

08 January 2015

F4 / From Field to Fork to Field

Establish a sustainable regional food chain

Appetizer



Description

What we eat has an impact on economy, health, environment and climate. The complex web of the modern food system often leaves us disconnected from the various factors involved:

- How low on the food chain is it?
- How much energy is used to produce, process and distribute it?
- What kind of packaging is or has to be used?
- How much waste does it produce?
- And not in the last place: how far has it to travel before it gets to the table?

What is the problem?

Food should be tasty and healthy. In addition, it should offer extra value, to the region as well as to the regional food producers, processors, retailers, caterers and consumers. The vast majority of Europeans depend on supply chains to bring food to their tables. Beginning with the farmer, supply chains move food through processing, aggregation and distribution to the market. In this process, food changes hands multiple times and travels massive distances and consumers rarely see the farmers or know where the food originated. The current food system is unsustainable in the long term, and many of the challenges we face as a region stay unsolved whilst having a food dimension.

On the other hand, regional agriculture and short food supply chains have economic, social and cultural benefits for farmers, consumers and rural areas in general. Thus, it is a regional food chain that can offer better taste and be more affordable, whilst providing freshness, reducing food miles, and offering benefits to all who are involved in the food chain.

Central Aim

The project From Field to Fork to Field (F4) aims to establish a regional chain from field to fork. It will, in a multidisciplinary, cooperative and chain-oriented approach, make substantial progress in creating and organising an efficient system for regional food production, processing, distribution, provision, consumption and waste management.

What is a regional food chain?

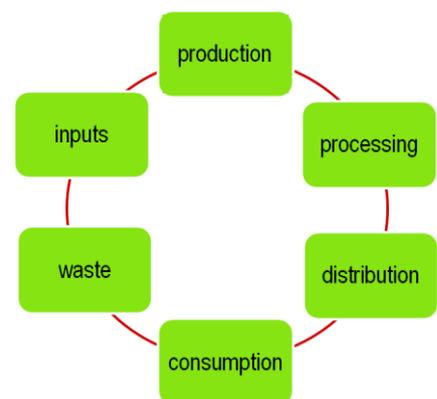
It is a network that supports connections between food producers (i.e. farmers) and consumers (private households and organizations) while meeting the economic, social, health, and environmental needs of communities in a region. This includes growing, processing, storing, distributing, transporting, selling and consuming food. A regional chain can foster a sustainable regional economy and strengthen community food security. The network is to help farmers and producers to access reliable markets, to ensure fair prices and wages and encourage land preservation and sustainable farming practices.

Hence, short food chains may increase the income of farmers and the consumption of fresh and relatively unprocessed food, brings consumers and farmers closer, engages public institutions in its promotion, helps to strengthen rural-urban linkages (particularly in the case of peri-urban agriculture) and contributes to sustainable development. These short food chain concepts are growing across Europe to meet rising consumer demand.

Envisaged output

In its recent research and analyses the JRC has listed the main challenges to be tackled by Short Food Supply Chains in order to become sustainable:

- More and better data, monitoring, output indicators
- Better connect regional supply with urban demand



- Comparative analyses between cases
- Role of exchange economy elements
- Access to all (incl. low income) consumer groups
- Price elasticity's

It is these innovation aspects the F4 project will focus on. The envisaged work packages will therefore deliver the output to be listed as:

1. **The senses:** Awareness, understanding and appreciation of food, its taste, origin, provenience and quality, amongst small scale consumers and large scale customers
2. **The mind:** Knowledge on facts & figures – who are the producers, how many are they, what products do they offer, what products are demanded? How does the food chain work, from field to fork, and how to close the circle (reduction and reuse of waste)
3. **The body:** Regional food chain with regional producers matched to large and small scale customers, in viable, reliable and durable relationships
4. **The wallet:** Solid regional business and earning models

Thematic keywords

- Sustainable food
- Short food supply chain
- Food chain
- Regional food
- CO₂ reduction
- Food miles reduction
- Regional economy
- Sustainable regional development
- New style regional cooperatives
- Shared regional management
- Regional innovation brokerage
- Regional governance

Partners found already

► To be added

Partners searched

► To be added

Estimated budget

€ 10.000.000

Lead beneficiary

Province of Groningen / Gebiedscoöperatie (regional cooperative) Westerkwartier