



A report of the Softagri project 2008-2010

Key elements of sustainable
food production and consumption:
a discussion document

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All partners of the Softagri project contributed to this publication:

- Agrarian Chamber of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County (Hungary)
- Den Hâneker (The Netherlands)
- Ecce-Bio (United Kingdom)
- FRCIVAM Bretagne (France)
- Libera (Italy)
- Risteco (Italy) and associate partner Aregai
- SPN (Foundation for the Regional Products in the Netherlands) (The Netherlands)
- Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming (United Kingdom)



* Please note that the content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the Softagri project and the European Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information.

Contents

Summary	5
1. The project and participants	6
2. Our programme of meetings and educational visits	9
3. Sustainable food and farming: working towards a definition and how to communicate this	10
The definition of sustainability	10
Methods to evaluate the sustainability of food production	10
Elements of a sustainable food and farming system	11
4. The case studies	16
5. In conclusion: a network of information and support	17
Annex: Case studies	19
1. Agricolture e detenzione	19
2. Alinterra	20
3. Boerenkass Fiets4daagse	21
4. Eco-efficienza nella Ristorazione moderna	22
5. Ecological footprint method for public catering	23
6. Ecomeal.info	24
7. Food co-ops in schools	25
8. Friendly Kitchens, Regional Organic	26
9. Fungi: The role of symbiotic fungi in crop production	27
10. Good Food on the Public Plate	28
11. Good Food Training for London	29
12. Grille de durabilité du Réseau Agriculture Durable	30
13. Les Bons Repas de l'Agriculture Durable	31
14. La France de ferme en ferme	32
15. Le Pain Normand	33
16. Libera Terra	34
17. L.I.C.E.T.	35
18. Making Local Food Work: Food Co-ops and Buying Groups	36
19. Making Local Food Work: Food Supply and Distribution	37
20. Risteco handbooks	38
21. Somerset Organic Link	39
22. Streekproducten, Righteous tastes	40
23. Sustainable Community (BICI E AM.I.C.I.)	41
24. Sustainable Community (Community involvement and sustainable development)	42
25. Systèmes Alimentaires Territorialisés	43
26. Using biodiversity in agriculture	44
27. Van Eigen Erf	45
28. Waddengoud	46
29. Week of Taste	47



Summary

The Softagri project was funded from 2008 to 2010 by the European Commission's Grundtvig programme for lifelong learning.

The project aimed to develop new educational approaches on sustainable food production and consumption by creating a network of expertise among eight sustainable food and farming organisations across five European countries:

- Agrarian Chamber of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County (Hungary)
- Den Hâneker (The Netherlands)
- Ecce-Bio (United Kingdom)
- FRCIVAM Bretagne (France)
- Libera (Italy)
- Risteco (Italy) and associate partner, Aregai
- SPN (Foundation for the Regional Products in the Netherlands) (The Netherlands)
- Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming (United Kingdom)

The project was co-ordinated by Risteco, and six successful educational exchange visits were held in:

- November 2008 in Italy
- March 2009 in the UK
- October 2009 in France
- January 2010 in the Netherlands
- April 2010 in Italy
- June 2010 in Hungary

Two conferences were held in association with the Softagri project: the first in Rome, Italy on 13-14 April 2010 (<http://www.ecomeal.info/?g=cittachemangia>); and the second in Túrístvándi in Hungary.

A working definition of sustainable food and farming has been produced, along with 29 case studies showing what this can mean in practice.

The educational exchange visits, and the process of producing the Softagri materials, has generated a lively, trans-European network – communicating via googlegroups – of the participating organisations.

This report, and other materials generated by the project can be found on <http://www.softagri.info>. A special Softagri section has also been created on the Ecomeal website <http://www.ecomeal.info/?g=softagri>.

1. The project and participants

The project

The Softagri project was devised by the Italian organisation, Risteco. The name “Softagri” was based on an Italian book about the “soft” economy, in which companies base their business on innovation, cultural and territorial identity, and integrating social equity with competitiveness. It was considered that, since these are all good values for sustainable agriculture and food systems, the project could usefully be named Softagri.

In collaboration with the participating organisations (listed below) the project aimed to:

- Exchange knowledge and experience on the development of sustainable food and farming, and improve links between producers and consumers;
- Create a network of complementary expertise in sustainable food and farming, not only to inform each other, but also anyone who wants to know more about sustainable agriculture and its products;
- Develop a better mutual understanding of the main features of sustainable farming and food so that producers can integrate them into their practices, and consumers know what to expect when they buy sustainable products.

Softagri was also an opportunity for the partners to:

- establish good working relationships between organisations sharing similar interests and provide mutual support for each others' work;
- share knowledge, experience and good practice, particularly in how to create larger markets for the products of sustainable farming systems. This includes raising awareness among citizens in general, but also working with other parts of the food chain such as public sector catering, and local food outlets;
- help build food systems based on open, fair and co-operative relationships, as well as linking rural and urban communities and promoting the principles of sustainable agriculture and development.

The Softagri proposal was made to the Grundtvig programme of the European Commission, which promotes lifelong learning and adult education across the 27 countries of the European Union (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc86_en.htm). The application was approved in 2008, and the project has been co-ordinated for two years by Risteco.

Participating organisations (in alphabetical order)

Agrarian Chamber of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County (Hungary)

The organisation was created to represent agricultural producers' interest and to create a free farm advisory system, organise training and exhibitions, and produce information material. It has also promoted tourism in rural areas, and tours based on local producers' high quality products, stimulating high levels of interest.

www.agrarkamara.hu

Aregai (Italy)

Aregai is an associate partner of Risteco (see below) for the Softagri project. It is a non-profit association gathering complementary expertise, and aiming to disseminate the culture of sustainable development in the territory, mainly by increasing the quality of life. It is currently developing projects to market the area, coupled with wellness and systems to assess food sustainability.

www.aregai.eu

Den Hâneker (The Netherlands)

Den Hâneker is a regional association for sustainable farming, nature and landscape management, agro-tourism, farming & care and regional products. Den Hâneker promotes sustainability on several themes and believes that a total approach will be most effective, with a focus on local initiatives and environmental friendly agricultural production and food consumption. Biological food can be one aspect

of this, but there are also other aspects, which make food production and consumption are sustainable.

From the perspective of sustainability awareness is very important. To advance citizens become acquainted with the region, Den Hâneker facilitates this in several ways. Den Hâneker promotes a sustainable, liveable and enjoyable countryside by:

- improving natural diversity
- protecting and realising an attractive landscape
- supporting agrotourism
- creating tourism facilities and infrastructures
- promoting cultural identity
- increasing the support for these activities from farmers and citizens
- developing farming and care
- providing educational materials to primary schools
- facilitating marketing of regional products

www.denhaneker.nl

Ecce-Bio (United Kingdom)

The co-operative ECCE-Bio represents the formalisation of a social and trading network that has been developing for around ten years. With six member co-operatives and three associates drawn from five EU member states, ECCE-Bio represents smaller scale organic producers working to the highest agro-ecological and ethical standards. ECCE-Bio believes that a fair, ecological and co-operative food system is vital for the future of farming, the environment and a healthy society.

Though ECCE-Bio's members do trade with each other the co-operative's main aim is to share knowledge between members and

with a broader audience through workshops, seminars and work placements.

www.eccebio.org

FRCIVAM Bretagne (France)

The regional federation of CIVAM (initiative centres for agriculture and countryside) was created in Brittany in 1995, and includes 21 entities (associations, firms) with 1000 farmers and 300 citizen members. Localised food systems have now become their main focus due their experience of assessing and promoting sustainable farming. FRCIVAM also assesses on-farm energy use through the Planete diagnosis, the most widely used assessment system in France. Other activities include: training and exchange forums for farmers; conferences for citizens and environmental associations; teaching in secondary schools and universities; fairs and festivals; training and support for co-operative projects; energy assessment; training, studies and research for social accommodation (for elderly people, those with a disability, and youngsters); education on the farm and tourism; networking and training for entrepreneurs implementing alternative and linked activities in agriculture, in rural areas; projects with local authorities, associations and businesses for local development.

www.civam-bretagne.org

Libera (Italy)

Libera - Associations, names and numbers against mafias, was born on 25 March 1995 to involve and support all those who are interested in the fight against organised crime. Libera is currently a network of more

than 1,200 associations, groups and schools, committed to creating synergies between politics and local culture to promote a new culture of lawfulness. Some of Libera's achievements include: the law on the social use of real estate confiscated from organised crime; education on democratic lawfulness; the fight against corruption; camps for anti-mafia education; and projects on work, development and anti-usury.

Land confiscated from organised crime is now producing oil, pasta, wine and legumes and other organic products, developed by cooperatives in Sicily, Calabria and Puglia.

Most of the staff are young people and the products carry the brand "Libera Terra", symbol of quality and lawfulness. Libera works in difficult conditions on farmland confiscated from the Mafia, in particular facing death threats in territories where the Mafia has a heavy influence on local territories.

www.libera.it

Risteco (Italy)

The mission of the Risteco Consortium is the development of new models of sustainable catering and food services, alongside research and international cooperation activities. It mainly acts as a facilitator to establish synergistic collaborations between universities and research centres, companies, non-profit associations, public bodies at local and national levels, and foundations. To stimulate these relationships Risteco produces information materials, runs education and training events on the links between food and the environment, and organises national and international workshops, conferences, and learning journeys.

www.risteco.it

SPN (Foundation for the Regional Products in the Netherlands) (The Netherlands)

SPN started as a network organisation for regional and local products in 1999, associated with organisations from various regions in the Netherlands (currently six regional development organisations, six smaller producer organisations and 15 individual producers). Its first national coordinating function was to develop standards for sustainable regional products, at the request of its associated members. Since 2001 SPN has developed a program of projects focusing on increasing the capacity of local producers and small scale businessmen to produce and sell more sustainable products. More recently, SPN has begun to look at sustainable food systems and public procurement, and is aiming to organise producers to be able to meet the demands of catering companies and regional governments. SPN does not have its own educational staff, but is working together with educational organisations and specialist.

www.erkendstreekproduct.nl

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming (United Kingdom)

Sustain represents around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level. It advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, promote equity and enrich society and culture. Sustain co-ordinates a number of projects and campaigns, and those taking part in the Softagri project included Good Food on the Public Plate (helping to make food more sustainable food in the public sector), Good Food Training for London (enhancing the skills of public sector staff on sustainable food issues) and Making Local Food Work (which is supporting food co-ops and local food distribution systems).

www.sustainweb.org

Note: Sustain became a formal participant in the Softagri project in December 2009, taking over from Alimenterra, the original participating body, which could no longer continue due to organisational difficulties. Alimenterra is a European network of sustainable food and farming organisations and Sustain is a long-standing member of this network, along with other organisations in the Softagri project.

