NIBIO
NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF
BIOECONOMY RESEARCH

Selling local food in the city

A comparative study of short food supply chains in Oslo and Bristol

NIBIO REPORT | VOL. 9 | NR. 28 | 2023

Anna Birgitte Milford and Frøydis Gillund, department of Economics and Society, NIBIO, Daniel Keech and Matthew Reed, Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), UK

TITTEL/TITLE

Selling local food in the city. A comparative study of short food supply chains in Oslo and Bristol

FORFATTER(E)/AUTHOR(S)

Anna Birgitte Milford, Frøydis Gillund, Daniel Keech, Matthew Reed

DATO/DATE:	RAPPORT NR./ REPORT NO.:	TILGJENGELIGHET/AVAILABILITY:	PROSJEKTNR./PROJECT NO.:	SAKSNR./ARCHIVE NO.:
21.02.2023	9/28/2023	Open	51185	17/01692

ISBN:	ISSN:	ANTALL SIDER/ NO. OF PAGES:	ANTALL VEDLEGG/ NO. OF APPENDICES:
978-82-17-03242-7	2464-1162	72	1

OPPDRAGSGIVER/EMPLOYER:	KONTAKTPERSON/CONTACT PERSON:
The Research Council of Norway	

STIKKORD/KEYWORDS:	FAGOMRÅDE/FIELD OF WORK:
Lokalmat, korte leveringskjeder, bynært landbruk	Samfunnsøkonomi, sosiologi
Local food, short food supply chains, peri urban agriculture	Economics, sociology

SAMMENDRAG:

Denne rapporten presenterer funn fra en kvalitativ undersøkelse blant aktører involvert i produksjon og salg av lokalmat i Oslo og Bristol, med fokus på salgsmodeller og utfordringer og muligheter ved direktesalg.

Aktørene i Oslo og Bristol hadde i stor grad samme motivasjon for lokalmatsalg, blant annet miljømessig bærekraft, åpenhet i forsyningskjeden, skape fellesskap, støtte bønder, kunnskapsdeling om mat og landbruk, samt å være en motvekt til det ordinære matsystemet. Klimakrise og matsikkerhet er sterkere motivasjonsfaktorer blant aktører i Bristol enn i Oslo, mens det i Oslo synes å legges mer vekt på at de lokale salgskanalene er viktig for matmangfold og kvalitet.

Flere av aktørene peker på økonomiske forhold som en av de viktigste utfordringene for lokalmatnæringa. Det krever stor arbeidsinnsats både innen produksjon, markedsføring og salg for å lykkes som småskalaprodusent, noe som igjen gjør det krevende å oppnå tilstrekkelig lønnsomhet. Samtidig innebærer ofte kjøp av lokalmat mer tid, krefter og penger av forbrukere, enn å handle i dagligvare.

Rapporten peker på flere mulige løsninger på disse utfordringene: Økt etterspørsel som følge av holdningsendringer, økt samarbeid mellom produsenter, salgskanaler, organisasjoner og offentlige myndigheter for å redusere konkurranse, finne løsninger i fellesskap, samt utvikling av felles digitale plattformer som kan skape stordriftsfordeler og effektivisere leveranser. I tillegg er det viktig å se på hvordan det offentlige, både gjennom tilskudd, innkjøp og veiledning kan legge til rette for økt produksjon og salg av lokalmat.

NIBIO
NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF BIOECONOMY RESEARCH

SUMMARY:

This report presents findings from a qualitative survey among actors involved in the production and sale of local food in Oslo and Bristol, with a focus on sales models and challenges and opportunities for direct sales.

The actors in Oslo and Bristol had largely the same motivation for local food sales, including environmental sustainability, transparency in the supply chain, creating community, supporting farmers, sharing knowledge about food and agriculture, as well as being a counterweight to the mainstream food system. Climate crisis and food safety were stronger motivational factors among actors in Bristol than in Oslo, while in Oslo there was more emphasis on the importance of local sales channels for food diversity and quality.

Several interviewees pointed to lack of economic profitability as one of the most important challenges for the local food producers. It requires a great deal of work both with production, marketing and sales to be economically successful as a small-scale producer. At the same time, buying local food often requires more time, effort and money from consumers compared to shopping in grocery stores.

The report points to several possible solutions to these challenges: increased demand for local food due to changes in attitudes, increased cooperation between producers, sales channels, organizations and public authorities to reduce competition and find common solutions, as well as the development of common digital platforms that can create economies of scale and make marketing and deliveries more efficient. It is also important to look at how the public sector, both through grants, procurement and guidance, can facilitate increased production and sale of local food.

LAND/COUNTRY:	Norway and United Kingdom
FYLKE/COUNTY:	Oslo
KOMMUNE/MUNICIPALITY:	Oslo and Bristol
STED/LOKALITET:	Oslo and Bristol

GODKJENT /APPROVED	**PROSJEKTLEDER /PROJECT LEADER**
Agnar Hegrenes	Anna Birgitte Milford
NAVN/NAME	**NAVN/NAME**

Preface

This report is based on research conducted in the project “Farmers and the city: Enhancing added value and sustainability through optimized use of urban and peri- urban farm resources” (URBANFARMS). The project was financed by the Norwegian Research Council for the project period 2019-2023. The overall aim of URBANFARMS was to find out how farmers in and near cities can utilize the proximity to the city to increase value creation from their production in economically, socially and environmentally sustainable ways.

This report is the result of a sub-project on business models and sales channels for urban and peri-urban farmers. All the main authors have contributed to writing all the chapters. The project leader of URBANFARMS, Sebastian Eiter, provided comments to a late draft of the report. Quality assurance of the report was provided by Agnar Hegrenes.

We would like to thank all the informants in Bristol and Oslo who contributed to this work.

Bergen, 21.02.23

Anna Birgitte Milford

Extended abstract

Bristol in the UK and Oslo in Norway are two cities with similarities in terms of population and agricultural land, although Oslo, being further north, has shorter growing seasons. In this study we carried out qualitative interviews with stakeholders involved in local food production and sales in both cities. These stakeholders included farmers, retailers and civil society networks that promote local food and short food supply chains. Both cities have a variety of different sales channels for local food, which includes farm shops, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture and direct sales to small wholesalers, independent food shops, restaurants and online platforms. In addition, Bristol is served by a number of different veg box schemes and an online platform selling for different independent shops in the city and delivered by electric bikes. A particularity in Norway, including in Oslo, are the REKO-rings, which are marketing initiatives run on Facebook, in addition to an online sales channel facilitating direct sales between local producers and local restaurants, and a consumer cooperative.

The interviews show that there are similar motivations for local marketing in the two cities, such as environmental sustainability, supply chain transparency, creating community, direct support to farmers, knowledge transfer to consumers about food and agriculture and being a counterweight to the mainstream food system. In Bristol, climate emergency and food security are stronger motivating factors than in Oslo, where there seems to be more emphasis on the local sales channels' beneficial effect on food diversity and quality.

