

### 3N - How transparent is your short chain? Where does your money go?

Theme: Short chains and urban agriculture  
Moderator: Greet Goverde (Platform Aarde Boer Consument)  
Speakers: Simon Clissold (The Food Hub), Jocelyn Parot (Urgenci), Jack Stroeken (Beebox)

#### Report

Simon Clissold and two others run a shop on the outskirts of Leuven, soon moving to the center. It is also a webshop. You can see that they sell from the shop but also deliver to collection points and to people's doorsteps. The products are organic and mainly local but they also source from southern Europe (transport by ship). Simon knows all his 40 farmers/producers personally and has visited them, he thinks that's what's most important: connecting to 'your' farmer. On the website you can even see where the money goes per product, e.g. for oranges 31% transport and distribution, 63% to the farmer, VAT (BTW) 6%. This is very labour intensive but very transparent. He looks for: organic farmers, but also: small scale, local, family business. Relationship with the farmers is more important than papers that people sign. 'Paper is patient', rules can be avoided'.

It's also a centre for projects: this year kitchen, soup making, catering. He thinks organic shops are not transparent. There are hardly any 'food hubs' in Flanders. There are no farmers' markets in Flanders. There are the foodteams (clubs of consumers) but they sometimes complain: "You have to eat what you get and some farmers take advantage of them", the food is sometimes not fresh.

Jocelyn Parot talks first about CSAs generally: The California Farm Bill says a CSA should be farm-based. Japan: CSA movement and organic movement are interchangeable - it had the first CSAs. In France there are about 400 'AMAPs' (CSAs) one third consumer-led, one third farmer-led, some mixed. Farmers on average sell 25% through CSA - how about their other streams? They should be transparent about those as well. Should CSAs require certified 'organic'? In France most of the AMAPs are not certified: they are based on trust. In southern Europe they now apply PGS system because certification for organic is so expensive ('participatory guarantee system' peer-to-peer judgement during visits, plus opinion of a network like Dutch Nautilus (organic growers' organisation). In France there is 'La ruche qui dit oui' (a pun at the older AMAPs that are said to be grumpy, inflexible). 'La Ruche' is a box scheme operating from Paris. There's big money behind La Ruche. On the website they say 83% goes to the farmer (plus his transport to the village - within 250 km - and spending a few hours there). They are not clear about how decisions are made, and about how they arrive at the percentage of the consumer's price that goes to the farmer.

Jac Stroeken - he is on the board of Beebox. Every week on Wednesday afternoons farmers from all over the country bring their products to Loenen (a/d Vecht); average mileage 100-120 km. They may be transporting more than their own products, to different places. The products are 100% organic and 100% Dutch. On Thursday mornings the products are packed into boxes by a group of people and then transported to the franchise takers - one of them, Chris, (one of the 2 franchisers in Utrecht) attended the workshop. They deliver the products, if necessary in cooling boxes, to collection points, often in supermarkets such as Jumbo and Spar. From Loenen to the consumer it takes 250 km on average; the average product in the supermarket has travelled 2500 km, so it' is only 10%. Chris has 5 districts with now 140 clients, he should get about 300 to earn a decent income. There are 30 franchisers in all.

Clients stay members for about 9 months. Competition is tough nowadays (Hello Fresh or Marley Spoon which has big money from Zalando behind it). It is cooperative: decisions are taken by four groups with equal weight: consumers, farmers (individual farmers and a representative of an organic farmers' organization), the organizers/distributors, and a 'Social Impact Bank' (part of ABN AMRO). The cooperative owns the shares. The farmer gets 50% and the profits go to the cooperative.

We discussed what criteria, or rather, more friendly, what starting points we could formulate, e.g. to go by when entering a 'food hub' on the Voedsel Anders website on the 'short chain map'. A LEI report shows that on average the farmer gets between 20% on cucumbers and 40% on eggs. Examples of food cooperatives are De Nieuwe Graanschuur, Lazuur, Wilde Weelde, Rechtstreex, Beebox, Willem en Drees, Hello Fresh and Marley Spoon. There was a lady of 'Goudsbloem' in the audience. We discussed the criteria.

## Outcomes

1. Know your farmer(s) Simon: It's absolutely essential that you know who the farmers are, that you have a personal relationship with them.
2. Good quality food (preferably certified organic, or another quality system, or your trust of the farmer) preferably from the area.
3. How much of the money goes to the farmer? Ask for transparency in that field. Compare LEI report: Between 20 and 40%. It should be more than that.
4. Where does the profit go? In a cooperative it is invested in the cooperative or is spent on 'green' projects. At the other extreme: it goes to investors. Who takes the decisions? Is it a hierarchical or democratic setup?

## More information

- Website and webshop The Food Hub, [www.thefoodhub.be/](http://www.thefoodhub.be/)
- Website Urgenci, <http://urgenci.net/>
- Website Beebox, <https://beebox.nl/>
- Report, 'Prijsvorming van Voedsel: ontwikkelingen van prijzen in acht Nederlandse ketens van versproducten', [https://www.wageningenur.nl/upload\\_mm/9/0/4/40460922-9b22-4ea7-a2f4-b57bb5360987\\_LEI\\_Rapport%2014-112\\_web\\_nieuw.pdf](https://www.wageningenur.nl/upload_mm/9/0/4/40460922-9b22-4ea7-a2f4-b57bb5360987_LEI_Rapport%2014-112_web_nieuw.pdf)