

Put Aragon on Your Table

Supporting a short supply chain of local food in Spain's Aragon region



Summary

Food producers and providers in Spain's Aragon region have taken advantage of RDP funds that are available for promoting local food through short supply-chains - via a coordinated system of local and online outlets across an area larger than the Netherlands.



Type of project

Short Food Supply Chain

Priority/focus area, measure

Promoting food chain organisation

Theme

Competitiveness of agriculture,
Balanced territorial development of rural economies
and communities

Location

Zaragoza, Aragon region, Spain

Funding

Total RDP funding € 2 750 000

Type of beneficiary

LAG

Duration

2009 – 2013

Website

www.ponaragonentumesa.com

Description

Official project title

Put Aragon on Your Table “Pon Aragon en Tu Mesa”

Context and needs

Everyone needs food and RDP funds play effective roles in helping to ensure that EU citizens have access to a good choice of healthy, quality food. Providing local food for local people is another important priority for RDPs and funds are available in the Member States for a useful variety of projects that promote ‘short supply-chains’ of local food.

Objectives

LEADER LAGs from 20 different territories in Spain’s Aragon wanted to take advantage of rural development benefits from short supply-chains regarding local food. Objectives for the LAG cooperation included improving connections between food consumers, food producers, and food processors. This was expected to offer benefits for rural residents who would not need to travel so far to buy food if it is provided locally. Fewer links in the supply-chain could also cut costs, which would help to make local food more affordable and fresher. Direct sales approaches would be promoted as part of the project because these were known to be the shortest supply-chains, which allowed stronger relationships between consumers and food providers. Boosting business development opportunities and competitiveness was thus another core aim of the project.

Activities

Aragon’s approach evolved over time to cover an integrated and systematic collection of actions promoting local food that are coordinated under a marketing initiative named ‘Put Aragon on Your Table’. Hundreds of farmers, food producers, restaurants, shops, local associations (including the 20 LEADER groups), public sector bodies and technical service providers have all been involved in the project. Together they supply a huge range of fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, oils, spices, cereals, confectionery, wines and other drinks, as well as processed and canned foods across an area larger than the Netherlands.

Results

Key results relate to the project’s successes in raising awareness about the availability, quality and diversity of Aragon’s local food. This encourages consumers and providers of Aragon food to increase their interest in either buying or selling local products.

Training schemes and cookery courses have also been funded to promote demand for local food by schools, commercial caterers, and households. A network of well-used Aragon ‘food routes’ was established for residents and visitors alike. These are complemented by a stock of other gastronomic products and regular events organised by the project’s customer-oriented management strategy.

Social agendas, including healthy eating habits, form integral aspects of this rural development project’s on-going work plan, which represents good practice in implementing such a complex short supply-chain for local food products.

Lessons

Effective coordination has been a cornerstone of the project’s success and management inputs have to take account of a great many different stakeholders’ requirements. Fostering cooperation between the various links in the supply-chain helps to run operations as efficiently as possible. Supervision involves ensuring adequate supplies of quality food remain accessible via local and online outlets - hence pro-active principles are applied to promoting and controlling the initiative.

Other lessons underscore the finding that consumers often like to know how and where their food is produced - so buying direct allows them to ask any questions they have about their purchases. Producers also gain from such interaction because they get to know useful information about their customers’ purchasing patterns, interests, and loyalty factors.

Short supply-chains therefore offer ‘win-win’ opportunities and other positive outcomes linked with this type of rural development activity include less transport costs and vehicle pollution. Restaurants and tourist businesses also often favour selling local food that can be branded to act as an asset for attracting culinary or cultural tourists.

Quotes from beneficiaries/participants

“The project aims to put Aragonese products on the table of the Aragonese people, giving a positive impulse to rural development and promoting the tourism opportunities provided by the food produced in the region.”

Pon Aragon en Tu Mesa website

“Collaborative projects like this have proven their worth and the interest they have for our rural areas.”

Luis Marruedo: Aragon’s Director General of Rural Development

Contact

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www.ponarogentumesa.com

Additional sources of information, links

www.facebook.com/Ponarogentumesa