



Newsletter

Nr. 2, March 2004

Teruel 2001 becomes: AlimenTerra

It is a year ago that we published our first newsletter and this seems to indicate that not much had happened. Well, this is by no means true.

Six members of the Teruel-network have decided to turn the network into a new European organisation under the name: AlimenTerra. The name symbolizes the connection between food and earth.

These founding organisations are:

U.K.: Food Link UK and Sustain

France: FNCIVAM

Italy: AIAB Veneto

Spain: CERA

Holland: SPN.

After a year's preparation, made possible by donations of the Fondation pour le Progrès de l'Homme Léopold Meyer and LTO Netherlands, AlimenTerra will officially be launched on July 7th of this year in London.

Charter

Based on the Teruel 2001 declaration the first step has been to agree on a common charter. In this charter nine principles and objectives have been laid down as the driving force behind the new organisation. The charter contains also eight proposals which will be the basis for concrete programmes and projects in the next years.

The main objective is to provide for an alternative European food system. A food system that is economically, ecologically and socially sustainable, offers fair prices for both producers and consumers, offers healthy food products which reflect the rich diversity of food throughout Europe. In other words: to put the philosophy of Teruel 2001 into practice.

This, of course, is a truly ambitious goal, but one which is fundamental to the future of our food systems. Current and future problems in European agriculture, the European country-side, in diet-related health problems are all part of the same problem which requires a comprehensive and European approach.

What will AlimenTerra be?

Although AlimenTerra has far reaching goals and objectives, it wants to be above all a practical organisation, bringing together local experiences, knowledge and practice on a European level to create a truly sustainable food system. AlimenTerra is therefore not a lobbying organisation, but wants to put theory into practice and to show that an alternative food system is indeed possible. Of course, as the foundation of our work will be sustainable solutions that work in practice, this will also lead AlimenTerra to seek to influence rural, agricultural and food policy on all geographical and political levels to create real change in our food systems.

Who will make up AlimenTerra?

AlimenTerra is a not-for-profit organisation with full democratic control by its members.

Taking the Teruel 2001 as a good starting point, AlimenTerra wants to involve all those organizations and people that support the mission and goals laid down in the charter. Membership must be based on a clear commitment and a contribution to the organisations resources. Members are expected to get actively engaged and contribute, each member in its own way and with its own resources, to help achieve these goals.

Members of AlimenTerra will be organisations themselves. Individuals however will be welcomed as supporters. There will be two types of members: full and associate members. Full members will be those organisations working on a (supra-)national or regional level to create sustainable food systems. This group of members will elect the board and have the full democratic control of the organisation.

Associate members are organisations who want to be actively involved in AlimenTerra projects. These can be either organisations working at a local level or organisations working on (supra)national or regional level and whose aims are supportive of AlimenTerra.

Founding news

All is in full preparation to found AlimenTerra officially on July the 7th in London.

On this day AlimenTerra will have its official launch, the founding organisations will sign the Constitution and will appoint the first Board, which will then have its first meeting.

Next month further news will be issued on the launch.

Work programme

Four axis of work

As said before, AlimenTerra wants to be in the first place a practical organisation. So together with preparing the founding of the organisation the first initiatives have been taken to develop a working programme.

The main targets AlimenTerra wants to focus on for the next years are:

- To develop a European programme on public sector catering that establishes common methodologies and a charter.
- To develop a European trading network for local and sustainable food products
- To establish a European standard for sustainable food production
- To influence European policies at all levels.

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 and research in the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain have shown the need for the creation of a more integrated approach.

For this reason AlimenTerra has been working with a partnership of various European regions to develop a first European project, *Sapphire*, which has been proposed for the Interreg IIIc programme in April this year. (Answer expected in July). The project will focus on exchange and development of best practice, exchange and development of common methodologies and the creation of models for public sector catering that can operate on all levels throughout Europe.

Information: Clive Peckham

Trading network

A lot of organic and local, sustainable producers are struggling with the marketing of their produce. Some are successful, but most remain at a scale too small to offer a viable economic future.

On the other hand it is recognized at all political levels that these producers play a vital role in supporting local economies and in maintaining the environment.

One way of creating better means for survival is to share experiences and to create a European trading network. In this way producer groups can profit from each others knowledge, marketing channels and thus an access to a wider market.

There are several examples that show this can work. The current Leader+ programme and network offers a good stepping stone to build on

these experiences and try to establish an European trading network. Up till now a first network of contacts had been established in various countries (U.K. Ireland, Holland, Germany, Italy, Spain). In October a first meeting will be held to develop this into a Leader+-project.

Information: Bart Soldaat or Marina Guedon

News, events and activities

Slow Food

Parallel to the Salone del Gusto Slow Food is organising a world wide event called Madre Terra. Some 5.000 people from all over the world are expected to participate. AlimenTerra is liaising with the Terra Madre organisation to ensure that some of the most interesting and rich 'food communities' from the members and associates of AlimenTerra will participate.

Information: Clive Peckham

Sustainable Open Spaces

This is an Intereg project involving 6 rural regions which are situated in the vicinity of large urban centres: how can a sustainable development of this valuable areas be promoted vis à vis pressure from the cities? In this context a conference will be held in October, called: Europe's Urban Regions in Search of Open Space. Euro commissioner Franz Fischler will be one of the key note speakers. AlimenTerra has been approached to participate

Information: Bart Soldaat.

Sustainable Public Sector Catering and Food Education

Together with one of its founding members, AIAB Veneto, and the city council of Venice AlimenTerra is planning to organise a global conference in 2005 on sustainable public sector catering and education

Information: Clive Peckham

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On the AlimenTerra website,
www.alimenterra.org, basic information can be found in English, French and Spanish.