2. Our programme of meetings and educational visits

Several meetings were organised during a two-year period to encourage all the partners to exchange experiences and knowledge, and discuss and develop the elements of a sustainable food and farming system, and how this could be communicated.

- November 24th and 25th 2008: This “kick off” meeting was organised by Risteco in Italy to introduce all the partners to each other and establish the work plan for the whole project.
- March 30th to April 1st 2009: The second meeting was organised by Ecce- Bio in England and saw the first discussion about the sustainability of food systems and presentations of good practice from across Europe.
- October 8th to 9th 2009: Fr CIVAM Bretagne organised the third meeting in France. A special session was devoted to an analysis of farming systems, which helps farmers monitor their progress towards sustainability and provide good quality products for public catering. Partners had the opportunity to see the theory put into practice by visiting several farms using the sustainability grid system and by speaking with farmers. They also visited the exhibition, Ille et Bio, devoted to organic production, where partners presented a workshop on “Sustainability of the food chain: a European comparison” to the visitors at the exhibition.
- January 21st and 22nd 2010: The fourth meeting was organised by SPN and Den Hâneker in the Netherlands and focused on marketing sustainable food. Partners were able to see online retail systems for local and sustainable food, and examples of organic and care farming, with visits being organised to several farms. The visit to the Biovak organic exhibition provided an opportunity to talk with food producers interested in sustainable production and consumption, and experience some examples of local marketing. There was also a workshop on seasonal food consumption, using a seasonal food calendar activity developed by Sustain.
- April 12th and 13th 2010: Organised by Risteco and Libera in Italy, the fifth meeting allowed Softagri partners to participate in an international conference in Rome called “Eating Cities” (<http://www.ecomeal.info/?g=cittachemangia>). This enabled organisations to discuss the project with a range of international experts.
- June 16th to 19th 2010: The sixth and final meeting of the series was organized by the Chamber of Agriculture in Hungary, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, focusing on organic and local products, rural and agro-tourism based on local products, and several good practice examples were presented. The group was introduced to some high-quality territorial products, for example traditional Hungarian animal husbandry, a local shop for a wide range of local products (from spirits to organic honey) and young dairy farmer equipment, as well as visiting a school for vocational education on agriculture and rural tourism. In Túrístvándi a Rural Development Forum took place, to which local authorities, Local Development Agencies, Local Action Groups, civil and professional organisations, and local farmers were invited. At the forum participants heard examples of the best Hungarian and international practices on the subject of local products and tourism.

Papers from these meetings, and the programmes from the conferences in Rome and Túrístvándi are available on the websites at <http://www.ecomeal.info/?g=softagri> and <http://www.softagri.info>.

3. Sustainable food and farming: working towards a definition and how to communicate this

The definition of sustainability

In 1987 the Brundtland Report, also known as Our Common Future, alerted the world to the urgency of making progress towards economic development that could be sustained without depleting natural resources, harming the environment or perpetuating social injustice. Published by an international group of politicians, civil servants and experts on the environment and development, the report provided a definition of sustainable development that has stood the test of time: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Brundtland Report highlighted three vital and inter-related aspects of sustainable development: environmental protection, economic development and social equity. The report recommended that all these elements must be pursued simultaneously, as each is intimately linked to the others.

This section takes these three elements – environmental, social, and economic - and examines them in relation to food and farming. The aim is to try to tease out the elements that, together, would make a sustainable food and farming system.

Methods to evaluate the sustainability of food production and consumption

The following table indicates all the steps which have to be taken into account when measuring the sustainability of food production and consumption sustainability, from land management to raw material production, processing, transport, retail, up to waste production.

Table 1:

LAND MANAGEMENT <i>The analysis of land management can be done by evaluating the environmental qualities of the land where the food is produced, as well as the economic and social context of the area.</i>
FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION PATTERN
AGRICULTURE <i>Crop production</i> <i>Animal breeding</i> <i>Fishing</i>
FOOD PROCESSING <i>Agro food industries : milk products, bread and cakes, meat, vegetables etc...</i>
FOOD TRANSPORT <i>Logistics</i>
FOOD RETAIL <i>From the producer to the retailer from direct selling, small shop, supermarket etc...</i>
MEAL PREPARATION <i>At home or restaurant, public catering etc...</i>
MEAL CONSUMPTION <i>At home or restaurant, public catering etc...</i>
END OF LIFE <i>Waste (waste returning to the land)</i>

Elements of a sustainable food and farming system

I Environment

Land management

New relationships need to be found between urban and rural areas, in particular regulating between competing uses of land. Agriculture needs to be included in land planning alongside other infrastructures such as roads, schools, and shops, so that as much local food as possible can be produced for the local population, including for public catering services such as schools or hospitals. Indicators can be used to measure factors such as soil and river pollution (nitrate and phosphate levels), biodiversity, air quality, water use, protection of soil, impact of waste management etc.

Agriculture

The table 2 indicates the different parameters that can be used to assess the environmental impact of agriculture and fishing.

Table 2:

Parameters	Crop production	Animal breeding, aquaculture	Fishing
Limit harmful inputs and toxic effluents	Control of pests and disease avoiding harmful chemical inputs	Maintain animal health and welfare without relying on synthetic inputs	Avoiding fouling agents on boats and nets
Good agricultural and fishing practices:	Maintain and improve the health of the soil to allow plant nutrition.	Animal welfare: improve living conditions and feed.	Environmentally friendly fishing techniques.
Limit energy, water and raw material consumption	- high self-sufficiency in energy (using renewable energy) - limit water use and pollution (water management)		
Limit waste production	Promote reuse and recycling		

Food processing to consumption

The table 3 indicates the main parameters that can be used to evaluate the environmental impact of food processing and consumption.

Table 3:

Parameters	Food processing	Food transport	Food retail	Meal preparation	Meal consumption
Limit energy, water and raw material consumption	Eco-efficiency - use renewable energy - limit water use - limit materials and energy use				
Limit waste production	- Prevention - Recycling				

Logistics is a key factor in the food supply chain, so when measuring environmental effects, eco-efficient food transport should rely on less polluting vehicles, and more efficient logistics, reducing kilometres and making better use of space in the vehicles. Systems for measuring the environmental impact of transport can be built on traceability indicators (distance between production and consumption areas) and also on energy consumption indicators. However, efficient logistics can only work if there is a local food supply, and if local producers can have access to local markets such as local retailing systems or public catering services.

There is also a direct relationship between logistics and waste. Indeed, food transport distances and food supply chain complexity not only contribute to air pollution, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emission, but also increase food packaging leading to greater amounts of food packaging waste. Some waste can be avoided by reducing packaging, and by consuming all the food which is prepared (by eating the food and by disposing of any unavoidable waste by, for example, composting or anaerobic digestion).

II Social issues

Healthy food

A good diet helps to promote health and well-being by offering generous portions of vegetables, fruit and starchy staples like wholegrains, cutting down on salt, fats and oils, and cutting out artificial additives. It should be micronutrient-dense, fibre-rich and provide essential fats to reduce the risks of cardiovascular diseases, some cancers and other diet-related diseases. Good food, along with regular physical activity, will also help to tackle the epidemic of obesity in European countries.

Good working conditions

This is important for all people involved in food production and supply chains including farmers, fishermen, people working in food transport, retail and food service. Indicators to measure working conditions could include: the number of jobs created, workers' annual salary, safety conditions, training and social integration of marginalised people.

Trust from transparency

It is essential to enhance knowledge and awareness about sustainable food production and improve the relationships between producers and consumers. A strong local and traditional identity, low chemical inputs at all stages, short transport distances, good professional skills and a distinctive taste may help to create a high-profile brand with a message that consumers can understand and pass on.

Certification schemes, such as organic certification, allow a clear evaluation of food production systems. However, small producers do not always have the capacity to undergo certification schemes. There are also a large and growing number of food labelling schemes that are not transparent and which cause consumer confusion.

Training in the food supply chain

Producers need support and training in how, for example, to improve their farm shops and web shops, develop shop interiors and software, expand their product range and tackle logistics, legal issues and financing.

In addition, producers need assistance in communicating about the values of their work, not only with local communities (including ethnically and socially diverse neighbourhoods) but also with other parts of the food chain such as wholesalers and chefs/cooks. Cooks and others could, in turn, be trained to adapt these stories into ones they can easily dish up to their customers. And citizens could be 'trained' to appreciate the various advantages - for animals, the environment, biodiversity, local jobs and traditions, their health, and so for everybody - of eating regionally grown organic food.

The quality of service

This aspect of food is too often neglected but food should be a pleasure, not only due to its good taste, but also because of the sociable environment which allows people to relax and enjoy the meal.

Table 4:

Parameters	Description
Nutritional value and safety	- presence of good elements (vitamins, minerals, antioxidants etc...) - lack of harmful elements (residues of pesticides and chemicals used for production, or external pollutants from water, air or soil such as heavy metals, dioxin etc...)
Food freshness	- Seasonal food - Short food supply chain.
Ethics	Contribution to worldwide food balance Work intensity Quality of life Social integration
Quality of service	Welcome, hygiene and safety
Communication	Training and sharing of traditions with younger generations Cross-fertilisation between different cultures

Land management and social issues

Land use should be planned taking into account the needs of the population for healthy local food. A good strategy could promote organic agriculture and quality food products such as PDO (Protected Denominations of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indications of Supply) or TSG (Traditional Speciality Guarantee). Good land management is also needed to protect the landscape, and help create direct links between all those involved in food production and consumption in an area.

