



Farmer seeks customer – customer seeks farmer

Cooperative fund

Aim

Invest in making production more sustainable; help young farmers get started; greater visibility for producers in shops, renew the link between farmer and customer; greater transparency; fair distribution of the added value and risks throughout the supply chain; community-building together with civil society organisations and a retailer.

Concept

This fund aims to support farmers by investing in or providing project support for sustainable production projects. Such projects may include switching from crops for which the local demand is low to crops for which there is a high demand, switching to crops with a high level of sustainability or transitioning to organic farming. The fund is also intended to help farmers who are just starting out in the profession to purchase farmland.

Farmers, at least one retailer, customers or other interested citizens, and civil society organisations can all participate in this cooperative fund. It aims to create a long-term relationship/partnership between all involved. The board of the cooperative fund should include a good balance of the interests of all parties and act as an arbitrator between retailers and farmers. Each link in the chain should be represented, with a particular focus on the position of the farmer. The retailer may not play a dominant role on the board.

The fund can work on the basis of calls for projects and/or on the basis of a set of criteria which are used to select projects from those submitted. The farmer plays a central role in the communication process, as the campaign will focus on their story (storytelling) and strive to create close links between the farmer, customers and retailer (community-building).

Results

- A more sustainable range of products instore- everyone knows who the farmer is
- Less food waste, as supply is tailored to demand
- Farmers who participate in the fund have a guaranteed turnover for a fair price
- The fund also invests in risk-sharing (to account for fluctuations in production and prices)
- Recognition for the retailer's efforts to promote a sustainable product range: image boost
- Greater stability for the retailer
- Fair profit-sharing between all links in the chain (farmer and customers) and the supply chain is highlighted
- Twofold action on the part of the customer: they can both buy sustainable produce and participate in expanding the range of sustainable products on offer
- Product subscriptions for customers and/or partners (guaranteed sales + link to customer + low-entry point)
- Efficient and tailored to the right size