Local producers usually have a small marketing budget, and marketing is often pursued through word of mouth or social or mainstream media, and storytelling or selling an experience is often important. There are also indications of price competition between producers, particularly among those selling through REKO rings. Sometimes local sales channels and retailers compete against each other, primarily for consumers but also for local food products.

There are several obstacles to growth in the local food sector in Oslo and Bristol. Most local producers operate at a small scale, producing a variety of different products, while personally engaging in all the necessary tasks related to production, marketing and sale, often in addition to other, salaried work. Many do not have sufficient capacity, experience or skills to manage this as efficiently as large scale, specialised producers who can also outsource different tasks. In addition, local producers are often committed to ethical production in terms of environmental and social sustainability, which requires even more time and effort. So does also the direct contact with customers, which is important for transparency and when using storytelling as a marketing strategy. For sales channels including online shops, retailers and restaurants, purchasing locally often implies slower deliveries from many different producers providing small volumes of products that lack consistency in terms of size and shape. Buying non-local products from mainstream wholesalers can be faster, less complicated and less expensive. Competition with the mainstream food system is also a barrier for increased consumer demand, as supermarkets conveniently provide a large selection of less expensive food that can be taken home at any time. Purchasing locally might require more of customers' time, effort and money, or giving up some control over food selections.

Several solutions to these challenges are offered in our data. Demand could grow with a change of attitudes among consumers and restaurant chefs, with, for instance, a higher acceptance of seasonal limitations. Furthermore, more collaboration and dialogue between and across the different groups of producers, sales channels and organisations and public authorities, could perhaps reduce competition and instead create solutions for the common interest. More collaboration regarding online platforms could create economies of scale and improve efficiency of deliveries. But it should also be taken into account that the variety of different sales channels each have their importance and meet different consumers' needs in terms of, for instance, direct contact with producers and creation of community.

More support from public authorities and farmers organisations would also be helpful, including funding and subsidies that could better secure the farmers economic situation. Public procurement from local farmers could harness the buying power of local institutions, while support for the provision of skills development through courses and information about production and marketing are helpful, as is access to public land for cultivation and for markets.

Content

1 Introduction

Concerns about sustainability and food insecurity have led to an increased interest among consumers for supporting local food production (Bugge and Schjøll, 2021). Industrial food production has increased pressure on farm incomes (Renting et al. 2003), which may be moderated through the establishment of urban agriculture and short food supply chains, that can add value to farm products with distinctive qualities, involve on-farm processing and direct sales to consumers willing to pay higher prices for local quality food. Urban agriculture and short food supply chains may, together with possibilities for multifunctional farm activities, help producers create more profitable businesses (Aubry & Kebir 2013). Hence, urban areas represent a significant opportunity for new business models to farmers in urban and peri urban areas.

Research into urban agriculture is still emergent in Norway, since 'urban' food production on a professional scale has developed only recently. There is particularly a need for more research on marketing strategies and business models for farmers in cities and suburbs who intend to utilize their proximity to the city to increase value creation from their production in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way.

In this report we present findings from a comparative study of marketing strategies for local food in the Norwegian capital Oslo (population approx. 700,000) and Bristol (approx. 475,000), the largest city in south-western England. The comparison was chosen as the two cities are reasonably similar in size, but have different experiences in urban agriculture. In Oslo, urban agriculture has developed quite recently, while Bristol has a longer history of, and well-established practices in, urban farming and city food systems. The study was informed by conducting qualitative interviews with producers, sales channels and organizations working to promote urban agriculture in the two cities.

With this study we wanted to investigate and compare local food production and marketing strategies in Oslo and Bristol with an aim to explore:

- How is local food produced and marketed in the two cities?
- What are the motivations for promoting local food in the two cities?
- What are the main challenges and barriers for increased direct sale of local food in the two cities?
- How can these barriers be overcome?
- What can the two cities learn from each other?

As the study was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, we also included questions to explore the interviewees' experiences of selling local food during lockdown.

2 Method

For this research project we applied qualitative methods for data collection by conducting in-depth interviews with a range of different stakeholders involved in local food production in Bristol and Oslo. A small sample of statistics from available sources on the internet was also gathered to describe some of the characteristics of the two cities regarding food and consumers.

The interviewed stakeholders represented three main groups:

Local food producers located in Oslo and Bristol or their proximity selling through short food supply chains in these cities.
People involved in different types of sales channels for local food (staff or volunteers), including online markets, wholesalers and retailers.
Organisations and public authorities supporting local food production.

We interviewed 16 stakeholders from Oslo and 18 stakeholders from Bristol.

Table 1: Overview of interviewees.

Stakeholder	Bristol	Oslo
Farmers/food producers	6	5
Online food market/wholesaler	2	2
Farmers' market/REKO	2	2
Independent shop	2	1
Organisation	5	2
Public authority	1	3

Initially, we contacted various stakeholders in Oslo and Bristol involved in supporting local food production and short food supply chains. These individuals made onward recommendations about potential interviewees to ensure a range of different actors involved in local food production (e.g. snowball technique). After generating a list of potential interviewees from both cities we selected representatives of the three predefined categories (producers, sales channels, organisations/authorities).

Fifteen interviews in Bristol were in person, three were online. Three of the in-person interviews were made taking notes, the others (12 interviews) were recorded. One researcher participated in all the interviews in Bristol, and one of the Bristol based researchers participated in three of these interviews.

Interviews in Oslo were conducted online with two researchers, except for two interviews in which only one researcher participated and another in which the stakeholder answered the questions in writing as the interviewee had problems with the internet connection.

One researcher was present at all interviews except two, to secure that the data collection was done in a similar way in the two cities. The same interview guide was used in all interviews (with some minor adaptations). The interview guide focused on the following themes:

- Organisation of the company/organisation
- Motivation for local marketing
- Marketing strategies
- Barriers/challenges (for company/organisation and local food production in general)
- Impacts of the corona pandemic
- External support
- Long term goals

All the interviews that were recorded were transcribed, and all the interview material was coded using the data software NVivo. The same two researchers who conducted all interviews in Oslo collaborated to code all the interviews.

3 Characteristics of Oslo and Bristol, Norway and the UK

Bristol and Oslo are two cities in two different countries, UK and Norway, and differences between these two cities and countries can explain some of the differences found regarding sales channels.

Table 2: Characteristics of Oslo and Bristol.