Agriculture, food processing to consumption, and social issues

Table 5:

Parameters	Crop production		animal breeding		fishing
	Food processing	Food transport	Food retail	Meal preparation	Meal consumption
Nutritional value	Limited use of additives and hydrogenated fat			Correct cooking techniques	
Good nutritional balance				Good diet balance	
Food freshness	Respect for the seasons Short supply chain				
Ethics and legality	Contribution to worldwide food balance Work intensity Quality of life Animal welfare Social integration through work				
Quality of service	Welcome, hygiene and safety				
“Fair trade”:	Contribution to worldwide food balance Work intensity Quality of life Loneliness (Social integration through work)				
Communication	Information, training, education Better knowledge between all food chain co- producers from the farm to the plate. Transmission of traditions to young generations Cross-fertilisation between different cultures				

III Economics

It is possible to boost the local economy by producing sustainable food, and creating dynamic new jobs and environmental friendly companies.

Land management

Marketing strategies that focus on local and sustainable food products include the following approaches:

- Short food supply chains allow the producer to get a better share of the price, and a higher profile for their products;
- Tourism can be linked to sustainable food production, as it helps to educate and entertain people at the same time. Food producers can form a network to share experiences and communicate their work clearly to visitors. Food tourism can also be linked not only to healthy and tasty food, but also to physical activity (for example, by working on the farm, or taking part in cycle tours), and to rest and relaxation in beautiful surroundings. Appropriate communication campaigns can also bring consumers closer to producers and help them to revalue traditional agricultural and small-scale production as well as rural communities.

Agriculture, food processing to consumption, and economy

Table 6:

Parameters	Crop production	Animal breeding			Fishing
	Food processing	Food transport	Food retail	Meal preparation	Meal consumption
Economic viability	Economic viability of the activity (measured through accounting) Farm productivity Farm incomes Value added activities Level of economic specialisation Number of job created, relative to economic performance				
Independence	Financial autonomy (in particular, given subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy)				
Transmissibility	Transmissibility of capital				
Efficiency	Productivity (efficiency of production process)				

4. The case studies

As part of the process of discussing the elements of a sustainable food and farming system, outlined in section 3 above, the Softagri partners developed a number of case studies showing how these elements can be put into practice. Some of the case studies focus more on the environmental, or social or economic aspects of sustainable development. Some of the case studies are more concerned with a particular part of the food and farming system, such as production, or distribution, or consumption. However, given the inter-dependence of all three elements of sustainable development, and the close links between all parts of the food chain, all of the case studies are relevant – directly or indirectly – to sustainable food and farming as a whole. They are therefore not grouped according to any classification, but are listed in alphabetical order, and a description of each can be found at the end of this report.

1. Agricolture e detenzione: un percorso di futuro (Farming and detention: a route for the future) - AIAB (Associazione Italiana di Agricoltura Biologica), Italy
2. Alinterra, linking tourism to traditional agriculture - Agrarian Chamber of Szabolcs- Szatmár-Bereg County, Nyíregyháza, Hungary
3. Boerenkass Fiets4daagse – Farmhouse cheese cycling routes for tourists - Den Hâneker and Groene Hart, The Netherlands
4. Eco-efficienza nella Ristorazione moderna (Ecoefficiency in modern catering) - Consorzio Risteco, Italy
5. Ecological footprint method for public catering - FRCIVAM Bretagne, Cesson-Sévigné Cédex, France
6. Ecomeal.info: Social dialogue for sustainable food service - Risteco, Italy
7. Food co-ops in schools - Somerset Community Food and Somerset Organic Link. Somerset, UK
8. Friendly Kitchens, Regional Organic – that’s what’s cooking! - Friendly Kitchens, associate partner of SPN, The Netherlands
9. Fungi: The role of symbiotic fungi in crop production: the example of tomatoes - University of Turin, Plant Biology Department, and Sotral SpA, Italy
10. Good Food on the Public Plate - Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming. London, UK
11. Good Food Training for London - Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, London, UK
12. Grille de durabilité du Réseau Agriculture Durable (RAD) Sustainability grid of the Sustainable Agriculture Network - Réseau Agriculture Durable, Cesson-Sévigné Cédex, France
13. Les Bons Repas de l’Agriculture Durable, BRAD (Good Meals from Sustainable Farms) - Les Défis Ruraux (“Rural Challenges”), Haute Normandie, France
14. La France de ferme en ferme (From farm to farm in France) - FNCIVAM et FRCIVAM, Rhône Alpes, France
15. *Le Pain Normand* (Norman Bread) - Les Défis Ruraux (“Rural Challenges”), Haute Normandie, France
16. Libera Terra - Libera Associazioni. Nomi e Numeri contro le Mafie (*Associations names and numbers against mafias*), Italy
17. L.I.C.E.T. - a new method to measure farm production sustainability - Aregai, Terre di Benessere, Torino, Italy
18. Making Local Food Work: Food Co-ops and Buying Groups - Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, London, UK
19. Making Local Food Work: Food Supply and Distribution - OrganicLea, East London, UK.
20. Risteco handbooks – ecoefficiency in modern catering (I Quaderni di Risteco: ecoefficienza nella ristorazione moderna) - Consorzio Risteco, Italy
21. Somerset Organic Link (SOL): a farmer controlled marketing business – Somerset Food Link, UK
22. Streekproducten, Righteous tastes, Delicious products from the region - Den Hâneker, The Netherlands
23. Sustainable Community (BICI E AM.I.C.I.), cycle-tourism linking food and farming - Aregai, Terre di Benessere, Torino, Italy
24. Sustainable Community (Community involvement and sustainable development) - Aregai, Terre di Benessere, Torino, Italy
25. Systèmes Alimentaires Territorialisés (SALT) Territorialized Food Systems - FRCIVAM Bretagne, Cesson-Sévigné Cédex, France
26. Using biodiversity in agriculture - Wakelyns Agroforestry Farm, Suffolk, UK
27. Van Eigen Erf: Dutch local farm food, Organic Good - Biologisch Goed Van Eigen Erf, associate partner of SPN, the Netherlands
28. Waddengoud, A sustainable fishery in the Waddensea - Waddengroep (associate partner of SPN), the Netherlands
29. Week of Taste - SPN, Biologica, Slow Food Netherlands and Eurotoques, the Netherlands

5. In conclusion: a network of information and support

The SoftAgri project has been valuable in allowing the people from the eight organisations to meet each other, eat together, and visit inspiring examples of sustainable food and farming in five, diverse European countries. We learned about the different ways the concept of sustainability is understood and used in the participating countries, and these new insights helped us to rethink our own ideas and develop new ways to promote sustainability.

This short report cannot describe fully the quality of the network of relationships that have been developed by the Softagri project over the two years, but a lively network has been created via googlegroups, which allows people to continue to exchange information between meetings and, now, once the project has ended. Already some initiatives have been developed for new projects and other ways to exchange knowledge and experiences.

This report, and other materials generated by the project can be found on <http://www.softagri.info>. A special Softagri section has also been created on the Ecomeal website <http://www.ecomeal.info/?g=softagri>. We hope this goes some way to communicating the importance of the SoftAgri project in promoting and developing sustainable food and farming in Europe.

Since the Softagri project began, Europe, and indeed the world, has experienced one of the worst economic recessions in living memory. There has also been growing evidence not only of the impact of climate change – droughts, floods, storms – on agriculture, but also of the damage being done by our current food and farming system to a range of environmental problems such as climate change and biodiversity. In this context, networks of people and organisations – such as those represented by the Softagri project – exchanging knowledge and expertise on how to create and maintain sustainable food and farming systems will become more and more important.

The project partners are grateful to the Grundtvig programme for the funding that has allowed this network – and the associated information – to develop, and look forward to continuing to work together in the coming years.

September 2010



1. Agricolture e detenzione: un percorso di futuro

Farming and detention: a route for the future

AIAB (Associazione Italiana di Agricoltura Biologica), Italy

Summary

The project looks at the impact of Italian jails' farming activities – such as organic fruit and vegetable production, flower cultivation, fish farming etc. - on prisoners' quality of life.

Relevance to Softagri

The project shows that the educative role of farming - either inside the jail in or in day to day life, once the sentence is finished – can help to rehabilitate prisoners and provide professional qualifications.

Description

AIAB is conducting research on the effect of agricultural activity in jail. Several activities such as workshops, training, prison visits, meetings with cooperatives and workers allowed the project to gather numerous testimonies from prisoners, educators, jail staff, and agronomists. These stories have been communicated to the Italian population through meetings and fairs such as Terra Futura in Florence.

Farming activities in Italian jails are increasing, thanks to the initiative of government. The type of production is related to the territory, to the existing structures in the jail, to the presence of experts, and to



the ability of prisoners. The project confirms previous observations that working outside improves prisoners' health, helps rehabilitation and social reintegration, occupies the mind and releases tensions. The main message from the testimonies is "transformation" and "life".

Indeed farming is synonymous of renewal and the symbolic aspect is particularly appropriate for re-educating prisoners into social life:

green areas are obtained with hard, long and patient work and waiting is the day to day life of prisoners in jail. Contact with animals is also therapeutic and farming develops a sense of responsibility. Many jails produce excellent food products such as bread, coffee, and eggs. Producing this food not only offers the chance to get good professional qualifications, but also helps the processes of integration back into the community.

More information

<http://www.aiab.it/>
bioagricolturasociale@aiab.it

Agricoltura e detenzione, un percorso di futuro, Anna Ciaperoni

L'agricoltura oltre le mura, i risultati della ricerca di aiab sulle attività agricole negli istituti penitenziari.

2. Alinterra

Linking tourism to traditional agriculture

Agrarian Chamber of Szabolcs- Szatmár- Bereg County, Nyíregyháza, Hungary

Summary

The Alinterra project creates tourist routes in the rural areas of participating regions, using farmers as tour guides.

Relevance to Softagri

Alinterra aims to shorten the food chain, to bring consumers closer to producers and revalue traditional agricultural and small-scale production as well as rural communities and rural sites.

Description

The project is creating various tourist routes based on traditional agricultural and cultural products. These support a network of high quality producers, typical of the region, and of tourism providers in rural areas. The tourism sector is thereby linked to the traditions of agriculture, creating new options for business and employment.

