returns back to the producer. This liaison

results in empowerment of the farmers within the food system and a higher self-esteem of the rural and periurban dwellers.

Marsden et al (2000) use the concept of SFSCs as an “umbrella” term, and propose that SFSCs should show four defining characteristics, in order to go beyond the conventional and classical definitions of short food chain and, in particular the issue of distance definition:

1. the capacity to re-socialize or re-spatialize food, thereby allowing consumers to make value-judgements about the relative desirability of foods on the basis of their own knowledge, culture, experience or perceived imaginery.
2. The redefinition of the relationships between producer and consumers showing clear signals as to the origin of food.
3. The development of new relationships for new types of supply and demand with new criteria that link price with quality criteria and the construction of quality. Usually, this food is defined by the place and the farm where it has been produced, and serve to enhance the image of the farm and the territory as a source of quality foods.
4. Emphasis on the relationship between producer and consumer to construct value and meaning, rather than solely the type of product itself, and all these are summarized in the ability to engender some form of connection between the consumer and the food producer.

Table 1 Meanings attributed to SFSCs

Meaning of food in SFSCs	Meaning of production-distribution system in SFSCs
“fresh”, “diverse”, “organic”, “slow” , “quality”, “seasonal”, “traditional”, “local”, “regional”, “taste”, “delicious”, “food heritage”, “cultural identity”, “fair”, “sustainable”	“small scale”, “short”, “traditional”, “local”, “environmentally sustainable”, “embedded”, “fair”, “transparency”, “traceability”, “corporate social responsibility”, “local economy”, “lower emissions”, “rural-urban linkages”, “self-esteem” “social acknowledgement”, “prestige of food producers”, “sustainability”

1.3 Towards a definition

The two basic criteria needed to define SFSCs are physical and social proximity. As "short" indicates, in SFSC these distances are reduced in comparison to conventional food chains.

As seen is the preceding section, SFSCs are often associated to other concepts such as “local food“, “alternative food chains“, “local food systems“, “direct sales” etc. However, evidence shows that these are different concepts. For example, although “short” may be a necessary condition to identify many of these types, not necessarily is “short” linked to “local”, if we consider ‘fair trade’ schemes. There is therefore a need to identify criteria to delimitate the concept of SFSCs.

Physical distance refers to the distance of transportation, or food miles (Pretty et al, 2005; Hogan & Thorpe, 2009) of a product from the place of production to the point of sale. Coley et al, (2009) propose that this distance should be extended to the distance between the place of production of other inputs (e.g. pesticides, animal feed).

Some SFSC initiatives have set exact distances (or radiuses) or territorial boundaries as a benchmark to qualify for shortness.

According to the definition adopted by the U.S. Congress in the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (2008 Farm Act), the total distance that a product can be transported and still be considered a "locally or regionally produced agricultural food product" is less than 400 miles from its origin, or it has to remain within the State in which it is produced.

In England, CPRE has promoted a definition of local food as "food produced, grown and processed within 30 miles of the store". This distance has also been adopted by a number of UK large retail chains including Waitrose, Asda, Booths and The Cooperative. Tesco uses a county or neighbouring county definition.

The UK National Farmers Retail and Markets Association (FARMA) has developed this definition into a set of certification criteria for farmers' markets to protect their integrity. It uses 30 miles as the ideal radius, but this can be stretched to 50 miles for larger cities, or coastal or remote regions, with 100 miles as the maximum recommended. FARMA also recognises distinct geographical areas such as Counties and National Parks.

There are also private initiatives that consider a reference figure for an acceptable distance for local food (i.e. Willem&Drees in the Netherlands – see case study 2 - establishes local as within a circle of 40 kilometers from the supermarket, although it depends on the availability of the products).

However, due to regional and cultural diversity of food systems there is no universal definition possible that would define the optimal physical distance of SFSCs. Therefore in practice their metrical and physical boundary interpretations vary. Nevertheless, geographical proximity and location matter, as "short" is first of all perceived as something that is comparatively close physically and/or located and grown in a certain region or a locality.

Social distance (proximity) in formal terms finds expression as the number of intermediaries between producer and consumer. In SFSCs, this number equals zero or very few (often one, but no more than two). In the latter case, intermediaries have to connect, rather than disconnect producers with consumers.

It is important to highlight that social proximity implies the capacity of the chain to establish a channel of communication between producers and consumers, that give producers the possibility to control information given to final consumers and to receive feedback from them, regarding not only the name of the producer, food quality features or farming practices but also the ethical and social values of the process. Then, the consumer can make connections and associations with the society and territory involved (Marsden et al., 2000).

Therefore, in addition to the number of intermediaries, it is crucial to take into account the qualitative face of the relationship, so in all cases, the amount of information about the product transferred to the consumer is expected to be increased in SFSCs.

Reducing the number of intermediaries between production and consumption has been also a widespread strategy of large commercial food distribution in the context of globalization (Sevilla et al., 2012). Usually this strategy guarantees neither putting producers and consumers into a more direct contact and closer

sort of relationship, nor offering better prices to any of them. Therefore, by integrating retail and wholesale functions and establish contact with both production and consumption, large commercial distribution companies consolidate their strategic power (Burch and Lawrence, 2007).

On the other hand, there can be the case of certain farmers' cooperatives that sell their products to final consumers through shops managed by cooperatives of consumers. According to the number of intermediaries, this could be envisaged as a "long" food supply chain. Therefore, although the number of intermediaries is important in the definition of SFSC, it should not be the main factor.

The direct interaction between producers and consumers in many SFSCs brings about more intangible social proximity aspects such as: mutual knowledge and respect of each other, trust, solidarity and compromise between producer and consumer, acknowledgment of the quality features of the food product and the conditions of production, ethics and values, (re)connection with traditions and identities, collective civic engagement in the local food system, intensity and directionality of information flows, and balance of power between the actors.

In many cases, SFSCs increase the possibility for the consumer to make informed choices and increase food sovereignty. Therefore, SFSCs allow consumers and producers opening wider dimensions than those strictly limited to food production-distribution-consumption practices and become engaged together in new forms of food citizenship or civic food networks (Renting et al., 2012).

Reduced distances have implications on the organisation of food supply chains. The developed mutual commitment and trust between producers and consumers often substitute or reduce the need for formal confirmation of certain qualities materialised in forms of certificates and labels (Lamine, 2005). However, this also can make SFSCs vulnerable to misuse and customers to deception.

Table 2 Examples of definitions of SFSCs

Author	Definition	Criteria for definition
Slow food	A short food supply chain is created when producers and final consumers realize they share the same goals, which can be achieved by creating new opportunities that strengthen local food networks. It is an alternative strategy enabling producers to regain an active role in the food system, as it focuses on local production - decentralized regional food systems that minimize the number of steps involved and the distance travelled by food (food miles). Source:http://www.earthmarkets.net/pagine/eng/pagina.lasso?-id_pg=2	Governance, locality, number of intermediaries, physical distance
French Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry	Commercialisation of agricultural products through direct selling or indirect selling when only one intermediary is involved. Source: http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/100809-lettreCircuitsCourts.pdf .	Number of intermediaries
European Network for Rural Development	„… the definition of local food networks and short supply chains is not only focused on the distance between production and sale of the product, but also the number of links in the food supply chain, with the goal being to reduce these as much as possible – the shortest option being direct sales from the producer. In other words, short supply chain means reducing the number of intermediaries who are necessary to deliver the final product to the consumer." Source: R. Peters (ed.) (2012) Local Food and Short Supply Chains, *EU Rural Review* N°12.	Number of intermediaries and physical distance

SFSCs represent an alternative type of governance and organisation of food chains. Many of them are bottom-up initiatives in which producers and consumers, who are often passive and subordinated participants in conventional global chains, become influential and active actors as owners of these chains who exert power and control in them. The role of territory evokes the embeddedness of SFSCs in local territorial resources and its contribution to territorial development (see Chapter2).

1.4 Criteria for classifications

On the base of the criteria outlined above, a great variety of SFSCs can be identified and various classifications or typologies developed. Such classifications are useful for a more systematic exploration of SFSCs and development and implementation of necessary support measures. The EC IMPACT project (Marsden et al, 2000; Renting et al, 2003) – see Annex) proposed three main types of short food chains on the basis of the number of intermediaries, physical distance and organisational arrangements:

1. *Face-to-face SFSCs* in which a consumer purchases a product directly from the producer/processor on a face-to-face basis and authenticity and trust are mediated through personal interaction (e.g. on-farm sales, farm shops, farmers' markets).
2. *Proximate SFSCs* which extend reach beyond direct interaction and are essentially delivering products which are produced and retailed within the specific region (or place) of production. Consumers are made aware of the 'local' nature of the product at retail level (e.g. consumers' cooperatives, community supported agriculture).
3. *Spatially extended SFSCs* where value and meaning laden information about the place of production and producers is transferred to consumers who are outside the region of production itself and who may have no personal experience of that region (e.g. certification labels, restaurants, public food procurement to catering services for institutions).

The 22 case studies analysed within the Foodlinks project (see Part 2) belong to *face-to-face* initiatives (many box schemes of different size, farmers market, collective farm shop), to *proximate* SFSCs (several channels) and to *spatially extended* (linked to farmers associations or specialised wholesaler for gastronomy).

Many box schemes as part of a Community Supported Farm Initiatives deliver mainly fresh and seasonal products (often also organic) from their farms directly to consumers or to deposits in a town.

The Birkenhof Farm Dairy (in Switzerland) offers a diverse range of fresh local milk products (including some organic products) and pig meat of an old breed to local shops (no supermarkets), canteens and restaurants, households and on local markets all within a range of 20 km.

The initiative Brin d'Herbe near Rennes (France), where 20 farmers run 2 shops in the town periphery offering seasonal mostly organic fresh products.

The CROC project (Chaffotte & Chiffoleau, 2007) found it useful to distinguish between individual and collective, direct and indirect (with one intermediary) SFSCs. The European Network for Rural Development in their report on SFSCs have identified three types of SFSCs on the basis of their individual or collective organisation and initiators (producers and consumers): Direct sales by individuals, Collective direct sales, Partnerships of producers and consumers (Peters, 2012).

According to the report elaborated by EHNE, a farmer´s union of the Basque Country, Spain (Mundubat, 2012) SFSC can be classified on the basis of the level of compromise (low, medium and high) that may be adopted either by producers or consumers into nine categories.

Table 3 - Short Food Supply Chains classified on the basis of level of compromise adopted by producers and consumers

		Producers		
	Level of compromise	Low	Medium	High
Consumers	Low	Supermarket of organic food	Shop purchasing directly from producers	On-farm sales Farmer's shop
	Medium	Cooperative of consumers		Box-schemes
	High	Cooperative of consumers managed by consumers		Cooperative of consumers managed by consumers and producers

Chapter 2 - Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

- How do short food chains contribute to sustainability and health?
- What criteria are to be considered for the evaluation of the environmental, social and economic impact of short food chains?
- Can the impact of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability be assessed?

2.1 Introduction

Interest in SFSCs is growing due to their potential to contribute to more sustainable food systems, rural development and healthier communities. Chapter 1 listed some common characteristics of SFSCs, but also exposed the great diversity in SFSCs which are often operating in very different social, economic, political and geographical contexts. These differences between SFSCs mean that no common description of the sustainability impacts of SFSCs can be provided, as they vary from chain to chain. The three common pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) themselves cover both complimentary and conflicting issues complicating an overall analysis even further. Nevertheless, evidence shows that both close physical and close social proximity often have favourable impacts on the sustainability of products from SFSCs. On the basis of evidence from scientific literature, reports, expert opinion and practice, we have analysed the diverse sustainability aspects of SFSCs in a systematic manner. We have categorised these aspects under the headings of "health and well-being", "environmental", "social" and "economic" sustainability and discuss the impact of physical and social proximity on each of these at individual, community and/or regional level.

2.2 Health and well-being

Reliable access to affordable, safe and nutritious food is essential to the food security, health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. There are numerous factors along the production chain (including environmental influences, agronomy, harvesting, processing, storage and transport) that determine a food product's safety and nutritional quality (Chahbazi & Grow, 2008; Edwards-Jones, 2010; Frith, 2007). It is hard to separate out the individual effects of each of these factors in each particular food chain, but there are several characteristics of SFSCs that show potential for better quality products.

In some regions, SFSC chains offer a more diverse variety of products, especially fruit and vegetables, therefore contributing to nutritional diversity, food security and balanced diets (Lamine, 2005) although this may be heavily dependent on season (Edwards-Jones, 2010). Overall, the evidence is limited in quantity and quality regarding the effect of SFSCs on increased access to affordable healthy food. SFSCs including farmers markets (Freedman et al, 2011; Ruelas et al, 2012) and those where consumers participate in growing or producing food themselves, such as Grow-Your-Own (GYO) (Corrigan, 2011; Kortwright & Wakefield, 2011; Wakefield et al., 2007), have been shown to increase aspects of the access to healthy food,

in particular fruit and vegetables . However, several SFSCs specialise in luxury high fat or high sugar products thus also increasing exposure to foods which are less healthy (Rose et al., 2008).

A wide range of evidence shows that SFSCs increase knowledge about food amongst consumers and lead to the adoption of a healthier diet, particularly with regard to fruit and vegetables, in a range of social groups but especially school children. However, there is also evidence that SFSCs can lead to less healthier diets due to limitations in the supply of a varied range of foods (McCormack et al, 2010; O'Hara, 2011; Page, 2012; Robinson-O'Brien et al, 2009; Rose et al, 2008; Saltmarsh et al, 2011).

Products in SFSCs often travel shorter distances, are sold fresher and therefore have no or less need to contain preservatives or be extensively processed. Shorter duration of transportation and storage also reduces damage and spoilage, whilst a reduced time between harvesting and purchase may prevent nutrient loss (Frith, 2007). SFSC products are more often harvested when ripe and with less mechanical intrusion which may both improve their nutritional qualities. Yet in general, there is insufficient evidence to argue that SFSCs offer food that differs nutritionally from food from elsewhere (Edwards-Jones et al, 2008; Lindgren, 2007) or that there is a difference in microbial food safety. General sanitary and hygiene regulations provide the guarantee of food safety standards in SFSCs just like any other food chain. There is an effect on nutritional health as a result of improved diet for some SFSCs (see above). GYO activities can also increase physical activity levels (Hawkins et al, 2011; van den Berg et al, 2010). Pollution of GYO produce (through contaminated soil or air) can be a problem in SFSCs in urban environments in some cases (Leake et al, 2009; Saumel et al, 2012).

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and GYO activities have been shown to improve mental health and wellbeing, whereas a few different forms of SFSCs can contribute to social inclusion due to the social proximity between producer and consumer (Hale et al, 2011; Hawkins et al, 2011; McCormack et al, 2010; Oglethorpe, 2009; Perez-Vasquez et al, 2005; Wakefield et al, 2007). The transparency within SFSCs contributes to trust by consumers that more subjective food characteristics contributing to wellbeing – such as freshness, diversity, flavour etc – are upheld. Some SFSCs have internal regulations that guarantee certain negotiated qualities of products, f.i. some schemes may guarantee that the products are fresh and that they have not been transported long distances or conserved too long (Lamine, 2005).

The potential for healthier food in SFSC is created by both formal and informal measures, but cannot always be fully reached due to trade-offs that need to be made with other characteristics.

2.3 Environmental sustainability

SFSCs are not by definition more environmentally friendly than conventional, longer supply chains. To that regard, the impact of production methods, processing, packaging, distribution, cooling, transport and waste in each chain should be considered. However, SFSCs do present advantages in environmental sustainability in some cases, for instance when the use of fossil fuel or packaging is minimised, or when there is the adoption of pesticides free / less intensive methods of production.

The close physical proximity between producer and consumer within SFSCs means that the distance over which products are transported is

often shorter, but this is not necessarily always the case. The transport distance regularly has to be unwillingly increased due to logistics, in particular a lack of local facilities such as storage, packaging and processing plants, flower mills, slaughter houses or retail outlets (see also Chapter 4). Although this affects the closeness of physical proximity, it does not necessarily impact negatively on environmental sustainability. The concept of "food miles" (distance transported) is now seen as an unrepresentative measure of environmental sustainability of food supply systems (Desrochers & Shimizu, 2008; Edwards-Jones, 2010; Smith et al, 2005) and more holistic approaches using a range of indicators for environmental sustainability are currently favoured. Although these indicators are not yet generally agreed upon, a key factor is the amount of non-renewable resource used for processing, transport and storage (Edwards-Jones, 2010; King et al, 2010; Mariola, 2008; Oglethorpe, 2009; O'Hara, 2011). Many SFSC use less packaging than supermarkets what makes them use less resources. For example plastic packaging for bread or yoghurt in supermarkets travels huge distances, whereas in many SFSC bread is sold without packaging and yoghurt in reusable glass containers. In order to use reusable glass containers in an efficient way, physical distances should not be too long - this is a potential of SFSC (Neugebauer W., 2003, Speiseplan und Transportaufkommen).

This of course may vary greatly between different SFSCs.

According to Gustavson et al (2011) food losses in Europe and North America amount up to about 280 to 300 kg per year. and person. About 2/3 of these occur in production and retail due to quality standardisation. These can be reduced substatially in SFSCs. Moreover concerned consumers with more knowledge and attention to food can be assumed to produce less food wates on household level.

Efficiency is key and, as individual supplies of small quantities are characteristic to many SFSCs, resource consumption per product is often increased compared with larger scale, conventional chains, particularly when fuel consumption of consumers' transport is included which is often higher for SFSCs (Coley et al, 2009; Edwards-Jones, 2010; King et al, 2010; Mariola, 2008). However, environmentally friendly transport solutions are used by some SFSCs (e.g. in Italy, Zolle box scheme uses a mixed “van-bicycle” delivery formula). Likewise, inititatives involving people at neighbourhood level allows avoidance of the use of cars.

The length of time between harvest and sale (freshness, seasonality) plays an important role in the environmental impact of SFSCs as the energy used for storage can be a key factor in reducing their environmental sustainability (Edwards-Jones, 2010). It often also means less processing and packaging which saves energy and resources as well.

The close social proximity of SFSCs means that very often consumers will be informed about the method of production which is therefore generally expected to be highly sustainable in many respects. The same applies for most SFSCs where consumers are directly involved in the production, such as GYO. For this reason and the fact that growers selling via SFSCs are more environmentally conscious; many SFSCs deal with organic products or products which have similarly recognisable sustainability characteristics (e.g. pesticide free) (O'Hara, 2011). SFSC initiatives often rely on the attachment to nature and seasonal processes in

agriculture, and they favour environmentally friendly practices. For instance, it is typically for box schemes to be organised around natural irregularities and the respect of natural metabolisms (Lamine, 2005). Many SFSCs contribute to agro-biodiversity as producers are keen to cultivate diverse varieties and raise traditional breeds. Moreover often they are local varieties, which are well adapted to local environment (In the case of Italian GAS, seasonality, respect of biodiversity, adoption of organic methods of production are central elements of the agreements between consumers and producers (Brunori et al., 2012).

Environmental benefits exceed the food chain and can favour broader territories and communities. SFSCs can potentially reconfigure the periurban landscapes, supporting multifunctional farming and creating a resistance to urban sprawl and degradation of periurban agricultural land. They can also provide new opportunities for survival and revitalisation to the agriculture of marginal rural areas (Brunori and Di Iacovo, 2012).

Many SFSCs can be considered as an expression of rising ecological citizenship (Seyfang, 2006) that manifests itself as active environmentally friendly life style, based on ethical considerations and values.

For instance, KaDzi initiative in Latvia is strongly driven by consumers' ecological motivation to consume organic and local products.

Environmentally friendly practices are observed here all along the whole food-chain; they involve organic production methods, collective supplies, reduced food-miles, few packaging and repeated use of it. So, not only producers are organic, but also consumers are "green", and their ecological activism overpass food as many of them are members and/or take part in other ecological organizations and events.

2.4 Social sustainability and ethics

Social sustainability of SFSCs refers to their capacity to contribute to the equity or fairness among food chain actors, food security and the viability of local communities. It is much rooted in the trustful, fair and personal relations, solidarity and shared values between consumers and producers.

Members of CSA KaDzi initiative in Latvia (case study 12) stress the sense of community, collective identity and collective benefits that motivates and advances them.

The direct, single relationships between producers and consumers in SFSCs makes it easier to establish fairness. They facilitate consumers' understanding of the 'real' costs of agriculture and food production and their readiness to pay for products they know and trust, which in turn allows producers to receive a dignified income for their work (Renting et al, 2003; Brunori et al, 2011). Fairness involves not only fair price but also ethical recognition and appreciation of farmers' work – direct interaction and feedback from consumers increases farmers' belief that their work is necessary (Ka Dzi case, Straupe rural goods market, GAS San Zeno, Brin d'Herbe, Birkenhof Farm Dairy, etc.). Presumably, this adds to farmers' socio-psychological comfort and improves their self-esteem to keep on with

farming. In addition, fairer power relations are established in SFSCs: from passive or subordinated food chain actors producers and consumers become active and equal owners and governors who establish rules, organise and control these food chains.

Besides social impacts at food-chain level, SFSCs also can contribute to revitalise local communities in multiple ways. The very values and meanings attributed to a product and its origin develop a sense of pride, social cohesion and belonging in a certain area and community (Peters, 2012). Many SFSCs put in value (traditional) local products, production and marketing methods and knowledge and consumption habits and therefore strengthen local culture and identities. SFSCs provide space for community member interactions thus strengthening their social capital in terms of networks, inclusion, knowledge and social cohesion.

For instance, Selbsternte (pick-yourself) initiative's plot in Austria serves also as a meeting and recreation point for local residents which has facilitated their communication and development of new networks, in which opinions, knowledge and information are exchanged (Vogl et al, 2004).

Especially some forms of collective "do it yourself" agriculture, like urban gardening fulfill more social integrative motives than food production in itself.

For instance the integrative and intercultural gardens in Germany and Austria (Müller 2007) provide social integration and empowerment of marginalised groups primarilly, but food production comes only secondary.

Often SFSCs also reconnect urban and rural territories and communities, creating new opportunities to meet their food, social and economic needs. The impact of certain SFSCs in urban areas (such as regular farmers' markets) goes beyond the mere commercial relationship and into a higher social cohesion of the population in these areas, which determines the education and sensibilization of the people, and even the sense of identity and security

2.5 Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability of SFSCs addresses such issues as competitiveness and economic viability of food chains and their actors, efficient use of and contribution to resources (including human ones), contributions to communities in terms of creation of jobs and income. Although there are variations among various SFSCs regarding their economic sustainability, several commonalities can be identified.

It is characteristic that especially small and medium farmers are involved in SFSCs. This stems from the fact that they are often less competitive in the conventional chains due to their higher costs of production (because of the lack of economies of scale and the different organisation of production processes) and the higher prices. In many cases these farms do not have easy access to the conventional channels also because of the inconsistency in their supply, in terms of volume, quality and/or continuity. Providing a fair access to the market, SFSCs represent a solution to increase economic viability of small and medium farms and processing companies. SFSCs are often developed as collective economic initiatives in response to aggravating disadvantageous market conditions, and therefore they "shorten" and strengthen links among local entrepreneurs and mobilize local resources in a synergetic manner (Schermer et al, 2006).

During the 1980s Gilmar Pontel and Jamir Vigolo, small farmers of Antonio Prado, belonged to an association of young farmers promoted by the local priest, Pe. João Bosco Luiz Schio. After that a young farmer of the area died by intoxication of pesticides in 1986, the group started to work at a project to turn their farm into 'ecological farming'. They created a cooperative, AECIA, and joined the network 'ecovida' through which they obtained organic (participatory) certification. They started to diversify, as they grew raspberries, grapes, caki, apples. In a first time the cooperative would not find retailers or wholesalers willing to recognize the difference of ecological production. Thanks to the initiative of Mrs Guazelli, an activist with very influencial frends in Porto Alegre, a farmers' market was in the meanwhile open in Porto Alegre (200 km far) in 1990. The first time he went to the market, says Gilmar Pontel, he sold all his production in 9 hours.

As there are fewer intermediaries in SFSCs, many of them, especially direct ones, provide producers with relatively high degree of independence in production and marketing decisions, lower overhead costs, and premium prices when compared to conventional retail and wholesale channels (Ruiz et al, 2010; Wittman et al, 2012).

