



Innovative Short Food Supply Chain management

How to stimulate growth of short food supply chains in Europe, both in terms of numbers of producers involved and volumes traded, to increase farm income?

The EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Innovative Short Food Supply Chains (SFC) brought together 20 experts to answer these questions. The experts delivered their final report in November 2015.

The group analysed the different short food supply chain models in Europe. The discussions focused on finding those models that substantially improve farmers' income, and have potential for scaling up. The group agreed that whilst it is not currently possible to identify a single model which is most appropriate for scaling up, the idea of collaborative SFCs offers the most potential. The group defined collaborative activities broadly as those in which more than one farmer, food producer, organisation or individual agree to work together for the following mutual benefits:

- ▶ improved product range available to consumers
- ▶ resource sharing amongst producers and processors
- ▶ maintaining local food chain infrastructure (such as abattoirs)
- ▶ increased negotiating power for groups of producers
- ▶ reduced competition between small producers
- ▶ mutual support to combat isolation and stress

On the basis of their practical experience, the group looked for factors that hamper scaling up and decided to address four major 'challenge areas' faced by collaborative SFCs, namely:

- ▶ Setting up and getting support
- ▶ Product development
- ▶ Access to markets and consumers
- ▶ Infrastructure and logistics

"Short food supply chains in Europe are very diverse but offer great potential for farms to secure a higher share of the retail value of food through moving closer to the consumer. The Focus Group identified potential solutions to organisational, technical and financial barriers that restrict the scaling up of profitable short food chains to allow more farms to benefit. I hope farmers and policy makers use our recommendations to overcome these barriers."

- Martin Collison (UK), expert from the EIP-AGRI Focus Group on Short Food Supply Chains -

Innovative Short Food Supply Chain management

Ideas for Operational Groups

- ▶ Securing finance to invest in new technology or equipment for product innovation or testing.
- ▶ Matching business needs with technology providers or to investigate how existing technological innovations could be better adapted to the needs of the SFC sector (through for example, down-sizing, simplifying or soft technologies).
- ▶ Setting up territorial guarantee schemes suitable for small-scale farmers and producers operating within SFCs.
- ▶ Setting up territorial food hubs or one stop shops which enable groups of farmers and producers to collaborate to serve the needs of large customers.
- ▶ Setting up collaborative logistics and distribution solutions and identifying the most efficient routes and opportunities for back-filling and joint deliveries.

Research needs from practice

- ▶ Funding models for collaborative SFCs like crowd-funding, peer to peer lending and venture capital.
- ▶ Barriers to new entrants like access to land and credit and subsequent business models.
- ▶ Barriers to the uptake and adoption of technical innovations to support collaborative SFCs.
- ▶ Concepts, tools and methods for evaluating the impact of SFCs in a given territory.
- ▶ Role and contribution of SFCs in sustaining the social and economic viability of remote rural communities.
- ▶ SFCs and their role (now and in the future) to create better access to affordable, healthy food for the most vulnerable groups in society.
- ▶ Role of SFCs to reduce food loss and food waste.
- ▶ Nutritional quality of food sourced through SFC compared to that sourced through conventional retail chains.
- ▶ Typology of collaborative SFC, in order to identify the types most successful according to a particular context and the relevant support, management structures and innovations needed.

Other recommendations

The report contains recommendations for policies, training and spreading of good practices.

For more ideas for Operational groups and research needs please see the final report

More information	
Focus Group webpage	Inspirational ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Craigie's farm: "We don't just sell products, we sell the experience!"• Smart logistics to connect producers and consumers
Final report	Press article: How short supply chains can help increase farmer incomes

Contact: EIP-AGRI Service Point - - Avenue de la Toison d'Or 72 - 1060 Brussels - BELGIUM
Tel +32 2 543 73 48 - servicepoint@eip-agri.eu - www.eip-agri.eu

Join the EIP-AGRI Network!

Register to the EIP-AGRI website where you can find peers, projects, ideas and resources to catalyse innovation in agriculture, forestry and horticulture together.