The project aims to

- Increase the number of visits by tourists in districts where new economic activities are needed to complement agricultural jobs;
- Increase trade in food and tourism between the regions represented;
- Establish a common brand of local tourist products among the partner regions;



- Create a network of rural entities that generate new tourism projects for the future of rural areas;
- Establish a training guide for responsible tourism products in rural areas.

The project may also produce a collection of possible thematic tourist routes and create local groups of entrepreneur-farmers who are willing to diversify their activities, add extra value to their products and offer their skills to help rural areas survive.

More information

www.alinterra.net

A report showing some of the tourist routes is available to download here <http://www.alinterra.net/imagenes/prosi.pdf>

3. Boerenkass Fiets4daagse

Farmhouse cheese cycling routes for tourists

Den Hâneker and Groene Hart, The Netherlands

Summary

To encourage people to become acquainted with the process of traditional cheese making, tasting cheese and buying cheese, the farmhouse cheese cycling routes have been developed. At the farms tourists can learn about the authentic ways of producing regional products and cultural aspects of the region. A special event is the cycling4days when, for one week a year, people can join a route daily, with the route passing more than 40 cheese farms. On the last day of this special week all participants have the opportunity to taste traditional cheeses.

Relevance to Softagri

This project promotes sustainability through combining sales of regional products with rural tourism. The cycling routes through the region lead tourists to small, historic locations that are characteristic of the area where they can see authentic ways of preparing regional products like farm cheese. The products are also sold in the farm shops

Description

In the Netherlands the Cycling4days is a regular annual returning event. In one week participants cycle a route of about 35 kilometres



each day. Special cycling routes have been developed to introduce regional products, such as cheese, to tourists. The routes offer lots of possibilities to meet people in the area, learn how they live and find out how the regional products are created. It is free to visit the farms

and the tourists get an impression of the cultural and historic roots of the area and the products. By inviting tourists in the area, the project increases the market for regional products and raises awareness of the importance of sustainable food.

More information

www.boerenkaasroute.nl

www.groenehart.nl

www.denhaneker.nl

4. Eco-efficienza nella Ristorazione moderna

Ecoefficiency in modern catering

Consorzio Risteco, Italy

Summary

Risteco has initiated a study to evaluate environmental effects of catering service by using an LCA approach (see below), starting with direct effects such as logistic and waste production.

Relevance to Softagri

LCA is a scientifically robust assessment method that can be used in certification and labelling systems to inform citizens about the environmental impact of catering services.

Description

Life Cycle Assessment is a methodology created in the early sixties, when questions about efficient use of energy and raw materials start to arise. It became clear that, to tackle this problem, the analysis of environmental performance must take into account the whole life cycle: from cradle (raw material production) to grave (waste production) including all transformation and transportation processes. An important aspect of this method is to consider the whole production chain, and avoiding simply shifting negative effects from one part of the chain to another. Another aspect is to avoid sectoral approaches and favour dialogue



and cooperation between all the actors along the chain.

Applied to catering, the LCA method has shown the main environmental effects in three phases: meal production, meal consumption, meal waste management, as:

- raw material production (mainly farming and food industry),
- packaging, primary and secondary logistics,
- food storage,
- meal cooking,
- meal serving
- waste production.

More information

<http://www.ecomeal.info/?g=innoverwww.ecomeal.info>

5. Ecological footprint method for public catering

FRCIVAM Bretagne

Cesson-Sévigné Cédex, France

Summary

To help catering staff change to a more sustainable food system the project uses a wide set of indicators to help them take decisions. This includes financial and nutritional issues as well as land-based and ecological ones. The ecological footprint can help assess the ecological impact of current practices and the potential effects of alternative ones.

Relevance to Softagri

The project owner is Agrocampus Ouest - site de Beg Meil, that works with its partners, the FR-CIVAM de Bretagne, the Maison de la Bio 29 and several catering services. To apply the EF methodology to catering services a 'simplified' version was developed and training will be available to help catering staff change their practices.

Description

The Ecological Footprint (EF) measures the "space" occupied by a human population in the biosphere. It estimates the amount of biologically productive land and sea area that would be necessary to sustain levels of natural resource consumption and carbon emissions by a given population. The EF is calculated as a standardized area equivalent to 1 ha of world average



bio-productivity and is expressed in global hectares (gha).

To apply the EF method to catering services a 'simplified' EF was developed to make the calculations easier and adapt it to the available data. The simplified EF for food is divided into three parts : (1) the footprint of the productive farming area, (2) the carbon footprint of production and processing and (3) the carbon footprint of transport. The data is not always available for all three parts, and only parts 1 and 3 of the simplified EF were taken in account because few data were available on processing and energy use.

The simplified EF method was used to calculate the EF of a school catering service on different

scales: over a year, for a menu, and for a single product. This work highlights some major factors that affect the EF, for example, that using animal products has a very important impact on the overall EF. The consumption of fish, seafood, meat and eggs represents a little less than 20% of global food consumption, but it accounts for almost 80% of the total EF.

The project is now trying to take farming methods into account in the EF calculation and at the farm level, the project has begun studying energy consumption. The project is also aiming to develop an online EF calculator in 2010 so that when catering staff want to evaluate the EF of a specific menu they will only need to gather a limited amount of data to do it themselves.

More information

http://www.civam-bretagne.org/civam.php?ref_rub=21&ref=59

Warnery Céline, Egreteau Marie, Abel-Coindoz Claire, Cosquet Fanny 2008, Ecological footprint for catering services, Softagri meeting, London , April 2009

Rees William & Wackernagel Mathis, 1996, Our ecological footprint: reducing human impact on the earth.

6. Ecomeal.info

Social dialogue for sustainable food service

Risteco, Italy

Summary

Ecomeal.info aims to share information and to undertake a dialogue with all food service stakeholders to develop “new models of sustainable food services”, by using both web 2.0 concept and social networking.

Relevance to Softagri

As more and more people eat out of home, food service is an important element to take into account in sustainable food strategies. Ecomeal.info is creating a network of communication to share knowledge on sustainable food production and consumption.

Description

Ecomeal.info was launched in March 2009 with an inquiry to investigate the main interests of people working on the theme of sustainable food chains. The project is based on international networking and collective intelligence building, in which each user is part of an active dialogue. The portal may contribute to innovation and foster links between the quality of food, quality of life, environment and health.

It relies on the creation of a partner network sharing the vision of a sustainable food chain, that will



ECOMEAL.INFO
 DIALOGUE SOCIAL
 POUR UNE RESTAURATION DURABLE

manage national sections by providing information. One objective is to re-define collectively the “vocabulary of food”, starting from the definition of the concept of food sustainability. Active sections of the site include:

- World Wide News: a collection of main information on the web and through Risteco’s network. Information is posted on the portal in original language, with possibility of simultaneous

translation of the page into the main languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian)

- Documents: gathers thematic documents
- Social networking based on facebook to host members forums and discussion groups discussion
- Tools: Software to calculate catering CO2 emissions (in construction)

More information

www.ecomeal.info

7. Food co-ops in schools

Somerset Community Food and Somerset Organic Link

Somerset, UK

Summary

Somerset Community Food and Somerset Organic Link are two organisations in Somerset that work together to support co-operative buying groups. These buying groups (also known as food co-ops) are run by volunteers who place orders with suppliers and then divide the goods among themselves. Some of the most successful food co-ops are in schools. Pupils learn about local food and sustainability while at the same time managing a small business. The two organisations have developed and tested a practical, one-hour training session for classes of school children to learn about running a food co-op.

Relevance to Softagri

By running a food co-op in a school, pupils learn about a range of sustainability issues including organic production, local supplies, food miles, seasonality and co-operation.

Description

Somerset Community Food is an educational charity based in Somerset, in the south west of England. The charity aims to: support people to produce more of their own food; encourage people to enjoy preparing healthy, local food for friends and family;



and help people to explore new ways of buying and sharing food. Somerset Organic Link is a farmer-owned business that specialises in producing and distributing locally grown organic produce to households, businesses and community groups in Somerset.

Both organisations work with community groups to help them set up co-operative buying groups. Some of the most successful food co-ops are in schools. Educational aspects of running a food co-op include: numeracy (basic mathematics, accounting, managing a bank account), literacy (communication, publicity and promotion), food handling and hygiene, co-operation, and other valuable skills. Pupils also learn about sustainability and all aspects of managing a small business.

During 2009, with funding from the Making Local Food Work project, Somerset Community Food

developed an in-school training programme, in association with Somerset Organic Link, to introduce a class of children to the idea and practice of a food co-op. The hour-long session covers:

- An introductory discussion of issues such as: organic production, food miles, packaging, waste, and co-operation (20 minutes)
- A practical session (20 minutes) during which the children carry out a number of set tasks: one group divides up the fruit and vegetables among an agreed number of customers; another group works on a poster and communication strategy to promote the co-op; a third group sets up a system to collect customer orders and record sales and takings
- A closing session to gather feedback from the children, and to discuss and evaluate what they have learned (20 minutes)

More information

www.somersetcommunityfood.org.uk

8. Friendly Kitchens

Regional Organic – that's what's cooking!

Friendly Kitchens, (associate partner of SPN), the Netherlands

Summary

Friendly Kitchens stimulates and supports restaurants and (public) caterers to employ more organic, locally grown ingredients in their establishments. Special theme weeks stimulate alliances between producers, distributors, restaurants and consumers. Friendly Kitchens trains restaurants and caterers to act as ambassadors to link farmers and consumers, getting across the values of producing and eating regionally grown, organic food.

Relevance to Softagri

Friendly Kitchens trains producers to communicate about the values of organic farming with wholesalers and chefs/cooks. Cooks and personnel are trained to adapt these stories into ones they can easily dish up to their customers. Consumers are 'trained' to acknowledge and appreciate the various advantages - for animals, the environment, biodiversity and so for everybody - of eating regionally grown, organic food.

Description

Friendly Kitchens was born as a result of the organic agriculture campaign run by the province of North Holland (The Netherlands) since the summer of 2005. Restaurants, seen as 'ambassadors'

for promoting regional organic food were, from the outset, an important part of the campaign.. However, it soon became apparent that, although interested in, and willing to promote 'regional-organic' produce, they lacked the knowledge of where to find products, the understanding about the price differences between organic and non-organic produce, and the skills and time needed to organise the promotion of special organic menus.

