



Short supply chains and the organic pig meat sector

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European Coordination Via Campesina

Definition Short Supply Chains

“Supply chains involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to cooperation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between food producers, processors and consumers.”

The EU's rural development regulation (1305/2013)

Organic in Pig Meat Sector

- The organic pig farming sector represents **less than 1 % of all pig farming in the EU**. Austria and Denmark have higher levels of organic pig farming (3%), as does Sweden (2%).
- Organic pig and poultry production shows **higher annual growth rates** (respectively 6% and 10%).
- Unlike conventional ones, organic pig production systems must **include access to a free-range area**.



Some data on organic and standard pork meat production

Country	Total organic meat (in thousands of tonnes)	Total meat production (in thousands of tonnes)
Belgium	1,63	1098,72
France	21,6	2201,11
Italy		1270,87
Spain	3,61	5003,43

Eurostat

Italy : Valli Unite Soc. Coop. Agr. (Elisabeth Paul)

Agricultural cooperative in Costa Vescovato (Alessandria), northern Italy. They are **22 associates**, and 4 people are working part time / full time in the pig and meat sector. The farm is **100 ha of woodland** and mixed farming including **24 ha of vineyards, orchards, vegetable, bees** etc.

Production and Reproduction

- 12.000 tons of live weight a year and this is translated in: 9600kg meat (most used for charcuterie).
- Birth and fattening in one system.
- Capacity: around 70 animals.
- Breeds: Large White x Duroc.
- Natural insemination: 4 sows, 1 male.
- Slaughter age: 10 - 14 months.
- Slaughter weight: 180kg - 240kg.
- Slaughter on farm in organic certified slaughterhouse.



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System semi free range “Semi-brado”

- **Certified organic** on pig farming since 20 years.
- From April to October **free range** with additional daily feeding.
- From November to March in the **stables** with access to paddock.
- Organic production: straw bedding, outside access, fed with feed, vegetables and fruits of the season (pumpkin, apples, old bread etc).



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Feed production

- **Barley**: produced within the farm.
- **Fava beans**: produced within the farm.
- **Bran**: produced within the farm.
- **Sorghum / Corn**: (30% of production) have to buy as it cannot be produced, drought.
- **Mineral** supplements are bought.

Outdoor

- 2.5 ha available for **free range** with water and feeding places.
- 60 animals for fattening in the outside rearing.
- **Landscape** has been sown with edible crops and has **fruit trees** and **shrubs** and roots for additional nutrition.

Output :

- **Manure mixed** with bovine manure for **fertilization** of other agricultural areas of the same farm (all organically produced).

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Products are sold in **farm shop**, **local farmers market**, our **restaurant**, other restaurants and **institutions** like university for lessons on meat.

Pricing :

- Cost: 3.8€ - 4.0€ / kg live weight at the slaughterhouse.
- Sale: 6.2€ / kg carcass weight in halves.
- Price range from 8€ - 17€ for different cuts in farm shop (depend on type of cut).
- Salumi / charcuterie: 18€/kg - 33€/kg depending on the product and weight loss through ageing.

Difficulties :

- Find **organic certified sows** and intact males.
- Find **organic corn**, that has no fungi infection and mycotoxin load: zearalenone, as organic corn is not treated
- **High cost and bureaucratic load for certification.**



France : Marine Jeannin

Marine and her companion have a small farm of 13 ha with 8 ha of **woodlands**, and 5 ha of **meadows**.

About the production :

- Organic.
- They breed 15 sows, and sell about 100 pigs per year at 9 to 10 months – 100 to 140 kg.
- **No grain production**, all the feed is bought.

About the sale :

- Pigs are slaughtered in a **slaughter house 1 hour from the farm** then processed in a cutting workshop on the farm.
- Fresh meat, sausages and various preparations under vacuum, sold in **2 local cooperative organic shops**.



*« With the lock-down in march 2020, people got more **conscious** about their food and the sales made a big jump. Now it went down again, and the price of **feed -and fuel-** is terribly rising causing real economic problems »*

Southern Alps : Richard Rougon

Family cattle farm converted to organic production of beef, with cereals and grassland.