Variables	Oslo/Norway	Bristol/UK
Population	699 827[1]	465 900 (2020)[2]
Area	454 km2[3]	110 km2[4]
Agricultural area in use	7.352 km^2[5]	14.380 km^2 (Bristol administrative area)[6]
Income level	(2020) 563 000 NOK[7]	£ 31 900 (2020) (ca. 383 000 NOK pr. 16.05.2022)[8]
Food expenditure as a share of total consumer expenditure (2017) [9]	12%	8%
Life expectancy	(For people born in 2021)[10] Women: 85 y/o Men: 81.4 y/o	(For people born in 2019)[11] Women: 82.8 y/o Men: 78.5 y/o
Food expenditure as a share of total consumer expenditure (2017) [12]	Norway: 12%	Norway: 8%
Share of death attributed to obesity (2019)[13]	Norway: 6,62%	United Kingdom: 9,11%
Crime rate	No. of crimes reported pr. 1000 inhabitants (2020): 89.9[14]	No. of crimes reported pr. 1000

[1] https://statistikkbanken.oslo.kommune.no/webview/
[2] https://www.bristol.gov.uk/statistics-census-information/the-population-of-bristol
[3] https://www.oslo.kommune.no/statistikk/miljostatus/areal-og-friomrader/
[4] https://www.britannica.com/place/Bristol-England
[5] https://www.ssb.no/kommunefakta/kostra/oslo/landbruk
[6] https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32619/Who-feeds-Bristol-report.pdf
[7] https://statistikkbanken.oslo.kommune.no/webview/
[8] https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32947/Bristol+Key+Facts+2021
[9] https://ourworldindata.org/food-prices#food-prices-compared-to-wages
[10] https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/05797/tableViewLayout1/
[11] https://www.ons.gov.uk/filter-outputs/906f051b-431f-4ac5-b00c-b2fbe1e87571
[12] https://ourworldindata.org/food-prices#food-prices-compared-to-wages
[13] https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-results/
[14] https://www.ssb.no/statbank/table/08486/tableViewLayout1/

Variables	Oslo/Norway	Bristol/UK
		inhabitants (2020/2021): 101[15]
Share of population who trust the national government in the country (2020)[16]	Norway: 94.3%	United Kingdom: 47.4%
Proportion of population that thinks climate change is very or extremely serious (2020)[17]	Norway: 42%	United Kingdom: 65%

Oslo, the capital of Norway, is larger than Bristol in both surface and population, but Bristol has almost twice as much agricultural land as Oslo in total.

Both cities are in high income countries and life expectancy and crime rates are not strikingly different, although crime rates are somewhat higher in Bristol than in Oslo. The average income level is substantially higher in Oslo than in Bristol, but the average per capita spending on food is also higher in Norway than in the UK, which indicates that living costs are also higher in Oslo than in Bristol.

The most striking difference between Norway and the UK is perhaps the level of trust in government, where in Norway 94% of the population trust the national government in the country while in the UK only 47% do so. The world average is 54% and the United Kingdom has the lowest number of the Western European countries (together with Portugal), while Norway is ranked as the highest. There is also a large difference in the extent to which populations in the two countries think climate change is a serious problem, where the British seem to be far more worried than the Norwegians.

[15] https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32947/Bristol+Key+Facts+2021
[16] https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/share-who-trust-government?tab=table
[17] Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020 https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/DNR_2020_FINAL.pdf

4 Mainstream food marketing in the UK and Norway

There are some important differences in the natural conditions for agricultural production in Norway and the UK. Norway is further north and hence the climate is colder with a shorter growing season and higher risk of harvest loss due to climatic conditions such as frost or long, cold periods. Furthermore, Norway is a country with a hilly topography and large areas with high altitudes and low population density. Transport communication can be slow compared to the UK which is much more flat and densely populated.

The British and Norwegian food marketing systems have both similarities and differences. In both countries the retail market is dominated by a few, large supermarket chains.

A major difference between the two countries is that in Norway the majority of farmers are members of large farmer cooperatives. The meat and dairy cooperatives also operate as wholesalers and processors, and process and sell meat and dairy products directly to the supermarket chains. The largest fruit and vegetable cooperative sell to wholesalers, who in turn sell to the majority of the supermarket chains. Although sales also take place outside these supply chains, the producer cooperatives, at least the ones for livestock, dairy and cereals, have dominant roles and can negotiate collectively with the large supermarket chains on behalf of their members.

Norwegian farmers are challenged by high production costs due to both unfavourable natural conditions and high labour costs, and there is pressure from competition with low-cost food products through both professional, commercial imports and private, individual cross border trade (Milford, Spissøy and Pettersen 2012). However, Norwegian agricultural policy is to a large degree focussed on food security and the multifunctionality of agriculture, and import tariffs have been implemented to protect domestic production (Farsund & Daugbjerg, 2017). To maintain rural employment, cultural landscape and the exploitation of grass resources, agricultural subsidies to livestock producers are paid out in a system that favours smaller and more remote farms (Asheim, Thorvaldsen, & Rivedal, 2020; Refsgaard & Johnson, 2010).

In Norway government subsidies for vegetable production are paid by area of land used in the production. Hence, small-scale vegetable producers receive very little subsidies. Additionally, it is more difficult for these producers to sell their produce through the cooperatives and the supermarket chains, who only take large quantities and generally only from those who are already cooperative members (Milford, Lien and Reed 2021). For most small-scale vegetable producers, sale outside the mainstream system is therefore the only option.

In the UK, agri-food represents an important economic sector, contributing £120 billion (NB: thousand million), or 9.4% of Gross Value Added to the economy and employing over 4 million people. The corporate sector is highly concentrated, with ten major grocery companies and two main contract catering companies dominating the market (Hasnain et al. 2020). In the UK, in such mid- and large-scale supply chains aimed at multiple retailers (supermarkets) and food service firms, farmer sales channels are usually confined to two formats. These are direct supply contracts with supermarkets, or sales to wholesalers who then consolidate product ranges from multiple producers for onward sale. Arrangements vary according to particular food sectors and, for example, wholesaling through abattoirs remains an important market channel for livestock farmers.

On the whole, and unlike Norway, farmer co-operatives are not prevalent as a way to organise produce marketing, although there are some notable exceptions, for example in the milk sector. Agricultural policy was, under the EU's Common Agricultural policy, not specifically linked to domestic food security and recent studies have suggested that the UK imports half its vegetables and over 80% of its fruit, with two EU countries - Spain and the Netherlands - as key suppliers (Garnett et al. 2018). Since Brexit, reform of agricultural subsidies has been evolving. Arrangements will be separately administered in each of the four devolved UK nations, allowing for a finer-grained subsidy arrangement to be developed than was possible at the national level, but also likely to affect how agricultural productivity and environmental protection are balanced in different regions. In any case, devolved agri-subsidy regimes will still be subject to UK national trade arrangements.

5 Different sales models for local marketing

For farmers selling outside the mainstream food marketing systems there are several alternative sale channels. Many of the same types of sales channels exist in both Bristol and Oslo, but there are some local differences between them, and each city also has some sales channels that the other does not.