Friendly Kitchens was founded in 2006 with two aims:

1. To stimulate and support professional kitchens to increase the amount of regional organic products they use;
2. To train and support professionals to promote the 'regional-organic' theme to their (potential) customers.

From the start Friendly Kitchens has organised meetings for professional chefs, where they are introduced to organic farmers, to learn more about the principles of organic agriculture and about 'seasonal eating'. Producers learn about the needs of chefs and what they require to maintain a healthy enterprise. Chefs are encouraged to share their



knowledge with colleagues.

Friendly Kitchens also organises special promotions with 'friendly restaurants and caterers' to increase consumer interest in regionally grown organic produce. Examples include: special occasions when restaurants serve (organic) 'regional spring or harvest menus'; the 'taste train', where local chefs treat passengers to organic bites prepared with ingredients originating from the regions they are travelling through; and cycle tours - including the creation of a special map highlighting 'organic-friendly' farms, restaurants, shops and markets – guiding consumers from the heart of the city to surrounding organic farms.

More information

www.vriendelijkekeukens.nl

9. Fungi: The role of symbiotic fungi in crop production

The example of tomatoes

University of Turin, Plant Biology Department, and Sotral SpA, Italy



have been defined “microbes which help to feed the world” and they are considered to play a fundamental role in natural as well as agricultural ecosystems, together with other soil microorganisms. Naturally present in soils, they are fully compatible with organic farming; however, their activity is strongly reduced by intensive agricultural practices, in particular the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

For this experiment the tomato was chosen as a model plant and the first activity was to see how the presence of symbiotic fungi influenced fruit metabolism. The results should show

Summary

The positive effect of micorrhizal fungi (acknowledged in Italy as natural fertilisers) on crop productivity is already very well documented. This project evaluates the impact of symbiotic fungi on the taste and nutritional qualities of tomatoes.

Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (AMF) form mutually beneficial links with the roots of 90% of land plants. They are known to carry out many ecosystem functions such as improving plant establishment and growth, enhancing nutrient uptake and protecting plants against stresses. For these reasons, they

the importance of preserving or restoring soil biodiversity in sustainable farming practices.

Future areas of research could include how organic farming can add value by improving product quality.

Relevance to Softagri

Mycorrhizal fungi can be considered as a new class of environmentally-friendly fertilizers that could, using natural processes, improve the bioactive compounds in fruit and vegetables can help to promote human health and prevent diseases.

Description

This project, funded with a Proteinn grant, investigated the potential impact of mycorrhizal fungi, as a new class of bio-fertilizers, on the quality of vegetables.

More information

www.bioveg.unito.it, see in “Pubblicazioni” number 211 and 212

Salvioli, A., Novero, M., Lacourt, I., Bonfante, P. (2008). Dal campo alla mensa: valutazione dell’impatto della micorrizzazione sulle caratteristiche qualitative di pomodoro. *La Rivista di Scienza dell’Alimentazione* 37(1) 49-57. ISSN:1128-7969

Salvioli, A., Novero, M., Lacourt, I., Bonfante, P. (2008). The impact of mycorrhizal symbiosis on tomato fruit quality. In: Neuhoff, D. [et al.] (eds.), *Cultivating the Future Based on Science, Volume 2: Livestock, Socio-economy and Cross disciplinary Research in Organic Agriculture. Proceedings of the Second Scientific Conference of the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISOFAR), Modena, Italy, 18-20 June 2008.* ISOFAR, Bonn 332-335. ISBN: 9783037360248.

<http://orgprints.org/view/projects/conference.html> : The impact of mycorrhizal symbiosis on tomato fruit quality. Salvioli, A., Novero M., Lacourt, I. & Bonfante, P. (2008).

10. Good Food on the Public Plate

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming.

London, UK

Summary

Good Food on the Public Plate provides assistance to public sector caterers and procurement teams to buy, and serve more sustainable food.

Relevance to Softagri

Good Food on the Public Plate works with public sector staff to communicate to them what sustainable food is and to help them, in turn, communicate to their customers when they are providing sustainable food.

Description

The Good Food on the Public Plate project is funded by the London Development Agency as part of the implementation of the London Food Strategy. The project provides a wide range of free of charge assistance to public-sector bodies in London, helping them to buy and use more sustainable food and its achievements include:

- £216,000 now being spent on more sustainable products, with 16 public sector institutions purchasing a variety of sustainable produce including free range eggs, seasonal fruit and bacon and sausages from pork reared to higher British standards.



- Good Egg awards from Compassion in World Farming in 2009 for many participants who switched from caged to free range eggs. Examples of 2009 winners and 2010 applicants include the Metropolitan Police, Imperial College, Royal Holloway (University of London), and several London boroughs.
- The inaugural Good Food on the Public Plate Awards, held at City Hall in November 2009, an event celebrating the achievements of 14 of our participants who are buying more sustainable food.
- The formation of a London cluster collaborating to increase the sustainability of food purchased through their tendering process, for example for milk and meat. As part of this process several public sector buyers were taken to see three methods of chicken farming - Red Tractor, Freedom Foods higher welfare indoor, and Free Range.

More information

www.sustainweb.org/goodfoodpublicplate

The interim report, 'What we have done and what we have learned' (2009)

www.sustainweb.org/publications/?id=175

The London Food Strategy, 'Healthy and Sustainable Food for London' (2005).

www.london.gov.uk/londonfood

11. Good Food Training for London

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming

London, UK

Summary

Good Food Training provided food skills training courses to catering and service staff from schools, hospitals, prisons and care settings to help them to buy, prepare and serve sustainable food.

Relevance to Softagri

Good Food Training developed training courses, produced new training materials and ran training events to teach the skills and knowledge needed to use sustainable food. Existing mainstream training for caterers in the UK (and across Europe) does not adequately address sustainability.

Description

The London Food Strategy (2005) recognised that to secure benefits to health, the environment and the London economy, catering staff needed the skills and knowledge to plan, prepare and serve healthy, seasonal and locally-produced menus. 'Good Food Training for London' was set up in 2007 to provide free-of-charge food skills training to around 1,200 catering, procurement and other staff in schools, hospitals, prisons and care settings in the capital. The project was funded by the London Development Agency as part of the



implementation of the London Food Strategy.

Good Food Training (GFT) was run by a partnership of organisations, managed by the Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency, and Sustain was a lead partners. GFT also worked with catering colleges and independent trainers. The project:

- Developed bespoke training courses, for example, 'Customer Service' for school cooks and lunchtime supervisors; 'Sustainable Food Purchasing' for catering managers; 'Food Waste and Energy Management' for kitchen staff.
- Designed new training materials, like the seasonal food calendar floor mat [see illustration]
- Provided accredited training courses offering nationally-recognised certificates and skills to trainees, which were particularly important to people who have never held a qualification before.
- Ran procurement skills training events, such as day-long training for catering managers, head cooks and other food purchasing decision-makers.
- Worked on food skills training policy, to ensure that what was learned can affect training provision long into the future.

More information

www.sustainweb.org/goodfoodtraining

The interim report, 'What we have learned' (2009).
www.sustainweb.org/publications/?id=171

The evaluation report from City University (2009).
www.sustainweb.org/publications/?id=178

The London Food Strategy, 'Healthy and Sustainable Food for London' (2005). <http://www.london.gov.uk/londonfood/>

12. Grille de durabilité du Réseau Agriculture Durable (RAD)

Sustainability grid of the Sustainable Agriculture Network

Réseau Agriculture Durable, Cesson-Sévigné Cédex, France

Summary

The sustainability grid is a method to assess sustainability in a production system, including eight economic criteria, seven on social sustainability and seven on the environment. Farmers can use it to assess their own farms, and it can be used for farmers training sessions and to educate farm visitors.

Relevance to Softagri

Evaluating the sustainability of a farming system is a complex issue, and the sustainability grid offers a simpler vision of these complex interactions. A network of farms using the same grid allows students, consumers, committed citizens and farmers to analyse farm management systems and compare them.

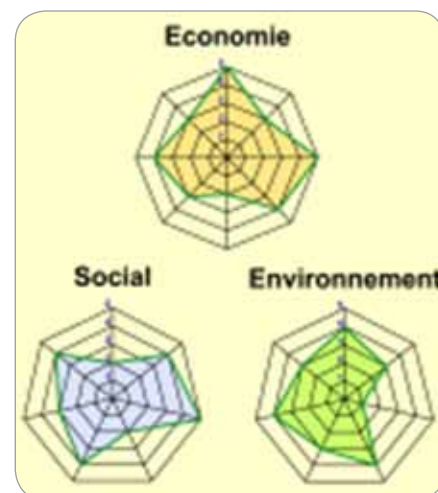
Description

The Réseau Agriculture Durable has been gathering farmers groups (30 now) for 20 years, to improve their economic viability, social conditions and environmental practices, well before the word “sustainable” became commonplace. However, a simple way was needed to assess sustainability so that farmers could measure their progress and visitors to the farms could have a quick method of answering complex

questions. A collective working group designed the first grid in 1999 – 2000, comparing the IDEA method with other methods. This grid has been renewed and a revised version is available on the RAD website.

About 500 farms have been analyzed, and an observatory gathers the results of 79 farms permanently. The results can be presented visually through three radar diagrams (see example), one for each pillar of sustainability. It immediately shows the strengths and weaknesses of the farm. This clarity is useful for the farmers, who speak very openly to visitors of their hopes and constraints, achievements and difficulties. The educational approach also includes a comparison with the “average regional farm” so that visitors can compare the farm situation with “normal” practices.

The method is flexible and local groups or individual farmers can adapt it to local conditions or specific questions. In some regions, a network of farms has been given a set of posters presenting the sustainability grid in a uniform way, which allows schools or associations to compare the approach on several farms. In Brittany about 2 500 visitors come each year.



More information

There is a technical guide « évaluer la durabilité d'un système de production » (how to evaluate the sustainability of a production system). On line access to the grid and to the field guide is at www.agriculture-durable.org/?page_id=118

Examples of farms at http://217.174.222.169/agri_durable/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/ex_viande_01.pdf and the Breton demonstration farms at www.civam-bretagne.org/civam.php?pj=33&ref_rub=8&ref=56

13. Les Bons Repas de l'Agriculture Durable, BRAD

Good Meals from Sustainable Farms

Les Défis Ruraux ("Rural Challenges"), Haute Normandie, France

Summary

The project organises meals for schools and colleges with produce from local farms certified as "sustainable", and also provides educational workshops for pupils on sustainable eating.

