

Public sector catering

The public sector has a key role to play in creating a sustainable food culture at all geographical levels in Europe both through its food provision services and as a prime provider and promoter of food education. Public sector support for producer groups supplying public caterers with sustainably produced ingredients has the potential for achieving significant benefits, especially if this can be linked with issues concerning health, development of rural economies and environment. In other words: a good opportunity for public bodies to put policy into practice.

Actions: AlimenTerra is creating long-term collaborative projects at European level that will enable public, private and third sector organisations to exchange and create best practice and develop collective methodologies and actions.

Trading network for local and sustainable products

Over the past decades numerous local and regional initiatives have been taken to foster and promote a more sustainable food system and a better income for farmers, be it through (re-)developing local quality food products or converting to organic methods of farming. But, because of the small scale on which most of these initiatives have to operate, they lack the means and resources to set up an adequate marketing system.

Actions: AlimenTerra is working on the creation of local to European trading networks. These networks can provide efficient and effective infrastructures for all initiatives in Europe dealing with the marketing of locally and sustainably produced food products and can achieve the necessary economies of scale. In this way producer groups can profit from each others knowledge and marketing channels creating new local systems whilst ensuring access to a wider co-operative and ethical market.

Standards for sustainable food

AlimenTerra believes it is necessary to develop Europe-wide standards and charters that can be used to support the production and marketing of food produced with common standards of social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Actions: AlimenTerra is examining charters, statements of principles, sustainable standards and certification systems already used to identify common criteria and devise an appropriate charter for a new European ethical trading system.

Food Policy

AlimenTerra believes that it is vital to view the future of food policy from the viewpoint of the sustainability of the system as a whole. On the political level, we aim to offer a springboard for linking European discussion on the reform of the CAP, with the issues concerning food safety, food security and the relationship between food, the environment and personal health. The future actions of AlimenTerra will be based on ensuring that politicians and key stakeholders are made more aware of the necessity to look at food policy in its complexity focusing on the need to create a healthy and cohesive food system from plough to plate.

Key participating organisations:

-France
FNCIVAM (Federation Nationale des Centres d'Initiatives pour Valoriser l'Agriculture et le Milieu Rural) www.civam.org
-Italy
AIAB Veneto (Associazione Agricoltura Biologica Italiana - Veneto region)
-The Netherlands
SPN (Foundation for the Regional Products in the Netherlands)
www.erkendstreekproduct.nl
-Spain
CERAI (Centro de Estudios Rurales y de Agricultura Internacional)
www.cerai.es
-The UK
EAFI (East Anglia Food Link with Food Links UK) www.eafl.org.uk
Food Links UK www.foodlinks-uk.org

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CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS RURALES Y
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Food is everybody's business!



About AlimenTerra

Background

Food and Agriculture play a key role in defining the culture and landscape of Europe at all geographical levels. Each village, town, region and city has its unique food culture that is based on a blend of local tradition, and products with food from across Europe and the world. The production, distribution, preparation and eating of food should be one of the principal mechanisms for creating a healthier and more cohesive society, creating bridges between rural and urban areas and between the different regions of Europe.

At the first major event organised by the founders of AlimenTerra 'Teruel 2001 – Another Food System is Possible' the forum agreed that the current dominant food system in Europe is the cause of poor nutritional standards and the serious crisis in our food system: the globalisation of food culture is leading to standardisation of production systems and products whilst there is a growing distance between food producers and consumers, that creates divisions between different sections of society both within and outside Europe and the growth of health problems through ignorance of the importance of a good diet.

The organisers of the forum decided it was imperative to build on the process set in motion in Teruel and are now establishing a formal network that will provide a platform for the promotion of practical solutions and the support of a viable and sustainable European Food System in a Fair Global Economy.

What is AlimenTerra

AlimenTerra is a new network of European organisations committed to developing practical and co-operative actions leading to the creation of a truly sustainable European food system. The organisations participating in the creation of AlimenTerra currently come from five European countries and cover all the food chain from farmers' unions and development organisations to NGO's, local food initiatives and organic support bodies.

Roles : co-ordination, information, action, reflection

- Acts as a central information and co-ordination point: linking people and organisations, finding funding, building up expertise, sharing knowledge on project methodology and operation, supporting members in their own actions and providing appropriate project management services
- Helps create a policy and philosophical path for the future, through organising and supporting information exchange and debate, both for AlimenTerra and the wider movement for a sustainable, co-operative and ethical world

- Acts as a catalyst for new ideas and projects
- Undertakes concrete actions: gathers data, communicates, develops and operates projects

AlimenTerra Charter

Principles:

1. Every individual and society as a whole has the right to a good and balanced diet
2. Consumers have a right to access all information on the origin and production conditions of the food they eat
3. The food system should prioritise human values, preserve and support multi-functionality and the responsible management of rural areas. Food production therefore can not only be governed by the rules of the market
4. Food production must develop towards a ecological and socially sustainable system that promotes the health of individuals and society, that ensures animal welfare and that supports family and co-operative production systems
5. Farming and fishing are and should be inextricably linked to seasonality and the uniqueness of each locality; production should prioritise proximate and co-operative markets
6. A fair pricing system for agricultural products should operate that reflects the real social, economic and environmental cost of food production; producers have the right to fair prices and support that reflect their fundamental contribution to society, the economy and their role in managing the rural environment
7. Genetic resources are the patrimony of all humankind. Unscrupulous pillaging of indigenous varieties, the patenting of life and the introduction of sterile varieties should be prohibited
8. Food quality must include references to the diversity of food production; the rich diversity of its food systems is one of the cornerstones of European culture
9. Sustainable and healthy food must be a cornerstone of public policy and food education must be prioritised by private and public institutions at all levels

Proposals:

1. To foster local and co-operative initiatives in all sectors at all levels of the food chain that strengthen sustainable food and farming systems
2. To create a complementary system of food and farming standards that take into account the sustainability of agricultural holdings, which recognises the importance of social standards and which takes into account the full life time costs of production
3. To develop a European charter for public sector food provision which takes into account the well-being and health of our communities
4. To ensure that access to good food and a healthy diet should be prioritised in the formulation of food policy
5. To develop community actions and mobilise public opinion to demonstrate that another food system is possible
6. To develop a coherent food education programme at all levels that links healthy diets with sustainable production, food culture and biodiversity
7. To develop a proficient and effective European network that involves all organizations and individuals at local, national and European level that ensures that the proposals of AlimenTerra proposals are put into action
8. To create a European food system that is integrated into a sustainable global food system and which can provide an alternative to the industrial food model at all geographical levels

For AlimenTerra a sustainable food system must be:

- **Proximate** - originating from the closest practicable source, with parallel social, environmental and economic benefits
- **Healthy** - part of a balanced diet, with no harmful biological or chemical contaminants
- **Fairly or co-operatively traded** between producers, processors, retailers and consumers
- **Non-exploitative of employees** in the food sector in terms of pay and conditions
- **Environmentally beneficial or benign** in its production (e.g. through organic methods and use of biological controls)
- **Accessible** in terms of geographic access and affordability
- **High animal welfare standards** in production and transport
- Support the **food security** of communities, at all geographical levels
- **Socially inclusive** of all people in society
- **Encouraging knowledge and understanding of food and food culture**
- **Encouraging and supporting of bio-diversity**
- Any label or product information above all must **tell the truth**