Certain types of SFSCs in which consumers are engaged on the basis of long-term commitment reduce economic uncertainties related to variations in production and sales volumes. In box schemes, consumers pay in advance costs that are set beforehand, and producers are sure to sell their products at a given price (Brunori et al., 2011), including those non-standard products that would be discarded from conventional chains (Lamine, 2005). The latter contributes also to resource saving and reduces food waste.

SFSCs can contribute to (re-)vitalise local economies. As stated above, they preserve small and medium farms which are at the core of local rural economies (Rosset, 1999). SFSCs increase or help re-circulate community income and create new jobs (Wittman et al, 2012; Peters, 2012). SFSC help to sustain the knowledge and skills of many small food producers and processors (especially knowledge about local varieties). In addition, contributions of SFSCs to local economy may both boost agro-food sector and reach beyond it.

In Austrian Selbsternte (pick-your-own) plots, there are local organic gardeners, tool retailers and other providers who benefit from the demand of self-harvesters as well as the local farmer involved (Vogl et al, 2004). In Straupe rural goods market (Latvia), direct exchanges with consumers and among producers have encouraged farmers towards economic diversification and creativity: several of them have started processing on farm, many invented new products. Moreover, this market contributes also to local tourism development since the market has become a major object of tourists' interest.

In the meantime, operating in a SFSC often demands additional investments and/or special skills which may create barriers to economic success. Also competition with expanding supermarket chains, of which some started even with regional product lines and local deliveries in larger towns, put economic pressures on SFSCs.

2.6 Issues regarding sustainability

The evidence outlined above about sustainability of SFSCs is mostly based on single cases, studies that explore SFSCs without comparing them to conventional counterparts or research that details only one particular dimension of sustainability. In order to make overall conclusions about SFSCs in terms of their sustainability, these chains should be assessed systematically in their complexity and in a comparative manner (short versus conventional) in the longer term. This is a challenging task, and there are few such analyses performed so far. The different pillars of sustainability and health are often complementary, but they can be also conflicting (Leat et al, 2011). Analysing the trade-offs between indicators representing the different dimensions of sustainability is an important challenge (for any food supply chain). Finding a way to represent such an analysis to consumers in an easily understood manner which enables them to make an quick but informed and evidence-based decision is an even greater dilemma.

Brin d'herbe (Rennes, FR) has established an external audit ("NESO") that controls a cluster of indicators against social, energy, environment and origin criteria. Consumers are involved in the audit process. They are repeated every 3-4 years. The results of the audits for each participating farm are communicated to consumers via leaflets in the shop. The labels for organic and non-organic products have different colours (green for organic and white for the others).

The most promising method for both of these seems to be the use of Principal Component Analysis, its representation in spider-diagrams, and the translation of these into simplified pictorial representations (Sustain, 2007; Barnes, 2012).

On the basis of our meta-analysis we can conclude that the degree of sustainability varies among different types of SFSCs, their products, locations etc. Also various participants in SFSCs may interpret sustainability differently and experience different impacts.

Chapter 3 – Organizational patterns for SFSCs

- What are the trends in the organisation of SFSCs?
- How can growth of SFSCs be managed?
- What are the conditions and limiting/favouring factors for growth of SFSC?
- What are the opportunities and risks for growth of multiplying SFSCs?
- What growth is desirable and feasible?
- What are policy recommendations for different stakeholders?

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with organisational and growth issues of SFSCs. One of the key questions is what growth of SFSCs is desirable and feasible. What does growth mean? Does it mean a bigger share in the food chain? Is growth limited to the individual case? Is it about expanding certain food systems characterised by short physical and social distance? Or is it understood more from a sociological point of view that niche drivers, or even landscape drivers, will become mainstream ?

Certainly when we speak about growth, it is about conditions and implications for growth, even the trade-offs thereof. But it is not only about economics of scale, it is often also about "social (human) scale". It will need reflections on how this growth should happen, e.g. larger or more operational units, most likely to lead to a higher market share of SFSCs.

However, some SFSCs will even limit their size/growth in order to remain operational and socially inclusive (see the following).

Therefore we have also to consider what might be optimal organizational structures of different forms in different stages of development and contexts. In order to match all these aspirations we will speak of growth and development of SFSCs rather than scaling up.

3.2 Organisation, growth and development of SFSCs: trends and context

Short food supply chains provide an alternative outlet for farmers. The most important benefits they give are a reduction of dependence on powerful actors in the chain and the possibility of a more direct relationship with consumers. Short food supply chains, in fact, give farmers a channel tailored to small (and sometimes inconsistent) quantities and high/special quality, which are nevertheless appreciated on the market.

Once they are established, short food supply chains have low entry costs for farmers. Moreover, the setting up costs are considerably lower than other outlets and the costs can be distributed over a large number of actors. From organisational and governance aspect, in fact, SFSCs are at the basis of new forms of collective engagement of consumers, producers and other actors as "food citizens" within food networks. Various types of SFSCs presented in the Chapter 1 and explored more in detail in empirical studies (e.g. the case studies analysed in part 2 of the Evidence Document and within specific sessions on "Civic Food Networks" at many recent conferences (Renting et al., 2012)) show similar organisational characteristics:

- Active engagement and cooperation of producers, consumers, other actors of civil society and also public sector;
- A small leader group of initiator(s);
- Network type of governance;
- Collective learning;
- Importance of Internet in organisation and performance of SFSCs.
- Good communication to involved consumers (co-producers) and clients.

One important organizational issue is the relationship that SFSCs establish with supermarkets. Although most SFSCs are 'alternative' to supermarkets, some adopt the 'short' formula (short physical distance, reduced social distance, information about producers and values) but involve supermarkets as well.

Willem&Drees has specialized as intermediary between farmers and supermarkets, delivering local food to local supermarkets ('local for local'). The company was started with a dream: to deliver local food to the supermarkets, with a convenience for the consumers. According to Willem and Drees local is a farm from within a circle of 40 kilometers from the supermarket, but local also depends on the availability of the products. At the moment Willem&Drees are mainly active in the middle and southern part of the Netherlands and are slowly expanding their activities into the western part of the country.

Once established, farmers often see SFSCs as a component of mixed marketing strategies: they deliver both through short and conventional market channels (see case study 16 Villa of Roses in Ukraine, or case study 11 Straupe market of rural goods in Latvia). This would mean that, in many farmers' eyes, there is a complementarity of both types of food supply chains. This mixed strategy can put some competition stress on SFSCs, especially the newborn ones. It is for this reason that some SFSCs we have studied ask their producers not to sell to supermarkets, as in the case of Birkenhof (Switzerland) – see case study 6.

3.2.1 Internal factors and challenges influencing growth of SFSC?

Although many SFSCs are comparatively small-scale and remain of very local character, in general the sector experiences dynamic growth that is characterised by the diversity of SFSC forms, sprouting of new initiatives and multiplication, maturation and consolidation of the existing ones. It happens at interaction of various internal and external context factors.

The process of growth in SFSCs can be characterised through their specific internal developments and changes in different phases of development, (e.g. process of professionalization, organisational structures, power relations, knowledge management, etc..). Although economics are always important (e.g. profit) other factors might be important reasons for participation, such as self-determination and self-esteem of the actors (in particular farmers), as mentioned in several case studies (e.g. Meet box scheme Alava – case study 9 ; Uagalur Food from the land - case study 19 both in Spain).

In general, internal developments of SFSCs follow a certain organisational life cycle. As known from management literature, marketing initiatives evolve through several development stages, which have specific characteristics, outlined by Schmid et al. 2004a in a guide for organic marketing initiatives:

- Pre-start-phase: nucleus of ideas, network building, idealistic unpaid work, etc.
- Start-up phase: often strong role of initiator, change in professionalism, higher investments, etc.
- Maturing phase: reorientation, strategic turning points, often enlargement of network and change of initiators' role.

Key factor for the growth and development of SFSCs are: the vision and role of the founder(s), the ability of the core actors to adapt their strategies objectives to changing consumer trends, market and political environments during different phases of development. Also, maintaining motivation of members and other internal and external cohesion factors are major challenges to achieving not only economic, but also wider social, environmental and political goals. As emphasized in the projects OMIaRD and COFAMI on farmer's marketing initiatives, it is important that such iniatives aim at improving their supply policy (in sufficient quantity and quality), keeping logistic costs to a minimum, and that they do rely too much on public funding. A final key success factor is networking; along the supply chain and also in the region (Schmid, 2004b, Schermer *et al*., 2006). SFSCs through their close contact to consumers and, in many cases, the sharing of sustainability goals with other societal groups, can better address these challenges.

However, what is often lacking is sufficient knowledge of marketing and food processing. In particular small SFSCs have often little financial resources to buy expertise from outside. Therefore there is need for training and coaching possibilities for such initiatives, in particular in the start phase.

3.2.2 External conditions and limiting/favouring factors for growth of SFSC?

The development and growth of SFSCs have always been influenced by external factors, both changing agricultural policies and consumer behaviour and fragmentation. As Schermer (2012) showed for Austria, the changes in consumer-producer relationship have to be seen into the context of wider societal changes encouraging or hampering the various approaches over time. Thus a picture of changing, and partly progressing consumer-producer relations evolves. In summary, the changing consumer – producer relations during the last decades in Austria, we can distinguish four distinct phases. Different actors and civic networks shape each phase:

- 1st phase: regional developers in connection with third world activists are actors with a very ideological approach, supported by political actors of the ruling socialist party.
- 2nd phase: the federal ministry of agriculture and later the chamber of agriculture who aim to assist farmers in making direct links with individual consumers.
- In the 3rd phase, retailers become the dominating actors together with the organic farmers associations.
- Recently a 4th phase with newly emerging civic food networks linking critical consumers and (post) organic farmers can be observed.

A cycle of changing consumer relations from being very close in the first phase, becoming more and more distanced during the second and third phase to recently emerging re-connections. The major goals have changed correspondingly along the cycle. However the four phases are not strictly consecutive, there

are certain features, practices and institutions remaining from each phase even at present. Some of the early food coops are still existing, albeit in a more professionalized form, but still maintaining some core values as the case studies conducted in the frame of the EU-Project "Facilitating alternative Agro-food Networks, FAAN" demonstrate (Karner et al. 2010). The same applies to various forms of direct marketing and to the organic brands in the supermarkets. This leads to a diversified landscape with a varying degree of cooperation between producer and consumers (Schermer, 2012).

As described in Chapter 4, regulatory frameworks and public support systems may facilitate or hamper SFSCs. In some countries farmers benefit from lower VAT Tax than other market actors (e.g. the collective farm shop of Brin d'Herbe in France – see case study 3).

However, the existing regulatory framework tends to increase disproportionally various costs for small producers (see chapter 4 on regulations).

Another factor is market opportunities or constraints. SFSCs emerge in response to various market situations, which often involve limited access to conventional market channels, their inconvenience and limited, unsatisfactory to certain consumers, food supply. Although SFSCs most often take the market niches of special quality products they face competition from the conventional food chains, which, on one hand, offer cheaper products, on the other, tend to mimic also local and traditional food (e.g. supermarkets misusing the label "products from my farm").

SFSCs face also common problems of rural and agricultural development: outmigration that reduces available local labour, consumers and also producers, increasing pressure on land due to urbanization.

Growth in SFSCs is more subject to seasonal variations as they often follow natural seasonality of products. For example, in the case of farmer markets, the major challenges for growth as reported by Wittman et al (2012) are their accessibility in terms of locations, hours, supply and variety, competition from the conventional food system, pricing and availability of products, declining number of farmers, pressure on farmland from urban growth, escalating land prices, labour shortages, increasing production costs, a limited growing season, unpredictable weather patterns, declining processing facilities, lack of research and development, and a changing regulatory climate.

3.3 What are opportunities and risks for growth of or multiplying SFSCs?

There are several organisational aspects which need more attention, when analysing the growth of SFSCs. Growth is challenging for many SFSCs as it demands appropriate knowledge and management. Several more complex and extended SFSCs with different sales channels and a larger number of consumers indicate that through the process of growing much more efforts in communication are needed (e.g. Uagalur Food from the Land in Spain – case study 19; Zolle in Italy – case study 10).

In several regions there are good opportunities for SFSCs to grow by delivering local food to public canteens and schools (e.g. Oregional in The Netherlands – case study 4, Corazzano Farm in Italy – case study 14 , Uagalur Food from the land in Spain – case study 19, Le Bon Repas in France – case study 5). Also the potential of tourism, for example by delivering local food to hotels is an opportunity, which until now only few SFSCs have experimented with.

- *Distribution costs*

Some SFSCs have faced logistic problems, which not always could be solved through voluntary work of consumers willing to be directly involved (see GAS San Zeno in Italy – case study 13). In some cases this was solved through the emergence of new initiatives (e.g. new local CSAs or box schemes (other CSAs beside Panier Bio in Rennes, France).

In other cases, the SFSC has been centralized to become more efficient. However the distribution costs remain a key factor for the economic success of SFSCs, mainly due to the small quantities transported. Innovative solutions have to be found also with the aid of information technology, to improve planning of product collection from farms and distribution. In some cases these costs could be reduced through the collaboration with a regional wholesaler (e.g. SpeiseLokal! - Austria – case study 8).

- *Search for optimal size and "appropriate" growth*

Growth can also undermine the essence of SFSCs and their advantages rooted in direct relations between producers and consumers. In a paper "Does growth hurt?" by Milestad and Kummer (2012) based on two box schemes of different sizes in Sweden and Austria, the impacts of growing food networks on the resilience of farms have been reported, showing that in some cases the growth has led to changes in the network and the relationship with consumers. In the Austrian case producers that could provide larger quantities became more important in the network than small local producers and could therefore stay well in contact with end consumers. On the other hand, diversified and/or small-scale producers had to make an effort to find new connections with consumers. The other side of such growth might give an opportunity to have better access to public procurement, contract growing, pooling arrangements and regional clustering.

For several cases here is a risk that a growth that is too strong might damage the direct links between producers and consumers and potentially threatening values of authenticity and inclusion, education, and economic advantages (Wittman et al, 2012).

The Brin d'Herbe collective farm shop in France will not take up more farmers as this would rise the complexity of the SFSC. The Box Scheme GAS San Zeno and Birkenhof Dairy in Switzerland wants rather to reduce the size of the operation to keep it at a human size and to avoid high new investments. Birkenhof Dairy in Switzerland cannot affort to pay highly qualified and expensive cheese-maker(s) without a much higher turn-over and profit, which is only possible with high investments.

As a conclusion from the analysis of the cases we can see that there is a quest to find the optimum size for each SFSCs, which is still economic but maintains the social closeness to consumers and customers. Often this size is also determined by the available financial resources for investments in buidlings or human resources. This shows that further growth of SFSC enterprises is not a simple linear process. It is about making strategic decisions on what size fits best the operation, both economically and socially. Some SFSCs have decided to further grow with more sales channels (including public procurement) supported by more communication. Other SFSCs decided not to grow further or only in a qualitative way. Instead of more volume and more customers they opted for more added value on the farm through product diversification or on farm processing (e.g. Corazzano farm, Italy – case study 14). Often the collaboration with other local farmers is sought and intensified, which allows a better specialisation and a diversification of the supply through other products.

3.3.1. Adaption/appropriation to the current dominating food regime

Another issue to look at when considering growth of SFSCs is the increasing interest in local products from the side of conventional chains. Schermer (2012) showed how different alternative food networks, including SFSCs, go through an adaptation/appropriation process, e.g. through uptake in dominating structures at a meso-scale either by supermarkets (e.g. local and regional food) or transformation into agricultural policies (organic food, farmers markets). Originally, alternative initiatives loose part of their alternative characteristics through professionalization and regulation pressures, but persist with their core values. What will happen with the new wave of SFSCs /civic food networks? Evidences seem to show that these initiatives are aware of this risk and are engaged in the search of really innovative organizational models (e.g. SpeisLokal in Austria – case study 8, Birkenhof Dairy in Switzerland – case study 6).

3.4 Knowledge gaps and challenges

For a more thorough notion of the process and impacts of growth and development on SFSCs it is necessary to gain more knowledge (partly taken from Darrot, 2011) about:

- those SFSCs initiatives which have failed.
- skills and knowledge of the main SFSCs actors needed (e.g. about innovative marketing and communication systems and organizational models).
- consumers' involvement in terms of their motives, perception, willingness to pay or directly engage, recognition, etc.
- social impacts of growth of SFSCs, e.g. on overload of work for farmers through diversification.
- possibilities to reduce distribution costs (with and without growth) and additional investments costs (economies of scale versus new models of cost sharing).
- innovative models of cooperation on local level with other farms or societal groups.
- impacts of different governance systems (including the role of local authorities) and funding schemes (initial funding versus continuous funding).
- the potential of public procurement for SFSCs.
- the use of territorial and quality branding.

Chapter 4 - Short food supply chains and policy

- Why, and to what extent, can SFSCs deserve support from public policies?
- What are the support policies that can be mobilized to develop short food supply chains?
- To what extent, and at what level, does regulation create obstacles to the development of SFSC?
- What strategies should complement regulation in order to exploit the potential of SFSCs?

4.1 SFSCs as targets of policy support

"Local food systems provide many societal benefits – such as environmentally more sustainable cultivation methods, high-quality and fresh food, community engagement, re-linkages between rural and urban areas, local economic development. Consumers gain awareness of those societal benefits through greater proximity to producers, thus developing knowledge and trust as a basis for their economic relationship. Often these benefits are integral to the practices of a Local Food System." (Karner et al., 2010).

Many SFSCs deserve support from public policies because they contribute directly and indirectly to social, environmental and economic sustainability, At the same time, if adequately supported, SFSCs can represent significant policy tools, as catalysts for broader processes of change in attitudes and practices around food. To that regard we can for instance consider the following relations:

- *SFSCs and food policies:* the inherent SFSCs character of reconnecting production and consumption makes them play a central role in the definition and implementation of local food strategies aimed at meeting city dwellers' needs for quality food as well as in the reconstruction of a culture around food.
- *SFSCs and environmental policies:* SFSCs could be instrumental to policies addressed to support/reward virtuous practices of food production-distribution-consumption (e.g. low input/low carbon emission/low energy consumption methods of productions; use of recyclable packaging; optimisation of transport, etc.).
- *SFSCs and rural policies:* the spread and consolidation of SFSCs represent an opportunity for the revitalisation of local communities and for the valorisation of human and natural resources of rural areas, also considering the capacity to recreate social and economic linkages with the urban contexts; thus SFSCs assume a central role in rural policies definition and implementation;
- *SFSCs and urban policies:* SFSCs can represents a way to reconnect rural and urban areas or, as said above, to recreate spaces of direct relationship

with food production within the urban spaces.

4.2 Supporting short food supply chains

There are many support tools already in place at European level. Many of them fall within the second pillar of CAP. SFSC actors are eligible to various support measures, a considerable part of which is financial support to investments, certification, research, training, advice.

Family S. near Wels in Upper Austria runs an organic farm with 50 ha. Their main activities are pig breeding, lying hens and geese fattening. They always sold part of their products from the farm gate. In 2008 they built a farm shop. 1/3 of their investment costs were subsidised from Axis 3 (diversification) and Axis 4 (Leader).

The Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Chamber of Agriculture, runs the program "Bildungsoffensive Direktvermarktung" (Educational offensive on direct sales), in order to ensure good training for farmers that sell their products directly to consumers. This program includes for example trainings for teachers and trainers.

As short supply chains are the product of a collective endeavour and a multi-actor process, the effectiveness of public policies is higher when support measures are framed into broader territorial and collective projects. Most interesting examples of successful public support come from projects aligning short food supply chains with actions related to the development of local products, creation of thematic tourist routes and public procurement.

The project "Natur-Kulinarium" is a cooperation of three Austrian partners and one Hungarian partner and aims at developing touristic offers based on nature and local culinary. It is financed by 85 % from the ERDF and 15 % from national budgets .(http://www.natur-kulinarium.eu/) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/cooperation/crossborder/index_en.cfm

The regional and county authorities pay the Défis Ruraux (A CIVAM from the North of France - Normandie) to organize meals and refund schools the difference (capped at €1) between the cost of "sustainable" meals and ordinary meals. The funding bodies pay for 220 two-hour workshops in a school year, 150 in 11–15 schools and 70 in 15–18 schools or colleges. After a general presentation, pupils are given worksheets to fill in as they circulate between five activities designed to be entertaining and thought-provoking and to develop critical faculties.

LEADER ("Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale"/'Links between the rural economy and development actions') and National Rural Networks have a key role in supporting SFSCs. LEADER is a method to achieve the objectives of the EU's rural development policy through bottom-up implementation rather than the traditional top-down approach. The LEADER approach cedes a high degree of control to local partnerships,

encouraging them to design development strategies, foster innovation, promote co-operation and build networks.

The Scottish Rural Development Programme has facilitated local action on short supply chains. This has been done largely through the Scottish National Rural Network (SNRN) and the LEADER programme. Every year the SNRN agrees a programme of activities with the Scottish Government that look to stimulate new ways of working with others, with activities taking place at the appropriate scale. Examples include: I) visiting businesses and projects: in 2012 SNRN members visited the award winning Kirkmichael Village Shop to discuss issues, experiences and ideas with each other on how a community owned shop, post office, petrol station, café and exhibition space can operate in a remote rural area at a time when rural services are depleting. II) Hosting events: in 2011 SNRN hosted a Taste for Tourism event in the Cairngorms to provide opportunities for networking and collaboration between food & drink businesses and tourism businesses in rural Scotland. The event was organised in partnership with Cairngorms National Park and Scotland Food & Drink.

LEADER has also been instrumental in stimulating action on short supply chains.

Argyll and Bute Agricultural Forum (Scotland – see http://www.argyllagriculturalforum.com/) employ a development manager to deliver actions identified within the local Agricultural Strategy. The Forum has initiated training events, studies and regional lobbying initiatives. The Forum has also secured further funding to become involved in a transnational LEADER project which is aiming to promote five regions across Europe as good food destinations.

Savour the Flavours is an initiative led by food and drink businesses supporting producers, retailers and manufacturers in Dumfries and Galloway to grow and develop; by encouraging chefs and the wider hospitality sector to use local food and drink; by encouraging local people and visitors to embrace Dumfries & Galloway produce and by helping children learn about local produce.

The innovative and successful 'Ceanglaichean Croitearachd - Crofting Connections' project teaches sustainable farming skills to young people and reconnects them with their crofting heritage. The flourishing project supported by a number of funding partners including a number of LAGs. School pupils are participating through a range of crofting related activities to learn about the connections between food, health and the environment. They learn about practical crofting skills from experienced crofters, growing their own food, cooking traditional recipes, the relevance of crofting and the links with Gaelic and their cultural heritage.

Local Produce - this is a project between Tarbert & Skipness Community Trust and North/South Skane in Sweden allowing the exchange of experiences on topics such as local food and drink production, logistics and transport, horticulture, cultivation, and employment and training opportunities through rural skills. The project builds on work relating to local food production that has been done across the Kintyre area by co-ordinating the sharing of experience, skills and resources between local food projects in Tarbert, Campbeltown, Islay and Gigha and Skane in Sweden.

The implementation of specific policies should require an assessment of the potential in terms of SFSCs contribution to development goals. For example, sustainability assessment should be carried out, as not necessarily short is sustainable.

Attention should also be devoted to avoiding excess of demand on supply. For example, financing farmers' markets infrastructures without an appropriate analysis of the production environment could put stress on the production system itself, encouraging sourcing from outside and the transformation of farmers' markets into more conventional retail markets.

4.3 Removing regulatory barriers

Food production and distribution is a highly regulated field. Within this frame, SFSCs are subjected to the whole body of agri-food system regulation. It involves rules of hygiene, food health, standards, taxation, certification, trading etc. Often, regulation is tailored to industrial companies, and this represents an objective constraint to development of short food supply chains. For this reason, *"Public sector authorities face the challenge of not only needing to identify ways to support the development of the sector, but also having to refocus their role from legislative enforcer to legislative modifier"* (Peters, 2012: 19). In many cases it has been shown that it is possible to carry out an adaptation of regulations at the level of EU Member States within the same European regulatory framework. Local authorities have a very important role, as they can use their unique position to remove at least in part barriers, to facilitate the development of networks and develop opportunities for the valorisation of local products (Peters, 2012).

