

Local agriculture and short food supply chains

Workshop C:

A better use of Hygiene and Food safety Regulatory Framework for Small Producers



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La respuesta inteligente. La respuesta independiente.



What is short chain or direct selling?

- **Local markets**, products can be sold by producers directly but also by some intermediaries or a producer that market the products of a group of them.
- **Internet selling**, can be through websites that sell the product or websites that put in contact producers or are intermediaries that give the transport and do the payments.
- **Direct selling in farms**, of fresh fruits and vegetables or more processed products such as dairy, meat products or processed products, ham, canned products...
- **Local products area in supermarkets: Not really the same.**



Why consumers want to buy directly?

- **Freshness**, vegetables just cut from the plant, very recent, matured in the plant. Seasonal products.
- **Quality**, traditional products, naturally produced, less industrial, local variety of fruits and vegetables.
- **Confidence**, if they know the people that produce the product they trust it more.
- **Support to local production** (in Italy Gruppi de acquisto solidali)
- **Sustainability**, products Km 0, less transport (reduced impact on environment is assumed)
- **Price**, but this is not always the case, is not always cheaper.



What is the experience around UE?

- In some markets/farms, imported and industrial products are sold together with local products and this is misleading: need to be clarified.
- Touristic markets, with “local “products.
- Producers that do not have products buy from another producer and sell it to you as local or Km0 although coming from far away.
- Organic packs, how is it controlled, is the packaging certified?
- Some times, meat products not correctly prepared.
- Logo “product from my farm” does not seem to be the good solution: if no requirements, no added value; if certification, then it is costly; also difficult to differentiate from other logos.



What consumers are worried about?

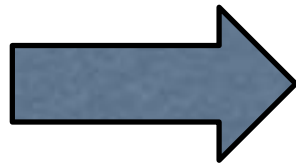
- Indication of prices in direct selling and farm markets, they do not want to ask.
- Products not properly prepared (ex: cuts of meat)
- Conservation and display of the products during selling:
 - refrigeration if needed
 - protection from insects in open markets...
- Origin of products:
 - Industrial products together with farm products
 - Imported products or from other areas sold as local or Km0
 - Bio packs, is the packaging certified? How to know if truth or not.



What legislation to adapt?

Not only hygiene criteria to be adapted, but create a framework for this activity including:

- Labeling
- Traceability
- Hygiene
- Price indication



Not in all the three kinds of direct selling the same requirements are needed



Principles to be respected

There are some “red lines” that we can summarize in 3:

- Safety: Assuring the safety of products, at the same level as for other products.
- Transparency: Always know where the product comes from:
 - Traceability
 - Origin information, prices
- Control: Independent official controls



Traceability

- Very easy when the product is sold in the farm.
- Some kind of identification necessary for producer of each product when sold by internet (more extensive if products of different producers grouped together).
- Also necessary to some extent when products offered in markets. Non local products should not be mixed with local ones in order not to mislead consumers.

A public register is needed



Public register = producers + products

- A good solution can be also a public register of producers that do direct selling (incl. what products they produce and sell).
- Consumers can consult, via a website, what are the possibilities and what can be found or not in a farm.
- If they buy other products to sell them together with their own ones it should be clear.
- If any incident occurs that results in a ban in selling this can be reflected in the public register. Also in terms of RASFF communication.



Labeling:

- Some exception to FIC are possible, but some minimum information is required although the way of providing it can change:
 - No nutrition information.
 - Address of producer not needed if producer sells, yes if via internet/n^o of producer (public registration)
 - Ingredients/ allergens, flexibility in how to give this information (leaflets, copies, handprinted...)
 - Best-before date is needed, although could be add handprinted.
- Health and nutrition claims: same rules as other products, i.e. if a nutrition claim is made on the product, then nutrition labeling is required.



Hygienic rules and safety and quality

- For consumers, the most important thing is that the **product complies** with legislation, not how they arrive to do it. The important thing is the product and not the process of production.
- Figure of **official control adaptation hygienic rules** according to products and to practical possibilities and real risks. Official **independent control** to verify the compliance with legislation. APPC could be substitute by good hygienic practices.
- Some countries have already **guidelines** harmonization. Adaptation.



Safety: what can be adapted or not

Microbiological limits, veterinary drugs MRL, pesticide limits, contaminants= other products,

Correct storage/transport temperatures must be guaranteed as appropriate.

Few rules but clear limits,

- avoid cross contamination,
- plans for cleaning,
- control of pests,
- water supply
- assurance of correct technological process by indicators, pasteurization, sterilization, etc..

Adapt the requirements to the risks. It's not the same honey or fresh meat, raw milk or cured cheeses.

Common rules for all the countries



What are the specificities of local production and short food supply chains in terms of sanitary norms?

- No long transport, direct contact with producers. No intermediaries with transporting and storing long periods.

What is necessary to achieve consumer safety standards? Which derogations are justified?

No derogation, but perhaps a framework to compile some exception already foresee in Hygiene package and in FIC.



- Some flexibility in the application of hygiene rules to short food chains is already foreseen in the hygiene package. What are the barriers to a full application of this flexibility?
- **Differences between countries, some have guidelines, other do not.**
- **Inspectors are not harmonic in applying these flexibility.**



- How can we harmonise the relationship between production and economic sustainability on the one hand and sanitary and veterinary standards on the other hand, taking into account the food safety requirements in the context of simple processing and short shelf life?
- Simplified hygiene rules (guidelines), easy to follow but important.
- Consumers speak about common sense, but this has to be put into rules.
- Have good local/near official inspection that can adapt and give flexibility to legislation according to requirements.
- Logos with accreditations are not the good way:
 - People do not distinguish between them.
 - If an accreditation is needed is extra cost and complicate, if not is nonsense say nothing.