Relevance to Softagri

The BRAD scheme promotes sustainable farming via an adapted version of the IDEA method (see below) for whole-farm evaluation. As well as promoting sustainable eating to pupils and school staff (cooks, bursars etc.) stakeholders are also involved in the supplier selection procedure.

Description

The project was started in 2004, at the instigation of the (Seine-Maritime) county council. The regional and county authorities pay the Défis Ruraux (DR - a voluntary organization belonging to the CIVAM network) to organise meals and refund schools the difference (capped at 1) between the cost of "sustainable" meals and ordinary meals.

Suppliers must meet several entry criteria: the farm must be within the relevant administrative area (county for schools with children aged 11–15, and region for schools

or colleges for 15–18 year olds); it must be GM free for both crops and animal feed; it must comply with hygiene regulations (particularly for on-farm processing of dairy products); hormones and antibiotics must only be used to treat medical conditions, not routinely; frequency of herbicide and pesticide inputs must be below the regional average; and the farm's nitrogen balance must be below 150 kg/ha. This is based on the IDEA method for analysing whole-farm sustainability.

Two farm visits are made by a DR 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 DR representatives, experts and consumers (school bursars, cooks, parents etc.). Progress is monitored via a second IDEA analysis after two years. Wherever possible DR try to provide help with technical solutions in the meantime.

School 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.

2008/2009 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)

More information

www.defis-ruraux.fr/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=28

www.idea.portea.fr

www.cardere.org

14. La France de ferme en ferme

From farm to farm in France

FNCIVAM et FRCIVAM, Rhône Alpes, France

Summary

From farm to farm in France promotes farmers adopting sustainable practices, and helps consumers understand how their food was produced, processed and marketed. It takes place on open farms in the last weekend in April each year.

Relevance to Softagri

Farm visits give citizens an opportunity to discover real agriculture and create new links between consumers and producers. Farms are chosen from the CIVAM movement to ensure the farms are sustainable.

Description

In 2009, 200 000 people visited at least one of the 514 farms that were open. The simultaneous opening makes it possible to build a whole itinerary and visit several farms on the same day and in the same region. The visits are to places where farmers live and work, without restriction, and this transparency means the links go far beyond the simply commercial.

A clear presentation of the farm is required from each farm. It includes a whole range of sustainability issues, such as the production system and the processing of the



products, but also how the farming family lives, and how they link to the surrounding land and community. This helps the visitors understand the whole farm system and the many ways it links to environmental, social and economic issues. After the farm visit, people are more likely to look for the farm's products in other places such as markets and shops.

The producers gets better informed about the needs of their customers through direct conversations.

They can also experiment with new products or processes and get consumers' reaction. This information allows producers to innovate to improve product quality, or the range of products, or processes.

Although the programme is now very large, it retains a strong social and human dimension. It strengthens knowledge about farming for city dwellers that increasingly want to get informed and to preserve their heritage.

More information

www.defermeenferme.com

15. Le Pain Normand

Norman Bread

**Les Défis Ruraux (“Rural Challenges”),
Allouville-Bellefosse, Haute Normandie, France**



Summary

Le Pain Normand (“Norman Bread”) is the brand name of the bread produced by a short supply chain linking local cereal growers, millers and artisanal bakers.

Relevance to Softagri

A strong local identity and distinctive taste and texture have created a high-profile brand with a message consumers can understand and pass on: a traditional, hardy wheat variety, low chemical inputs at all stages, short transport distances, and bakers who actually bake!

Description

Nine local cereal growers currently produce 450 metric tons of Camp Rémy wheat (a traditional, hardy breadmaking variety), which is stored on farms without using insecticides (growing specifications are under review with a view to further reducing inputs, now that French legislation has caught up with the original specification). They deliver the wheat directly to a local miller, who turns it into flour without using chemical improvers or preservatives. The bakers (80–100, all based in Normandy) make the bread on their own premises, allowing the dough to ferment for at least four hours to let the flavours develop. The result is a more



characterful kind of French bread, with a chewy golden crust and uneven distribution of holes!

Keeping the links in the chain to a minimum enables the miller to ensure maximum traceability, right down to which farm a given sack of flour has come from. Although food miles (or kilometres) are not specifically measured, the “local” criterion limits transport distances.

One of the objectives of the project was to make sure all stakeholders were paid fairly for their work, rather than having prices imposed by big flour brands – something that is

easier to ensure in a stakeholder-owned framework.

The project was officially launched in 1997 by the voluntary association Les Défis Ruraux, which still owns the brand name and carries out some organisational tasks. In 2004, the stakeholders set up their own association, Les Compagnons du Pain Normand, which now steers the project as a whole, promotes the brand and forges social links between participants in the supply chain (including consumers) via events such as a yearly festival and breadmaking competition.

More information

<http://www.defis-ruraux.fr/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=21>

16. Libera Terra

Libera Associazioni. Nomi e Numeri contro le Mafie

Associations names and numbers against mafias, Italy

Summary

“Libera Terra” is the department of Libera in charge of managing social cooperatives producing organic food such as wine, oil, tomatoes, pasta, honey and nuts on land confiscated from criminal organisations, and selling the produce all over the country.

Relevance to Softagri

The idea of “confiscation and social reuse” has a tremendously powerful cultural message about legality, and offers a very effective demonstration of the social aspects of sustainability in food production and consumption.

Description

The success of the Libera project is based on the idea that organised crime gangs in the modern era can be efficiently tackled only when deprived of their economic power. The project also socially re-uses those properties belonging to criminal organizations, assigning them to social actors (cooperatives, associations, NGOs etc.) In this way assets previously used for fuelling illegal economies are now used by people to provide employment, to sell “clean” products, and to help disadvantaged people. This breaks the illegal chain created by criminal organizations who used to ruin a huge part of the economy.



Libera Terra now has five cooperatives located in the south of Italy and employs approximately 50 full time employees. Libera Formazione implements numerous educational activities in Italian high school classes. In addition, Libera Terra organises summer camps every year where international volunteers are welcome to work during the summer at a Libera Terra cooperative, experiencing what it means to “produce” culture and products in a land formerly steeped in criminal values. In the 11 summer camps that took place in 2009, about 2000 volunteers from Italy and from abroad participated.

March 21, the first day of spring is “The Day in Memory of Victims of Mafias”, a national event which gathers about 100.000 people every year, sending a clear message to the rest of the country and to national institutions. Given the success of this approach Libera decided in 2008 to “export” its model with the FLARE (Freedom Legality And Rights in Europe) Network made up of 44 civil society organizations from over 25 countries (Western Europe, Mediterranean Sea, Balkans, Eastern Europe, Caucasus).

More information

www.libera.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/13

www.liberaterra.it

www.flarenetwork.org

17. L.I.C.E.T.

A new method to measure farm production sustainability

Aregai, Terre di Benessere, Torino, Italy

Summary

Three farms – conventional, integrated, and organic – have been used to test a new method of measuring the economic, social and environmental sustainability of farm production.

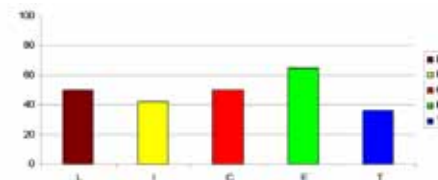
Relevance to Softagri

The preliminary data from this new LICET method strongly suggest that it can be an original, useful and accurate way to measure farm production sustainability, providing farmers with simple and clear indications on where and how to improve. The project will also address the problem of communicating these results to stakeholders, developing an internet-based network that will enable farmers to publicise their performance and to be in contact with consumers who care about sustainability issues.



Description

Aregai is a non-profit cultural association whose mission is to integrate tradition and innovation to help communities live in a healthy environment. The association is developing a rigorous method, based on the best available scientific evidence, called “LICET” to assess farm sustainability. It addresses historical, economic, social and environmental issues and combines data from a brief and focused interview (understanding the particular context in which farmers are operating) with information obtained from detailed questionnaires. The questionnaire



is divided into five main areas and several sub-sections corresponding to specific sustainability targets. The evaluation is articulated in a range of judgements and indexes, but is also summarised in a more user-friendly graphical form (see graph).

This “LICET” method was initially undertaken with three farms using three different farming systems (conventional, integrated and organic), to test its specificity and sensitivity. The results obtained show the effectiveness of the method in detecting specific features in each particular farming system (for example, the environmental performance of the organic farm was the highest of the three farms). However, it also highlighted some “hidden values” (the conventional farm was shown to be almost ready to switch to integrated management), as well as some problems. All three farms had improved aspects of health and safety (for workers and for consumer) and complied with HACCP protocols.



More information

www.aregai.eu

www.educazionesostenibile.it

18. Making Local Food Work

Food Co-ops and Buying Groups

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, London, UK

Summary

The Food Co-ops and Buying Groups project aims to help new food co-ops to set up and existing food co-ops to become more sustainable.

Relevance to Soft Agri

The food co-ops project aims to share information on how to set up community run food co-ops

Description

Making Local Food Work is a large, five year programme funded by the Big Lottery and the Food Co-ops and Buying Groups project is one aspect of this programme. Other parts of Making Local Food Work include supporting community run food outlets – such as village shops, farmers' markets, food hubs and country markets - to supply more local and sustainable food .

The sustainability of food co-ops relates to economic, social and environmental factors. For example, can the food co-op cover its running costs, does it provide other social benefits to its volunteers and the local community, and does it aim to reduce its impact on the environment, such as by providing fresh local produce with minimal packaging.



As part of the project a food co-ops toolkit has been produced – both online at www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit and in print. The toolkit provides an overview of the important things groups need to think about when setting up and running a food co-op. As well as providing logistical information on establishing a food co-op, e.g. on how to find local producers,

the toolkit also provides ideas on educational activities to promote healthy and sustainable food.

The toolkit will be expanded over time to provide more links to useful information, for example on what produce is in season, and downloadable information such as recipe sheets or newsletter templates.

More information

www.foodcoops.org

www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit

www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk

19. Making Local Food Work

Food Supply and Distribution

OrganicLea, East London, UK.

