Sustainable Food Chains: What Does it Take? A Consumer Co-operative’s Standpoint

European Community of Consumer Co-operatives

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Overview of Euro Coop

General Facts

- European association of consumer co-operatives
- Members: national consumer co-operative organizations in 19 countries
- Members’ main activity: retail

General Numbers

- 5,000 local consumer co-operatives
- 500,000 employees
- 36,000 points of sale
- 32 million consumer-members
- > €76 billion annual retail turnover
Main goals

- Represent the members before the EU Institutions
- Exchange of experiences, best practices, Know-how
- Providing information on key policy issues

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Different entrepreneurial model based on values and principles

VALUES →

Supply Change in European Food Chains, Milan – 23 & 24 October 2015
The Co-operative Difference (II)

PRINCIPLES:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Co-operation among Co-operatives
7. Concern for Community
Because of their specific entrepreneurial form based on values and principles co-operatives are generally considered as inherently sustainable businesses.

The concept of sustainability is rooted in the one of sustainable development, which we intend as indicated by the United Nations.

“A mode of human development in which resource use aims to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment, so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come”

Sustainable Food Chains: a Vision (I)

Sustainable Food Chains are those that:

✓ Produce **safe, healthy** products in response to market demands and ensure that all consumers have **access to nutritious food** and to **accurate information** about food products

✓ Support the **viability** and **diversity** of **rural and urban economies and communities**

✓ Enable **viable livelihoods** to be made from **sustainable land management**, both through the market and through payments for public benefits

✓ **Respect and operate within the biological limits of natural resources** (especially soil, water and biodiversity)
Sustainable Food Chains are those that:

☑ Achieve consistently high standards of environmental performance by reducing energy consumption, minimizing resource inputs and using renewable energy wherever possible

☑ Ensure a safe and hygienic working environment and high social welfare and training for all employees involved in the food chain

☑ Achieve consistently high standards of animal health and welfare

☑ Sustain the resource available for growing food and supplying other public benefits over time, except where alternative land uses are essential to meet other needs of society

(UK Sustainable Development Commission)
Sustainable Food Chains: What does it take? (I)

✓ A coherent, multi-pronged message

✓ Leadership

✓ Co-operation and further understanding among food manufacturers, retailers, NGOs, governmental and farmers’ organizations
Sustainable Food Chains: What does it take? (II)

- Promote goods that take environmental and social aspects into specific consideration, e.g. organic, eco-labelled, Fair Trade etc. also through public procurement
- Act on food reformulation to include ingredients obtained in a sustainable way
- Promote higher animal welfare standards
- Encourage seasonal food products and a higher diversity among food products
Inform and educate consumers on the impacts of different food choices.

Promote more sustainable food choices throughout the food supply chain by increasing their availability/accessibility.

Make the “right” option (e.g. local, seasonal, Fair Trade etc.) the “easiest” option.
Sustainable Food Chains: Some Good Examples (I)

The Co-operative Group UK:

- Greatest commitment to Fairtrade in the UK, second to none in terms of Fairtrade products availability

- ‘Responsible Fish Sourcing Policy’ since 2008, which governs the sourcing of all own-brand wild and farmed seafood. Aim to maintain position as one of the UK’s most responsible retailers of fish

- Since 2008 all shell eggs free-range, and all own-brand eggs certified either Freedom Food (98%) or organic (2%)

- Several initiatives to reduce food waste, a.o.: use of computer-guided lasers to punch tomatoes plastic packages → better control of moisture level, less food waste; first UK retailer to include in bags for food sold loose storage instructions; switched emphasis of promotional offers from volume-led deals (“buy one get one free“) to value-driven promotions (half-price offers)
Coop Italy:

- First in the world to launch Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) certification for beef and veal. It includes nutritional, social and economic aspects of beef and veal consumption and production. Aim to make transparent and publicly available data on environmental impacts of beef and veal supply chain so to reduce them.

- "Water from my own place" campaign → Aim to raise awareness among consumers about water scarcity and responsible water use. Encouraged tap water consumption, more visibility to local mineral water, info on the distance between point of sale and mineral water sources.

- "Buon fine" project → Donation of still edible, unsold food products to charities and people in need.
Coop Denmark

- “GoCook” → app which teaches consumers recipes, storage indications and products specification
- Single Bananas → Bananas sold separately. 6,000 less bananas wasted everyday
- Unsold, unedible food sent to biogas production (-10,000 tons CO2/year)

Coop Norway

- Campaign same price organic / conventional food
- Single Bananas + business-led project to reduce the amount of edible food waste by 25% before end 2015
Sustainable Food Chains: Some Good Examples (VI)

S Group Finland

✓ Biofuel from food waste, EkoFlex E85
✓ Largest seller of organic products in Finland
✓ Since 2007 price reduction practices harmonisation so that all products approaching the “best before” date are sold at a discount

Coop Sweden

✓ All stores KRAV-certified, then required to feature a broad range of organic products and train the staff about organic production
✓ Innovative fishing policy → all seafood sold complies with strict environmental criteria, explanation of feeding methods to farmed fish, no beam trawled fish, no GMOs in the KRAV-labelled fish feed

AND MANY, MANY MORE!
Thank you for your attention!

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