Straupe market (Latvia) – case study 11 - was the second established regular farmer market in the country and as a pioneer it had to face some constraining shortcomings of the regulations at the time. It has adapted itself to some rules and incited changes in other. A problem the market faced soon after the opening was that the regulation of that moment allowed to organize only eight market days per year for this type of markets. The organizers took the initiative and together with the cook of Slow Food movement and a coordinator of another farmer market approached the Ministry of Agriculture with propositions to change the existing regulations. The minister of agriculture agreed that the existing regulations were out of date and farmer markets should be supported.

The Scottish Government has recently launched (Dec 2012) a review of farm regulation that potentially impact on farmers and land managers. The areas covered are "Agricultural support", "Protection of the environment legislation", "Animal health and Welfare", "Food and Feed law" and "Employment legislation". For further info, please see http://www.farmregulation-doingbetter.org/

4.3.1. Focus - The implementation of the hygiene regulation

The relevant hygiene regulations at European level are associated in the General Food Law - Reg. (EC) No. 178/2002 - and in the Food Hygiene Package - Reg. (EC) No. 852/2004, Reg. (EC) No. 853/2004, Reg. (EC) No. 854/2004 -. The first aims at ensuring a high level of food safety and at harmonising existing national requirements in order to ensure the free movement of food and feed in the EU. The Food Hygiene Package is a complementary set of rules to tighten and harmonise EU food safety measures: it sets down stricter, clearer and more harmonised rules on the hygiene of foodstuffs, specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, and specific rules for controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. The principle on which the package is based is flexibility. So, it gives Member States a broad autonomy in defining appropriate rules related to the specificities of their food production. To that regard there is a large variety across countries and regions on how regulators deal with small farming and SFSCs in relation to food hygiene. However, in general, it can be said that Member States have assisted passively to the flexible implementation of the hygiene rules. There is a general inertia, often accompanied by the attempt to blame the EU for the rigidity of rules. This inertia creates inadequate burdens for SFSCs and hampers the optimal use of their potential in attaining sustainability goals (as described in chapter 2).

As a result of this situation it is widely acknowledged that the implementation of hygiene regulation in the EU has strongly favoured the food industry and marginalized small farmers, artisanal processes and short food supply chains. Hygienic regulations (or « bureaucratic/hygienic form» of rural development (Marsden et al., 2001)) appear developed to a large extent in response to food risks originating from the agri-industrial system by agri-industrial mode, with stronger negative effects on small producers. They are "ratcheting up the regulatory costs of small producers and food processors and reducing market entry into the most lucrative supply chains (often linked to the main corporate retailers) to those larger producers and processors who can more easily meet the demanded quality criteria that are now set." (Marsden et al., 2001: 77). Fragmentation of food production and turnover into many standardized technical procedures also complicates application of locally developed farm management, food production and turnover practices (which are often embedded in and adapted to specific local environmental and social conditions) and threatens specific local food traditions which are at the core of many SFSCs.

The mechanism of marginalization is based on a) standards tailored to large scale processing; b)proportionally higher costs of adaptation to the new standards; c) discriminatory attitude of implementing and controlling authorities; d) lack of information on how to comply; e) lack of initiative of national / regional authorities to fill the gaps left by EU regulation.

After the emergence of initiatives around local food and the increase of attention of public opinion on it in many countries a demand and some initiatives to apply flexibility have developed.

In order to better understand why SFSCs demand appropriately adjusted approach in the implementation of food hygiene regulation, the specificity of SFSCs has to be taken into account. It is characteristic that mainly small farms, which often carry out a multiplicity of operations and cover the whole cycle of

production, engage in SFSCs. To that regard, it is important to take into account that diversity of food and production processes that small farms represent is a value to be preserved. Next, SFSCs have a lower level of complexity, as they involve a smaller number of nodes and often apply simplified methods. This implies different risks and different risk management design in comparison to bigger producers (ENRD, 2012). The SFSCs organization facilitates, for example, a continuity of responsibility along the process, as in the case of farmers processing on farm and selling directly. In this cases, the use of guidelines of good practice, as foreseen in EU food hygiene legislation, is possible without hampering food safety (ENRD, 2012). Another important point is the direct communication between producers and consumers which has implications on the transparency of the food production-turnover system: consumers are encouraged to be involved in the quality control and producers are stimulated to increase their accountability towards them. Taking these specificities into account does not imply, however, different hygiene standards for SFSCs. Instead, a tailored design of risk management practices and control systems should be adopted.

The problems presented by small producers and SFSCs are not inevitable. It depends much on the role of public institutions - Member States, regional and in particular local administrations, and local food safety authorities -, if and how they interpret and apply regulations and define specific support tools.

The successful examples of application of the flexibility principle (see the cases of Good practices below) show that in order to implement regulations EU Member States and their relevant authorities have to consider:

- the approval of specific national / regional guidelines that take into account the specificities of national and regional food production systems.
- the stakeholders' involvement (roundtables): particularly small farmers are not adequately represented in decision making. As a consequence, public authorities lack complete information of their problems and needs, which risk to be not addressed in the relevant policies. Similarly, also consumers interested or directly involved in SFSCs functioning are not adequately represented in decision-making; their perception of the quality of food and their attitude towards different farming systems should find proper voice and be taken into consideration.
- the promotion of training, education, communication: the lack of necessary knowledge and expertise to develop and implement national guidelines has to be overcome. Moreover informative, training and education measures have to be organized in order to translate and transfer the guidelines to practitioners, both producers and inspectors. Good communication practices among these actors can help the search of proper solutions to solve specific difficulties in complying with regulations.
- the promotion of fine-tuning and adoption of appropriate technology (f.i., mobile slaughterhouses) to ensure the practical implementation of flexibility.

In Austria, the Standing Hygiene Committee of the Ministry of Health, which consists of several ministries, professional and consumer organisations, has developed national guidelines for meat, egg and fish producers, small dairy processors and fruit processors. These guidelines are based on EU hygiene regulation, but they define simplified documentation, monitoring and laboratory testing procedures. Training courses for rural advisors and producers were organised in order to ensure their application in practice.

In Italy, Sardinia region is an area characterized by a high presence of sheep, goat and pig farming. To remedy the hygienic problems related to on-farm slaughtering of animals, the Regional Government in recent years enacted laws providing full funding for the purchasing of mobile slaughterhouses by Municipalities that do not have slaughterhouses within 20 km. The Municipalities assign the management directly to groups of farmers.

In Italy, Coldiretti (the largest of the three national Farmers' Unions) has developed national guidelines aimed at supporting the implementation of the EU hygiene regulations. In particular, the handbook aims to provide: operational support to farmers involved in all the different sectors of the primary production and in the processing of agricultural products, through farm procedures of self-control of the hygienic risks of production processes and a simplified application of a HACCP system (where required by regulations); an operational tool for those who are in charge of controlling the application of the Regulations, in particular advisors and control authorities, who so can make use of guidelines consistent across the country.The handbook also provides formats and practical information for the preparation of the documentation to be submitted to the control authorities.

In Switzerland the agriculture central advisory service centers of AGRIDEA support farmers with leaflets and courses for direct marketing and on-farm processing, with particular focus on the hygienic rules. Furthermore it is important that farmers starting with on farm processing do get advice already in the planning phase from the offical food inspection agencies before they are making larger investments relevant for food safety (e.g. in the case of the Birkenhof Farm Dairy in Switzerland this worked quite well).

4.4 Short food supply chains as a policy tool

We have identified four main policy areas where SFSCs can foster change: green economy, local and regional development, food and drinks business, urban food strategies.

SFSCs and the green economy: SFSCs could be instrumental to policies addressed to support/reward virtuous practices of food production-distribution-consumption (e.g. low input/low carbon emission/low energy consumption methods of productions; use of recyclable packaging; optimisation of transport, etc.).

SFSCs and local and regional development: short food supply chains can contribute to this in several ways. By giving consumers the opportunity of identifying and choosing local produce, they help local economies to retain more added value within the region. By giving farmers alternative outlets to their produce, SFSCs increase farm resilience by reducing dependence from big wholesalers, retailers and

food processors. By providing alternative communication channels to conventional ones, short food supply chains contribute to strengthen regional identities and reputation of the territory, and by this way they can set own quality standards. By needing a small starting capital, they can create employment. They also can foster tourism and export marketing of local products. In this policy field, short food supply chains can find synergies with quality policies aimed at fostering organic, unique, processed-on-farm products.

SFSCs and Food and drink business: SFSCs can create business opportunities especially for SMEs. They can be taken into consideration as complimentary to product innovation, for example in the case of the use of local breeds and varieties and of on farm processed products. They are a key to differentiation strategies aimed at creating market niches and getting a premium price. In fact, one of the most relevant limitations of global food chains is their size, in general too big to host small quantities, high quality products. In the past this limitation prevented farmers to innovate, and quality standards were defined by retailers or processors giving the way to standardization. Moreover, Short food supply chains give farmers the opportunity to improve their cash flow, as in general consumers pay cash while retailers retard payments up to two months. SFSCs also increase consumers' trust in the system.

SFSCs and urban food strategies: urban food strategies are a new field of policy recently developed in many European and American cities, addressing issues such as food security, food sustainability, healthy nutrition. In fact, they provide market access to fresh and seasonal food produced in peri-urban farm areas. They can provide a remedy to 'food desertification', the tendency of small food shops to disappear from many neighborhoods as a result of the competition from supermarkets, which often are located far away from many peoples' home. Their double function – commercial and communicative – make them a media to introduce the issue of food into urban imagery. Some of them – for example purchasing groups – provide an arena for interaction between producers and consumers, which have social cohesion as an important byproduct.

Chapter 5 - Recommendations[1]

5.1 SFSCs actors

- Get the necessary knowledge, when starting or further developing SFSCs.
- Invest enough time in networking and communication (externally and internally in the own operation)
- Keep the size of the operation at the appropriate level, both economically and socially.
- When there are opportunities for enlarging the market, take into consideration the possibility to make agreements or ally with suitable intermediaries, such as local shops, managers of public food procurement initiatives,etc.
- Involve public authorities mainly on local level in the planning process (e.g. on hygienic requirements) and envisage public-private partnership.
- Find innovative solutions in reducing distribution costs through collaboration.
- Monitor and communicate the levels of sustainability of the product and of process.

5.2 Local administrations

- Learn from success strategies at local level, and better use local planning to facilitate SFSCs (e.g. territorial planning, preserving farmland; retailing policies, leaving space to other channels than the dominant ones).
- Public procurement: To facilitate local sourcing in public procurement through more effective communication and sharing of experiences, updating of existing Green Public Procurement criteria for 'food and catering services', and, possibly, introduction of social considerations into public procurement within the broader framework of a socially responsible purchasing policy.
- Behaviours, mindsets: To consider linking the development of local food systems to educational programmes for children, adults, professionals and public catering managers, to create substantial and regular demand for local food.
- Urban planning can help to develop certain SFSCs (i.e. farmers' markets), specially when designing new areas of cities, including facilities and installments suitable to receive the people involved. The impact of these infrastructures usually goes beyond the mere commercial and into a higher social cohesion of the population in these areas.

[1] The recommendations for policy makers are partly taken from from the project Facilitating Alternative Agro-food Networks (FAANs) (Karner et al. 2011) and the funded EU study on "Marketing on local markets" in 2011. The focus of these recommendations have been extended from Local Food Systems to SFSCs.

5.3 National governments

- Develop an official definition of short food supply chain taking into account the following aspects:
  - → both physical and social distance and their interrelation when defining SFSCs, organising and/or formulating their support measures. Regarding the physical distance, not only the travel between a producer and consumer, but also the travel of inputs (for example feed) and the amount of travel needed by consumers to buy and collect the products can be considered.
  - → Ensure flexibility of interpretations of SFSCs and their support measures according to the context in which the SFSCs are functioning. Over the time several SFSCs have developped also more differentiated and diversified complex delivery and sales systems, were a certain share of non-seasonal products are procured from more distant producers (e.g. Original NL, Birkenhof Dairy CH).
  - → Ensure that definition allows the control of communication flows is in the hands of producers, so that the consumer acknowledges the origin of the product and the producer, and the quality features of the product, and the producer can get feedback from consumers in order to improve its production.
- Build recognition of SFSCs into multiple policy areas – including health, environment, rural development and agriculture – noting that they can deliver solutions to many cross-departmental policy challenges, especially at a local level.
- Use the flexibility of EU rules as a means to remove unnecessary hindrances to SFSCs, such as over-burdensome interpretations of hygiene regulations.
- Ensure there is increased funding for projects which have been initiated by local communities, in partnership and taking innovative approaches and keeping administrative efforts for farmers low.

5.4 Recommendations at EU level

- Create an inter-DG task force for SFSCs: this would promote on-going, detailed examination of policy. Agree on a certain definition of SFSCs.
- Facilitate a Europe-wide structure for information exchange among and about SFSCs.
- Consider systematically using relevant EU funded projects, especially those encompassing multi-country partnerships, as operative tools for the spreading of information on modalities for the practical implementation of SFSCs at the local and regional level.

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ANNEX

Examples of SFSC according to the IMPACT project classification criteria:

Definition	Trust is based on	Type	Examples
Face to face	Personal interaction	farm shops	http://www.parkfarmshop.co.uk/ ,http://fattoriadicorazzano.it/chi-siamo.aspx
		farmers markets (open air / indoor)	Earth markets (slow food)http://www.earthmarkets.net/ http://www.lfm.org.uk/markets-home/ http://www.mercatsantacaterina.net/ http://www.straupe-hanza.lv/index.php?p=4574&lang=828
		roadside sales	http://www.organicexplorer.co.nz/shop/New+Directory/Browse+By+Region/Canterbury/Tree+Hugger+Organic+Ltd.html
		pick your own	http://www.pickyourownfarms.org.uk/ http://www.selbsternte.at/
		box schemes	http://fattoriadicorazzano.it;http://www.zolle.it/
		home deliveries	http://www.riverford.co.uk/
		mail order	http://www.fruitforthought.co.uk/shopfront/shopfront.php http://www.dabasdobe.lv/en/home
		e-commerce	http://www.organickingdom.com/
		farm to work (training component)	Wwooff (world wide opportunities on organic farms)http://www.wwoof.org/
		mobile urban farm	http://prinzessinnengarten.net/about/
		consumers as producers	http://www.earthmarkets.net/pagine/eng/pagina.lasso?-id_pg=1
Proximate	Relations of proximity	farm shop groups	Landwinkel (http://www.landwinkel.nl/)
		regional hallmarks	http://www.gegarandeerdgroningen.net/
		consumer cooperatives	http://www.versvoko.nl/ http://www.voedselteams.be/content/wat-een-voedselteam http://www.retegas.org/ www.bioparadeis.org/
		community supported agriculture	http://www.soilassociation.org/communitysupportedagriculture http://www.reseau-amap.org/ www.ochsenherz.at/csa.html

		Community supported fishery	http://namanet.org/events/community-supported-agriculture-fisheries-csacsf-fair
		A combination of consumer coops and CSA	Canastas communitarias
		on farm vending machines	http://www.milkmaps.com/
Extended	Label, brand& certification	certification labels	http://www.sustainweb.org/news/oct11_msc_welcomes_government_fish_standards/
		production codes	http://www.earthmarkets.net/filemanager/official_documents/product_rules.pdf
		reputation effects	?
		special events (local food festival)	http://www.realfoodfestival.co.uk/
		thematic routes (articulation in space)	http://www.fietsmenu.nl/
		fairs (articulation in time)	http://www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk/
		local shops	http://www.uagalur.com/
		restaurants	Restaurants "Slow Food-Km 0"http://cocineros.slowfood.es/nosotros/programa-km-0/ http://ekovirtuve.lv/index.php/ideja/
		public food procurement + catering for institutions Farm to school	http://delicious.com/stacks/view/It0ux9 http://www.civam.org/spip.php?article66
Extended SFSC	Label, brand& certification	tourist enterprises `dedicated' retailers (for example, whole food, speciality, or dietetic shops)	?
		Participatory guarantee system	http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/PGS-Brochure-Dec2011_Web.pdf http://www.barcelona.degrowth.org/fileadmin/content/documents/Proceedings/Boza.pdf http://www.befair.be/sites/default/files/all-files/brochure/Participatory%20Guarantee%20Systems.pdf

Section 2

1. Case study - LavkaLavka (St.Petersburg, Russia)

Author: Olga Gromasheva

Type of short supply chain addressed

This is an Internet shop which sells farmers' products (intermediary and farmers' cooperative). The focus of this organization is on providing tasty and healthy food for consumers and on supporting farmers. The main slogan of LavkaLavka is “Support the local farmer!”. The main activity of LavkaLavka (http://spb.lavkalavka.com/en) is purchasing products from farmers and delivering them to consumers in St. Petersburg (the company also has branches in Moscow, Kaliningrad and Kiev but we will describe only the St. Petersburg branch). The products are delivered three-four times a week to the clients’ apartments (for an additional charge), or to the office of LavkaLavka and three order desks where consumers can pick them up free of charge. It is also possible to subscribe to a box scheme and buy a gift certificate. The products are either picked up on the farm by the LavkaLavka employees or delivered to the city by farmers, depending on the agreement with a particular farmer. There are around 60-80 customer orders per week, and about 70% of them are repeat purchases.

LavkaLavka pays farmers almost the retail price by which farmers sell the produce to individuals who come to the farm (therefore collaboration with LavkaLavka gives farmers certain stability compared to dealing directly with individual consumers, and better revenue compared to selling products to processing factories).

In addition to the before-mentioned activities, LavkaLavka has several other projects. One of them is the vegetable garden. The vegetable garden functions in the centre of St. Petersburg in the summertime since 2011. People can sub-rent a piece of land to plant greens (price for the use of 1 sq.m. for the summer 2013 was approximately 182 euro for individuals and 273 euro for companies) and have access to master classes and consultations with the professional gardeners. Alongside the vegetable garden the following activities are organized by LavkaLavka: the kiosk with farmers’ products (open from Friday to Sunday), fast-food bazaar (open on weekends, snacks from farmers’ products such as chips from seasonal vegetables, home-made ice-cream and lemonade, etc.); and the novelty of the summer 2013 – the Supper Club (café which is open on Friday evenings, chefs of St. Petersburg restaurants cook with farmers’ products, the suppers are devoted to various regional cuisines, sometimes the farmers are invited to talk about their work with the consumers). During the year LavkaLavka also arranges cooking master classes, dinners cooked from farmers’ products (by appointment, around 13 euro) and private events in its office. Moreover the restaurant of the new Russian kitchen “Kokoko” (http://www.kokoko.spb.ru/en) was launched by the famous singer Sergey Shnurov together with LavkaLavka (80% of products used for the meals are seasonal from the local farmers).

In November 2011 LavkaLavka announced creation of a Cooperative engaging farmers, consumers, shops, restaurants, etc., and the launch of a Fund for support of farmers’ projects. Thanks to investments made by the loyal customers several farmers were able to buy necessary equipment, and later they paid back to customers in products.

LavkaLavka is also developing their own organic certification system and making efforts to arrange agro-tourism (in this case 100% of money from farm tours goes to farmers). LavkaLavka tries to control not only that the producers do not use pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, hormones, but also to monitor the living conditions of animals (free range) and workers, cleanness on the farm, etc. The visits to the farms are one way to control quality of the products, among other ways are check of certificates, tasting of farmers’ products on a daily basis, and collection of feedback from their customers. Though LavkaLavka has quite strict rules for their producers, still these products cannot fully comply with the European organic production system which includes many more criteria such as waste disposal, etc.

Vasily Konashenok, the manager of the St. Petersburg branch of LavkaLavka, told in an interview[2] that in their work personal trust is the

[2] Interview was conducted by Olga Gromasheva in St. Petersburg in January 2012.

key issue because the consumers' trust in official papers in Russia is very low. That is why they try to establish personal relationships with the customers and if they have doubts about the quality of the product, they exchange product or return money without any questions, and then try to clarify the issue with the farmer. In 2011 the label KKK (Client Control of the Quality) was established by LavkaLavka and it is ascribed to farmers who have proven to be reliable and consumer-friendly. Based on the information from its website around half of the farmers whom LavkaLavka Petersburg is working with have already received this label.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

About half of the farmers are based in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad province (rural area surrounding the city) or adjacent regions (Karelia, Novgorod and Pskov provinces), and they sell mainly fresh food - vegetables, meat, eggs, milk, bread, etc. Half of the farmers are based in other regions of Russia, mainly on the south (Krasnodar province), and three of them are from the former USSR (Ukraine, Armenia and Abkhazia). The most distant is the sea food producer from Sakhalin island in Russia (around 10 000 km). The nearest productions are bakery, beer and meat processing which are based in St. Petersburg a few kilometers away from the LavkaLavka office. More distant farmers provide mainly preserves, jams, cheeses, oils, dried fruits and nuts, herbs and teas (which can be stored for longer period of time). They were involved in collaboration because they supply products which are not available from the local farmers, and because there are not many local farmers who can comply with the rules of LavkaLavka.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

During the last year the number of farmers whom LavkaLavka collaborates with has doubled. In the summer of 2013 there were 59 farmers and food producers – among them 34 were men, 11 were women and at least 11 were family farms, there were also three monasteries involved.

Type of products delivered

The range of products is quite big: meat, fish, poultry, milk products, vegetables, soft drinks and beer, bakery, grains, oil, honey, herbs, sauces, jams, juices and pickles. Among products are both staple foods such as milk, eggs, honey, and speciality products (made according to new or 'old-and-almost-forgotten' recipes such as 'sbiten' - tea with honey and spices - and jam from green pine cones, etc.).

Products sold by LavkaLavka (soused cloudberry[3] and pheasant[4])

Among the requirements for farmers published on the LavkaLavka website are: adherence to the principles of organic agriculture; availability of all required hygienic, veterinary, etc. certificates; openness (including provision of soil, water, products' tests, and readiness to communicate with consumers on farmers' personal blogs on the website and arrange farm visits for them).

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[3] http://spb.lavkalavka.com/catalog/zagotovki/varenya-dzhemy/moroshka-mochyonaya-ot-eleny-solovevoy-1-l. Consulted on 12 September 2013.

[4] http://spb.lavkalavka.com/catalog/ptica/fazan-ot-aleksandra-verzakova. Consulted on 12 September 2013.

The price level is high (2-2.5 euro for 1 liter of cow milk, prices of jams are between 4 and 27 euro). But the manager of LavkaLavka told that he does not rule out that with the development of the organization and participation of more farmers, prices can go down.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

The overwhelming majority (around 50 of 59) are new generation farmers who started several years ago, though there are several who are succession farmers or who have started farming more than 20 years ago. Six farmers have European organic certificates or are in the process of getting them.

For most of the farmers and the LavkaLavka employees it is the main/full-time activity. The manager of LavkaLavka said that they prefer to consider themselves not as a shop but as a cooperative or club of people having the same interests and way of life. The initial motivation of founders of the first Moscow branch of LavkaLavka was to get tasty farmers' products - they could not find them on the market and that is why they decided to go directly to producers (first for themselves and later, when they realized that there is demand for such products, for other consumers as well).

The farmer-supplier of LavkaLavka[5].

Time length of the initiative

The project started in Moscow in 2009 and now it is also running in St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad (Russia) and Kiev (Ukraine). The St. Petersburg branch was opened in the summer of 2011.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

Most customers of LavkaLavka are women (especially pregnant women or new mothers) from middle or upper class.
LavkaLavka successfully collaborates with restaurants and chefs, and also tries to cooperate with shops, suppliers of equipment, seeds, fertilizers, forage, energy, etc.

The vegetable garden of the LavkaLavka[6].

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

"Short" in this case means transparency and traceability - products come to consumers embedded with information about method of production, etc. On the project's website each farmer has a page describing the farmer's biography, farming experience and ideology, production methods, location of the farm, etc. It is also possible for consumers to visit some of the farms as LavkaLavka tries to develop agro-tourism. It is not exactly a 'direct' chain (LavkaLavka is an intermediary) and the distance

[5] http://spb.lavkalavka.com/fermer/vladimir-klyukvin. Consulted on 12 September 2013.