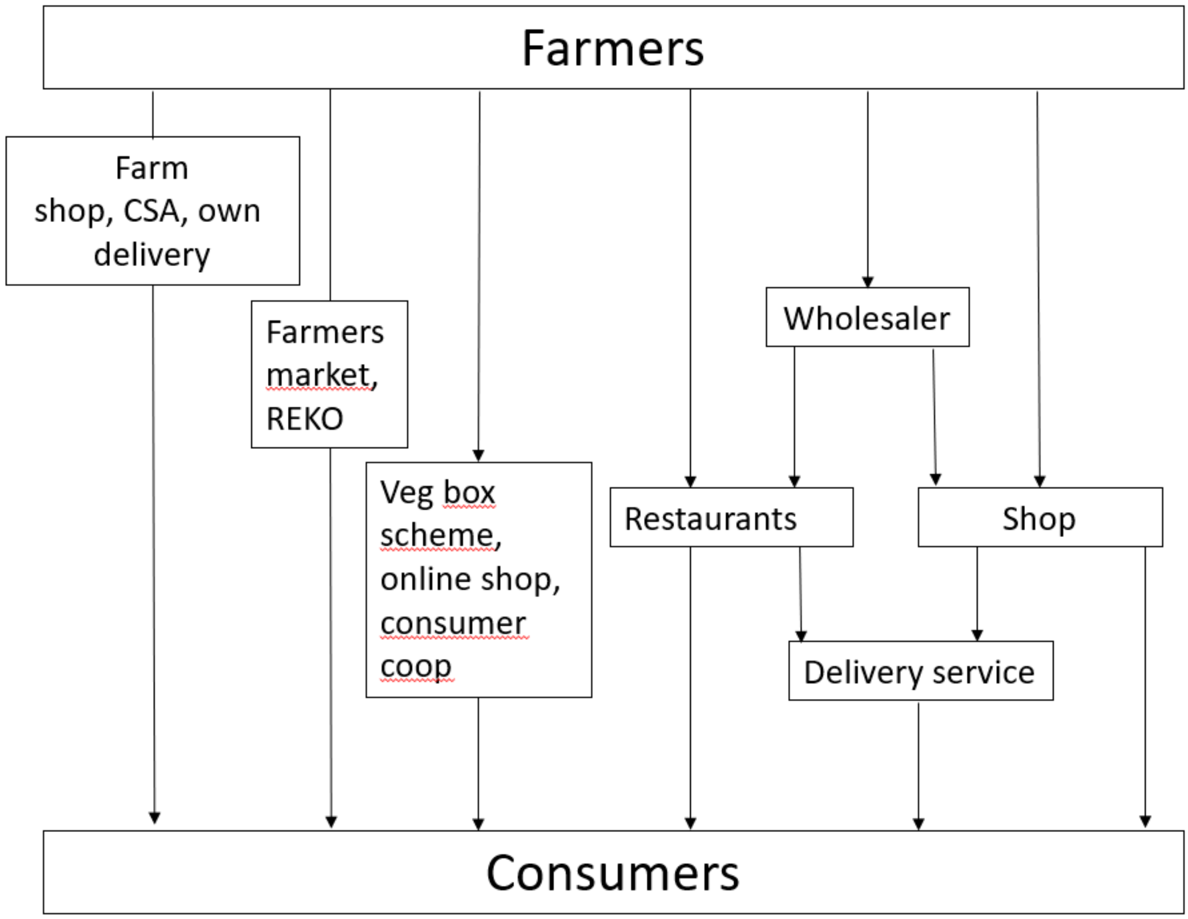

Figure 1: Different sales channels involved in local marketing in Oslo and Bristol.

5.1 Direct sales from the farm

Some farmers sell their products directly from their farm either with a "harvest yourself" scheme, from a farm shop or from a shed by the road. Farm shops market products only from the farm, or from other farms as well, or in some cases several farmers collaborate to sell their products in a common farm shop. Some farm shops are self-service, while others staffed, and some also offer preprepared meals and other products.

Examples of farm shops in Bristol are **Elm Tree Farm** and the **Grow Wilder** farm which sells plants produced at the farm, and where it is also possible to pay a donation for pick-your-own produce from the field or the greenhouse. There is also a farm shop and café at the **Windmill Hill** City Farm, selling food produced at the farm. In addition, the **Five Acre Farm** in Backwell in Bristol is owned by the Tobacco Factory and most of the produce is sold at the shop or the café there.

We are not aware of farms that have their own shop or sell by the roadside in Oslo, but there are many farm shops in the surrounding municipalities[18].

5.2 Community supported agriculture (CSA)

A farmer-led CSA is a collaboration between a farmer and consumers where the consumers buy a share of the crop, often by prepayment. The consumers, also often called shareholders, and the farmer thus share the risk of crop loss. In some CSAs there is an obligation to participate in voluntary work on the farm. In some CSAs consumers harvest their own vegetables, in others it is the farmer who takes responsibility for harvesting, packing and delivery. Most CSAs produce a large number of different vegetables on relatively small plots of land. There are several CSAs located in Oslo and its proximity[19], and in the city of Bristol there is at least one. Other CSAs are initiated and run by a group of consumers with access to land to farm on. Generally, consumer run CSAs need to hire a gardener to get the work done.

5.3 Farmers' markets

A farmers' market is a regular event in a town or city when farmers come to sell their fruit, vegetables, eggs, meat, etc. directly to customers[20], and sometimes also prepared food and beverages. It's a physical retail space which can be outdoors or indoors, and it varies in size and number of stalls. Farmers' markets exist in many countries in the world.

5.3.1 Farmers' markets in Oslo

In Norway all farmers' markets are organised by the organisation "Farmer's Market" (Bondens Marked), established in 2003. The Farmer's Market is owned and managed by the farmers themselves through a cooperative organisation. The markets are held in around 20 different places around the country, usually on Saturdays in the city centres, with producers from the surrounding areas. In Oslo there are farmers' markets with about 15 – 25 farmers at different places in the city almost every Saturday, except of in July and in the winter period between December and March. Early autumn and before Christmas they might be more frequent. Organising markets at different places rather than a permanent place is a strategy to reach more consumers. The markets are announced through a SMS service to a customer group that has been build up over time, as well as through social media. There is usually collaboration with local trade associations or organisations where the market is held, who advertise through their channels. Most farmers participating at Farmer's Markets in Oslo have asked to become members themselves, but resources are also used to recruit new members. There are clearly defined rules, requirements and quality revisions for members, described in a handbook. To be able to sell on the Farmer's Market the products must be local and traceable, and the farmers must take responsibility for the sale. *Farmers participating in a market have to pay a fee that covers the costs of parking, rent of marketplace etc.*

5.3.2 Farmers' markets in Bristol

In Bristol there are several farmers' markets. The ***Bristol Farmers' and Producers' Market*** was established in 1998 and is held on Corn Street outside St Nicholas Markets. It is organised by the Bristol City Council's market officer, who also organises the other markets at St Nicholas (indoor market, street food and indies' market). The market used to be every Wednesday from 9.30 a.m. -

[18] https://kart.hanen.no/?search

[19] https://www.andelslandbruk.no/kart.

