

COFARM



CASE STUDY:

La spesa in campagna
Siena

Introduction

The case study concerns the associated management by a group of farmers, of a direct sale store in the town of Siena. Starting from the national association promoted by the farmer's association CIA, called "La Spesa in Campagna" (shopping in the countryside) a group of farmers of the province of Siena, established the local association "La Spesa in Campagna Siena" with the specific objective to cooperate for a common selling activity. A first group of 16 farmers created a store in the town of Siena, managed by their Association "La Spesa in campagna". The success of this cooperation experience encouraged other farmers to participate; actually 43 farmers are involved in the management of the common store.

Basic information



Siena (I)

Name La spesa in campagna Siena

Year of establishment 2012

Kind of cooperation Producers group

Number of farmers/ landowners/ entrepreneurs/ enterprises involved 43

Internet links <https://www.facebook.com/Bottega.Spesa.Campagna.Siena/>



Farm Data

Description

The network includes 43 farmers. Many farmers are involved in certifying processes for quality production and/or have adopted organic farming system. The shop managed by 4 part time employees sells a wide range of products. These include: wine, oil, vegetables, meat, cheese, pasta, bread, flour, legumes, jams, sauces, juices and other farmers' products.

The special characteristic of the management of the store is the direct selling system: each farmer sells his/her own products, invoices are directly sent to each farmer. This system have a double advantage: for farmers as they obtain an higher add value, selling directly their products; for consumers who have the guarantee of origin and traceability of products.



Cooperation Process Data

In the context of small-scale agriculture, farmers do not have enough capacity to negotiate individually with commercial chain suppliers, and have difficulties in selling their products directly to consumers too. The challenge of this original form of cooperation is to allow direct selling, identifying a list of clients interested buying local products directly from farmers. Concretely the innovation of this system is based on a special accountability software. When the client purchases the products, he receives an invoice from the food producers/farmer. Thanks to this system the consumers have clear information about the products produced on the farm, with a guarantee on their traceability, and each farmer is identifiable on the label of the product. The store is directly managed by the Association "La Spesa in Campagna Siena". The costs of management (staff employed in the store, rent and consumption costs) are paid by farmers, with on average 24% of the sale price allocated to these costs. However, the rate is not fixed but is dependent on the monthly turnover. This can vary (22-30%) from month to month. Logistical support is also provided by farmers too. They bring their products directly to the shop. The turnover of shop is increasing overtime. The shop had a turnover of € 480.000,00) in 2017, which was an increase of in excess of , 10% from 2016. The

products are sourced locally with the exception of oranges and lemons). These are sourced directly from farmers in other regions of Italy. The shop has established without receiving any private or public external funding. The shop has become very successful and gained a loyal customer base. Since it was established, the number of associated farmers involved in the shop has increased significantly, from 16 to 43 farmers. In the same period the shop had acquired 2,200 clients, while its Facebook page had reached 1,400 followers.

The main knowledge requirements for this type of activity include:

- Cooperation system in agriculture
- Legal and financial administration
- Principles of direct selling and short chain supply

Further to this first successful initiative, the association "La Spesa in Campagna Siena", has recently promoted the creation of a legal entrepreneurs' network, with the ambition to realize in another area of the Province of Siena, a new shop for farms' products. The network participated as lead partner in a RDP program call (2017) for Integrated Chain Projects. The network includes 20 associated members, with 13 members participating in the chain project as beneficiaries. The project foresees an investment of almost €2,000,000.

The main benefit for farmers participating in this cooperation experience is the opportunity to use a common sales platform, thereby reducing the steps from the producer to the consumer within the food supply chain and thus, eliminating intermediary costs.

The critical point is that the shop, in terms of asset management cannot absorb and sell large quantities of products due to logistical factors and space requirements for storage. The network is one of the first examples of cooperation in direct selling within the region with its main function being to valorize local products and support the development of the short chain economy.

Advantages and disadvantages associated with this initiative include:

Advantages:

- Low management costs for farmers
- Good quality and Guarantee of products' traceability, building trust among consumers, and encouraging them to focus on quality instead of quantity in their purchases.
- Supporting business growth and sustainability of small farmers.

Disadvantages:

- The small scale of management has a high product unit costs, therefore the prices for consumers are a little bit higher than in the ordinary market.
- The management is headed by the association, therefore a good level of cohesion is necessary.

Advice/Recommendation

According to Anna Stopponi, coordinator of the Association La Spesa in Campagna Siena, the main recommendations / advice for establishing a similar initiative include:

“ Short chain is not the solution for marketing problems of farmers, but is a relevant help to promote local products of small farms. In the context of an agricultural sector based on small farms and diversified production, cooperation for sharing marketing approach is one of the main factor to improve their competitiveness. ”

“ The relationship between farmers and consumers is essential in a agri-food system based on quality, food safety and valorization of territory. ”

Queries/Questions

- Do you think that a similar experience could be replicated in your locality?



Key Words

Cooperation Key Words

Direct sales/short supply chain
Marketing/sales
Producers group

Farm Key Words

Organic/integrated/certified farming
Small/family farm(s)
Traditional products/farming practices

Partners



Limerick Institute of Technology:
(Ireland)
www.lit.ie/rdi



Hof und Leben GmbH
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www.hofundleben.de



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On Projects Advising SL
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www.onprojects.es



Union de Agricultores y Ganaderos-
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www.coagjaen.es



Biotehniški Center Naklo
(Slovenia)
www.bc-naklo.si



Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori Toscana
(Italy)
www.ciatoscana.eu



European Landowners' Organisation
(Belgium)
www.europeanlandowners.org

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Project Website

www.cofarm-erasmus.eu



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