Summary

OrganicLea runs a café and sells produce grown at their allotment, supplemented with produce grown by other local gardeners and local farmers in East Anglia. They also run events at their Food Centre, teaching local people about growing, cooking and preserving. They also run a “scrumping” project which collects apples from local gardens.

Relevance to Softagri

The majority of OrganicLea’s efforts are around reaching out to different sectors of their local community – which is very ethnically and socially diverse - and educating them about their food.

Description

Making Local Food Work is a large, five year programme funded by the Big Lottery and OrganicLea participates in the food supply and distribution part of that programme. OrganicLea is a food growing workers’ co-operative in the Lea Valley on the edge of London, which started as a community allotment. The following is a sample of their work with members of their local community.

1. Cropshare: OrganicLea has developed a supply chain from local allotment sites. Allotment holders needed a



lot of reassurance that their spaces were not being turned into commercial growing sites. They were also concerned about the legality of selling produce (because there are restrictions under UK law which prohibit sales from allotments but allow the sale of surplus produce).

Organiclea produced a paper clarifying the legal situation (www.organiclea.org.uk/sellingallotmentproduce.pdf) which helped local allotment holders feel able to participate. Fifteen local allotment holders and gardeners are supplying produce to the Food Centre.

2. Workshops: OrganicLea has run workshops on growing and cooking for a number of different groups in their local community, including:

- Cooking workshops for people with mental health problems
- Open public workshops on baking and preserving
- Day long growing courses for a local adult education institution

3. Fruit scrumping project: Volunteers were recruited to pick apples and pears from private gardens where the owners were unable or unwilling to harvest the fruit themselves. The owners were able to keep some of the fruit for their own use, and the rest was turned into juice or sold as fruit to local people. Twenty different varieties of apples and pears were collected and 1,000 litres of juice was produced. Customers to the weekly stall were encouraged to join in the juice pressing by having a go themselves.

More information

www.organiclea.org.uk

www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/about/ds/index.cfm

20. Risteco handbooks – ecoefficiency in modern catering

I Quaderni di Risteco: ecoefficienza nella ristorazione moderna

Consorzio Risteco, Italy

Summary

“Risteco handbooks on catering eco-efficiency” is a series of publication started in 2005, which present the environmental effects of catering using Life Cycle Thinking.

Relevance to Softagri

These publications are intended for catering workers at any level and also local authorities in charge of public catering. They are also a training programme to teach skills and knowledge needed to implement innovative and more sustainable public catering services.



Description

- Issue N°1 is about the tools for a sustainable catering such as environmental certifications and the life cycle approach to evaluate the environmental impact of catering (October 2005).
- Issue N°2 is about all the effects of meal production starting from raw material production, supply (organic, fair trade), local purchasing, and also meal preparation (March 2006).
- Issue N°3 is about the environmental impact of logistics and transport, mainly in terms of energy consumption and climate change but also atmospheric pollution. Transport has an impact at different step of the process, from raw materials to meal transport (July 2006).
- Issue N° 4 is about restaurant management, at the crossroads of catering service. Several aspects can have environmental effects such as the choice of table or waste management. It is also the ideal place to communicate with consumers (September 2006).
- Issue N° 5 is entirely devoted to waste management. Although it may appear trivial, it is a good starting point for analysis and to start improve the quality of the service. (February 2007)
- Issue N°6 is about environmental communication, and how to answer the new demands of consumers about safe, nutritious and tasty food, served in a pleasant atmosphere and produced with respect for people and the environment. Environmental communication means education, training, and information and may be useful to increase public catering competitiveness and to create a dialogue with consumers (October 2007).
- Issue N°7 is about Green Public Procurement, and presents the role of public bodies in the evolution of the catering market towards more sustainability (expected 2010).

More information

www.ecomeal.info

Italian language material can be requested from: info@risteco.it

21. Somerset Organic Link (SOL)

A farmer controlled marketing business

Somerset Food Link, UK

Summary

Somerset Organic Link is a farmer-owned business, which specialises in organic fresh fruit and vegetables grown in Somerset. SOL's business activity is guided by a commitment to supplying local food to local people. As a result, SOL has developed a wide network of customers, ranging from high street retailers to community buying groups. SOL has a programme of events and social activities designed to raise awareness of the benefits of local production and distribution of organic produce.

Relevance to Softagri

In its operations Somerset Organic Link strives to practice and promote sustainable methods of food production and food distribution. SOL has open days, and works with schools (see case study 7 on school food co-ops), in order to encourage children and adults to understand more about sustainable food systems.

Description

Somerset Organic Link (SOL) was formed by a small group of organic farmers in South Somerset in the south west of England to promote and distribute locally the fruit and vegetables they had grown. SOL's founding aims were, and remain to:



- support organic farmers;
- distribute local food to local people and to shorten the distance food travels;
- provide a service to shops, farm shops, market stalls, cafes, restaurants and catering services to enable them to stock, sell and use more local organic produce;
- assist community groups to work together to buy direct from SOL;
- encourage consumers to buy local produce and to take an interest in where the food they buy is grown;
- create a brand identity for organic produce from Somerset.

SOL's main sales are to business customers. SOL offers a range of services to complement these trade sales and to further its aims to link producers with consumers. These services include:

- organising in-store promotions during which customers can meet a producer and see a

display of pictures of local food producers. The producer spends part of the day in the shop, handing out samples of fresh produce and chatting to customers about how and where the produce is grown and by whom;

- providing a transparent supply chain: for example, sales invoices give the name of the farm on which the food has been produced, and the county and country of origin;
- offering free promotional literature;
- promoting trade customers at local events, exhibitions and festivals;
- managing farm walks and farm open days.

SOL also sells direct to the public at a weekly market stall in Glastonbury and via a small home delivery service in the area adjacent to the depot.

More information

www.somersetorganiclink.co.uk

22. Streekproducten, Righteous tastes

Delicious products from the region

Den Hâneker, The Netherlands

Summary

Righteous tastes promotes sales of “streekproducten” – traditional and authentic products – and develops networks of producers to exchange knowledge.

Relevance to Softagri

This project aims to promote the products and also the authentic method of production by making people from the region and the city familiar with these traditions.

Description

In the region Alblasserwaard-Vijfheerenlanden there are farmers who still produce their products in authentic ways. They produce a variety of dairy products like cheese and ice-cream, and various juices, marmelades, wines, meat, honey etc. The farmer cultivates, processes and selects his materials very carefully and with skilled labour. Many farmers sell their products at their own farms. A visit to a farm can be combined with a guided tour, so that people can experience the way of life at the farm.

Den Hâneker facilitates the promotion and marketing of the sustainable local products and supports the development of new sales outlets. Den Hâneker also supports the producers and creates



networks through with they can exchange experiences and learn from each other.

More information

www.denhaneker.nl/aandachtsgebieden/streekproducten

23. Sustainable Community (BICI E AM.I.C.I.)

Cycle-tourism linking food and farming

Aregai, Terre di Benessere, Torino, Italy

Summary

The BICI e AM.I.C.I. project is a cycle-tourist initiative in the 25 municipalities of the Monferrato area. Its is creating a sustainable tourist network linking the economic interests of food and farming and the tourist businesses, together with the people's well-being.

Relevance to Softagri

The BICI e AM.I.C.I. emphasises to food producers the importance of working together, producing food sustainably and communicating clearly. For families and cycle-tourists the project focuses on the importance of a healthy diet, an active life and relaxation in beautiful countryside to improve one's quality of life.

Description

Aregai is a non-profit cultural association whose mission is to integrate tradition and innovation to help communities live in a healthy environment. The bicycle trip has been designed along the beautiful hills and fields of Monferrato, an area rich in history, tradition and gastronomic specialities. The Monferrato area has been nominated to become a UNESCO world heritage site.

The BICI e AM.I.C.I. project provides



two different itineraries: one on the hills (around typical wine cellars) and the other along the valley (taking in a series of mills). Along the routes the local businesses such as farms, bed and breakfast and restaurants work as:

- stage points: proving that the cycle-tourists have passed through those locations. The book of coupons given to tourists at the beginning of their itinerary is stamped as the journey proceeds. Tourists are also offered food products (wine, oil, salami, rice etc.) and services (restaurant, bed and breakfast, toilets etc.)
- stop points: the cycle-tourists are welcomed with information

on what to visit or where to go to spend their free time. If needed, general customer care is provided.

The producers involved in the project commit themselves to be sustainable and to communicate clearly the environmental and social results achieved through the agreement with "The certificate of transparency" and L.I.C.E.T. This system of certification stands for L. link with the territory; I: innovation; C: competitiveness and economic sustainability; E. ecology and environmental sustainability; T: protection, security and wellbeing. The registered trademark L.I.C.E.T. is used by Aregai to evaluate the producers that take part in the project.

More information

www.aregai.eu

www.emasmonferrato.it

24. Sustainable Community

Community involvement and sustainable development

Aregai, Terre di Benessere, Torino, Italy

Summary

In the project, school communities in four villages investigated the environmental and social aspects of a daily meal (pasta with tomatoes and omelette with stuffed carrots). The results were the focus of a workshop with local authorities, teachers, families, caterers and food producers).

Relevance to Softagri

The “Sustainable Community” project shows that a participatory process can raise awareness of the impact of different activities in the food system and uncover opportunities for sustainable development.

Description

Aregai is a cultural and non profit association for sustainable development. Its mission is to integrate tradition and innovation to improve social, environmental and economic aspects of the community. In a “Sustainable Community” organisations have specific roles, responsibilities and accountability.

The sustainable food chain can be considered as a series of processes with specific “owners” (such as caterers, food producers, purchaser, etc.). The “Sustainable Community ” project involved



different organizations in Como area (about 16.000 inhabitants per 6200 households): municipality and school (administrators, students, teachers, cooks, families, etc.) of Cermenate, Cirimido, Comasco, Limido, Vertemate con Minoprio; catering company; and others. The project:

1. Implemented a participatory process to identify the environmental effects of the different organisations involved in the food chain process;
2. Identified internal and external resources needed (such as materials, energy, water, and so on);
3. Identified and evaluated the risks of potential scarcity and monitored the use of natural resources;
4. Increased awareness of all actors in the food chain process (producers, management of: municipalities, schools, catering) so that they:
 - consider themselves a responsible part of the community
 - recognise the value of working in partnership, supporting the exchange of experiences, to promote and achieve the sustainable development.