About the production :

- Pigs is a complement to the beef production, and is not organic, because of lack of cereals.
- 200 piglets bought from traditional breeders in the area.



About the sale :

- slaughtered in a slaughter house – processed on farm (one son has a training).
- Started selling their products directly to consumers through a brother producing wine in Provence (further south - more population) – then build a cutting room on the farm with an adjoining shop.
- Enable to provide income to 4 people in the family : the farmer, his wife and 2 sons, plus hired staff.

« The label doesn't really count. People come back because they know the farm and the farmer, they like the product which is quite different from standard industrial production »

Spain : José Manuel Benitez Castaño

The farm is mountainous, 130 ha of holm oaks and thorns in a national park, the main production is pig with some cows.

About the production :

- Traditional production of Iberian pig and ramon de pata Negra.
- 20-30 yeaned piglets bought each year from a local breeder.
- animals kept free range and fed on acorn (sometimes complement with peas, with problems to find ecological supply without GMO contamination).
- Slaughtered at 18-20 months of age –110-130 kg in a local slaughter house.

About the sale :

- Some are sold to a pig factory for cash flow.
- Some are processed in a local custom cutting room.
- Black leg ramon needs to dry 3-4 years.
 - + other preparation (loin, sausages, shoulder, chorizo..).

*“my production is sold to people **who know**, individuals and consumers groups, in the **area or where I have connections**, like in the Basque country. The **label doesn't matter**, they know the **product is good**. IG and labels are important for industrial”*



Belgium : Patrick Siraux

Patrick converted his small maize and pig farm to processing, when he set up a butcher shop on the farm.

About the production :

- Used to have about 120 sows, now 40 sows. Also poultry.
- Pigs fed on maize (produced on the farm) and concentrates – not organic.
- 4 people from the family work on the farm.

About the sale :

- Every week, 3- 4 pigs are slaughtered on Mondays in a slaughter house 25 km away, and processed on Fridays by a butcher in a cutting workshop on the farm for direct sales, according to the demand.
- Fresh meat under vacuum – various preparation.
- Sold in boxes – or in the shop. Very simple presentation of products.
- The shop is now 100 m², and sells various products from 60-70 local producers.
- The municipality is sympathetic to local agriculture and offers good visibility to the farm shop (other pigs are sold to a merchant).



“after the crisis covid ended , the demand has gone down again, and price of grain is rising. We have to adapt to the demand and we should diminish the number of pigs in Belgium ”

Comments on short food chains

It's a **LOCAL-market driven activity**, which adapts to various ecological-socio-economic situations in diverse and smart ways

- Processing and selling his-her products directly through short food chains is **very rewarding for farmers**, with nice remarks and **appreciation of customers and in terms of financial return**.

BUT it can't be taken for granted.

- Not all people are able to **appreciate the VALUE** of quality food.
- Many people do appreciate, **but are not able to pay the price for good quality**.
- In SFC, consumers want products that are **good, local**, processed by someone s.he knows and trust, respecting **animal welfare and the environment**, and organic farming is the good system for it, **but labelling is not a priority**.
- Label and IG are beneficial for larger production in longer chains.
- **Organic and SFC enable small farms to be more profitable** and provide work to families and to the rural community.
- It is beneficial to the rural community, but in turns, **it needs a good socio-economic environment to thrive**.
- **It needs infrastructures**: slaughter-houses, custom cutting workshops, cooperatives to provide services, traditional producers to buy the piglets, larger factories or cooperatives as outlets for the production not sold directly as well as general public services like schools, health, internet...

More comments on how to encourage organic pig farming and short food chains

- Enable small and young farms to **settle and start their businesses**.
- **Increase support for small farms in the CAP** (lump sum, redistributive payment...) as well as for organic production.
- **Better support in rural development plans** and other social funds (including in the recovery funds)
- More references and research on **organic farming and SFS**.
- **A push for social and solidarity enterprises** to create the structures necessary for the sales, the transformation etc...
- Adapted standards of production.
- **Keep the mainstream and always growing industrial system under control** : competition for land , and sanitary risk (antimicrobial resistance, epizootics, GMO dissemination etc...), and growing critics of consumers on meat and animal production as a whole.

Thank you for your attention

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