[6] http://www.newhollandsp.ru/blog/detail.php?ID=286. Consulted on 12 September 2013.

is not always short (some products come from other countries). But this intermediary acts as a knowledge broker and a promoter of sustainable practices so in this case fewer links in chain or shorter distance are not necessarily better from the sustainability point of view.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

LavkaLavka promotes many of the values associated with sustainability (organic farming, animal welfare, reconnection of producers with consumers, support of local producers and fair price, etc.). The organization pushes farmers into following more ecological practices by stating it as a selection criterion, and by offering consulting and support in transition to organic farming, certification, etc. They increase the awareness of consumers by providing information about organic farming, production methods, living conditions of animals, etc.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

Due to the high prices (small scale production, small number of farmers, nearly organic methods, plus costs added by the intermediary), these products are accessible mainly to upper middle and higher class customers (sustainability for the rich?), while issues such as food access are not addressed. Is it really feasible to decrease the price only by involving more farmers, or does it require more radical changes? Can scaling up be done without compromises in the ideology and decrease in the quality? Will the company go in the direction of commercialization or will it manage to develop the farmers' cooperative and engage consumers more actively?

2. Case study - "Willem and Drees" (The Netherlands)

Author: Leonid Dvortsin

Type of short food chain addressed

Dutch supermarkets provide floor space for the products. Willem&Drees take care of the most vulnerable part of alternative food networks and short food supply chains and regional/local food systems in general: distribution. All the vegetables and fruits are packed and delivered in Willem&Drees wooden crates. At the moment Willem&Drees are using what they call a hybrid distribution system with one hub (in Cothen, which is a small town near the city of Utrecht) and several vans and drivers who collect the products bring them in to the company's headquarters. Here the products are sorted, labelled and organized into parcels for the different stores. The same drivers redistribute the prepared pallets in the supermarkets. Apart from being the drivers the men also serve as the eyes and ears of the company, checking the visibility of the products, stocks and freshness.

Willem and Drees

The main idea is that the developed business model can be copied and diffused all over the Netherlands and even beyond the country`s borders. Willem&Drees are providing an interface for both consumers and producers. Consumers know where their food comes from and the farmers know where their produce is going to. This creates mutual trust, respect, better fit between supply and demand, supports local communities and economies. Also the company is stimulating the participating farmers to grow special local species of fruits and vegetables in order to preserve the biodiversity and local traditional varieties. This is also a business opportunity for the supermarkets to offer something unique and special to their customers. Willem&Drees work with different types of farmers and not necessarily only with the organic ones.

Starting from January 2013 Willem&Drees are going to introduce a new logistical system in their distribution channel: cross-docking. The new system should significantly bring down the transportation costs of the initiative. This will allow liberation of cash flow which Willem&Drees want to invest in new campaigns, better services, and prices for the farmers. Also cross-docking opens up access to the supply chains of the supermarkets for local products.

Apple storage

Author: Leonid Dvortsin

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The company was started with a dream: to deliver local food to the supermarkets, with convenience for the consumers. According to Willem and Drees local is a farm from within a circle of 40 kilometers from the supermarket, but

local also depends on the availability of the products. At the moment Willem&Drees are mainly active in the middle and southern part of the Netherlands and are slowly expanding their activities into the western part of the country.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

The initial investors were Triodos Bank, LTO Noord (farmers` union) and Stichting Doen (a NGO foundation). Today the company employs 14 staff members and distributes products from almost 100 farmers to Jumbo supermarkets (more than 180 locations), the second largest supermarket chain of the Netherlands.

Type of products delivered

Fresh fruits and vegetables (seasonal, local and sometimes organic)

Time length of the initiative

The company has been in operation since 2009 and is 100 % owned by Willem Treep and Drees van den Bosch.

Growers

Picture taken from website http://www.willemendrees.nl/onzetelers *(consulted on 10/10/2013)*

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

One of the main problems within alternative food networks and short food supply chains is that farmers wish to deliver small quantities of their harvest while most supermarket chains prefer steady and large supply quantities of produce on a year round basis for all of their shops. The retailers remain the main points of sale for fresh fruits and vegetables in the Netherlands and therefore small hold farmers face a problem of entering the retail market. Willem&Drees have designed an alternative distribution system to solve this problem. Their dream is a problem as well as a great opportunity, as the same supermarkets were responsible for the destruction of local food systems in the past. Simplifying the reality it can be said that the supermarkets rely on mass supply chains and focus primarily on supply consistency and quality and to a lesser extent on localness of food. But the dream appealed to the sentiment of the founders' vision, ideals and educational background but was approached with marketing and sales skills and experience of working for a multinational firm.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

Willem&Drees clearly believe in the strength and ability of SFSCs to provide fresh and diverse produce to Dutch consumers. Also they look for farmers who are able to grow fruits and vegetables in a sustainable way, meaning using less fuel and fewer chemicals or even no chemicals at all. Also the seasonality factor is emphasized through the Willem&Drees sales channel. This should lead to a more sustainable production of food and a healthier lifestyle of Dutch consumers.

Apple storage

Author: Leonid Dvortsin

Willem Treep points out that there are two dilemmas, which Willem&Drees faces at the moment. First, creating a match between alternative food networks and conventional supply chains. Clearly the alternative food networks affect conventional businesses but it is difficult to find the right balance when you want to be profitable. Second, the distribution chain requires integration with the conventional wholesale system in order to "beat" the economics of distribution.

At the moment the distribution goes through the following steps: farmer selection; aggregation; order selection and storage; distribution to the supermarkets; presentation and storytelling. Selection of the right farmers (based on reputation and intuition) and storytelling are the two core competencies of the company according to Willem. And the main driver of innovation is the question how Willem&Drees can enrich the assortment of supermarket chains.

The story telling happens through different communication channels. First of all on their home page Willem&Drees present what they call their heroes: excellent farmers who are showing their product and share their visions. Secondly the information is spread via the shop floor through flyers and QR codes that can be "read" by consumers if they use smartphones...at least this was the plan.

Also Willem&Drees in cooperation with the supermarkets to which they supply the produce organize once in a while special dinners on special locations. These events are used to target specific groups of people who are invited as guest at the W&D table. And finally, in the weekends Willen&Drees organize farmer markets together with their suppliers in front of the supermarkets, which they supply with the local products. This is a good promotion of both Willem&Drees themselves as well as the farmers cooperating with them.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed.

How to manage the integration of this SFSC into the mainstream and keep its unique advantages compared to the conventional chains?

How to optimize the logistics and distribution model for a better service within the entire country in order to meet the growing demand?

Here is link in English summarizing their story: http://cookingupastory.com/willem-and-drees-local-for-local-distribution

Products

Picture taken from website (http://www.willemendrees.nl/)

3. Case Study - Brin d’Herbe (France)
Author: Pascal Aubrée, Gianluca Brunori

Type of short supply chain addressed

Brin d’Herbe is a group of 20 farmers, which for 20 years have been selling “cottage” and “organic” products in two stores on the outskirts of Rennes . Main products are meat (60 % of the turnover), fruit & vegetables, bakery, dairy products, cheeses, eggs, honey, cider. Their market can be quantified as about 1000 consumers per week. The shop opens three days a week. The turnover is 1,5 million Euro per year.

Photo: Brin d’Herbe farm shop

(author: Pieter van de Graaf)

To run the shop, farmers are organized into a into a specific form of association that allows them to keep their identity and operational autonomy vis a vis consumers, and at the same time to define a common space of coordination. This aspect is also a regulatory requirement, as in this way the shop can be classified as a‘direct selling’ activity. The legal status of the organisation is a "GIE = Groupement d'Interet Economique" (economic interest group). In addition, Brin d'Herbe runs a cooperation with limited liability which enables retail activities.

To conciliate the need of managing common operations and of having a ‘direct selling’ profile, which give some regulatory advantages (e.g. only 9 % tax rate in comparision with 26 % in retail), farmers have adopted some organizational solutions.

- They hire people to work at the shop, but at least one of the farmers guarantees his/her presence in the shop as well (to improve exchanges with the consumers about the products). They have a labour time bank (linked to the turnover of each producer). The more produce a farmer sells in the shop, the more time he/she should invest into the shop. Every kind of work (communication, repairs, etc.) is valued the same. In general, each of them dedicates one day a week to the shop. Pictures of all associated farmers are displayed in the shops.
- The software to register sales can read on the barcode of the products the name of producers. On the top of the invoice is written "Brin d'Herbe", but next to each listed product there is a code which indicates the producer.
- Prices are set by individual farmers, although there is internal communication about price policies. However, there is not much overlap among farmers with regard to products sold, so in shop competition is avoided.
- The Shop is only a part of the total farm’s sales. Our host, for example, Sylvie Forel, who produces apples and cider, sells only 10% of her produce in the shop. Other farmers sell up to 90 % of their produce in the shop.
- The food from the 20 core farms is never owned by Brin d'Herbe. It is owned by the producers until it is sold to the consumers. Each farmer is responsible for delivering his/her own products to the shop and take home leftovers. The goods from another 50 associated farms, carefully selected on the basis of their production methods and after on-farm "inspection" by Brin d'Herbe, is sold "on consignment" ("depots-vendeurs").
- Additional (fair trade) products are bought by the cooperation with limited liability of Brin d'Herbe and then sold to the consumers. These form about 10 % of the sales.

They have chosen not to be only organic (2/3 of the producers are organic now ; at the beginning it was 50%). But this is not a problem when they sell fresh products, as there is no overlapping of categories (either organic or conventional), but it has created a problem of external communication, as they need to give a coherent image of themselves to the outside. They have solved this problem by activating an external audit ("NESO") that controls a cluster of indicators against social, energy, environment and origin criteria. Consumers are involved in the audit process. They are repeated every 3-4 years. The results of the audits for each participating farm are communicated to consumers via leaflets in the shop. The labels for organic and non-organic products have different colours (green for organic and white for the others).

The shops takes a margin of 9 % on every product sold. This money is used to pay the five employees (together 4 full-time jobs) and to finance investments. The shop room is rented from a farmer, the interieur is owned by Brin d'Herbe. Many of the hired staff are farmers' wives.

Common decisions are taken during periodical assemblies every 4 - 6 weeks. They are organized also into working groups. At the moment, the operational groups are a) communication; b) labour; c) taste/quality.

Decision making, says our host, is a time consuming activity, and sometime difficult. However, they have managed to carry on their activity for 20 years. They have also chosen not to expand, although there is potential for growth. They think, that 20 farms is a good size to cooperate. In fact, they are concerned about the increase of complexity of the business.

The group is member of the FRCIVAM network.

http://www.brindherbe35.fr/Accueil/Accueil.html

Brin d'Herbe farm shop

(author: Pieter van de Graaf)

4. Case study - Oregional (The Netherlands)

Author: Femke Hoekstra

Type of short supply chain addressed

Oregional is a farming cooperative of 22 producers (the shareholders). The producers are all located within an area of 50km from the city of Nijmegen. Oregional sells produce of their members directly to caterers, care institutes, restaurants and shops in the region. In 2012, they started a webshop where they sell fruit and juice boxes and boxes with an assortment of regional products. Products are produced and retailed in the specific region (or place) of production, and consumers are made aware of the 'local' nature of the product at the point of retail.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

Area around Arnhem and Nijmegen.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Oregional has 22 member producers. They deliver to about 9 restaurants and 4 care institutes.

Type of products delivered

Products they currently source regionally include fruit; dairy (butter milk, yoghurt, custard, milk, cheese); poultry; vegetables; veal, pork and beef; eggs and juices.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

Oregional is an intermediary between the producers and the buyers. They collect the produce from the farms and deliver it to the customers preferably on the same day. Oregional has 5 board members and the following staff members: a manager, a sales person, a marketing and communication specialist, a product and market developer, a driver and a logistical manager. They work with 22 producers including pig farmers, arable farmers, dairy farmers, producers of ducks, poultry, water cress, mushrooms and fruit (blue berries, apples, pears, prunes, cherries, red currants, raspberries, black berries, gooseberries and grapes).

For all (or most) producers involved, Oregional is just one of their marketing channels.

Time length of the initiative

Oregional started from an Interreg pilot project with a care institute (St Maartenskliniek) in 2009. This pilot started from a question on how to enhance the value of rural areas with a specific focus on regional products. The pilot was successful and led to the foundation of the area cooperative Oregional 2,5 years ago.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

Oregional talks about 'regional food'. They associate regional food with physical (50km range of Nijmegen) and social (transparency) aspects. They talk about regional (and not local) food because they want to offer their customers enough variety of products that requires sourcing from a regional instead of a local area. Key issues for them:

- Delicious and healthy
- Seasonal
- Freshness (within 24 hours from farm to plate)
- Supports local economy
- Corporate social responsibility (reduction CO_2, food miles)
- Transparency – know your farmer, know your food

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

The criteria they apply to select new regional producers are first of all taste and quality, then reliability, then sustainable production method. Producers do not have to be organic but at least they should make an effort regarding sustainability (e.g. in terms of animal welfare or energy use). In addition, the producers should fit a certain philosophy and have a passion for good quality food.

In terms of economic sustainability, the St Maartenskliniek found that buying regional food does not have to be more expensive. Buying seasonal products saves costs since the products are widely available and therefore less expensive. Buying fresh ingredients is less expensive than processed products. Furthermore less food is wasted because of better quality products. In general, care institutes waste around 40% of the food because patients do not like it or are unable to eat it due to their illness. In addition, they decided to cook less meat or buy better quality meat that loses less moisture during cooking.

Price comparison of before and after the switch to regional products has been difficult since the price agreements with the wholesaler are not transparent. They often offer quantity discounts for example.

Oregional's aim is to give producers a fair price. "Fair" in this case means in general a price of 15% above the normal market price. Part of the money earned by Oregional (who take a percentage) is reinvested in nature and landscape management in the area.

The care institutes involved with Oregional did not measure the effects of the diet change on the patients' health but they observe that especially the elderly ones gained weight.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs.

In general they want to increase their product volume. What has been challenging is the fact that the producers they work with are not used delivering highly customised products (exact weights, type of packaging, cut or processed). At the same time, customers prefer to work with one big supplier having one receipt that can deliver highly customised items.

Focus in the care institutes has been mainly on introducing regional products in the patients' meals. However, on a daily bases the restaurant for the staff and visitors serve more meals. These staff/customer kitchens are not yet using regional products (except for fruit and juice). This could be a next step.

In their experience, opportunities depend a lot on passion of individuals and personal motivations to change something in an environment that is not yet completely institutionalised.

5. Case study - Les Bons Repas de l'Agriculture Durable - BRAD (Good Meals from Sustainable Farms) (France)

Author: Pascal Aubrée

Type of short supply chain addressed

The project was started in 2004, at the instigation of the (Seine-Maritime) county council. The regional and county authorities pay the Défis Ruraux (A CIVAM from the North of France - Normandie) to organize meals and refund schools the difference (capped at €1) between the cost of "sustainable" meals and ordinary meals.

Suppliers are filtered by several entry criteria: the farm must be within the relevant administrative area (county for 11–15 schools and region for 15–18 schools or colleges); it must be GM free with regard to crops grown and animal feedstuffs; it must comply with hygiene regulations (this applies especially to on-farm processing of dairy products); hormones and antibiotics must only be used to treat medical conditions, not systematically; frequency of herbicide and pesticide inputs must be below the regional average; the farm's nitrogen balance must be below 150 kg/ha.

Their certification is based on the IDEA method (evaluation of food sustainability) for analysing whole-farm sustainability. Two farm visits are made by a Défis Ruraux agronomist, the first to collect data and the second to give feedback and negotiate a progress agreement with the farmer. The supplier's results and progress agreement are then submitted to an "Ethics Committee" made up of Défis Ruraux representatives, experts and consumers (school bursars, cooks, parents etc.). Progress is monitored via a second IDEA analysis after two years. Wherever possible the Défis Ruraux tries to provide help with technical solutions in the meantime.

There is a rota by area (= 1/3 of county) to help schools source as locally as possible and keep farmers' transport costs down. School bursars are sent a list of products once a month. Contact details for suppliers are provided once a school has placed its order.

Schools workshops on food choices are run by a partner organization called CARDERE, which has run workshops on environmental issues for many years and is licensed by the Ministry of Education.

The funding bodies pay for 220 two-hour workshops in a school year, 150 in 11–15 schools and 70 in 15–18 schools or colleges. After a general presentation, pupils are given worksheets to fill in as they circulate between five activities designed to be entertaining and thought-provoking and to develop critical faculties.

2010 figures :
65 suppliers (farmers or short supply chain processors)
Total collective turnover: €400,000 before tax
Average meal price: €2.18
Average top-up subsidy per meal: €0.60
193 schools workshops (150 in 11–15 schools, 43 in 15–18 schools or colleges).

<u>Les Défis Ruraux</u>
"Les Défis Ruraux" is a voluntary organization belonging to the CIVAM network. They organize meals for 11-15 schools and 15-18 schools and colleges with produce from local farms we have certified as "sustainable". The package for schools includes educational workshops for pupils on sustainable eating
Related publications, website, links etc.
http://www.defis-ruraux.fr
http://www.idea.portea.fr

6. Case Study - Farm dairy Birkenhof & Uster plus association (Switzerland)

Author: Otto Schmid

Type of short supply chain addressed

The Farm dairy Birkenhof (www.hofmolkerei.ch) is a pioneer initiative, which is located ca. 20 km outside of Zürich at the periphery of the town of Uster (30'000 inhabitants) and was started by an innovative farmer family, Martin and Elsbeth Pfister. The Birkenhof dairy and farm is on one hand a farmer group (3 farms working together in farmer cooperation). On the other there is since several years a strong collaboration with an organic farm in the near neighbourhood. And recently 2 other non-organic farms can also deliver milk.

What is unique is that the initiator Martin Pfister is also strongly involved in a local food initiative, the "Uster plus" Association. Furthermore the Birkenhof is associated with a regional dairy initiative of the Zurich Mountain Area, which has a specific label ("Natürli") and a supportive regional organisation PZB (see later).

The birkenhof diary farm[7]

In the Birkenhof dairy the milk is processed daily (ca. 1200 litres per day). The milk comes from the own farm and from the organic farm Dietenrain nearby. The main products are farm-made; these are: fresh cheeses as well as yoghurt (plain and with fruits), cream and pasteurised fresh milk. In addition a whole range of cheeses from small mountain/highland dairies of the PZB-Initiative is sold.

The Birkenhof farm has its own logistics with few vehicles. They deliver to private persons, specialised shops, canteens of social institutions for elderly persons. In addition there is a special gastro delivery service and a household delivery service.

The main aim of the founders (Martin Pfister and his wife), quoted from the website, was to maintain the high value added on the farm(s) and in the local region. The principal orientation is therefore also to serve clients in the near region. The Birkenhof has a strong link between producer, and different customers including also consumers. This is also facilitated by the local food promoting organisation "Uster Plus".

Price: they try to set a fair price both for the other farmers and in the shops. But they have some limitations regarding the price, because of the price level of supermarkets.

The loyalty of the costumers is high, however gaining new customers is rather difficult. The main buying motive is to get local products, therefore there is some tolerance regarding the price. Some years ago when the official milk price fell strongly, the Birkenhof could maintain their price level. However now also supermarkets promote more regional products and this makes it more difficult for Birkenhof dairy to gain new customers who radically change their shopping habits (large majority is still not yet enough aware of local food).

In fact the strength of the initiative is to have a high authenticity with their local orientation and can also offer a broad assortment thanks to different forms of collaborations.

Martin and Elsbeth have of course followed training courses in milk processing but also learned a lot on the job

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The initiative operates mainly in the local area of the town of Uster and a few surrounding communities in a perimeter of ca. 20 km. All the milk, which is processed in the dairy farm, is coming either from the own milk farm and three neighbouring farms (of which one organic).

In addition the Birkenhof-Team distributes the speciality cheeses of small dairies in the mountain/highland area of Canton Zürich, which is in a distance of ca. 50 km.

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[7] All pictures are taken from the website: http://www.hofmolkerei.ch/00000099b60966937/index.html (consulted on 9/17/2013)

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Currently ca. 12 people are working on the farm and in the dairy and in the distribution (corresponding to ca. 7-8 full working places).

Directly involved are 4 diary farms: the Birkenhof diary farm (cooperation with 2 arable farmers) and the neighbouring organic farm Dietenrain. Additionally since a few years 2 non-organic farms can also deliver part of their milk, which allowed a certain growth of the production (now ca. 450'000 Litres per year)

Indirectly many more farmers from the Zürich mountain/highland area, which deliver their milk to the local dairies, benefit. Birkenhof is selling the cheese of ca. 12 small dairies, members of PZB.

Type of products delivered

A broad assortment of all kind of milk products from the local milk farms and from the small Zurich mountain/highland dairies (member of a regional organisation called PZB) are delivered such as ca. 20 types of cheese, yoghurts, pasteurized fresh milk, etc.

The cheese factory

Beside this broad assortment of dairy products other products are also delivered, due to the demand of some social institutions and some shops. Nowadays there is an online shop, where for smaller and specialist retail shops products such as eggs noodles, beverages and also some meat products and local wine (also one of the farms they cooperate) can be ordered.

Orders from gastro/canteens and shops are on a regular weekly basis (2-3 times/week). Birkenhof can count on them: 40 % of the milk goes to 8-9 public residences for elderly people and ca. 10 shops. The proportion going directly to consumers is less than 10 %.

Transport and separation: transport is in refrigerated vans. The separation of the organic and non-organic milk is done by processing the milk at different times.

The milk bottling

Since 4 years also an organic milk and yoghurt line has been taken up in the production, however with a clear separation of the milk (separate day for processing the organic milk). This was possible thanks to an excellent collaboration with a neighbouring organic farm. It helped to raise also the turn-over as before some organic oriented consumers did not buy Birkenhof milk.

The private customers receive deliveries once a week (different times in different local areas) however only in 2 neighbouring communities. Special or small local shops and some restaurants are delivered ca. 2 times a week.

In addition there is a farm shop, which is open one evening in the week and on Saturday morning. Also the Birkenhof is present on 3 weekly markets.

The Birkenhof is very innovative in product development and services, e.g. by making special fondue mixtures or new types of soft cheeses.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

The Birkenhof is managed by Martin Pfister, supported by his wife Elsbeth and with their staff. Martin is the driving force and is also very well respected in the local farmer community and by the local town administration and in the

association "Uster Plus". The collaboration with the farmers and with the involved customers is very good.

Delivery van

Legal status: it is a society with restricted liability (GmbH). Decisions are taking by the farmer family, which have the shares of the GmbH.
Status with other farms: they have a delivery contract. The influence the other farms have is very limited.
A strong service orientation is very important, in particular for local shops, which compete with the large supermarkets. Through the participation at local fairs or events (2-3 times a year) the Birkenhof has a good recognition by consumers and in the public, although generally little advertising is done. Products also carry the logo of the local food initiative "Uster plus". However this logo is of minor importance now, as the Birkenhof with their customers is well known.

Time length of the initiative

The activity started as early as 2002 by building the farm dairy. Over the years new investments have been made. Also in that time the "Uster plus" Initiative started, of which Martin was also one of the initiators.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

The most interesting of the Birkenhof initiative is that there are mainly two groups of actors strongly involved.
One actor group is the Uster plus Association, the other one PZB.
Uster plus is an association in the city of Uster, founded 10 years ago. The association has been founded by a few producers and consumers. Their goal, according to their website (www.usterplus.ch), is to bring producers, traders and consumers together and to promote the production, processing and marketing of local products and special services (even with an own logo). They have their own website with ca. 100 products and information on which shops or in which farms they can be bought. Martin Pfister is co-president of the association as the Birkenhof is probably most profiting of the "Uster plus" Association. Most of the specialised shops (ca. 20) in the town of Uster are member of "Uster plus". "Uster plus" has also a good relationship with the town council and administration.

