

Good Practice of Smallholder Supply Chain Collaborations



Author information	
Country	Italy
City	Bovino (FG)
Organization	Piana delle Mandrie

Good practice general information	
Title of a Good practice	Agriturismo Piana delle Mandrie
Country/region/city	Italy, Puglia, province of Foggia, Dauni Mountains area
Short information	Piana delle Mandrie is a social farm and agriturismo located in the unspoilt countryside of the small municipality of Bovino in the Monti Dauni in the Apulia region. The farm raises various species of livestock, from cows to goats and donkeys and pigs. They produce dairy products using natural and traditional local methods. The cattle are free to roam in the green meadows surrounding the farm. There are also educational activities for school children and for adults and families.

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Detailed information

Nicola Consiglio, who passionately runs the farm and the agritourism together with his family, has always produced cheese and other traditional local dairy products with his own cattle. The cheeses are matured in the typical caves of the Monti Dauni. Such production requires certain knowledge and slow production times compared to those of industrial production, and the quantity produced is also smaller, since the focus is on quality.

If Nicola had decided to sell his products to large retailers, he would have run into two major problems:

- Higher investments to meet the numbers of the big retailers against lower earnings.
- Loss of the added value of having a local connection.

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	<p>Piana delle Mandrie therefore decided to continue the direct sale of its dairy products and in addition opened a farmhouse where it serves its cheeses and vegetables from its own garden. It also carries out food and rural education activities with school children.</p>
<p>Evidence of success</p>	<p>Piana delle Mandrie is a good short food fair practice, as it has decided to stay local and sell its products directly on site. The unspoilt location, the presence of the animals and being able to touch the dairy creates trust in customers, who not only have a guarantee of quality given the short production chain but are also enticed to go to the farm to spend some days in the open air and in contact with nature. Agritourism is also a winning choice for the above reasons.</p> <p>Pianna delle Mandrie is also a success as regards the implementation of social activities on the farm, involving children in educational and awareness-raising activities that inevitably also lead adults to approach the activity.</p> <p>In addition, the farm offers local products that also involve other producers in the area.</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>Remaining faithful to a traditional, slow production method with small numbers is certainly a challenge for Nicola and Piana delle Mandrie. To build and take a slice of the market under these conditions, you have to work twice as hard to attract customers. Even if today there is a growing trend in the search for local food products whose provenance and entire production cycle is known.</p> <p>From an economic and financial point of view, it is not very easy. Accessing public funds requires waiting for long periods, during which you have to work and bear any costs. Piana delle Mandrie, however, has received funding and support for the agritourism from Gal Meridaunia, which has made it possible to amortise the costs.</p> <p>A great help in bringing customers to Piana delle Mandrie was undoubtedly the opening of an agritourism farm where they can serve their own products, where the customer does not just come to eat a meal, but has an experience, that of being immersed in nature in contact with animals, knowing that what you are eating is literally at Km0.</p>

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Potential for learning

Piana delle Mandrie is certainly an example and good practice for other small producers in rural areas. The points of success were:

- having remained faithful to slow and traditional production;
- Having opened an agritourism to attract more customers and make their products known and diversify their activities.
- Piana delle Mandrie is not just a simple farm, but it has understood that education and awareness-raising is an important aspect to enhance the value of genuine local products. In fact, it is also a social farm that carries out activities with school children to raise awareness and education about the environment and healthy eating. This aspect also has an impact in terms of customers, as the children then bring their parents, in a vicious circle.

The lesson of Piana delle Mandrie is to diversify its activities. If there is space available, it is worth opening a small restaurant or a B&B to attract more customers and give them an experience.

The importance of networks: Piana delle Mandrie has received funding from Gal Meridaunia, a local development agency, to implement the catering and social farm activities. In the farmhouse, only products from its own production or from other small local producers are served, thus creating a short and responsible supply chain.

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