



FACTSHEET No 1, August 2016

SHORT SUPPLY CHAIN: THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

“Short distribution channels increase the income of producers and ensure the survival of a large number of farms [...]. They can help improve environmental performance [...] and preserve and support local traditions, while at the same time linking the product to a geographical area shared by producers and consumers”

EU Commission- Green Paper on promotion measures and information provision for agricultural products
COM(2011) 436

What is Campagna Amica?

Coldiretti is the main Italian and European association of farmers which created the Foundation **Campagna Amica** to explain citizens the

importance and the value of agriculture. Since its start, the Foundation worked to collect initiatives



aimed to promote, value, and enhance the **quality of local food products** and their links with the history, the culture, and the traditions of the country.

Under the name of Campagna Amica, Coldiretti built the **Italian Agricultural Supply Chain**, to build-up an agro-food system which has the twofold objective of offering consumers high-quality food products and to allow producers to gain a fairer value to their job.

Thus, in 2010 the **National Network of Selling Points of Campagna Amica** has been launched, a commercial network of farmers where only 100% Italian agricultural food products is available. At the beginning, the network was made up of 550 **farmers' markets**. In May 2016, the number of direct selling points has increased to 10,199, including Farmers' Markets, farms, agritourism, restaurants, urban gardens, and small shops (known as “Botteghe”) in urban areas where only Italian agricultural food is on sale.

The food authenticity and its origin are guaranteed by a **system of controls** implemented by Campagna Amica, which consists of the following:

- A first self-check from producers and suppliers of the network, who formally accept the **rules** imposed by Campagna Amica (declaration on the origin of products, acceptance to be under an external control and related penalties, use of the common visual signs, etc.);
- A second control made by the officers of the territorial services of Coldiretti who produce a dossier for each farmer analysed;
- A third control made by a certification and inspection company on the dossiers produced during the second phase;
- A last control is conducted on Farmers' Markets and Botteghe by a group of experts of food-safety, anti-fraud, labelling, and hygiene, which report directly to Foundation Campagna Amica.

How was the network constructed?

The building up of the network was a quite long process which started in the early 2000s and involved farmers, consumers, and institutions. In 2001, an Italian law changed the nature of the agricultural enterprises, making them more market-oriented, with a multi-function role in the society. In 2007, then, Farmers' Markets were formally introduced in Italy. In this context, Coldiretti started the construction of the network



www.strength2food.eu

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 678024. This document reflects the view only of the author, and the Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

of direct selling points of food working on different fronts:

✓ **Awareness of consumers.**

First of all, Coldiretti realized that consumers were not aware of what they eat, of the origin of food, and of the importance of agriculture for the survival of the



entire society. For this reason, in 2007 Coldiretti created Campagna Amica, to establish a direct contact between consumers and allow them to interact and talk to each other. In 2009, it started to build the network of direct selling points of Italian food products, and these places became spaces where consumers could buy **high-quality** food, and at the same time receive information about that food and its origin, the producers, and about the importance of **sustainability, biodiversity,** and agriculture in general. Within Farmer's Markets, experts of Coldiretti or Campagna Amica have started informing consumers with the distribution of printed **leaflets, publications, video, magazines,** and face-to-face informative activities.

✓ **Involvement of food producers.** The remarkable success of such initiative lies in the engagement of farmers as key element. Coldiretti worked to make producers conscious of the new public role they play in the society, emphasising the **benefits** derived from a short supply chain in terms of **turnover, employment,** promotion of farmers' activity, and **bargaining power** along the supply chain.

✓ **Rules.** To guarantee the functionality of the network, to make it recognizable among other initiatives, and to not disappoint consumers, Coldiretti and Campagna Amica defined a **set of**

rules that farmers should respect to participate in the network. These include:

- a. the use of the same brand, colours, tablecloths, apron, and other marketing signals;
- b. the acceptance of the Regulation about the use of the brand;
- c. the acceptance of common behavioural rules;
- d. the acceptance of a Code of Ethics which refers also to environmental issues (land use control, reduction of transport and packaging, protection of biodiversity, ect.)
- e. the acceptance of the Controls System.

The existence of these rules, unique visual marks and logo, recognizable and common in the entire Italian peninsula, triggered an effective word of mouth among consumers to promote a virtuous cycle of growth and development of the Network of Campagna Amica.

✓ **Training.** Farmers are food producers and not retailers. This is the starting point of a process of training that Coldiretti and Campagna Amica have organized for farmers participating in direct selling to prepare them for this "new job". In particular, some of the key issues relate to marketing, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, labelling, etc.

✓ **Beyond food.** During these years of network construction and since its consolidation, Coldiretti and Campagna Amica

increased the services offered to consumers, starting from the awareness that for consumers,



food is not only "calories" but also "culture", "tradition", "knowledge", and "sharing"; that consumers not only look quality food but also for a "right" and "honest" food.



Therefore, Coldiretti and Campagna Amica have made their Farmers' Markets places where consumers can buy good food while attending **cultural initiatives** as positive ethical aspects can be major selling points to consumers.

The role of Coldiretti and Campagna Amica in the Strength2Food project: the pilot action.

The experience and the outcomes achieved by Coldiretti with Campagna Amica have shown that a short supply chain, in its several forms, can **benefit** producers, consumers, and the whole society, from **economic, social** and **environmental** points of view.

Some surveys conducted by Coldiretti highlight that producers participating in the Farmers' Markets of Campagna Amica have increased their **turnover**, their **workforce**, and the **quantity** and **range** of products sold. Consumers appreciate buying within the Farmers' Markets of Campagna Amica, where they find **high-quality** food products but also information about agriculture, **seasonality** of products, **tradition, rural heritage**, and **ethic aspects**. Among the positive impacts, Farmers' Markets also play a key role in revitalizing and defending **rural areas** and conserving the biodiversity of the country.

From these positive impacts on the development of the territory and the local economy, the pilot action conducted in the framework on the Stregnth2Food project will promote Farmers' Markets in some more remote and disadvantaged areas in the South of Italy, to promote consumer's awareness and improve the returns to local producers.

This pilot action will exploit an application for smartphones named **Farmers for you** to help consumers find information about the existence and location of Farmers' Markets, and their products and services, and thus to encourage them to attend the markets. The pilot action will be implemented in the South of Italy where most of the agricultural foodstuff is produced, particularly where the produce is sold



through short channels (such as for fresh fruit and vegetables, olive oil, pasta, ect.), and where there is a high demand for local products and the network of Campagna Amica is less developed. The evaluation of the effectiveness of such initiative will be assessed using some developed metrics for smartphone app usage behaviour.

For more information, please consult

www.coldiretti.it

www.campagnamica.it



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