Cattle

Pro Zürcher Berggebiet (PZB, www.pzb.ch), meaning "Pro Zürich mountain area", is an association of 15 communities in Canton Zürich and a neighbouring canton, which has created a special organisation for their marginal mountain areas. The PZB has its own private but partially publicly supported marketing platform for regional products with its own label "Natürli". This platform owns it own cheese storage building for cheese maturing ("affinage") and an own distribution system. Most of the products they distribute are speciality cheese from ca. 12 smaller dairies but also some meat products.
One special internal rule, which they kept until 2011, was that their products should only be sold in specialised local shops but not in the large supermarket chain shops in order to maintain the authenticity of their products. However in 2012 they made an exception with one supermarket chain, which sells explicitly regional products. The

collaboration with the Birkenhof is that in the area of the City of Uster the distribution of the "Natürli" products is done by the Birkenhof team, which allows them to offer a broad assortment of ca. 10-15 specialty cheeses in addition to their own products. The PZB is considered in Switzerland as one of the most successful regional marketing initiatives.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

The main goal of the Birkenhof dairy is to process locally produced milk and to sell it direct to larger consumer households, specialised and local shops and social institutions in the town and some neighbouring communities.

Criteria for selecting additional products are that they come from smaller dairies in the local region (Zürich disfavoured mountain area) and from some other local producers.

Therefore in this initiative the characteristics of a SFSC are:

1. the proximity of the production and processing site (milk for processing within 3-5 kilometres from local neighbouring farms: The speciality cheeses come from small dairies not more than ca. 50 km away.
2. The relationship with the producers and processors through different forms of close collaboration (social nearness through direct delivery).
3. The strong engagement of the initiator in a local producer-consumer initiative, which was created at the same time as the farm dairy.

The social relationship is in this initiative very important. This has also allowed for continuously enlarging the production.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health: One of the key issues is that the milk products are very fresh (generally 24 hours storage) as they are from the neighbourhood. They are delivered several times per week and are also sold at different locations. The freshness of the products might also be associated as healthy by some consumers.

Environment: The food miles of the collection are very low for milk (within 3 km from the farms). The cheese and other products are coming from ca. 50 km perimeters.

The transport is by a small van.

The farms are either integrated farms and one organic farm, Birkenhof is also involved in a local nature conservation project.

Sales stand of Birkenhof at local fair (on the left hand side is the initiator)

Author: Otto Schmid

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

When the dairy was built the hygienic regulations (which are similar to the ones in the EU) led to costly investments. Fortunately this could be planned in advance and the local food safety body did show some flexibility. Before the dairy was built they got some "reasonable advice" from the hygiene control body of the canton, about what needed to be considered. Furthermore to fulfil the separation requirements of the organic food regulation (equivalent to the EU organic regulation) there were some additional measures necessary to document properly how organic and non-organic milk are not mixed.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

- Personal skill development:

This initiative was very much influenced by the engagement of the farm manager. He has not only developed excellent technical skills but also very good management skills. Furthermore one of his strengths was also the networking with the local consumer-producer group with the neighbouring farmers as well as with the Regional marketing initiative. It is difficult to say what would have happened without the strong role of the initiator. However as in many other initiatives

this bears also a certain risk for the continuity, as long as no other persons are currently able to take over this important role of the initiator.
Another characteristic is the professionalization within the initiative with high skill specialist (like a cheese maker, bookkeeper, etc.).
However most recently the cheese maker (a professional) has left and now the initiator will carry out the cheese-making because the farmer family cannot afford to pay a specialist, who would earn at least a third more than the initiator and manager.

- Upscaling / Further development:

Looking at the Birkenhof dairy over the last 10 years. We can observe 4 main phases:

- The initial phase: Mainly milk from the own farm was processed and first the distribution of the products had to be organised. In this phase the “Uster plus” Initiative was helpful to make the Birkenhof products better known (although probably more through actions and participation in fairs than through the local logo).
- The first take up phase I: here the collaboration with the PZB Regional Marketing Initiative with their speciality cheese assortment was a big step forward for the image and economically (here an scaling up of the assortment and number of customers was possible).
- The second take up phase II after a short adaption phase: it was strategically very clever to include an organic line, which was not that complicated as the neighbouring farm was organic. This allowed both the enlargement of the assortment with some organic products and a reach-out to new consumers.
- Consolidation phase: Currently new collaboration models are being developed and sought, e.g. newly founded Community Supported Agriculture initiative with a box scheme. There are also some niches being sought for new products, e.g. with a local beer producer or pasture beef farm. The main goal of this phase is rather to downscale a bit - because the workload is currently too high. The initiators want to concentrate on the products of their farm for processing trough diversification of their own specialty assortment and not on buying additional products from a big wholesaler and processor from outside the region. Additional services (e.g. schools on farm) are envisaged.

- Risks and opportunities

As already mentioned the strong role of the initiator is both a risk and opportunity due to his strong networking.
A key question for the future might be whether further growth has quantitative limits, as otherwise larger investments would be necessary in buildings and publicity for new cusotmers. This might also change the character of the initiative. Therefore the initiators decided on a phase with more qualitative instead of quantitative growth (see above).
A risk might be that the dairy products from the association Züri-Natürli will now also be sold in a supermarket. It is unclear how this will affect the image and the demand from customers.
Birkenhof Dairy has established quite a diversity of different SFSCs (direct sales, shops, etc.). This multitude of activities and sales channels is quite an organisational challenge and requires high management skills and almost permanent presence of the manager and good communication, which can also be considered a risk. On the other hand the different marketing channels reduce the economic vulnerability (standing on different legs).

7. Case study - Pico Bio (Switzerland)

Author: Otto Schmid

Type of short supply chain addressed

Pico Bio AG is an SME in the Zürich city area with a special focus on smaller producers and is specialised in the delivery of food to the gastropubs in the large Zürich City area.

Pico Bio sees themself as a key link (intermediary) between producers and consumers. Their role is not the one of a classic wholesaler.

Pico Bio's main goals are:

a. to sell authentically produced products with the main focus on farmers from the region,

b. to bring the fair and organic concepts together through the whole chain;

c. to act as a bridge between the producer and consumer

Pico Bio has a long standing experience of over 15 years in delivering to the special market segments of gastropubs.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The Pico Bio initiative is since 2008 located in the Zürich city periphery. Before that they were in the city centre and had in addition to the store house and distribution centre also a restaurant ("Les Halles"), which was very important to gain experience in delivering organic food to the gastro-sector. Nowadays the restaurant is independent from Pico Bio.

Their main delivery area has a radius of ca. 30 km around Zürich and its agglomeration.

The provision of products is basically in first instance from a few farms around Zürich (partners from the beginning) at ca. 20 km distance. One of the aims is to support smaller farmers also in less favoured areas. Pico Bio has slightly enlarged the provision area.

Instead of getting the products from two very big horticulture farms outside Zürich, they get vegetables from "Seeland" near Bern (where a lot of small organic producers are located), which is about 150 km distance. The same is the case with some speciality cheeses from mountain areas from fully converted organic dairies.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Pico Bio is a wholesaler with 17 full-time employees and a turnover of ca. 7.32 M Euro in 2011 with a growth of ca. 5 % per year.

Pico Bio works together with 58 producers and 65 processors (mostly dairies and butchers). The main producers, which have been delivering since the beginning (fruits, vegetables and potatoes) are organic farms in the peri-urban area of Zürich. Pico Bio buys most of the products directly from farmers, who either directly deliver to the Pico bio distribution centre near Zürich (larger producers) or from whom Pico Bio picks it up directly on the farms after having delivered restaurants (on the way back to economize distribution costs).

Pico Bio delivers to over 170 customers (of which 28 % gastropubs and 30 % restaurants and 37 % small retailers/organic shops). The main products groups marketed are fresh products (80 % based on turn-over). Most of the customers are in the city center or in the larger urban area of Zürich.

Type of products delivered

Pico Bio offers a broad range of ca. 5000 products (over 98 % organic), mainly different vegetables and fruits as well as milk and diary products as well as meat. Longer transportation is avoided. Ca. 1200 articles are stored in the central store in Dietikon near Zürich, but only for a very short time to save costs. In fact Pico Bio is somehow the extended cooling house for the gastropubs.

Almost half of the turn-over of 6.5 M Euro is from fruit and vegetables.

Pico Bio tries to keep the price difference to conventional products at a moderate level. For example producer price for radishes: CHF 1.20 / Sold to costumer (canteens and restaurants): CHF 1.85.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

Most of the staff is involved in handling the distribution to the gastronomes. The hierarchy is very flat. Most of the staff has already been working for Pico Bio for a long time.

The general manager of Pico Bio is a farm manager on a relatively large organic farm in the Zürich periphery. He decided together with 2 other farmers to sell their products collectively to shops and restaurants in Zürich.

Several farms delivering products to Pico Bio also gave money for the start of the enterprise (as a shareholder) and later when a large investment was necessary for the new distribution and storage centre.
Pico Bio is delivering to day schools and child day care nurseries, however without a contract with Zürich council. For the relative small canteens they can guarantee quantities and quality. In bigger canteens the cooks have to learn again how to cook with unprocessed food.

Time length of the initiative

The activity started ca. 15 years ago. For over 10 years they had 3 activities, an own restaurant, an organic shop in the restaurant and a distribution centre for food products.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

An important relationship is with the kitchen heads in the restaurants or canteens with whom there is a daily direct contact.
When Pico Bio moved to a new place, which needed quite some investment, some costumers (market partners, consumers) did provide money to pre-finance these investments as it was difficult to get money from a bank. This solidarity of some costumers has allowed making the step-change.
Over the past two years a stronger collaboration has started with a regional platform initiative of organic farmers in Central Switzerland (ca. 100 km away), which focuses on regional and fair. Several speciality products from them are in the assortment.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

Basically “short” in this case means 2 steps to the consumer in the restaurant (1-step to Pico Bio – 1 step from Pico Bio to restaurant/kitchen).
The Pico Bio is an interesting case to discuss the complexity of finding an appropriate definition.
One of the goals of the SME was to deliver regional organic products to restaurants and canteens in Zürich. This happens mostly in a radius of ca. 60 km.
However regarding the provision of the products there was a certain dilemma, either support smaller farms in a more distant area (around 150-200 km away) or to support the biggest organic horticulture farm in Canton Zürich (ca. 60km away). Their decision was to give priority to the smaller farms and to accept longer transport distances and higher collection costs.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

Health: One of the key issues is freshness, high quality and good taste as well as typical origin/flavour (e.g. broad assortment of tomatoes of different taste).
Environment: The building (store house and office) is relatively new and is relatively energy efficient. The transport is via small vans.
The farms and processors providing products are organic farms, which mean high sustainability. Pico Bio is one of four pilot companies, which carry out an overall sustainability assessment with ca. 16 different indicators based of the FAO-SAFA Guidelines in a project with FAO and FiBL. Pico Bio is interested in the outcome; the results should help them to better communicate the added value to the customers but also to have a tool to judge sustainability aspects of single products (in order to give them guidance for the product choice).

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

When the storage and service centre has been built the hygienic regulations (which are similar to the ones in the EU) will lead to more costly investments, than they were before in the old buildings.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

- Personal skill development:

This initiative is still carried by the strong engagement of the initiator and his good management and human skills. The social sustainability is very important for Beat Ledermann and his team-

- Up scaling up / further development:

Looking at the Pico Bio there has been continuous development over the last 15 years.
We can observe the following main phases:
- The initial phase: took place in old buildings with a restaurant and a shop. Delivery to a small number of restaurants in the inner city. They did get advice from a marketing specialist, gaining experience. Increasing capacity problems – too diversified.

• The take up phase: A big step was the move into an existing empty building at the city periphery – very close to the main farms, which provide products. Investment in better cooling and distribution equipment. Critical to find money for investments. Stop or find private money loans – no bank support. Solidarity was very stimulating.

• Now a consolidation phase: Looking for new partnership with other regional platforms. Social sustainability check.

A key question for the future will be how Pico Bio will go on, if the general manager were to leave.

The key dilemma here remains the issue of short distance versus small holders from more distant rural areas. Local and cheaper provision from big farms versus fairness for smallholders in small areas.

A challenge was in the beginning to respond always to the specific quality needs of cooks(especially since they buy from smaller holders in longer distance), hower in the meantime there are no major problems anymore.

Pico Bio delivering local food to canteens in restaurants and canteens in Zürich

Picture taken from the website (http://www.picobio.ch/pages/kontakt.html, consulted on 10/10/2013)

8. Case Study - SpeiseLokal! (Austria)

Author: Juliana Lutz

Type of short supply chain addressed

Community Supported Retailing.

SpeiseLokal started as a consumer-driven initiative in cooperation with a female organic farmer. Inspired by the Scottish consumer-network 'The Fife Diet', SpeiseLokal was originally thought of as becoming a platform that connects people, interested in local food, providing information on local and global food systems and on the various aspects of food, nutrition or gardening. Very soon the idea arose of setting up the possibility to purchase local organic food. From the beginning onward the people involved were families who were already active in various other civic initiatives (e.g. parent-organised kindergarten and school). Thus, the idea of setting up a Food Coop in its classical sense, including a rather high amount of voluntary work, neither seemed attractive nor realistic. Also the idea of setting up a CSA seemed to incorporate too much voluntary work. Furthermore the initiative did not want to stay exclusive, only attracting a small group of people already interested in a local, organic diet. The question was: how can we provide local, organic food for everyone?

Logo

Inspired and encouraged by other Austrian civic food networks, three women continued to work on this question. They visited about 40 farmers, between 6 and 80 km away from Maria Anzbach, asking whether they would be prepared to deliver them their products once a week. This was done in cooperation with two women who started a similar civic food network in nearby St. Pölten. The idea was to set up a solidarity based small enterprise that sells organic food from the farmers nearby. Solidarity based means: fair prices as well as fair and close relationships between consumers, producers and retailers. As most of the farmers agreed to deliver their products, SpeiseLokal! soon started to sell once a week. People order between Friday noon and Tuesday morning via a web shop. The farmers get the orders by Tuesday afternoon and deliver on Thursday or Friday morning. On Friday consumers pick up their orders at the farmers store, rented on a farm by SpeiseLokal!.

SpeiseLokal! sells what farmers decide to offer each week. Thus, only local and seasonal products are sold. Trust in the producer and retailer is based on personal interaction between the three women that run SpeiseLokal! and the farmers/producers. In order to establish close relationships between farmers, consumers and retailers, SpeiseLokal! still serves as a platform that connects people and initiatives. Every month it organises excursions to the farmers who deliver. It organises, coordinates and promotes cookery workshops, lectures, seminars, feasts and other events somehow related to food issues. It provides information on (sustainable) food production, distribution and consumption and helps people share their ideas, recipes, initiatives.

Author: Juliana Lutz

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The retailing system is based in Maria Anzbach/Austria. The produce is mainly produced within the region of Lower Austria (max. 100 km from where it is sold and consumed, mostly less than 40km).

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

SpeiseLokal! has basically 5 people working within the structure. Currently they interface with about 40 farms in the region of Lower Austria. They serve about 70 families each week. Farms get a high percentage of the final product price (two thirds of the final product price).

Author: Juliana Lutz

Type of products delivered

Fruits and vegetables, eggs, cheese, meat, bread, pasta, fruit juices, cereals, oil and vinegar, honey and jams, biscuits and cakes, chutney, sugo, beer and wine, herbs, beans and lentils, seeds.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

SpeiseLokal! is managed by three women Juliana Lutz, Judith Schachinger, Sabine Rosenberger and engages with farms with whom there is mostly a direct relationship, consisting of a pact of mutual trust with the farmers and their families. In some cases produce is delivered by a small wholesale trader (BerSta). This is due to the fact that some farmers cannot deliver their produce themselves to SpeiseLokal. BerSta has developed out of the first Austrian consumer-producer coop and mainly sells handmade produce from small farmers in the northern part of Lower Austria. SpeiseLokal also cooperates with a CSA.

Time length of the initiative

The activity started in September 2011. It took nearly 12 months of research on the territory to select the farmers to work with.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

Consumers have an active role since they must get in contact via the web shop or via telephone or by visiting the shop on Fridays. Also, consumers have the possibility to join excursions to the farms/producers and they have the possibility to do voluntary work or to bring their own stuff they grew in the garden. SpeiseLokal! also cooperates with initiatives situated in Maria Anzbach (e.g. alternative schools and kindergartens). As one of the women that runs SpeiseLokal! works at the University, SpeiseLokal! interacts with researchers as well.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

The main criteria for selecting the products are essentially two:

1) They must come from small farms/enterprises,

2) They must be seasonally and organically grown/produced - as near as possible, with very few exceptions (beer, butter) not further away than 80 km.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

Health: products are fresh and do not remain stored for longer than a morning, after which everything is delivered. Meat is stored in suitable refrigerators.

Environment: resource use linked to SpeiseLokal remains low due to the fact that farmers only provide the amount of food that is actually needed (i.e. ordered) and consumers eat what they bought. Thus, hardly any food is wasted. Further, transport-routes are generally short (between 0 and 100 km) and farmers as well as consumers cooperate on transport. Packaging is low and food is grown organically on small scaled

farms (closed substance cycle) and none of the products is processed industrially. Especially the use of milk bottles and the absence of packaging for fruit, vegetables or eggs make most consumers experience a significant drop in household waste.

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

There are restrictions of what can be sold in what way (e.g. packaging for cheese and meat). Further, European regulations concerning slaughter and the marking of eggs make it difficult to get meat (esp. poultry) and eggs from small farms.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

How can such an initiative sustain (economically) in the existing economic system and its related food system? That is, how viable economically is this experience in the long run? Will scaling up be an inevitable step? What would this imply? How could this happen without distorting the main principles of cooperation? What would be the alternatives for scaling up?

9. Case study - Meat Box Schemes in Alava (Spain)

Author: Roberto Ruiz

Premise

Generally speaking, the price received for meat by livestock farmers has experienced little change during these last years, even though meat products are certified by quality labels (i.e. Euskal Okela) or are produced under organic farming systems. In order to achieve better prices, there is a growing presence of and interest in developing SFSC for meat products based on box schemes.

Type of short supply chain addressed

Livestock farmers sell directly to consumers their meat in chilled storage vacuum-packed format. Farmers usually get in touch with consumers either by email or telephone call announcing the next slaughter date and the delivery of packages. Animals are taken to the abattoir, which prepares the packages, and are then taken back by the farmer in a suitably conditioned vehicle to keep in refrigeration. Different sites and time schedules can be agreed for collecting the packages, so that consumers can attend, pay and take their package home. In some cases, meat packages are sold directly on farm, and then consumers (with their families and children) can visit the farm, facilities, livestock, grasslands, etc. If the farmer has a website, packages can also be purchased through internet. Farmers might also provide directly to restaurants or take part in the joint commercialisation initiative of UAGALUR (see case study 21).

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

Farmers are situated in the province of Alava, at a distance to Vitoria-Gasteiz ranging from 15 to 40 kms. However, there is no abattoir in the province, so livestock has to be slaughtered in the territories nearby (mainly Gipuzkoa) at around 80-100 kms from the farm.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

According to my knowledge in the province of Alava, there are 4 livestock farmers commercialising their meat in this way: one for horse meat and three for beef:

- Organic livestock farmer;
- Two producers of meat labelled under Euskal Okela PGI (both with local breeds: Terreña and Pirenaica)

In Biscay and Gipuzkoa, there are similar individual initiatives in a number that can be assessed between 15 and 20.

Type of products delivered

Meat is marketed in chilled storage vacuum-packed format.

- Beef and horse meat packages: they are 5 kg packages divided in 8 smaller ones containing the diverse portions of the carcass (steak, 1st and 2nd quality fillets, ribs, minced meat, etc.). Prices: 60-65 kg / package.
- Suckling Lamb half-carcass packages.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

They are basically full-time farmers affiliated to UAGA, the Farmers' Union of Alava. They take part to different degrees in the existing advisory and support programmes (breeding schemes, technical and economic advisory, etc.). Feeding practices are to a great extent pasture based, but fattening is done basically indoors. The organic farmer also belongs to the local association of organic farmers (Bionekazaritza). In general, all of them are able to communicate to consumers the benefits of their product, which is not so common amongst farmers.

Time length of the initiative

The first SFSC of this type in Alava was initiated by the horse farmer in 2006. The other three were set up more or less at the same time (around 2009).

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

The main actors involved are the farmers and the consumers (or co-producers). The local convivium of Slow Food has also played an outstanding role in the promotion of these schemes and the quality of these products.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

The SFSC is based on direct sales to final consumers. Therefore, short has clearly both a social and a physical meaning. One of the farmers has some basic info and photographs on his website. There is also info on the web offered by

Slow Food after visits to 3 of these farms. Farmers are open to receiving visits on their farms, as well as to offering info about their farming practices. Moreover, there are no intermediaries when food is purchased in the shop of UAGA, local markets or at the farm, and there will be one intermediary when these products are sold in certain small food shops that collaborate with the initiative.

The physical distance is bound to be much shorter than most of the meat purchased at conventional shops, markets and supermarkets. At least, there is clear info about the origin of the meat.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

Health & wellbeing: horse meat is presented as local, nutritional, traditional, safe, healthy, produced by natural methods. The Terreña breed meat producer argues the outstanding fattening qualities of the breed (fat content within the muscle). Trust in the beef meat can be guaranteed since two of the farmers also produce on the basis of the rules set by the PGI Euskal Okela. The third farmer is certified as organic.

Environment: All of them rear their animals through pasture based farming systems, even grazing on mountain areas for some time every year. Therefore, they have a clear impact on landscape management, prevention of fire hazards. Farmers rear local breeds (Terreña, Pirenaica and mountain horse of Alava), except the organic farmer who is changing the herd into a foreign breed (Sallers). Information about the production methods is easily accessible: the organic farmer is certified, and the producers of Euskal Okela PGI follow well established rules in terms of feeding practices, veterinary treatments, etc.

Social and economic: the reason for starting this initiative was to improve the profitability of the farms by adding value activities, as well as to have feedback from final consumers. At the same time, farmers have tried to make their farms closer to consumers by attending famers markets, visits to their farms, presence in the local media, etc.

These SFSC also contribute to improve the self-esteem of the farmers by means of the increasing presence and importance of their products.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs.

Around the horse meat, a community of co-producers (named, Zalmendi) has been established. It comes from an idea of a farmer from the village of Okina (Álava), nearby Vitoria-Gasteiz, together with a group of people interested in purchasing this meat directly from the producer and consuming it due to the natural and health properties. The community must be understood as a group of consumers or co-producers sharing and consuming original good food (natural, high quality, nutritive, safe), healthy and clean (because of their ecological origin) and fair (by price). Nowadays there are more than 160 co-producers, an average of between six and seven slaughters per year for more than twenty foals.

Farmers are targeting also work places, restaurants, etc. for their SFSC.

More info:

Horse meat:

http://zalmendi.blogspot.com.es/

Beef:

http://www.ismacarneecologica.com/

http://slowfoodaraba.es/visita-a-la-explotacion-ganadera-de-adolfo-martinez-de-santos.htm

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

Farmers complain about the lack of abattoirs or slaughterhouse available in the province of Alava. Building their own facilities is simply not an option for them. Sometimes farmers also complain about the services that the existing abattoir facilities provide: they are so busy that they do not manage carcasses and meat with the required delicacy to achieve the best quality possible, or at least the standards the farmers expect. Farmers are allowed to market their meat under the Sanitary Registration of the slaughterhouse (printed on the meat box).

10. Case study - Zolle (Rome, Italy)

Author: Francesca Galli

Type of short supply chain addressed

Zolle" is a shopping (intermediary) service that allows you to receive fruits and vegetables, grown by small companies mainly located in the Lazio region, directly to the front door of the house. You can select on the website different sizes of Zolle (i.e. the boxes) based on the eating habits of your family, which contain a certain amount of fresh produce (fruits, vegetables, meat, cheese, eggs). An e-mail or a phone call is enough to activate the service.

This is the core idea: the quantity is chosen by the consumer based on the needs of the family, while the producers select the quality based on what is available on farm. It is the farmers who decide what is best to be delivered according to the season and production available in the territory, ensuring freshness and wholesomeness. It is a formula based on trust: trust of the families in the good sense and wisdom of farmers and farmers' confidence in the families, because it is the constancy of purchase that provides a market for small high quality producers. The entrepreneur is a young woman who used to work on a farm in the Piedmont region (i.e North of Italy). One day she received the visit from Japanese farmers who had started this activity more than thirty years ago. She realized that this could be a really innovative way to create a market for small family farms that often face difficulties in accessing conventional channels (or do not have interest in accessing them).

