Wolverton Dairy Group

Summary

Wolverton Dairy Group is a small buying group of friends and neighbours based in Wolverton, Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire. The group currently receives a weekly delivery of milk, butter, cream and eggs from GA Adderson’s small traditionally run dairy farm in North Crawley. The farm is approximately 12 miles from Wolverton and is the nearest source of sustainably produced dairy produce. Group members collect their orders from a town centre location.

Background

For a few years, GA Adderson Dairy had a stall at Wolverton’s bi-monthly farmers' market. Unfortunately due to on farm demands and low profit margins on dairy produce, they were unable to continue. A small group of market volunteers arranged to pick up milk and cream and sell it on the market’s cafe stall. However, wastage and low profit margins made this difficult to sustain.

Following discussions about 'breaking the supermarket habit' among the town’s new Transition group, a couple of volunteers arranged a weekly collection from the farm. As the farm was on the route home from work for one of the volunteers, it was possible to collect milk without additional financial or environmental costs.

Procedures

The Dairy Group was set up as a Transition initiative. An on-line order form was created using Google Docs. This enabled group members to manage their orders and the groups co-ordinator to collate the quantities and email the order to the farm. Members would then collect their order every Tuesday evening from the co-ordinator's house.

Progress

To broaden the reach of the group and take away some of the burden of organisation from the volunteer co-ordinator, it partnered with a local youth training social enterprise. This organisation has a catering enterprise which uses a significant amount of milk. The total milk order has grown rapidly to a level where it has become viable for the farm to deliver to Wolverton. The social enterprise now provides the venue for collecting the individual orders and has involved it's trainees in the administration and distribution of the produce.
Case study  Wolverton Dairy Group

People

The group is run by a volunteer co-ordinator and three social enterprise workers who are voluntarily adding this to their workload at an Urban Farm project because they are hoping to build a customer base who will also eventually order vegetables from them.

Practical resources

The resources used by the group include

- Computer with e-mail and Google Docs,
- a car and several bicycles (in the beginning before deliveries were possible)
- two coolboxes,
- telephone,
- a secure milk crate storage cabinet (that a volunteer made so that the milk wouldn’t get stolen before the centre opened up on Tuesday mornings) and
- a fridge.

Promotion

The scheme is promoted via the Transition Wolverton e-mail group, Milton Keynes Christian Foundation, and word of mouth.

Achievements

Before the group formed, it was not possible to buy local dairy produce in the town. The membership of the group is now big enough that the farmer will deliver outside their usual delivery area. This also gives the farmer a guaranteed weekly order.