

Inspirational Ideas

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Ordering local food through social networks

REKO organises the deliveries of local produce directly from farmer to consumer using Facebook to do the ordering. Inspired by a similar project in France, it is the first of its kind in Finland.

How it works

Social networks are becoming more and more popular, but did you know that you can even use them to order local, fresh fruit and vegetables? A number of volunteers in Finland have created Facebook groups where you can do just this! They have called it REKO, and farmers can use the groups to announce which products they have available and customers can make an order. Customers usually pick up and pay for their order at a local marketplace. Stopping for a chat with the farmer is also part of the deal. Mia, a consumer who regularly uses REKO, says "It's not only about the food, it's also about the community and meeting people". She says that they have not had a farmers' market in the community for a very long time and she is very pleased that now they do.



There is no formal organisation behind each REKO group, so no administrative costs involved. The administrators of the Facebook groups are volunteers, and the delivery points are strategically chosen so that no rents are involved. In fact, some supermarkets offer free space for the local REKO groups, to attract customers.

Benefits for producers and consumers.

The system provides advantages for both producers and consumers. Mia says that as a user of this system, "[We are] shaping what kind of agriculture we want and what kind of food we want to consume." Consumers are more and more interested in knowing where their food comes from and also supporting their local farmers. With REKO, consumers can discuss directly with the grower about which production methods he/she uses.

The products are seasonal, locally produced food, there is no unnecessary packaging or transport. Their website says "There are exciting, unusual varieties not found in a supermarket and you don't pay for advertising or intermediaries."

It also offers benefits for the producers as extra costs are reduced - there are no middlemen. They also have direct contact with the consumer so they can receive feedback from them about their products and production methods. In addition waste is reduced to almost nothing as farmers only harvest and bring what has been ordered.

How it started

Thomas Snellman is the coordinator, he is Finnish and he visited an 'Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne' (AMAP) in France in 2012, AMAPs are associative groups which run vegetable box schemes for example. He says "I was overwhelmed by this kind of opportunity and I decided immediately to try to establish something similar in Finland." REKO was launched in 2013 and "From the very beginning, authorities have been very helpful and supporting. This has helped the establishing of REKO greatly."

How it is catching on

Since 2014, Thomas has regularly been invited to present the idea in other parts of Finland. This has helped the idea spread quickly across the country. "We have about 150 circles with 200 000 consumers involved and 500 new ones every day!" Thomas told us.

More information

http://www.aitojamakuja.fi/reko_eng.php?sm=1

<https://sustainingroots.wordpress.com/2016/06/14/reko-rooted-governance-in-practice/>

Video: <https://youtu.be/K76qDGg5aaU>

Contact: thomas.snellman@multi.fi