More information

www.aregai.eu

www.educazionesostenibile.it

25. Systèmes Alimentaires Territorialisés (SALT)

Territorialized Food Systems

FRCIVAM Bretagne, Cesson-Sévigné Cédex, France

Summary

The SALT project studies how all short food chains can build a sustainable system in a particular territory through co-operation. It also proposes a formal method to evaluate the economic, social and environmental effects of short food chains.

Relevance to Softagri

Many studies have been made of particular forms of short food chains, such as AMAP (roughly equivalent to Community Supported Agriculture), farmers markets, farmers co-operative shops, and local public catering. This project considers the effects of all these types of initiatives in a specific territory to assess their contribution to local sustainability.

Description

Sustainable food projects aim to contribute to more sustainable methods of food production, processing and distribution. Many such projects are very creative and try, for example, to link consumers to farmers, promote healthy food and aim to save energy and reduce pollutants. But research on the impact of these initiatives remains poorly documented, at an individual project level, and is even weaker for the aggregated impact of the projects as a whole.



A method, Systèmes Alimentaires Territorialisés (SALT), has been developed through co-operation between civil society organizations (led by FRCIVAM Bretagne) and research (led by Agrocampus Ouest). The SALT project was launched in 2006, and is funded by the Regional Council of Brittany, as part of its co-operative research budget. The project is also linked to European projects under “science in society” that allow European perspectives (FAAN) and more detailed data on environmental issues (CRÊPE).

The method is based on the evaluation of all facilities distributing local food in a territory. Their individual characteristics are

explored, but SALT mainly considers the systemic interactions between them. There are case studies in peri-urban conditions (Rennes Métropole), highly rural regions (Centre Ouest Bretagne) and mixed territories (Dinan) that:

- show maps of initiatives and actors
- evaluate economic effects (e.g. turnover, employment) generated by short food chains
- identify participants’ motivations and aims on sustainability issues
- offer advice for local authorities on strategies to build sustainable food systems.

A guidance book will be published in 2010.

More information

www.civam-bretagne.org/civam.php?ref_rub=21&ref=59

Book “les circuits courts alimentaires – bien manger dans les territoires” by Gilles Maréchal, editions Educagri, 2008

26. Using biodiversity in agriculture

Wakelyns Agroforestry Farm

Fressingfield, Suffolk, UK

Summary

The project is investigating mixed cropping to see how crops can benefit from interactions - expected and unforeseen - among the different plants in the agricultural systems.

Relevance to Softagri

This experimental farm is testing new models in the hope that these highly diverse growing systems, with no external inputs, will provide new techniques for stockless organic farms that other producers can learn from.

Description

The farm's 60 acres are laid out for 'alley-cropping', with belts of trees running north-south across the fields. The farm has a number of different agroforestry systems, characterised by the tree belts - mixed hardwood and fruit tree standards, willow coppice and hazel coppice. The agricultural projects are rotated around these systems, investigating cereals, potatoes and mixed vegetable cropping.

The project challenges the consensus that monoculture systems (that depend on fossil fuels) give the best yields. Polycultural systems take advantage of multiple interactions among all combinations



of the trees, their under-storey, the crops and the green manures. The current major project (funded by the UK government's Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs) is developing diverse wheat "populations", in which each plant in the crop is different from every other. Such crops show immense capacity to protect themselves against varying environments and may prove particularly valuable in a time of climate change and high oil prices.

This stockless organic farm is similar to mixed farms with animals,

but in this case it is very small animals and micro-organisms that convert the green manure crops and other residues into useful fertility. Food crops are a by-product of the experimental procedures. However, the farm produces significant quantities of potatoes, vegetables, cereals and wood for fuel and crafts. The bulk of the potatoes and vegetables is sold, including to local people and markets, and a local shop and pub. Much of the wood fuel is used for on-farm heating as part of a longer-term project for self-sufficiency, and perhaps even export, in energy.

More information

www.wakelyns.co.uk

The farm is part of the Organic Research Centre:
www.organicresearchcentre.org

Functional biodiversity by Professor Martin Wolfe -
www.organicresearchcentre.org/manage/authincludes/article_uploads/art006.pdf

Wheat breeding: Generating and evaluating a novel genetic resource in wheat in diverse environments by Professor Martin Wolfe and Professor John Snape -
www.orgprints.org/6671/1/ORC_wheat_breeding_2007.pdf

27. Van Eigen Erf: Dutch local farm food

Organic Good

Biologisch Goed Van Eigen Erf (associate partner of SPN), the Netherlands

Summary

Van Eigen Erf promotes local organic food for better health, taste, sustainability and income for farmers. They run a training programme to professionalise farm shops, and organise workshops and knowledge exchange programmes. They also help set up cooperatives and new distribution channels like web shops. For consumers they organise farm events to promote the use of regional organic ingredients.

Relevance to Softagri

Van Eigen Erf trains organic producers to improve their farm shops and web shops including in marketing, shop interior, software, product range, logistics, legal aspects and financing. They also help to develop new product lines like regional bread, meat and other foods. The consumer 'training' programme includes farm events farm to educate consumers about where their food comes from and the advantages of using local organic food.

Description

Van Eigen Erf started in 2001 with a group of organic farmers that wanted better margins for their produce by selling directly to consumers. Direct local sale was also an opportunity for small scale farmers and farmers with specialty products that were



too small for supermarkets to be interested. Larger scale farmers could reduce their risks by adding direct sales to their market. Naturally, organic farmers saw the advantages of fewer food miles, at that time an idealistic notion, as it is consistent with their way of environmentally friendly farming.

Van Eigen Erf began by developing new distribution channels to support local sales. The foundation of regional web shops was and still is a successful distribution channel for local sales. Since the foundation of one web shop in 2001 with a turnover of 300.000 euro, there are now eight web shops with a national turnover of about 5 million euro and an annual growth of 40% for the last two years. To support local web shops, knowledge exchange programmes are organised for entrepreneurs, to help with their

marketing programmes and assist in choosing software programmes.

Each year Van Eigen Erf organises a national network event with workshops. In 2010 this will be organised at the BIOVAK, a trade fair for organic farmers. The programme will include selling to restaurants, care houses for the elderly, catering, farmers markets and local sale in supermarkets. Van Eigen Erf is also co-writer of the handbook for the local sale of farm food.

The consumer programme consists of yearly events at the farm, like the annual Open House at the organic farms (organised with Biologica) and the Burgundy dinners where consumers have a special dinner in a special setting at the farm, like the stable between the cows or in the field!

More information

www.vaneigenerf.nl

28. Waddengoud

A sustainable fishery in the Waddensea

Waddengroep (associate partner of SPN), the Netherlands

Summary

Sustainable fishery methods were developed and promoted in one of the main European protected nature reserves.

Relevance to Softagri

The project developed an approach for developing sustainable fishery methods that has been copied and used in other situations by other organisations. It aims to bridge the knowledge gap between producers, consumers and retailers about sustainable fishery.

Description

The Waddengroep is an associate partner of SPN (st. Streekeigen Producten Nederland), and is a regional non-governmental organisation that develops and markets sustainable products.

The “Waddengoud” label provides consumers with a broad range of sustainable products of guaranteed high quality from the Wadden Sea region. Only locally produced and processed products qualify for the Waddengoud label.

The standards for the sustainability criteria for the label are based on KRAV fishery standards. The Waddengoud label will be given to fishermen complying with these



standards and the Waddengroup inspects premises to ensure compliance, or appoints a third party to do so. If inspection shows that standards are not fully complied with, the business is told what the shortcomings are, and how long they have to make the changes to come up to standard.

The Waddengroup started with standards for the Waddengoud fishery for thick lip, thin lip and golden mullet with gill net and seine (*Chelon labrosus*, *Liza ramada* en *Liza aurata*) and sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*). In the Wadden Sea itself, the rules that are in force in this area change over time so, once a year the Waddengroup

evaluates the Waddengoud certified fishery to see if standards need to be adjusted to take account of any new developments and scientific insights.

The Waddengroup promotes the Waddengoud label to consumers and retailers and helps producers and fishermen to development new markets for their produce. More than 20 small businesses are participating in the project, including seven fishermen, processors and trading companies. In total, more than 400 products are certified with the Waddengoud label, providing extra income and market opportunities to more than 150 small businesses in the region.

More information

www.waddengoud.nl

www.waddengoud.nl/wadden-documenten-artikelen/mullet-sea-bass-waddengoud-Standards-April-2006-3-uk.doc

29. Week of Taste

SPN, Biologica

Slow Food Netherlands and Eurotoques Netherlands

Summary

The Week of Taste is an annual national event in the last week of September. It aims to inform consumers and retailers about the richness of locally produced, sustainable products. It also aims to stimulate new alliances between producers, retailers, processing industries and consumers.

Relevance to Soft Agri

The Week of Taste is mainly a communication campaign for consumers. However, it also provides a platform to producers, processing industries and organisations to inform consumers about their products and about sustainable production and consumption. By initiating new campaigns on public food and healthy consumption, the Week of Taste has become relevant for schools and the health sector too.

Description

The Week of Taste is a national event practices in the last week of September focusing on good food. In 2009 saw the 3rd event and over 400 organisations participated with activities and events at 3500 locations throughout the whole country. Communication and publicity has reached around 3,5 million consumers (newspapers, radio, TV).



Although the Week of Taste is a national event, the organisation is largely decentralised. Highlights are the 'special projects' like the 'Heroes of Taste' competition, Mooie Maaltijd (A Good Meal) for care institutions and the opening event. Each year a city is nominated as the 'Capital of Taste'. In 2009 this was Amsterdam, and their campaign was 'city of 1001

flavours'. In addition, every year the 'Lessons of Taste' campaign is organised for around 100.000 children in elementary schools.

The Week of Taste is a co-production of four organisations concerned with the quality of food and the sustainability of production and consumption patterns.

More information

www.weekvandesmaak.nl



Education and Culture
Lifelong Learning Programme
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A report of the Softagri project 2008-2010

**Key elements of sustainable food
production and consumption:
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