"Zolle" (i.e. boxes)[8]

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The box scheme is based in Rome and the produce mainly comes from within Lazio Region, with a few exceptions.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Zolle has 18 people working within the structure. Currently they interface with 90 farms, 80 of them located in the Lazio region. They serve about 1000 families. The top 20 farms with whom they work in strict contact get a high percentage of the final product price (on average, out of ten Euros of sales, 6 go to the farm and 4 to Zolle).

"Zolle" delivery

Type of products delivered

Fruits and vegetables, eggs, cheese, meat, bread, pasta, fruit juices, cereals, legumes, olive oil and vinegar, honey and jams, biscuits and cakes, and other non food products (e.g. soaps).

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[8] All pictures are taken from the website: http://www.zolle.it/web/partecipare-a-zolle/ (consultation on 9/17/2013).

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

Zolle is managed by two main leaders Simona Limentani e Ghila Debenedetti and engages with farms with whom there is a direct relationship, consisting of a pact of mutual trust with the company owner and his family.

Quoting from the website: “Constituent part of this agreement are the regular company visits by Zolle with the aim of better understanding, all stages of the production processes and any changes that occur over time, in addition to the organoleptic quality of products. Zolle works with family-sized farms that for history, tradition and environmental conditions embody what is called “local agriculture”. These farmers who sell to Zolle practice the following techniques of cultivation and / or farming: i) organic farming; ii) agriculture without the use of synthetic chemicals (for farmers who decided not to seek organic certification despite not using synthetic chemicals and they practice crop rotation. These companies most often self-certify their production methods. In the opinion of the organizers this type of certification is effective all the time in which there is direct selling or otherwise store within a local market such that the buyer is able to verify the statement made by the company; iii) Biodynamic farming; iv) Integrated agriculture.

Time length of the initiative

The activity started three years ago. It took 10 months of research on the territory to select the most preferred farmers to work with.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

Consumers have an active role since they must call or write to order the box. *“We do not look for new consumers directly, it is the consumer who contact us through a very powerful “word of mouth”, newspaper articles, radio interviews. We started with about twenty families, with whom we had personal relationships and we now serve about a thousand. The profile of our customers is fairly homogeneous: families with children, working women, a medium-high cultural level, average income, even if of course there are exceptions. However, these are people who are open to a different way of thinking about "shopping"*

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

As indicated by the manager of Zolle, the main criteria for selecting the products are essentially three:

1) the techniques of production used and the environmental sustainability of the product,
2) the proximity of the production site,
3) the taste. *“This is very important and inseparable from the place of production. In fact, we prefer not to sell a local product that does not also taste good (and it happens often!).*

We support local farms, but do not aspire to self-sufficiency. That is, during winter we get the oranges from Sicily (Lazio does not grow other fruits other than kiwi, in winter time) and recently I added Parmesan cheese in the Zolle (the boxes). Or when I have time to travel I add a good pesto made in Liguria. Obviously I do not put apples from Argentina because they are organic: it’s a matter of common sense, we ponder and evaluate gradually. I believe that the return to the "local product" must be a way forward, not backward!”

With respect to the implications of the organization of SFSCs *“In direct producer-consumer relations, developed mutual commitment and trust between producers and consumers substitute or reduce the need for formal confirmation of certain qualities materialised in forms of certificates, labels...”*

The relationship between producers and consumers is the indirect result of the professional experience of a group of young entrepreneurs, who act as mediators and take care of the logistics and of the relationship more in general (it took 1 year to select the farmers throughout Lazio). So there are intermediaries within the Zolle experience, who make a living out of it. The consumer gets to know the identity of the producer (through the box received, the website and facebook page, direct contact) and starts trusting him and eventually addressing him directly.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs.

Health: products are fresh and do not remain stored for longer than a morning, after which everything is delivered. Meat is stored in suitable refrigerators.

Environment: The delivery formula is low impact on the environment. They use a mix of "van plus bicycle". The van loads a large number of boxes, it meets the bicycles in an easily accessible part of the city (i.e. a square), each bicycle loads up to 5/6 boxes which then depart to reach the houses. After some time, the van meets the bicycles in another area and so on. *"This mechanism seems to be the most efficient. In terms of costs, compared to when we only relied on vans, the result is equivalent: instead of paying gasoline, we have to pay the people who run the bikes (but we save in terms of time and pollution!)."*
In addition the production practices followed by producers is not necessarily organic but they consider the environmental impact of their activity in some way, as ascertained by Zolle managers.

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

This is an example in which control authorities act in a less strict way. Simona says: *"From this point of view Lazio is a good environment. In general, products of animal origin would be expected to be processed in factories that are EEC certified. However this is a set of rules aimed at big business, not small family farms. Fortunately, in Lazio there is an exemption for small companies that sell the processed animal product in their province (or in nearby areas). Otherwise all the farms we work with could not afford the EEC certification. From the point of view of sanitation, HACCP is an adequate protection. In addition, the ASL (i.e. local food safety authority) in our territory works in a collaborative way: when problems have arisen, they have always helped to solve them in practice, rather than hinder. The truth is that our type of business is kind of "border-line", in many ways (e.g. packaging, sale structure, etc ...), not yet being explicitly ruled ad hoc.*

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

- This experience is based on the initiative of the two young entrepreneurs, on their personal relationship with the farmers: it is already of a considerable size. Would scaling up of this experience be possible?
- How can this happen without distorting some principles used for example in the selection of farmers and products?
- How viable economically is this experience in the long run?
- How can outbound logistics be improved?

11. Case study - Straupe market of rural goods (Latvia)

Author: Sandra Šūmane

Type of short supply chain addressed

This is an open-air farmers' market, organized twice per month. The market was initiated by a group of local activists who decided to create a space for local producers and consumers to make them meet directly in the local area. This initiative was intended to change or provide an alternative for the practice that both local producers and consumers go regularly to towns in order to, respectively, sell and buy products [3]. (Photographs are taken from the website: http://www.straupe-hanza.lv/index.php?p=4574&pp=6225&lang=828&g=2011).

Author: Rudīte Vasile

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The market is located in Straupe, a rural village (1500 inhabitants) in central Latvia, around 60 kilometers from the capital. The market has an advantageous location: it is situated next to a major road with regular traffic, which makes it easily accessible also for casual, passing customers. Another possibly important landmark is the local dairy's shop right next to which the market is organized. The dairy is quite well known among Latvian consumers for its quality products, and presumably both the market and the dairy benefit from each other's customers.

Big part of the producers-sellers come from the local territory /region (up to 30 km), but there are also some sellers who come from distant places more than 100 km away – often those are mobile producers who practice various modes of direct selling.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

There are around 70 food and non-food producers who regularly take part in the market. There is no estimate of the number of consumers.

Type of products delivered

Straupe market regulations [2], developed at local level by the market organizers, state that it is allowed to sell in the market agricultural and other artisanal products which are honestly [*godpratigi*] produced and processed by farmers themselves and which are closely linked to local food or local traditions. There is a limited space at the market and when choosing the participants the preference is given to products which are of local origin, organic, produced according to Slow Food principles (natural, traditional, environmentally friendly) and which contribute to the diversity of products at the market. Artisanal non-food products have to be related to local food or traditions.

There is a quite broad range of food products sold on the market: milk, bread and pastries, vegetables, fruit, honey, fish, meat, herbal tea, eggs, wine etc. Also seedlings and some smaller livestock (rabbits, sheep…) are available. Non-food products include such traditional articles produced from natural materials as wicker and forging works, wool and woolen articles, wood articles, pottery etc.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

A range of actors have been involved in various phases of the markets' development (see time-line below). The key actors who implemented the market have been a group of local activists, farmers and the local municipality, united by the idea that local producers and local food had to be given more value.

Majority of sellers are local and regional small and medium farmers and artisanal producers. There are also local inhabitants who sell overproduction from their household plots or picked wild or natural products (mushrooms, berries, flowers). There are also some local or regional food companies that take part in the market – this could mean that not on all market

days there are enough local producers who register for selling.
Consumers are local and regional people, as well as passers-by. No specific consumer profile is identified, but all ages, both genders can be observed among them. Local young families often arrive with children.

Author: Rudīte Vasile

Time length of the initiative

The market has been operating since 2008. There can be identified several phases of organizational processes in setting up the market. At the *initiating* phase, early 2008: the idea of local food market was generated by local activists, farmers were among them. *Building of a partnership* network followed. Firstly, links with the local tourism association was established. The idea was presented to local and regional governments. It was outlined in the project which received public funding from both institutions. A *learning* phase followed during which project developers and market participants learned from other farmer market organisations, national Slow food movement members, marketing experts and also from public institutions specifically about food production and distribution regulations and taxation. *Putting into action*: the first market took place in June 2008.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

A local dairy provides the venue for the market: it is organized on its land.
The market is networking in the Slow Food movement – the farmer market's idea was supported by a celebrity cook running a restaurant in Riga who considered that the farmer market movement has to be encouraged together with the ideas of Slow Food. In August 2012 the market received visitors from Italian and French Slow Food organisations.
The organizers have developed a good cooperation with the Food and Veterinary service and State Revenue Service regarding the formal requirements for market organization.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs.

The SFSC was initiated by local people in reaction to the specific situation of the local food production, distribution and consumption system. The basic idea of the market organizers was to reduce food miles, geographical and also social distance between local producers and consumers. Geographical distance has been literally reduced as far as it concerns local producers and consumers. The market attracts also some direct-selling producers from outside the region. In these cases, food miles may be not reduced, but present social exchanges between producers and consumers those distant geographical places are directly connected, have lost their anonymity and have been brought brought virtually closer.
The direct link between producers and consumers on the market days facilitates their social proximity, they get to know each other better, learn from each other. Social proximity finds expression also as honesty and trust between the two parties, which are presented as basic principles of the market. Trust is sustained by getting to know producers and also by the quality of products to which producers are attentive, of course, in order to keep their clients. (Correspondence to certain quality standard is also guaranteed by all the food production and distribution norms which producers have to fulfill in order to be accepted on the market – so there are also formal rules, not only pure trust relations.)
Another characteristic discovered in this SFSC is related to localness, construction of authentic local identity. Markets are quite popular food purchasing places among Latvian consumers. However, almost all of them are full of imported food stuffs (that happen to be misleadingly presented as local) and industrial food and articles. The organizers of Straupe market wanted to create an authentic space exclusively for local

and traditional products that would clearly distinguish it from the existing markets. Local origin is stressed in the market's regulations. Still, not all products are 100% local (presumably, there are not yet enough local producers who want and can sell on the market), but all the products bear the qualities of traditional Latvian products or are artisanal.
Finally, local ownership and governance of the food chain is another aspect of shortness: the specific rules of the market were developed by its organizers (according to national laws and regulations though) and they take the relevant decisions.

Author: Rudīte Vasile

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health: the market diversifies food choice and in particular improves access to fresh, seasonal and also organic products, which might lead to a more diverse and balanced diet, but this is not verified in this case in practice. (Regarding organic products, there are contradictory conclusions about their nutritional superiority. However, one thing is apparently clear that there are fewer pesticide residues in these products.) Local traditional food cannot be regarded as obligatory healthier though (f.i., pastry, high-fat cheeses and meat products are not highly recommended daily products).
Environmental: food miles have been reduced at some extent. Possibility to sell on the market allows some small local producers to avoid searching for more distant outlets [4]. However, it is questionable that the market can fully absorb all produce of all producers (especially of more commercial ones), as it is organized only twice per month and the number of customers, albeit considerable, is comparatively moderate. This indicates also that some SFSCs have a limited capacity and producers have to develop mixed marketing strategies (this point is relevant for characteristics of SFSC).
Economic: improves market access for small and artisanal producers. Moreover, the market also provides a space for finding other clients (restaurants, guest houses etc. [7]). Some of the producers witness that their income has increased [4]. The market format and direct exchanges with consumers and other producers encourage economic diversification and creativity: several farmers have started processing on their farms, many invent new products. The market has revived the local economy – both agriculture and also tourism as the market has become an object of tourists' interest [4].
Social: similarly as in the other Latvian case of CSA, also in the farmer market case there are witnesses that stress that direct interactions with customers contribute to the valorization and recognition of farmers' work and local products [3]. Presumably, this adds to / increases farmers' socio-psychological comfort to keep going on with farming.
At community level the market has facilitated some revitalization of the local community. The market has become a crucial social event in the community, it animates local social life, has become a place of meeting for local people.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

The market initiative presents a partnership in which a wide range of actors have cooperated in order to implement it. Cooperation has been necessary in order to provide the initiative with all the needed particular resources (initiative, knowledge, funding, venue…).

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

The case evokes the question of suitability and flexibility of existing regulation to new FSC forms. Straupe market was the second established regular farmer market in the country and as a pioneer it had to face some constraining shortcomings of the regulations at the time. It has adapted itself to some rules and incited changes in other. A problem the market faced soon after the opening was that the regulation of

that moment allowed to organize only eight market days per year for this type of markets. The organizers took the initiative and together with the cook of Slow Food movement mentioned above and a coordinator of another farmer market approached the Ministry of Agriculture with propositions to change the existing regulations. The minister of agriculture agreed that the existing regulations were out of date and farmer markets should be supported. Although the law was not changed immediately, an agreement was reached that the market can continue operating, exceeding the eight legal days.

Another problem was that there were no specific regulations for production and distribution of artisanal food products, which excluded them from the legal market. This question had been raised already by other producers (specifically organic) and as a result of increasing demand for legalizing artisanal food production the relevant legislation has been put in place after some time.

Finally, in order to expose and sell even the smallest animals in the market there was needed an additional demarche: a livestock stand had to be registered at the venue's address.

Besides, there is a local regulation on markets (regarding what type of products are accepted, organization and order in the market etc.), but the majority of the document refers to the many national / EU regulative norms that the producers must meet in order to be able to sell on the market [2]. Some participants acknowledge that there is overbureaucracy, but they agree that some standards and regulation must be in place [6]. In order to comply with all the regulations during the preparation phase of the market participants followed specific courses.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

Not questions, but some concluding themes emerging from the case:

- It demonstrates a collective, bottom-up, endogeneous process of initiating and implementing change in food system;
- Involves (social) learning and innovation (organisation, marketing, production);
- Improves local control over production, marketing and distribution;
- Synergy with local development: animation of social life and traditions (farmers market and cultural), contribution to local economy, tourism.

Internet and media materials:

1. http://www.straupe-hanza.lv/index.php?p=4574&pp=10383&lang=828
2. http://www.laukutikls.lv/vietejas_iniciativas/laba_prakse/31-straupes_lauku_labumu_tirdzins
3. Grinvalde- Iruka, A. (2009) Ciemošanos Straupe pielago tirgumhttp://www.diena.lv/sabiedriba/novados/ciemosanos-straupe-pielago-tirgum-679177
4. Majore – Line, M. (2011) Popularize vietejos sezonasproduktus http://www.edruva.lv/zinas/sabiedriba/zina/34225
5. Feldmane, S. (2008) Isti lauku labumi Straupe.http://www.edruva.lv/zinas/zinas_no_vecas_e_druvas/zina/4866
6. Radzina, Z. (2008) Gadatirgiem IR nakotnehttp://www.saimnieks.lv/Konkursi/5110
7. Straupes Avize. Straupes pagasta padomes informativais izdevums Nr. 161 2008. gada augusts.
8. http://www.laukutikls.lv/citi_pasakumi/pieredzes_apmaina_latvija/563-biedribas_lauku_partneriba_upe_8_dalibnieku_pieredzes_apmainas_brauciens_uz_cesu_rajonu
9. Observations on the market during 2011.

Author: Rudīte Vasile

12. Case study - Ka dzi': CSA Riga-Gulbene (Latvia)

Author: Sandra Šūmane

Type of short supply chain addressed

The initiative can be classified as community supported agriculture; the participants present themselves as a group for direct buying. The initiative was started by a group of devoted consumers who wanted to consume local, ecological products and also support local farmers. The idea originated in a woman, a young mum, who was looking to switch completely her consumption to organic products. She found many like-minded people in her entourage. They established links with organic farmers from Gulbene district who are selling now their products to them. Consumers organize weekly ordering and delivery of products. In contrast to traditional CSA groups where consumers receive prepaid ready-made food boxes, in this one consumers can also order specific products they like (there is a weekly list circulated in which participating consumers mark their choices); still seasonality and availability of products are respected. This individual ordering demands some extra organizational efforts both from consumers and producers, as well as it may result in some irregularities in farmers' income. However, so far the system functions well. It is made possible also by (1) good communication between farmers and consumers – farmers are informed about the quality and defects of their products, and farmers keep consumers updated about their offerings; (2) good self-organization among consumers. There is a strict division of duties: there is a consumers' group responsible for ordering, sorting and delivering products, another for organizing trips to farmers and, thirdly, there are collectors who collect, wash and arrange packaging.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The consumer group is based in the capital Riga. The supplying farmers are located in Gulbene district – slightlyless than 200 km from the capital.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

At the moment there are 67 consumers and 8 farmers involved in the initiative. At some point the number of interested consumers reached 120, but it has decreased. As the initiators explain, the reason why people fell away was that not everyone was ready to take an active part, invest their time and energy to make the initiative work. One more crucial actor for the initiative's logistics and green ideology is an organic shop "Uzkodu naminš" in Riga which serves as a supply and delivery point of products.

Type of products delivered

There are around 100 products on the delivery list (they are available according to their seasonality). All products are organic and produced in the participating farms. The assortment contains both raw products (vegetables, fruits, herbs, milk…) and processed products (cheese, cream, bread, pastry, juices, processed fruits and vegetables…). The range of products has increased with time due to learning interactions (feedback) between consumers and producers: producers take up creatively consumers' tastes and wishes and develop new products, whereas consumers in turn learn about the famers' facilities and capacities. Consumers confirmed that cooperation with farmers considerably diversifies their menu; it makes some (traditional) products available which are otherwise difficult to obtain. Membership in the CSA has changed their consumption habits: f.i., it has reduced their visits to supermarkets and it has demanded more creativity in preparing food.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

One of the main characteristics of this initiative is its strong ecological base. As consumers depict themselves, they "are "green" by conviction." They are organized in an informal group "Ka dzi'" which unites like-minded people on the base on their shared values of nature protection and human relations. Their ecological life-style is not limited to buying local organic products. Some of them are involved in other environmental groups (anti GMO) and activities.

Also farmers follow the strong ecological line: all of them are certified organic.

Time length of the initiative

The group started to operate in 2010.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

At the start-up representatives from a French CSA (AMAP) shared their experience and knowledge with consumers and producers. This sharing of positive experience was important to gain farmers' trust in consumers' intentions.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs

The initiative of direct buying emerged in opposition to conventional anonymous (in terms of provenance, production methods, ingredients, producer…), unnatural (modified, with preservatives, out of natural season…) food which had lost consumers' trust and liking. The consumers were looking for alternative ways to provide themselves with food that would correspond to their ecological and humanistic values.

Shortness in this CSA initiative is manifested in several ways. Social proximity between farmers and consumers finds expression as consumers' solidarity with local farmers, sharing similar values, trust (which substitutes formalized contractual relations), getting to know each other and learning from each other (producers, consumers and products are not anonymous; there are faces and stories behind them which make them meaningful). Geographical/ physical proximity: farmers are located comparatively close to consumers and this allows more intense interactions between them: consumers are visiting farms and also assisting there. Smaller geographical distance reduces the length and time of physical travel of products that permits that they arrive fresh and natural (there is no need for lengthening of products' life with the help of preservatives). Geographical proximity also allows association of products with a certain place – albeit products are not traditional/ specific to the particular locality, they have the identity of place. The particularity of Ka dzi' is its strong ecological dimension. The ecological embeddedness of this food-chain manifests as reconnecting to local nature and ecological cycles via environmental friendly production and consumption practices and natural-ness, freshness, diversity and seasonality of products. Economic proximity is established as direct market exchange of products and money, in which farmers are the direct and only profit makers. Finally, the governance of this SFSC is local: participants – local stakeholders own and control the initiative; they have agreed on rules and roles and execute them. Still it should be noted that the local governance happens in compliance with formal regulations on food production and distribution.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health: products are fresh and authentic, with no agrichemical residues, less processed (which means also fewer preservatives, less sugar and fat…), consumers are sure about their good quality. The diversity of products may provide a higher diversity of nutrients.

Environmental: As noted above, this SFSC initiative is strongly driven by consumers' ecological motivation to consume organic and local products. Not only producers are organic, but also consumers are "green", and environmentally friendly practices are observed all along the whole food-chain (organic production methods, collective supplies, reduced food-miles, few packaging and repeated use of it…). The participants represent ecological citizenship (Seyfang, 2006) which chooses active environmentally friendly life style, based on ethical considerations and values. Several of them are members/ take part in other ecological organizations and events.

Social sustainability is much ensured by the trustful, fair and personal relations, solidarity between consumers and producers. Several consumer members stress the sense of community, collective identity and collective benefits that advances them. The CSA initiative serves also as appreciation of farmers' work – farmers receive direct feedback from consumers which increases their belief that their work is necessary.

Economic: the initiative represents several economic advantages both for farmers and consumers that contributes to its economic sustainability. Farmers' access to market has increased. It is of particular importance for organic farmers as due to the low number of organic market channels in Latvia, a big part of them still markets thorugh conventional food chains without using an organic label. "Ka dzi'" provides regular income for farmers; income security is increased by prepayments and the negotiated price is fair for producers, "not

dictated by global markets". There are economic benefits also for consumers. They witness that for them it is a cheaper way (in comparison to shops) to obtain organic products; moreover, the offer is diverse.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

This initiative is informal; though there are rules and roles established. It demands high self-organization and active involvement from participants. In particular, it raises the level of consumers' participation – from relatively passive buyers they turn into active organizers, managers, also they are more directly involved in developing the range of products. In order to make the initiative work, there is a division of duties (see above under general information on the type of short supply chain).

The case illuminates the role of trust and social capital in establishing alternative food initiatives. Both on consumer and producer sides, many participants were recruited via existing social links (friends of friends, members of organic farmers' community). In the meantime the trust had to be built and maintained, especially between actors coming from different domains (ie between farmers – consumers). Shared values and mutual trust form a very solid base for integration (confirmed also by backsliders).

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

So far, the gathered information about the initiative does not permit to draw conclusions about some particular policy or regulatory impacts. Organic agriculture and artisanal production per se are quite strictly regulated. Another similar CSA initiative in Riga is experiencing difficulties with introducing meat and its products in CSA initiatives because of more specific regulations.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

It seems that most of regulations and support mechanisms concern producers. The question arises if and what policy support is needed for consumer driven SFSCs or at food supply chain level? Actually there are two questions (1) How to animate consumers and encourage them into more active engagement? (2) How to avoid standardization and the related risk of absorption of alternative initiatives by conventional chains?

This SFSC requires reflection about upscaling and integration. It shows that there might be some "natural" limits for informal initiatives. "Ka dzi'" seems to have reached its optimal size, when it's manageable and personal relations, sense of community can be maintained. So, now it seems rather closed to new members. Nevertheless the participants popularize direct buying, invite people to form their own groups and propose their assistance. So, it is rather upscaling via multiplication, not growth in volume.

Resources:

Rugena – Bojare, Z. and E. Zuša (2012) Tieša pirkšana. Presentation at "Par zalu tuvošanos" 24/03/2012 in Jurmala, Latvia. Available at http://www.tautasforums.lv/?p=5297 (Accessed 7/08/2012).

Seyfang, G. (2006) Ecological citizenship and sustainable consumption: Examining local organicfood networks. Journal of Rural Studies, 22 (4), p. 383-339.

See a video at the following link:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snCSs9YUVcQ

13. Case study - GAS San Zeno (Pisa, Italy)

Author: Adanella Rossi

Type of short supply chain addressed

GAS San Zeno is a Solidarity-based Purchase Group (GAS), that is a group of citizens-consumers organized to collectively manage provisioning through direct relationships with producers and direct engagement in managing activities through volunteer labour.