[20] Cambridge dictionary

2.30 p.m., and for some time had as many as 40 stalls each week. But in the later years the attendance of customers has decreased, and consequently also the number of farmers, and the market is now only every second Wednesday, with only 3-4 stalls. Possible reasons for this decline could be the inconvenient opening hours of the market for working people (mid-week and only until 2.30 p.m.), and with less people working in the city centre due to some large offices moving, there are also less office workers coming as customers at lunch time. The COVID pandemic deepened this problem, as it made even fewer people work from their office. Moving the market to Saturdays is not currently possible as there is already another popular market (indies market) using the space and stalls those days.

The ***Whiteladies Road Market*** is another interesting farmers' market in Bristol. It was initiated in 2006 by a group of neighbours in the suburb Redland in Bristol who called themselves "Sustainable Redland". Their motivation was to do something about climate change, and one of their ideas was to start a farmers' market to reduce packaging and cut emissions from transport. The market is taking place every Saturday from 8.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in an open space on the Whiteladies Road in Redland, which is a busy road with shops and restaurants in a densely populated area. They usually have 18 stalls each time, but more before Christmas. The market is still organised by Sustainable Redland which has one paid employee and several volunteers. The farmers/producers pay a stall fee to Sustainable Redland, which also controls and selects participants. They aim to have a varied offer of fruits and vegetables, bakery products, cheese, meat, fish, mushroom and various prepared foods and drinks.

Bristol also has other regular markets for selling local food products, such as the monthly ***Sunday market at the Tobacco Factory***[21], which has stalls with both artisans, street food and growers.

5.4 Food festivals

Food festivals offer local food producers an opportunity to sell their products and raise awareness about local food production.

In Oslo there are two large regular food festivals. "Matstreif"[22] is a festival that has existed since 2005 and is organized by Innovation Norway, commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food. It aims to be the most important meeting place for producers of local food and drinks. "Mat*larm" was established in 2020 by Hanen[23] and is a concept that connects producers with restaurants, and is especially aimed at producers who have lost a large part of their market through restaurants, hotels and canteens (HoReCa) as a result of the Covid19 pandemic.

Bristol does not have any similar type of food festival. But every year the Bristol Food Network organises an event called the "Get Growing Garden Trail", where a map is provided that shows different food growing spaces in Bristol, including allotment gardens, community gardens, orchards and city farms. These are then open to visit for the public during a weekend.

5.5 Independent food shops

Independent food shops are shops that are not part of a large, mainstream supermarket chain. These shops can buy directly from local producers because they are independent and not bound by leasing contracts or agreements with chain owners. They often want to offer customers locally produced products, as a part of their profile. Farmers selling to independent shops often do not have a fixed,

[21] https://tobaccofactory.com/whats-on/sunday-market/

[22] https://www.innovasjonnorge.no/matstreif

[23] https://www.matlarm.no/

written agreement, but in some cases oral agreements are made that are largely complied with by both parties (Milford et al. 2019).

Bristol has a relatively large number of independent food shops, some of which belong to (small) “chains” with several outlets, such as ‘Better Food Company’ and ‘Harvest’. Other examples of independent food shops are ‘Five Acre Farm Shop’ at the Tobacco Factory, ‘ScoopAway’, ‘Hugos Greengrocer’ and ‘Earthbound’. These are shops with large assortments of local and imported goods. Many have an ethical profile, sell only organic products, sell products that are Fairtrade certified, or sell food in loose weight to avoid packaging.

In Oslo there are far less independent food shops, but there are some such as ‘Mølleren Sylvia’ and ‘Landhandleriet’, as well as ‘Røtter’, which has several outlets.

5.6 Selling directly to supermarket stores

In general, it is more difficult for small-scale producers to sell directly to a shop that belongs to a supermarket chain than to independent food shops, because chain shops are bound by agreements with owners and are only allowed to sell products purchased by the chain. Small-scale fruit and vegetable producers find it hard, due to the need for sufficient supply quantity and consistent quality, to operate within large-scale market channels (Milford, Lien, & Reed, 2021). Nevertheless, local producers, particularly of processed food, sell directly to supermarket chains in both Norway and the UK. However, none of the informants in our study had this experience

5.7 Wholesalers

In both Bristol and Oslo there are a number of small wholesalers who buy food products from local farmers and re-sell them to independent food shops and restaurants. Wholesalers generally have storage capacity and vehicles for fetching and delivering merchandise. The advantage for producers of selling to a small wholesaler, is that the wholesaler takes care of deliveries, and it is possible to sell larger quantities at once, which will be divided between several customers. The disadvantage is that they also need to take a certain margin of the final consumer price, therefore the return to the producer will be lower than the price premium associated with direct sales.

5.8 Directly to restaurants

Many farmers in and close to Oslo and Bristol sell directly to restaurants, usually delivering the food themselves. Usually, this will be restaurants who focus on having locally sourced food on the menu.

5.9 Subscription schemes

There are several types of subscription schemes through which farmers can sell their food. A farm may operate its own subscription scheme, or it can be part of a scheme run by someone else, for instance another farm, or a company. For the consumers, being part of a subscription scheme means that you pay to have a box of food that you will receive weekly or fortnightly. Payments are made for each delivery, and customers can usually unsubscribe whenever they want. Some schemes allow customers to select their own food from a wide range offered. In other cases, choices of fruits and vegetables are linked to seasonal availability. Many food box schemes do not only offer locally produced food but also imports, to be able to offer a more complete range of what the consumer needs. Often food boxes will be delivered at the consumers’ house, but they can also be fetched at pick-up points or at the farm.

Many CSAs distribute food to members in a way that is similar to a subscription scheme. However, non-CSA subscription schemes usually do not require pre-payment, participation in farm work or involve customers to share the risks involved in food production.

In Bristol there is a number of options for buying fruit and vegetables through “veg box schemes”. Some are very large and operate on a national level, such as ‘Abel & Cole’ and ‘Riverford’. Just outside Bristol, in Chew Magna, is the Community Farm which operates a subscription scheme and delivers mainly to consumers in Bristol. The Community Farm delivers a combination of their own produce, products from other farms in the area, as well as other types of imported food. The Community Farm also operates as a wholesaler and sells to independent food shops, such as the ‘Better Food Company’. Inside Bristol it is possible to have a veg box subscription with small city farms such as Heart of BS13, Elm Tree Farm and Edible Futures.

