



Delivering local food to consumers in Ljubljana, Slovenia

Matching the logistics of a farmers' cooperative with consumers' needs can be a real challenge. The Jarina farmers' cooperative has found and tested several solutions over the past 12 years. It first started as an initiative to improve quality of life in the municipality of Litija, by promoting local agribusiness and by finding more profitable ways to sell local farm products, and over the years it broadened its territory of operation to the central part of Slovenia. A recent, innovative logistical solution is grouping deliveries for the employees of city-based enterprises.



Delivering to institutions

They now deliver to around 80 nurseries, schools and retirement homes in central Slovenia and recently they specially focused on those located in the capital city of Ljubljana. In terms of volume, these institutions represent Jarina's largest distribution channel.

Delivering to hotels & restaurants

The cooperative is now also currently developing their supply channels to hotels and restaurants, keen to build their reputation and fulfil customers' demand for local seasonal food and certification requirements such as Eco label or Travel life certificate. This activity is supported by the municipal government of the city of Ljubljana and its tourist agency Tourism Ljubljana.



Delivering to organised groups of consumers

Jarina found that delivering box schemes to individual consumers would pose logistical problems and might require larger volumes than they could deliver. So, they decided to sell via their 'webgarden' – an online ordering system – directly to organised groups of consumers focusing on larger (international) companies in Ljubljana and organising **grouped deliveries of boxes for individual consumers**. This means that a number of employees from each organisation order fruit baskets, or fruit and vegetable boxes and then they are all delivered at the end of the day to their workplace for them to take home. The companies involved are often interested in building their social responsibility, with a sufficient number of employees to make it worthwhile.

A growing cooperative

In addition to the first transport vehicle bought with support of LEADER funds, this year Jarina has been able to buy a second one from their own funds. We spoke to Ms Vesna Erhart who has been involved in Jarina from the start. She highlighted how the cooperative has grown:

"We first needed to develop the cooperative, training producers in understanding consumer demand and obtaining the necessary certifications and qualifications. This took a couple of years, and support from different Rural Development funds: National funds (special projects financed by municipalities, national measures for Rural Development) EU funds (SAPARD, RDP, especially LEADER -5 projects; cross-border programme and others)."



"This support was very important." She continued: "In 2007 farmers first delivered locally grown food to one school and one kindergarten through our producers' network. Since then, we have managed to substantially increase the number of farmers selling products, clients, and the sales volume. We are continuing to explore how we can expand our marketing channels. This year we are also specifically looking at how to further improve distribution and quality control, and we have bought our second transport vehicle!"

"The key lesson for us was that first we need to connect with farmers who are already market-oriented in order to develop trust among our buyers. Now that we have gained a reputation as a quality local food provider, we can also help local farmers managing smaller enterprises. This holds true with products. We started with typical, daily fruit and vegetables and now, with more demanding consumers such as restaurants, we expanded our offer to more specific tastes."

For more information:

The [presentation Ms Vesna Erhart](#) gave at the [EIP-AGRI workshop 'Cities and Food – connecting consumers and producers'](#)

www.jarina.si (in Slovenian)

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Photos: Jarina