According to the general features of the GAS movement in Italy, a central aspect of this kind of organization is the sharing of ethical principles, referring to solidarity and to environmental and social sustainability of production and consumption practices. These principles are turned into criteria for interrelating with producers and for managing all the activities within the Groups. GAS San Zeno has also adopted this approach (formalized in 2011 in a 'Code of behavior'), assuming as its organisational criteria:

- the choice of products based on seasonality and, preferably, on organic production methods;
- the preference given to local producers;
- the continuity of the relationship with the producers, through agreements;
- the definition of a fair price, through agreements with producers;
- the reduction of packaging and the preference given to recyclable or reusable materials;
- the promotion of trust and co-operation within the group.

The communication between the members of the Group and the farmers with whom the Group is linked is a central element. The physical relation is in part mediated by the members who are in charge of the management of the orders, and involves the other members through the periodical visits to the farms. The condition of direct relationship with producers is however experienced by all the members through the internal discussion about the various aspects involved.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The activities of the GAS are located in the town of Pisa, in Tuscany (Central Italy). As many other groups, it uses as base to meet and to collect and redistribute the boxes spaces made available to it by other organizations (a community centre for many years and more recently spaces in parish buildings) .

The farms linked to the Group are situated at different distances, depending on the kind of product. In the case of the most important products - vegetables and fruit products - the distance is approximately 30-40 km. For product that are not present in the area it is greater, but always within the province or the region, with a few exceptions (e.g. oranges from South Italy).

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

The GAS includes at the moment about 40 'families' purchasing regularly, and 10 producers (in some cases providing the same kind of product). The number of families refers to the purchasing of vegetables and fruit; for the other products it is usually lower. The number of the producers can increase if new relations are established (as in this moment, in which members are assessing the possibility to start the provision of a new product), or, on the contrary, it can decrease because of the lack of or reduced orders. The latter is a situation that the Group is experiencing, which is leading it to consider the opportunity to reduce the number of suppliers to guarantee conditions of economic sustainability.

Type of products delivered

The Group started its activity of direct provisioning with vegetables; later it introduced fruits, cheese, fruit juices and jams, flours and, more recently, eggs; it is investigating the introduction of pasta and cereals. Some products that were previously purchased are now no longer ordered (e.g. bread, wine). The products are provided on the basis of periodical orders, which generally refer to periods ranging from one to three months. The deliveries are weekly, with the exceptions of: apples, potatoes and cheese for which they are bi-weekly; oranges have monthly deliveries.

Figs delivery in GAS San Zeno

Author: Adanella Rossi

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

Almost all the farmers adopt organic or biodynamic methods; most of them are certified. They are mainly full-time ones (8), but there are also 2 part-time farmers. Among the full-time, 3 farmers have no agricultural professional background. The two suppliers of vegetables (the most important supplier for the GAS) have quite large farms (18 ha); both of them have relationships with other GAS and sell their produce also via other channels (i.e. school canteens, small retailers specialized in local food). The cheese also comes from a big cooperative. None of the suppliers sell to big retailers.

The members of the GAS represent different features, as do many other GAS. There are people of different age, from young students to elderly people. The level of education is medium-high, while the income level appears to vary from low to medium.

As for the other GAS, at the basis of the adhesion to the Group there are a sense of dissatisfaction with the conventional food system and a search for alternatives for food provisioning. However, the intensity of this kind of motivation is not the same among the members. All of them are looking for 'good food' - fresh, local, organic, seasonal - at a fair price; but only some of them are more consciously seeking to free themselves from the conventional retailing system, perceived as unsustainable and untrustworthy. In general, differently from other GAS, San Zeno is not characterized by an ideological approach by its members. Also its origin is peculiar. Instead of being constituted through self-organization of a group of citizens-consumers, it was promoted as an initiative by a single person (a doctor, engaged on activities related to health and social inclusion) in collaboration with a farmer (one of the two current suppliers of vegetable, who has been one of the first to experiment with social farming in Italy). Very soon, however, the consumers decided to organize themselves as a real GAS, also on the basis of the experience of other similar initiatives developing in the area, to which the farmer was linked. The farmer has thus played in that first phase the role of broker, fostering the transmission of information and experience. This kind of role is not unusual, especially when the farmers have relationships with many GAS (as in this case). This brokerage activity can align the organization of the GAS practices (from its establishment onward) and also the attitude of GAS members to the food provisioning (e.g. question of certification for organic products, composition of the boxes, seasonality, level of price). In the latter case the farmer can facilitate consumers' learning processes.

Time length of the initiative

The GAS was established about 10 years ago (2003).

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs

The meaning of shortness in this initiative finds different expressions. There is firstly the choice to establish a direct relationship with local farming, aimed at getting fresh and environmentally sustainable food. This geographical proximity however does not translate in rigid criteria with regard to the distance. There is also the desire to know better the reality behind that food, that is the farmers, the farms, the characteristics of the production processes and the related problems. There is here an effort to overcome the social separation which developed between the two parts (social proximity). Another important expression is the choice to translate the value acknowledged to the food, linked to its quality and the "quality" of its production processes, into a fair price. Looking more generally at the experience of GAS, the possibility to "reconstruct" the price, on the basis of the values

assigned to the product, represents a way to recreate an alternative economic space within which the exchanges are regulated differently, with reference to a shared basis of different criteria and strongly re-embedded into a relational dimension (economic proximity).

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health: the products are fresh and do not remain stored: when they arrive at the delivery point they are collected by consumers. Almost all the products are organic or biodynamic, and the methods of processing are artisanal, without use of preservatives.

Environmental sustainability: as said, the methods of production are organic or biodynamic and the farms are not far. The packaging is reduced as much as possible, and recyclable or reusable materials are used for the packaging. Moreover, the producers make the deliveries also to other GAS on the same day, and this minimizes the transport impact.

Social sustainability: the relationships established with the producers are based on mutual respect, solidarity, trust, reciprocal knowledge.

Economic sustainability: there are economic benefits for both parties. The producer can take advantage from a stable relationship, which raises the possibility to better organize the activity (the orders are generally for two or three months); moreover, the price is negotiated with the producers and the payments are in advance or at delivery. Consumers can benefit from good prices in relation to the quality of the products.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

As for the most of GAS, an essential aspect of this organization is the volunteer labor of its members and their level of participation in the social activities, from management of orders and deliveries to all the other communal moments. They both contribute to strengthen the sense of community and to guarantee the good functioning of the organization, preserving differentiation in relation to conventional forms of provisioning. Anyway, maintaining these characters is becoming harder and harder, as not all members are willing to participate actively with the result of a greater burden for the others. This problem is in part related to the growth of the Group (from 12 to 60 families), which has caused an impoverishment of the interpersonal interaction and a consequent decrease of the sense of moral commitment and of the social control among the members. The lack of a common vision of this experience and of its meaning has reinforced this process.

More recently, as a consequence of this situation, there has been a decrease in the number of orders and this has started to cause problems in the relationships with producers.

This critical point has often been the subject of much discussion in San Zeno assemblies. The worsening of the situation has recently triggered an intense debate, aiming at finding a solution. To that end two options have been considered: to radically reorganize the group, by reducing the number of members to those really willing to contribute (and also of suppliers…); to accept a different level of participation but also diversify the prices paid for the products. The Group has chosen the first way to 're-found' itself and has started a new phase with about 30 members.

This case thus highlights some critical points regarding this kind of experience. On one side, it points out the importance of the development within these networks of common frames to read the sense and the potential of the common 'enterprise', as a basis on which to build a robust organization through which to manage this 'alternative'. On the other, it highlights the importance of the scale, in the sense of the risks linked to an excessive growth, which can compromise the delicate but essential social mechanisms that are at the basis of this particular organization. The growth and scaling-up of this "movement" appears rather linked to the increase of the adhesion between these initiatives and on the consolidation of each of them.

Another important point, which also covers the whole GAS experience, is the organizational model to efficiently manage the stage of distribution. A fundamental feature of GAS is the establishment of direct relationships with the producers. Within this kind of organization farmers can increase efficiency by optimizing the plan of delivery (i.e. same days for close GAS) or by sharing transport with other farmers. In the case of GAS San Zeno both these solutions have been adopted by the suppliers. Notwithstanding, in some cases (i.e. where there is a great distance between consumers and producers, as for big

urban centers, or when the relationships are complicated by the lack of producers in the periurban areas) the difficulties related to the direct relation lead to look for more organized solutions, especially through forms of coordination among producers (i.e. through the establishment of cooperatives and a centralization of the management of orders and deliveries) or through the involvement of matchmaking services provided by small enterprises (their presence is growing hand in hand with 'food relocalisation' trends). When the Groups are small and/or spread around the territory, a solution sometimes adopted by producers is that of combining the delivery to a retailer who they supply with the delivery to a local GAS (which thus maintains the relation with the producer).

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

At the moment, there are no particular regulations that have a strong impact on this initiative, though they are indirectly impacted by the regulations that hamper the activity of small farms.

The law acknowledges GAS activities as non-profit associations and, as such, entities not subject to tax, provided that they are formally constituted. GAS San Zeno, as most of the Italian GAS, is an informal group and so it has not met this requirement. At national level, the condition imposed by the law has been strongly contested. The requirement to formalize the association as condition to remain legal is considered a limitation of private freedom (GAS activity being essentially a cooperation among private individuals and not an economic activity). Moreover, it is seen as a first step towards a process of institutionalization which, on the one hand, could strengthen these organizations, giving them visibility and space (i.e. in the relationship with public institutions), on the other, could foster their absorption into the conventional framework, thus diluting their innovation potential, or hampering their activity for the necessity to comply with rules. It is significant, to this respect that Banca Etica (an Italian bank strongly engaged in re-defining credit with reference to ethical principles) has recently introduced special conditions for GAS to open accounts and has found solutions to overcome the difficulties related to their informal nature. This choice has been viewed as a very different approach, aligned to the vision of GAS and more befitting their needs, very far from the need for homogenisation with conventional rules, which seems to characterize many public institutions.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

Is scaling up of this kind of experiences always advisable?

- How can it occur without changing the fundamentals of these experiences and reducing their innovation potential?
- How could this type of organization be improved?
- How could the relation between these forms of organization of demand and the features of supply be improved?
- What kind of policy support could be useful to help these particular systems of food provisioning to 'grow' and consolidate?

Links:

https://sites.google.com/site/sanzenogas/home
http://www.retegas.org

14. Case study - Corazzano Farm (Pisa, Italy)

Author: Francesca Galli

Type of short supply chain addressed

This is an organic agricultural firm the marketing strategy of which is totally focused on direct consumption: it provides fresh produce to GAS (Solidarity Purchasing Groups), it participates to a farmers' market, it has its own farm shop and is about to start selling on-line. It also sells to the municipal school canteens (Comune di San Miniato, Pisa serving 1400 meals a day). The prevailing relationship is face to face and trust in the producer is based on personal interaction. The percentage of product sold through different channels is:

- 20% of sales is through a box scheme to private customers.
- 30% is sold to solidarity purchasing groups
- 10% is sold to small shops and restaurants
- 40% is sold to school canteens

Corazzano first web page
http://www.fattoriadicorazzano.it/

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The farm is based in the county of San Miniato, a municipality in the countryside (province of Pisa).

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

The farm employs 7 to 9 people, beyond the owner and the agricultural consultant. It connects with Gas members and the administration of the local municipality

Type of products delivered

Fruits and vegetables mainly.

The farm spread out over 52 hectares, half of which is cultivated, 12 acres of vegetables in rotation with another 10 hectares of cereals, pulses, fodder. Two and a half hectares of vineyard and a small olive grove and a future orchard covering about 1 hectare, and the rest is woodland. This year they planted over 45 varieties of vegetables, including artichokes and potatoes, carrots, celery, salads and cabbage of all forms and types. They have also barley, wheat and maize (for polenta). A modern system of underground irrigation takes water from basins via a network of pipes, drop by drop. The extensive use of sheeting cover (mulch) made of fully biodegradable corn starch helps the fight against weeds, and replaces the use of any kind of chemical herbicide.

On farm shop

Author: Vanessa Malandrin

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

The farm is managed by the owner Carlo Agliardi with his wife and his two young children, who "landed" in Tuscany after a long career abroad in the golden world of yachting, determined to adopt a more natural and more genuine way of living. They were soon joined by Loredano Bellesi who is an experienced farmer (the counsellor) in the area, which has enthusiastically embraced the project to do "sustainable" business with organic farming. Corazzano sells its own produce,

plus other types of products provided by other farms in the area (pasta produced by a mill not too far from farm, and preserves) through a shop on farm which serves around 150 regular clients. I was told that they are planning to introduce a direct sale of processed products produced on the farm (soups, starters, cooked vegetables etc…). This is why they are building a kitchen in the farm shop. This will allow them to extend their range. The aim is always high value products (high quality- high price). Hygiene issues will be part of the definition of quality.

Time length of the initiative

The farm started in 2009, the land was abandoned and this allowed organic to be a viable option (in February 2010 they were certified, except the vineyards and the olive trees, which need a 3 year transition period).

The box for the GAS in preparation

Author: Vanessa Malandrin

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

Consumers have an active role since they must call or write to order a box. The local administration was very keen on developing a relationship with the farm regarding school canteen provision. San Miniato is a small town: it serves 1400 meals per day, has one central kitchen, and the local administration works closely and regularly with local producers. San Miniato municipality wants to support local farmers, and it is a very clear political decision. This is why the San Miniato municipality allocates extra budget to buy from local producers: they buy local produce (meat, eggs, vegetables) worth 80 thousand euros (per year). They are willing to support a local organic farm such as Corazzano (there are very few organic producers in the Pisa province), so they keep buying from them. On its side, the farm provides vegetables washed as cleanly as possible, but it is more a cooperation rather than an imposition of requirements. According to the entrepreneur the school catering service district is a good sales channel: *"The door was opened to us in a very friendly way when three years ago the municipality decided to convert the service to organic. In fact they pay a good price, higher than what they pay to Ecor (one of the two largest distributors of organic products) because they want to support local farms. The price is still low for us, but it's the best we can get, so we are not complaining. We value this sales channel for two reasons: the first is that we want to maintain a good relationship with the local administration. We need them, the bureaucracy can become a huge problem and if we see a good opportunity, the better for us! The other aspect is that often we host schools for visits and this is a great way to promote our image and our products. The kids come home and talk about it with their family, take our leaflets and this allows us to get known, it is a great marketing tool! "*

The access to the GAS (as a supplier) has allowed him to enter a much wider network of people (compared with another local farmer).

Example of a box

Picture taken from website (http://www.fattoriadicorazzano.it/cms/lc/14/d/ Photogallery, consulted on 10/10/2013).

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs

The whole farm is conceived to have a "short" link to its clients. They aim at niche clients that can pay for high quality a sufficiently high price.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

– Environmental: he chose organic, he was brave!

– Social: well integrated on social aspects, with the local PA. Good working team with a passion for organic (don't just aim for "the end of the month"!)

– Economic: hard work, he can't afford glass houses as he spent all his money in other investments required up to now.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

This is the most relevant aspect arising within the case analyzed. It came up several times in the conversation.

"We never had problems with quality – we have a large variety - but we did with quantity!"

"Seasonality is a constraint: sometimes we only have cabbages!"

"We had periods when it was impossible to fill the boxes decently and this can make us lose clients"

"We have no glass houses – the climate is very continental – and this limits our production"

"We started this year to buy products from other farmers in winter, to expand our range".

"Fall of demand during peak production season: in summer, when we have the most produce, families go on holidays so we cannot get the most out of it yet".

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

The PA doesn't allow in principle a glass house for landscape reasons. But this may change over time. Other regulatory aspects do not seem to have arisen.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

An organic farm for a non-conventional market (small quantities, not stable etc..) run in a "conventional way"…. Do these two "worlds" clash in some way?

What factors contribute/hamper economic sustainability in the medium long term, given the size (quite large) and the technology (structural endowment and way of production) of the farm?

The farm fields

Picture taken from website (http://www.fattoriadicorazzano.it/cms/lc/14/d/ Photogallery, consulted on 10/10/2013).

15. Case study - BioRomeo (The Netherlands)

Author: Pieter van de Graaf

Type of short supply chain addressed

Direct internet sales. The relationship of the consumer is direct with a group of farmers via the internet without intermediaries. Only limited information about the supplying farmers and their farming systems are given on-line. Communication is via on-line comments, email or premium rate phone number only. Delivery by post or pick-up at farm. Produce is also sold to restaurants, on farm and in a selection of local shops. A "harvest your own potatoes" event was organised on farm to closer connect local consumers with their food. Link: http://www.bioromeo.nl/

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The produce all comes from farms in the Noordoostpolder region of the Netherlands. On-line sales appear to be within the Netherlands only which would mean a maximum of 250 km distance from the region of production to the consumer.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

8 different farms/companies are involved

Type of products delivered

Fresh organic potatoes and field vegetables, some of heritage and unusual varieties

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

All farmers appear to be full-time farmers also involved in the direct marketing of their produce. One of the farms is CSA.

Time length of the initiative

Operational since August 2012, its predecessor, Krispijn, was founded in April 2012. The initiative was started by farmer Krispijn van den Dries and two other farmers who were seeking new markets for their potatoes left unsold due to cheap imports. Their predicament received a lot of attention in the Netherlands after van den Dries dumped 7 tonnes of potatoes in the central square in Amsterdam in protest on 1 April 2012. Link: http://youthfoodmovement.nl/nieuws/126

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

The main actors involved are the consumers and the farmers. The only other actors involved are the members of the CSA initiative on one of the farms and the delivery companies/postal services.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs

What is meant by "short" in this case?
The website mostly uses the term "direct" rather than "short". The introduction refers to "love", "involvement" and "passion" of the farmers, "freshness" of the produce, and the right of consumers to know where their food comes from. Technically, "short" here refers mostly to social distance, the number of intermediaries (none for internet and farm sales) and the amount of information available about the methods of production. The physical distance is not necessarily shorter than for Dutch potatoes and vegetables bought at conventional markets or supermarkets in the Netherlands.
Interestingly, although all produce is sold as organic, not much detailed information is given about the way this is certified. It seems that the consumer is suppose to trust the farmers in question regarding this aspect.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health & wellbeing: products are presented as "fresh" although in reality this is not possible for all types at all times (e.g. potatoes are stored on farm after harvest for many months). Products are less likely to be in transit for a considerable time than in conventional food supply chains.
Environment: the produce is organic and therefore has environmental benefits from that respect. The dispatch of small quantities of produce to individual customers (by presumably fossil-fueled transport) is unlikely to be environmentally more friendly than bulk sales to supermarket buyers. Whether the consumption of Dutch produce is environmentally better than imported produce is not argued. The website simply claims that Dutch produce is wasted as it remains unsold due to competition from imports. Details on individual farmer's production methods are scarce even though Krispijn van den Dries gives much more information on other websites such as Nature & More. Link :

http://www.natureandmore.com/growers/krispijn-van-den-dries
Social and economic: the livelihood of the farmers is clearly at stake, hence the reason for starting this initiative. From an economic point of view, it therefore enhances sustainability. Socially, it also contributes as 10% of the produce from the farms is donated to food banks in urban areas. Some production by van den Dries is on a "social care farm" (form of CSA) on which people with mental limitations are employed. Link: http://www.zorgboer.nl/index.php

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

This initiative is relatively new and it remains to be seen whether it continues seeing how the key reason for starting it was the absence of demand from the conventional supply chain. This is clearly an example of supply outstripping demand. Other marketing channels such as public procurement might be able to offer a longer term solution.

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

Not much reference is made to regulation. It seems market forces have been the key lever here.

16. Case study "Villa of Roses" (Ukraine)

Author: Leonid Dvortsin

Type of short supply chain addressed

Villa of Roses is farm that grew out a family farm into a middle sized multifunctional organic farm that sells its produce via the online farm shop and in some of the supermarkets in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. The individual orders placed by consumers can be delivered at home at extra cost, picked up from the office in Kiev or bought on the farm itself. The farm tries to own the entire supply chain when it comes to serving the individual consumers by eliminating the middle men and by dealing directly with the local branch managers of supermarkets in Kiev.

Yuryi Sergeyev the farmer[9]

At the moment there a few new initiatives being developed by the farmer owner, Yuriy Sergeyev, together with a restaurant to set up a special menu at the restaurant only based on the produce from Villa of Roses and a solidarity purchasing group of 10-12 families from Kiev has asked him if he could set up a box scheme together with them.

The farm is open for group or individual visits by interested customers. Also a small onsite restaurant is being constructed at the moment. This will allow the visitors to taste the products of the farm right on site.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

The farm is located in a village 80 kilometers away from Kiev, the place where the main group of customers lives. The distance can be covered within 1 hour of driving if there are no traffic jams in Kiev.

The farm is 150 hectares large and divided into different plots, which are physically separated from each other by plots owned by others. Some of the land is covered with woods, there is also a lake and other plots are used as pasture land and others to grow crops that can be used as animal feed for the livestock. Fruits and vegetables are cultivated on smaller plots closer to the farm.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Yuriy works himself on the farm but next to that he employs between 30 and 50 personnel depending on the season. For example, one of the employees is a veterinary who is responsible for the wellbeing of the animals on the farm.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

Other actors are the local authorities in the village, who support the initiative, phytosanitary authorities (both at local and national level), individual customers and supermarkets in Kiev.

Type of products delivered

Villa of Roses is an organic farm that produces fruits and vegetables, breeds free range pigs, geese, ducks, cows and free-range chicken for eggs and meat production, keeps beehives for honey and has its own dairy line. The production of dairy is its main business activity with the dairy products being sold in supermarkets in Kiev as

[9] Pictures taken from the website http://milk-shop.com.ua/index.php and by Leonid Dvortsin.

well as online while other products are mainly being sold via the online farm shop.

Time length of the initiative

Yuriy Sergeyev is a new and young farmer who started this initiative in 2008. In the future Yuriy Sergeyev hopes to be able to offer agro-tourism activities on his farm.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs

One of the most characteristic things about this SFSC is the fact that it wants to be totally independent from others due to the low level of trust among the members of Ukrainian society. Therefore Yuriy Segeyev and his team try to control the entire chain themselves. There are some long lasting relations but they are based on an individual level rather than on a network concept.

The initiative managed to cover a particular niche due to its uniqueness in the Ukrainian food and agricultural landscape. Most farmers are actually self-subsistence peasants or there are huge agro holdings active in Ukraine with almost nothing in between and especially not multifunctional.

One of the main challenges is logistics due to the outdated infrastructure. Also it is hard to find the right personnel that are willing to work on the farm and finally due to the high costs the products are accessible to a limited group of consumers.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

One of the main claims made by Yuriy is that by eating natural food people are not only supporting sustainability but also save money on medical care. Eating organic food is better for your health and therefore there is less need for medical care and costs, he claims.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

During the last two years the farm has experienced a strong growth in the demand from both individual consumers as well as from the supermarkets. This puts a lot of pressure on the farmer and his team to constantly perform and to grow as a business or value chain. The future developments are quite uncertain as in general there is high uncertainty rate in the daily life in Ukraine. On one hand this provides opportunities for further growth but on the other hand this situation is being experienced as very damaging for further sustainable development of the SFSC.

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

Soon a law on organic agriculture will be implemented in Ukraine. This means that the sector will finally be institutionalized and can be developed further with governmental support.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

How to build trust in this short food supply chain and involve other actors?

How to maintain the values and norms while growing as a sfsc?

Links:

http://milk-shop.com.ua/index.php

http://www.fibl.org/en/media/media-archive/media-release/article/organic-market-development-in-ukraine.html

17. Case study - Tuinderij De Stroom (The Netherlands)

Author: Femke Hoekstra

Type of short supply chain addressed

De Stroom is an organic box scheme. Relationship: Face-to-face since consumers can purchase organic vegetables directly at a farm shop. But mostly it can be defined on the basis of spatial proximity since the (bags with) vegetables are retailed in the region of production and consumers are made aware of their origin.