In Norway, national veg box schemes are far less common, but there are several such schemes which aim to offer subscribers everything they need to eat for a whole family for a week, and include recipes as part of the service. Some of these schemes seem to have a focus on local food (for instance “Kokkeløren”). Based on internet search we found very few farms that have subscription schemes delivering to Oslo.

Oslo Kooperativ is an organisation that has similarities with a CSA subscription scheme. It is owned and run by its members, who subscribe to a fortnightly veg box from local producers in or near Oslo. They can also purchase meat and dairy products. The food is all organically certified, it is produced by local producers and varies with the season. Members pick up their boxes in the centre of Oslo, and as part of the membership they are obliged to help with packaging the food that arrives twice per year (5-8 hours in total). They also have to contribute work hours in one of several work groups of the organisation (activity group, purchase group, meat and dairy group, communication group or logistics group).

5.10 Online marketplaces

Online marketplaces are basically internet sites where purchases are made and paid for. This format has some similarities with a subscription scheme, but it can involve just one purchase, i.e. not a subscription.

5.10.1 Online food shops

Many consumers are already familiar with online food shops. In both the UK and Norway there are supermarkets who operate with online food shops selling the same items that they have in their physical shops.

In the UK, a range of different online shops specialising in local or speciality foods has been established, such as FarmDrop, BigBarn and FreshRange. There are also speciality online shops, such as Elston & Son[24], Pullo[25] and Scratting[26], specialising in cider, beer, cheese etc. Some of these online shops use third party companies to deliver their products to customers. In Norway there are several other online market places that operate in Oslo and other places in Norway, such as localfood[27] and matfra.no. Online shops are often run by a company, but it is also possible for a farm to run its own online shop.

Source Food is an online food shop that operates in Bristol. The owner previously ran a store near St. Nicholas Market in the city centre. Most products are sourced directly from producers in Bristol or the surroundings. The shop also offers items that cannot be produced in the UK, which are sourced from wholesalers. A particular trait of the business model is that customers make their purchases

---

[24] https://elstonandson.co.uk/hampers/

[25] https://www.pullo.shop/

[26] https://www.scrattingscraftcidershop.co.uk/

[27] https://localfood.novamanus.com/#labels

online on Monday at the latest, and deliveries are made on Wednesday and Thursday. The time in-between is needed to source customer orders directly from producers, helping Source Food reduce the need for keeping a wide range of stock in storage. Source Food then prepares the food and delivers it to the customers' houses in Bristol, sometimes with an electric van or bicycle.

In Oslo, ***Dyrket*** operates both as a wholesaler and as an online shop for consumers. Dyrket staff collect goods from the producers in the Oslo area, and consumers can either have the food delivered at their door or pick it up themselves. Dyrket has a strong focus on local producers, with a presentation on their web page of each of the farmers they are purchasing from. In common with Source Food, Dyrket also offers organically certified food imported from abroad when local products are not available.

5.10.2 Dagens

Dagens is an online marketplace operating in Norway and Denmark, where producers and chefs trade food directly on their own terms. The producers get a larger share of the final price paid. Chefs get easy access to diverse and seasonal produce at competitive prices. The business model works in the following way:

1. The producers create an account and upload the products they want to sell and their price onto Dagens
2. The buyers (only commercial kitchens, not private consumers) order online from the producers
3. The producers harvest, produce, prepare etc., and deliver to their nearest delivery hub
4. Dagens ensures orders are picked up, gather the goods from all the hubs, cross-dock and organise the deliveries to buyers. Producers can also choose to deliver directly to buyers if they prefer.
5. The buyers receive their deliveries.

Dagens is not a wholesaler and does not have any physical warehouses or trucks. No goods are stocked and distribution is directly from the producers to the kitchens. Dagens' responsibility is the marketplace (linking producers and buyers) and delivery in larger cities (Oslo, Trondheim, Copenhagen).

5.10.3 Good Sixty

Good Sixty is an online marketplace in Bristol that started in 2017. It's a business model where consumers can order online from a range of independent shops, and the goods are delivered to their house. The purchases can be made from different shops, but there is only one check out for the consumers when they pay, and the order is consolidated into a single delivery using an electric bike or van. The ambition of the company's founder is to support local, independent shops, so publicly limited companies and corporations cannot sell through Good Sixty. The name of the company comes from a study which found that every one pound spent with a local, independent producer has a 60% more benefit to the local community and economy than money spent on other, non-local products.

5.10.4 REKO-rings

"Reko" is the abbreviation of "Rejäl Konsumtion" ("Fair consumption") and started in Finland in 2013 to help small food producers to reach consumers without the use of expensive intermediaries, so that they could be left with a larger share of the retail price. The first REKO ring in Norway was launched in November 2017. There are no official statistics on the number of REKO rings in Norway, but registrations at Google Maps® indicate that there are around 9 REKO rings in Oslo and 150 in

Norway[28]. The Norwegian farmers and smallholders' association (NBS) has been involved in the development of the REKO rings since their inception. REKO does not have a central digital platform, but each REKO ring has its own Facebook group where producers post their offers, and consumers order by commenting underneath the post. Usually, consumers pay at the point of just after ordering. Delivery of the goods takes place in a publicly accessible place, often a parking lot, for a very limited period of time (30-60 minutes). Compared with the Farmer's market, sales through REKO rings have lower start-up costs and are more efficient in terms of time and effort, since the actual sale is made in advance, the producers does not need to bring more than what has been sold, and the time spent on delivery is limited. Using Facebook has its advantages, since customers will get reminders when they are on Facebook for other reasons, and it is free to use for producers. The disadvantage is that it can be difficult for consumers to keep track of the purchases as there is no record of it other than the comments posted.

5.11 Differences between sales channels in Bristol and Oslo

There are many similarities, but also differences between sales channels in Bristol and Oslo.

Both cities have farmers' markets, but they are organised in different ways. Bristol has two farmers' markets that work in the more traditional way, i.e. they are organised independently from each other and are always held at the same place weekly (or lately biweekly). In Oslo, the Farmer's Market is a national organisation, and the farmers' markets in Oslo are held in different places each week. This makes the market available within walking distance for more people, but they have to rely on advertisement instead of people shopping at known markets as a matter of routine.

It also seems that food festivals promoting local food are more important in Oslo than in Bristol. The food festivals in Oslo are organised either by the public authorities or by organisations commissioned by the public authorities, which indicates that this is an area prioritised by Norwegian policy makers.

Another clear difference is that Bristol, compared to Oslo, has a lot more independent food shops selling local food, and veg box schemes with local produce.