Author: Femke Hoekstra

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

Tuinderij De Stroom is located in Hemmen. Hemmen is located about 6km from the town of Wageningen and 20km from both the city of Nijmegen and the city of Arnhem. The garden itself is situated next to the river Linge, hence the name of the garden (stroom is synonymous with river). The garden is approximately 4ha distributed over several plots. Every year different parts of a larger garden plot are cultivated following the crop rotation of an adjacent organic arable farm called De Lingehof.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

Three (female) farmers work in cooperation with the adjacent arable farmer from De Lingehof who cultivates about 100ha. This cooperation consists of an exchange of labour in times of need and De Stroom is able to rent land and make use of machinery and surplus manure. De Lingehof uses solid animal manure from an organic dairy farm close by. De Lingehof also produces certain crops for the vegetable boxes such as broccoli, cauliflower and onions. These vegetables require less handwork or are more risky to produce on a small scale in case of pest outbreaks. While, De Stroom experiences an increasing demand for their organic vegetables, De Lingehof has difficulty finding an outlet for its organic produce. Next to the cooperation with De Lingehof, they have some (regular) volunteers (around 10). During busy periods, they send around a request for temporary support to their customer network. Currently there is also one intern that is about to start a biodynamic education this year. She works both with the De Lingehof and De Stroom.

Type of products delivered

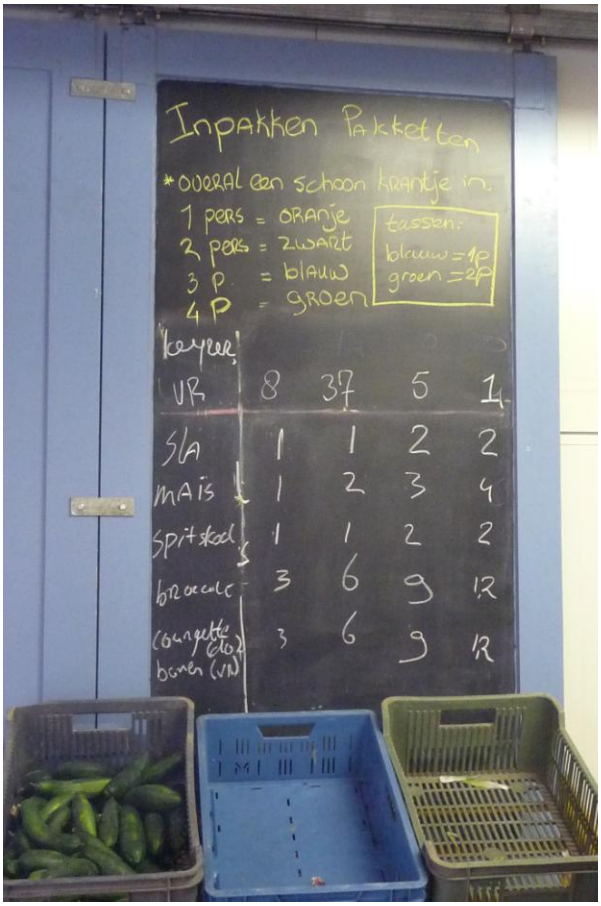
A majority of the produced vegetables goes directly to consumers in the area by means of a vegetable box scheme. The remaining produce is sold in organic shops in the area and on the farm. They started with vegetable boxes and now they are changing towards (biodegradable plastic) bags because they are easier to handle and transport. There are 4 different types of boxes/bags: 1 person for €6.25; 2 persons for €8.50; 3 persons for €12; and a family box for €14. They produce seasonal, mostly quite common, vegetables such as: broccoli, beans, carrots but also parsnips and turnips which are less common in the Netherlands. In general, each box contains at least 5 different vegetable varieties. The box of week 35 for example contained: lettuce, courgette, sweet corn, root and broccoli.

During the winter months they sometimes buy-in products from an wholesaler for a more varied supply.

They currently produce around 230 boxes and the numbers have been steadily increasing over the last seasons. At their maximum, they produced 280 boxes. They have the facilities to easily produce around 380 boxes. In terms of upscaling it is therefore more logical to increase the number of box sales instead of looking for different marketing channels.

They deliver 3 days per week to different points in their vicinity. One of their biggest distribution points is the University of Nijmegen; they distribute 100 boxes a week. An intermediary (a student union) takes care of the logistical distribution of the boxes and possible changes in subscriptions as well as weekly cancellations. They are working on a similar set up for Wageningen University.

The distribution points, like an artisan butcher shop, are free to ask for an additional fee for their services. The butcher for example adds 1 euro to the 2 person bag for keeping the bags cool etc.
De Stroom has an EKO certification which means that they do not use pesticides and fertilizers. De Lingehof has an organic SKAL certification.



Author: Femke Hoekstra

Time length of the initiative

About 8 seasons.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

An interesting aspect of this case study is the collaboration with intermediaries in the distribution and administration of the vegetable bags. It is very efficient for De Stroom to work with an intermediary since they cannot only deliver 100 bags at one point but this local partner can also take care of some local marketing which facilitates upscaling. Perhaps this is an interesting model to explore for other box schemes.

Tuinderij De Stroom:
http://www.degroenekring.nl/stroom/pages.php?page=9
De Lingehof:
http://www.degroenekring.nl/lingehof/pages.php?page=29
Intermediary:
in Nijmegen:
http://www.studentenvakbondakku.nl/diensten/groentepakketten/
in Wageningen:
http://www.wageningenenvironmentalplatform.nl/

18. Case study La Ruche Qui Dit Oui (The Beehive That Says Yes) (France)

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Introduction

The Ruche Qui Dit Oui (RQDO) is a french based private company which utilises web 2.0 tools to connect local food producers with consumers through a local structure which is the point of delivery , an e-commerce platform which allows individuals to take their orders and related bills.

The company was created in 2010 after a meeting between Guilhem Cheron, a former industrial designer with a 15 years' experience in multiples food jobs, and Marc-David Choukran, a self-taught person, web and TIC fanatic[1]. As the RQDO founders acknowledge : « if you want to develop effective and performing tools, then you can't be satisfied to make a rough bricolage : all this requires a great investment in time and in money ». So, the actual internet site has been constructed after more than a year of work. The first RQDO opened in France, on 21/09/2011, nearby Toulouse.

By the end of 2012 the RQDO « headquarters » in Paris hosted about a dozen of members, 2/3 men and 1/3 women, with an average age of around 30. Unsurprisingly, the RQDO is young, as are the majority of social networkers, bloggers and users of web 2.0 instruments.

The headquarters managing board is busy to develop the web site, to encrease the profile of the RQDO and its values through different media, giving answers to public questions, controlling producers' certifications (labels, HACCP and others hygiene regulations), managing payments and bills and, above all, to support producers and consumers of local Ruches.

Logo

Type of short supply chain addressed

The RQDO couldn't exist without the internet. In fact, RQDO is a networking company placed between a community based, local level and a centrally governed higher level, and functions as follows:

1 - a person, an association or a firm decides to open a Ruche in a public place (square, cultural center, school, etc.) or in one's own home, garden or garage ; this actor is the "queen bee" ;

2 - the person makes contact with small scale food producers and craftsmen in a radius of 200 km (125 miles). It usually concerns fresh and processed products, organic if available, exceptionally it's about non-food products ;

3 - at the same time the RQDO manager-to-be, spreads the concept locally, looking for new recruits in the neighbourhoods, through his/her friends, family and so on ; all these recruits are the « bees » ;

4 - as a little group of producers is formed (min. 4 or 5), and about 40-50 customers are enrolled on the local website, the manager of the Ruche gets the go ahead (from the headquarters) to start sales ;

5 - every week, the manager offers a range of goods from local producers to the whole community, through the web page of the local Ruche. Previously, every producer had a fixed minimum of orders at which he would be prepared to supply. The aim is to prevent unnecessary transports, notably when there are small amounts of goods. It also falls to the producer to decide the price of the products, in relation to the production costs and the distance from the Ruche ;

6 - customers have 5 days to order on the web site, simply by clicking on the products they want. Orders are possible up to 48 hours before the day of sale. There's no need of subscription, all that is needed is to be registered on the local Ruche's web site. When the total amount of orders matches the minimum quota proposed by the producers, then the Ruche says : « oui », and the trade will be realised ;

7 - as the orders are closed, there are two options : if the producer has reached the quota pre-established, then the trade will take place normally. If he doesn't reach the quota, then he will not deliver the food (but he can also decide to do it anyway). The day before the sale, every

member of the RQDO receives the complete list of their purchases and a purchase order which indicates the amount of the credit transfer. The monetary transaction will be realized the following days through a bank transfer. Thus, having a credit card is a necessary condition to be in the RQDO system.

The RQDO is a firm and consequently has some costs related to its functioning. That's why the purchasing price is increased by 20%. A part of this « surplus price » (7,9%) is taken out to pay the manager of the local Ruche. The rest is shared for the payment of the Value Added Tax (5,5%), bank charges (2,1%) and the IT services developed and managed by the Parisian staff, which allows the whole process (5,5% of the final price).

This 20% gross margin is subject to suspicion from consumers, which somtimes see in this applied margin an unjustified form of profit appropriation, particularly in reference to the headquarters in Paris. The creators of the start-up have had to answer several times to the consumers who publicly raise questions and critics against them through social networks. As a significative example, the management board directly intervened in a forum[2] :

"this margin is accepted and understood by our producers, considering that the RQDO relieves them from a number of tasks (invoicing in particular) and offers them a true service. In addition, it's smaller than margins of classical large-scale distributors (which can reach up to 250%). Moreover, we never tried to conceal our operating mode. The existence of this margin is stated quite clearly in black and white on the web site at the moment of the registration and it also appears in the FAQ, which is the traditional information place for the members, and almost all the press articles mention it. However, it's probably true that this information is not sufficiently visible by the non-members, we will see how we can show it clearly to the people who are not registered yet[3].

Thus, even when it's possible to have access to the price-related information via the web site (http://www.the-ruche.com/), some key points are still unclear. In relation to the capital, the 30 Ruches operating in january 2012 have generated a monthly turnover of 40 000 €, which is 4 000 € for the Paris headquarters. As we know that the number of Ruches at the end of 2012 has grown to 150 (with another 400 in construction), we can estimate that the monthly income for the Paris managing board is now around 20 000 €. These numbers don't seem to endorse the hypothesis of a predatory approach by the firm. However, it is questionable to what extent the central board can meet the bank fees, VAT, and wages of the twelve members of the start-up in Paris.

As a matter of fact, to find a starting capital at the end of 2010, the founders Guilhem Cheron and Marc-David Choukroun turned to some « business angels »[4]. Thanks to the intervention of Marc Simoncini, the Kima Venture fund and Christophe Duhamel (former founder of the famous recipes web site : marmiton.org), it was possible to have a capital injection of about 115 000 €, which helped to launch the web site and its first development. The progressive growing dynamics of the RQDO did the rest, thus the founders have succeeded in retaining the attention of new investment funds in november 2012. There were more than 30 business angels and the RQDO founders eventually chose the XAnge Private Equity fund, a subsidiary of La Banque Postale (postal bank), and the SOLID fund by Siparex group[5]. The first fund injected 1 million €, the latter 500 000 €. This capital injection will permit *"the further development of the platform, to strengthen the territorial network, the guidance and support of the Ruches responsibles and local producers, and to enhance the logistics, cornerstone of short supply chains"[6]*.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs

As indicated by the RQDO web site, the main criteria for selecting the products is a radius of 200 km (125 miles) around the local Ruche. Note that distances from producers to the local Ruche are indicated on the web site. Secondly, a respect for the environment is another criterium, but here there's no dogmatism about this, notably if it's difficult to find the necessary production quota to satisfy the consumers involved. By the way, interactions, conviviality, and the mutual commitment of the members enhance the trust and can be seen as a form of labelling reduction.

As in other case-studies (I. e. Francesca Galli - Zolle), consumer-producer relations are mediated by a group of professionals, young entrepreneurs. This is a crucial issue because they take care of logistics, marketing and information and communication services, which are activities often neglected by the farmers themselves (notably the olders). Here we have two intermediaries : the local person who finds producers and hosts the products, and the central managing board in Paris. So the system is materially short (the supply chain), but virtually long (banking operations and money transfer and the information and communication services).

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health: products are fresh and do not remain stored for longer than a morning, or a day at least, after which everything is delivered.

Environment: the radius-of-200-km-principle sounds like « food miles » and « locavore » friendly, but these concepts (food miles in particular) have raised some criticisms. However, the beehive says yes only if there is a sufficient amount of orders ; if there are small amounts of orders the producer doesn't deliver to the Ruche.

As mentioned above, the production practices aren't necessarily organic but producers consider the environmental impact of activities.

The main advantages of the RQDO are :

to make local commerce more efficient ;

to increase the farmers' income ;

to reduce the price of local and organic products ;

to create an additional income for the manager of the Ruche.

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

Number of regulations are involved with the RQDO.

Concerning the products, organic labelling is welcomed by the RQDO, as are other certifications such as Label Rouge (i. e. for bread, eggs, some local meats, etc.), or Geographical Indications. More important are HACCP or the veterinary certifications delivered by local authorities to the farmers, specially in the case of eggs ; as a matter of fact these are necessary preconditions to introduce products in the market.

Other rules concern the treatment of personal informations on the web site, the bank operations (there is a tax on the money transfers) and the sales, which all have required a law professional on the central board. VAT is also another regulation, applied at the local level (the manager of the local Ruche) and at the central level too. As we noted above, all these issues have some consequences for the consumers, who are often surprised by the margin of 20%.

Key questions emerging from the case study analyzed

- This initiative has spread all across France in a few months ; this was possible thanks to injections of capital from the so called business angels : to what extent will people take it up? Are people aware of it? These are important questions as the RQDO has recently injected the enormous amount of 1,5 million € and wants to develop beyond French frontiers in other European countries.
- The RQDO formula is a virtuous one, besides the capital injection, there are real advantages compared to other supply chains (such as supermarkets and other retailers). The success of such an initiative will give us important signals concerning consumers motivations. But today it's a little too early and may we may have to wait (we noted that some consumers organize themselves without such mediators, as « Ruches without Ruches »...).
- RQDO is strictly Internet dependent, but not all the people (in the producers' world as well as in the consumers world) are so connected . I can't be affirmative but it seems to me that the main RQDO public is urban more than rural ; but how could it be otherwise?

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[1] Guilhem Cheron was a designer for a veggy restaurant in Cuba, an organizer of cooking workshops for disabled people or children in social institutions, a manager of dining experiences in a teenagers psychological center, a manager of art of cooking performances in many museums, and he's also the owner of a patent for a « sensory spoon » (to give back sensations to people eating only mixed foods !). Marc-David Choukran started work at the age of 21 in a communication company ; he created his own business 3 years later, after many jobs in web sites

mangement, marketing strategies and innovation consulting.

[2] http://www.rue89.com/rue89-planete/2012/01/28/marre-du-supermarche-bienvenue-dans-la-ruche-qui-dit-oui-228815. 124 comments on 15/01/2013.

[3] *« Cette marge est acceptée et comprise par nos producteurs étant donné que La Ruche qui dit Oui les décharge d'un certain nombre de tâches (notamment toute la facturation) et leur offre un véritable service. De plus, elle reste minime par rapport aux marges dégagées dans la distribution classique (pouvant aller jusqu'à 250%). Par ailleurs, nous n'avons jamais cherché à cacher notre mode de fonctionnement. Sur le site, l'existence de cette marge est précisée noir sur blanc lors de l'inscription et figure également dans la FAQ, qui est le lieu traditionnel d'information pour les membres, et la quasi-totalité des articles de presse la mentionnent. Cependant, c'est vrai que cette information n'est peut-être pas suffisamment visible pour les non-membres, nous allons voir comment nous pouvons la présenter de façon plus claire aux personnes qui ne sont pas encore inscrites ».* Cf. previous note.

[4] Following Wikipedia, a business angel (or informal investor) is an affluent individual who provides capital for a business start-up, usually in exchange for convertible debt or ownership equity. Angel investments bear extremely high risk and are usually subject to dilution from future investment rounds. As such, they require a very high return on investment. Angels typically invest their own funds, unlike venture capitalists, who manage the pooled money of others in a professionally-managed fund. Although typically reflecting the investment judgment of an individual, the actual entity that provides the funding may be a trust, business, limited liability company, investment fund, or other vehicle. Angel investors are often retired entrepreneurs or executives, who may be interested in angel investing for reasons that go beyond pure monetary return. These include wanting to keep abreast of current developments in a particular business arena, mentoring another generation of entrepreneurs, and making use of their experience and networks on a less than full-time basis. Thus, in addition to funds, angel investors can often provide valuable management advice and important contacts.

[5] http://www.affiches-parisiennes.com/la-ruche-qui-dit-oui-leve-15-millions-deuros-755.html

[6] *« poursuivre le développement de sa plateforme, de renforcer le maillage territorial, l'animation et l'accompagnement des responsables de Ruches et des producteurs locaux et enfin d'améliorer la logistique, clé de voûte des circuits courts »* Cf. http://www.xange.fr/actualites/200-xange-et-solid-disent-oui-a-la-ruche-

19. Case study - UAGALUR Food from the land (Spain)

Author: Roberto Ruiz

Type of short supply chain addressed

UAGALUR is a joint commercialisation initiative established within UAGA, the Farmers' Union of the province of Alava, in 2007. It meant a substantial change from the traditional guidelines followed within UAGA until then, and in fact it was a personal gamble by the former president of the Union (by the way, she was the first female president of the Union).

The objectives of UAGALUR are to: i) foster SFSC and narrow the gap between the rural and urban population; ii) Add value to local products. iii) Support collaborations between farmers and consumers in order to share the risks and benefits of producing nutritive, healthy, genuine, tasteful and safe food; iv) keep rural areas alive by means of sustainable farming systems (agro-ecological, profitable, environmentally friendly and socially fair and sensitive); v) encourage entrepreneurship and labour within rural areas.

This initiative aims to arise the interest of local farmers for SFSCs, so they start considering SFSC as a real option for their activities, and then to receive training, etc. It is not expected that most of their production is commercialised throught the joint shop. Therefore, when a farmer starts working in this project he/she will probably sell most of his/her production through the conventional way, and a very small percentage through the shop. But later (or at the same time), he/she will be accessing new SFSCs (direct sales to consumers, farmers markets, restaurants, etc.).

UAGAlur website (http://www.uagalur.com/)

UAGAlur has a shop where their products are sold directly to the consumers. There is also a website for internet sales.

They also attend other events such as open-air local markets held in the city or in the villages. They take part in a public food procurement programme through the canteen of the Campus of Arkaute, and have started to work with some small food shops, bars and restaurants in Vitoria-Gasteiz to introduce local products.

Area and territory where the initiative takes place

Farmers can be situated anywhere within the province of Alava, which covers an area of 3.037,50 km² and has a population of 319,227 inhabitants. Vitoria-Gasteiz, with 243,298 people, is situated in the center of the province.

Number of actors/producers/farmers involved

According to the web site,there are 47 farmers taking part in the project.

Type of products delivered

Seasonal vegetables and fruits, potatoes, legumes, meat (beef, lamb and horse), dairy products (cow's and sheep's milk and cheese), wine (Rioja and Txakoli), olive oil from Rioja Alavesa. The quality and origin of some products are certified by PDO (Idiazabal cheese, Rioja, Txakoli) and some by quality labels (i.e. Kalitatea: beans, potatoes, olive oil).

UAGAlur products on the market

Author: Roberto Ruiz

To make the range more interesting and attractive, they also sell certain products not produced by farmers of UAGA, such as the salt produced in a village of Alava (Sal de Añana), local crafts, fair trade foreign food products (coffee and chocolate). In some cases, there can be some "invited" products: food that do not exist yet in the province of Alava (i.e. some conserves, marmalades, jams, etc.) will eventually come from the closest place possible (and following some basic rules) until that product is available locally.

Qualification of actors and/or the farmers involved

They are basically full-time farmers affiliated with UAGA, the local Farmers' Union. Initially two types could be differentiated: i) farmers with expertise in direct sales (Idiazabal PDO cheese makers, and Rioja wine producers), and ii) farmers lacking expertise in direct sales, but who believed in the potential of SFSCs for their farm (ie: some vegetables producers). The former president of UAGA (and the directive team) played a key role. There is a person for the coordination and catalysation of the project.

Time length of the initiative

This project started in 2007.

Other actors directly or indirectly involved

The main actors involved are the farmers, as well as the former president (and her team) of the Farmer's Union, who proposed, planned and fostered the initiative. There is also one person contracted to energise the project. Every farmer has to devote regularly some time working in the shop.

The participation of consumers (who buy in the shop) is basically limited to purchasing the products. But since they have access to knowing personally the farmers, some of them may go later into a more direct sort of relationship.

In relation to the Evidence Document

Ch 1: Identification of SFSCs

UAGALUR refers either to direct sales or short food supply chains. In this case, short has clearly both a social and a physical meaning. First, the project tries to make the farmer more accessible to the consumer. In fact, there is some basic info on and photographs of every farmer on the website. Moreover, there are no intermediaries when food is purchased in the shop, local markets or at the farm, and there is one intermediary when these products are sold in certain small food shops that collaborate with the initiative.

At the same time, since Vitoria is situated in the center of the province of Alava, the longest distance from the farm to UAGALUR is less than 50 kms. Thus, the physical distance is much shorter than most of the food purchased at conventional shops, markets and supermarkets.

Ch 2: Sustainability and health aspects of SFSCs

Health & wellbeing: products are presented as local, seasonal, nutritional, traditional, safe, healthy, produced by natural methods. It seems that the consumer is supposed to trust farmers regarding the production system. However, some consumers (especially those closer to organic food) might demand more information about the production methods. Only few of them are certified as organic.

Environment: Although the project mentions the objective of increasing biodiversity and agro-ecology, there is little information about the production methods, which are basically conventional and some can be "integrated". Only organic farmers can be certified. They try to foster organic and agroecological farming systems.

Whenever possible, the utilisation of local varieties or breeds (spotted bean of Alava, Latxa sheep, Terreña beef cattle, mountain horse of Alava, etc.) is usually mentioned, although this is hardly recognisable by the consumer as a guarantee of the farming system and the practices carried out.

Social and economic: the reason for starting this initiative was to help to sustain the family farms existing in Alava by means of profitable farming activities and adding value to local food products. Therefore, farmers should get a significant higher margin when selling through this chain. In the case of milk they get around 1 €/l. (taking into account that they have the cost of pasteurisation and some other costs) when dairy industry pays around 0,5 €/l.; For beef meat, farmers get around 12-12.5 €/kg (from this price too some costs should be discounted) vs. 3.5-4.2 €/kg of carcass that the butchers pay to the farmers

UAGALUR also tries to promote alliances between farmers, as well as between farmers and consumers. But at the same time, it attempts to bring the rural into the urban (and vice-versa, such as the program of children's visits to farms carried out with any school interested in it), so the population starts to value better local food and farming.

The project also mentions "social sensitivity", and the meaning can be quite wide. On the one hand, it pays special attention to training and education activities either for the farmers participating in the initiative for the consumers. Farmers willing to join the project will have to attend two basic courses: one about marketing and commercialisation and another about general management of the farm (computers, etc.). These courses are free and compulsory.

It also promotes entrepreneurship and diversification activities within the farms, so as to create demand for labour. At the same time, the presence of women is more evident, so the project tries to show to society the important contribution that women have traditionally made, and still make, on our farms.

Regarding the price of food products, some consumers would expect much cheaper prices for food products purchased within this SFSC. UAGALUR tries to educate consumers, show how actual food prices are not fair for the local sector, how their prices are established, and make consumers more conscious about this issue.

Finally, the initiative tries to improve the self-steem of the farmers by means of the increasing presence and importance of their products. This project helps farmers to change their opinion about their activity into a much better impression, as a result of training, higher capabilities and better self-esteem from the direct contact with consumers.

Ch 3: Organizational patterns for SFSCs

Since it is a joint commercialisation initiative, it is also a way to upscale food production and to reach better other options such as PFP in work places, restaurants, etc.

Ch 4 : SFSCs and policy

As the project was established by the Farmers' Union, it complains about the current hygienic and sanitary regulatory framework, which: i) do not make the difference between production methods, ii) confounds volume with public health, iii) favours industrial food chains to artisan and local food. They also claim that there is no abattoir or slaughterhouse available in the province of Alava for livestock or poultry. Finally, they also say that artisan food is usually not linked to the origin of food.

UAGAlur shop

Picture courtesy of Roberto Ruiz

www.foodlinkscommunity.net