Certain sales channel business models only exist in one of the cities. Source Food and Good Sixty are sales models that do not exist in Oslo. Dyrket has similarities with Source Food but has worked more as a wholesaler than selling to private consumers. Oslo Kooperativ, Dagens and REKO rings are sales models that do not exist in Bristol.

---

[28] https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?fbclid=IwAR1mlicpiJZsjMHZwzJDK94oLcahkyUNVzrhp3bn1ul3RMCcXOWUBSWqiKI&mid=1xvx6CIa6i406wG7z2u01wupMVp3avF7J&ll=68.38977982965325%2C21.169775749999992&z=6

6 Organisations that promote local food

6.1 Organisations in Bristol/UK

Bristol has a range of networks, some of which overlap, that work in different ways to promote a sustainable food system and/or support local food producers. Some of them are linked to national organisations or initiatives and will not be described in detail here. However, two national-scale initiatives are noteworthy, namely FareShare South-West and Sustainable Food Places. FareShare South-West is the regional branch (based in Bristol) of a national charity that accepts surplus food from supermarkets and other food corporations and redistributes it low cost to local and regional community groups. Although the food involved is not often locally produced, FareShare is an important food logistical company at the city-regional scale and diverts perfectly edible food from possible waste disposal. Sustainable Food Places (SFP) is an initiative originally established by the Soil Association and runs an award for local authorities who meet SFP criteria for bronze, silver or gold standards. The importance of SFPs is that Bristol is the second city in the UK to attain the SFP gold award.

6.1.1 Bristol Good Food Alliance

In 2011 a publicly funded report called *Who Feeds Bristol?* (Carey 2012) quantified the potential to grow more food in the city's spaces, including public parks, and highlighted Bristol's role in supporting a sustainable regional food economy. This report inspired the development of the multi-actor Food Policy Council, which advised Bristol City Council's mayor on food issues. Results included a food plan and the successful application to become the European Green Capital 2015. The Bristol Good Food Alliance was initiated by the Green Capital Partnership, the Food Council and the Bristol Food Network. It aspires to a healthy, affordable and sustainable food system for the city. It is a strategic advisory body and its members include many of the networks described in this section (and more). The alliance spear-headed the development of the Bristol Good Food Plan, the Sustainable Food Cities Silver Award in 2016, and was part of the network which secured the subsequent Gold award in 2021.

6.1.2 Bristol Food Union

BFU was established in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which suddenly ended business for restaurants and other caterers, as customers were forced to stay at home. BFU re-configured the work of restaurants and teamed up with community food projects to organise the distribution of cooked meals to some of Bristol's most vulnerable and isolated citizens. BFU subsequently ended its operations in 2022.

6.1.3 Bristol Food Producers

BFP was launched in 2015 and is a co-operative organisation led by food producers in Bristol. It aims to increase the opportunities for growing food in the city by offering skills training, lobbying for land to be made available for production, promoting market opportunities for local food and providing a network for its membership (some of which were interviewed for this report). Support for the establishment of BFP came partly via Bristol Green Capital.

6.1.4 Bristol Green Capital Partnership

In 2015 Bristol received the accolade of European Green Capital. Although Bristol's successful award didn't come with financial support, the City Council provided around £2million for Green Capital projects, of which around £360,000 (18%) was allocated to food projects. The Green Capital

Partnership is the legacy organisation established to allocate these funds and monitor and support the projects initiated during the European Green Capital period.

6.1.5 Going For Gold Bristol

In 2021, Bristol was recognised with a Gold Sustainable Food Cities award. The award was granted by Sustainable Food Places – a national partnership that supports and celebrates places making positive changes to their food systems and culture, helping them to share good practice and explore solutions to common challenges. Bristol Food Network, Bristol Green Capital Partnership, Bristol City Council and Resource Futures (a waste and resources B-Corp) coordinated the bid, although a range of other local organisations offered support. Individuals and organisations are encouraged to support local food, reduce food waste and improve their health and well-being through food growing activities.

6.1.6 Feeding Bristol

Feeding Bristol is a food justice charity, launched in 2017, that aims to ensure that healthy, sustainable and affordable food is available to everyone. Its activities include trying to alleviate immediate food insecurity (i.e. hunger), promoting growing, cooking and healthy eating skills, increasing the supply of healthy regional food in Bristol, and influencing Bristol's food policy.

6.1.7 Bristol Food Network

Bristol Food Network is a community interest company (a company which has local restrictions on the distribution of its assets) and is run by a board of directors drawn from other private, public and civil society organisations. BFN operates as an umbrella network of other local food initiatives in the city. Its vision is for Bristol to become a sustainable food city which, in practical terms, it has achieved through silver (2016) and gold (2021) awards. A key function for BFN is to connect and share good practice among grassroots food initiatives, through a regular newsletter and active website. BFN organises an annual 'Get Growing Trail' during which community food production projects are open to the public, and has compiled a history of Bristol's sustainable food movement.

6.2 Organisations in Oslo/Norway

There are some nationwide organisations that work to promote the interests of local food producers in Norway. Some are member organisations, while others are organisations that are appointed by the national authorities to support local food production. None of these are local, e.g. only operating in Oslo.

6.2.1 Hanen

HANEN is a nationwide member organisation for farms and companies that offer rural tourism, local food and inland fishing in Norway. HANEN offers its members a variety of services and benefits and represents the interests of local food and drink producers to both local, regional and national companies and authorities. All members are presented at Hanen.no and as such the organisation also offers a marketing opportunity for its members[29].

6.2.2 Stiftelsen Norsk Mat

Stiftelsen Norsk Mat[30]. is an independent foundation that aims to contribute to increased diversity, quality and value creation in Norwegian food production with an overall goal to make people choose food of Norwegian origin. The foundation was established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in

[29] https://www.hanen.no/

[30] https://www.lokalmat.no/

2007, with the aim to develop and professionalise local food producers. It offers guidance to local food producers mainly on commercial topics such as calculating costs and defining the price of a product, and marketing strategies. The foundation manages the webpage lokalmat.no which is intended to be a national register of all local food producers in Norway where they can market their products. In order to register at this web page, the producers have to complete a self-assessment to document that they comply with food safety requirements etc. Lokalmat.no also collaborates with the online market place Localfood.

6.2.3 Kompetansenettverket for lokalmat

Kompetansenettverket for lokalmat ('Competence network for local food') is a part of the strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to promote local food production throughout Norway. The network offers courses and individual guidance to all local food producers on topics related to processing local resources, with the aim to contribute to value creation, product diversity and food safety[31].

6.2.4 Innovation Norway

Innovation Norway aims to contribute to business innovation and offers services within financing, consulting, competence building, networking and profiling to companies, including local food producers. Financing can be provided to owners of agricultural properties or companies connected to agricultural properties. Support can also be provided to smaller food companies that cooperate with primary producers. It is owned by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the County Councils, and it receives annual grants through the state budget[32].

6.2.5 Local and regional authorities

Local and regional authorities support local food production and sale, both through their role as "community developer" and by managing grant schemes.

6.2.5.1 The City of Oslo

The City of Oslo has developed and adopted its own strategy for urban agriculture (2019 - 2030)[33]. It also has a grant scheme (since 2017, with a total of 2 million NOK to allocate to urban farm projects annually) specific for urban farming that aims to contribute to increased knowledge development and more urban agricultural activity in Oslo. The scheme supports activities such as preparation of common gardens, construction of wooden bed for growing vegetables, beehives and hen houses. The municipality also maps agricultural land that is or can be used for food production in the Oslo region, with the intention to make farmland more available to citizens wanting to grow food. It is also possible to rent agricultural land from the municipality for farming purposes, and the municipality offers courses in urban agriculture for its citizens. The municipality is also involved in several research projects concerning urban agriculture[34].

6.2.5.2 The County Governor of Oslo and Viken

The County Governor of Oslo and Viken also plays a role in promoting urban agriculture, primarily by working together with other regional bodies and organisations to facilitate business development

---

[31] https://xn--mathndverk-45a.no/

[32] https://www.innovasjonnorge.no/

[33] chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.oslo.kommune.no/getfile.php/13365754-1586326513/Tjenester%20og%20tilbud/Politikk%20og%20administrasjon/Milj%C3%B8%20og%20klima/Styrende%20dokumenter/Spirende%20Oslo%20-%20strategi%20for%20urbant%20landbruk.pdf

[34] https://www.oslo.kommune.no/natur-kultur-og-fritid/urbant-landbruk/

within agriculture. The County Governor took the initiative to establish an "Incubator programme"[35] for small scale vegetable producers in Oslo and Viken who want to start market gardening, an initiative that was taken in collaboration with the County Governor of Vestland and of Trøndelag. The first program took place in 2021 and, since then, similar programs have been offered in different places around the country involving County Governors of other parts of Norway.

[35] https://www.markedshage.no/nb/nyheter/2022/02/inspirasjonssamling-regional-inkubator/

7 Motivations for local marketing

We define 'local marketing' as selling food through alternative sales channels that are different from supermarket chains. An aim of the project was to identify the reasons why stakeholders see it as important that these alternative sales channels exist. The interviewees were asked about what they thought were the advantages of local marketing, what it has to offer that mainstream sales channels don't, and why people are motivated to sell and to purchase food through local sales channels.

7.1 Environment

The environmental benefits of small-scale production and direct sale was often mentioned in both Bristol and Oslo. Arguments were centred around reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, organic and sustainable production methods without use of chemical synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, as well as reduction of packaging and food waste.

7.1.1 Less food miles and pollution from transport

An association often made with local marketing is that food produced close to where it is consumed has travelled a shorter distance, hence there is less pollution from transport. This argument was mentioned particularly often in Bristol.

> *I think it comes down to food miles, obviously, things travelling, people are waking up to the fact that actually potentially, if something's grown locally, it doesn't travel so far. And that's a good thing (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

A good example is the farmers' market on Whiteladies road in Bristol which was initiated by a group of neighbours who wanted to do something to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The idea was that food sold at the market would come from fairly close, and consumers would not have to drive to get to the market. As there is no parking lot nearby, driving is rather inconvenient. Observing the market in the autumn 2021, there were indeed producers from quite close, such as the fruit and vegetable farmers from Leigh Court only 4 miles away. But the market also had stalls selling food that was not local, such as French cheese.

How food is transported also influences greenhouse gas emissions. Online market places deliver food to their customers in Bristol on electric bikes and vans, and use this information when promoting their business on their web pages.

> *Another benefit is that because we deliver using electric bikes, that's a much more environmentally friendly way of doing deliveries, rather than relying on a very big logistics chain using trucks and warehouses. Ours is a much simpler way of delivering things (Online food shop, Bristol).*

In interviews in Norway, we do not see the same emphasis on use of electric vehicles, but this could be because electric vehicles are far more common in Norway than in the UK[36]. In general, the environmental advantage of shorter distances was less often mentioned in Oslo. An Oslo producer talked about how systems that are economically efficient could be bad for the environment, giving the example of potatoes produced in the north of Norway that are transported several hundred kilometres to the south to be processed and packed and then transported back to the north to be sold. The producer said he enjoyed "*being a counterweight to how such a food system works*".

[36] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/05/electric-cars-record-market-share-norway

In their recent study, Majewski et al. (2020) found that a shorter distance between food producers and consumers does not necessarily mean less CO_2 emissions, since other aspects also matters, such as the energy used for transport, type of vehicle and how much it carries. Whether or not consumers travel by car to get their food is important, too. Some interviewees in Bristol expressed their awareness of the fact that less food miles are not automatically better for the environment, but their experience was that these nuances were difficult for consumers to understand.

> *I think food miles are very easy for people to conceptualise, it's very nearby therefore it must be having a positive impact, that's the perception (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

7.1.2 More environmentally friendly production methods

Interviewees in both Bristol and Oslo also talked about how local food was produced with more environmentally friendly production methods. An independent shop owner in Bristol said the following:

> *I think that knowing that, generally speaking, if it's grown locally, then it's less likely to be mass-produced, there's potentially less fossil fuels [consumer] in going into, you know, pesticides, fertilisers, that kind of thing.*

An independent shop owner in Oslo gave the following reflection on the role that shops like hers could have on environmental outcomes:

> *We have the opportunity to buy from small scale producers. Most farmers who deliver to us grow very diversified with several different crops, while those who deliver cucumbers to Kiwi (Norwegian supermarket chain) for example, they can only grow cucumbers. So, it would be easier to farm sustainably if more people used these kinds of shops, because then the farmer could be producing more diversified crops.*

These thoughts are in line with the findings of Milford, Lien and Reed (2021), that local marketing opportunities are necessary for vegetable farmers to be able to have small-scale, diversified vegetable production, which in turn is good for soil health and biodiversity.

Many local producers are organically certified, and many of the independent shops only source organically certified food. With organic certification a third party verifies that the food has been produced without any use of chemical synthetic pesticides. For some producers and shops in Bristol this seemed to be important, since "everyone knows what organic is" and it conveys a "clean message". Likewise, a producer in Oslo explained that they wanted the organic label because they felt people were searching for it.

Other producers said that they were using organic methods and had a strong environmental motivation for doing this, but that they were not certified. This is probably most common for CSAs since they have a close contact with the consumers who therefore have detailed information about how production takes place on the farm.

7.1.3 Less food waste

Food waste was mentioned in both cities. Several producers mentioned that with local marketing they were able to sell vegetables with aesthetic defects such as unusual shapes or insect damage, which mainstream supermarkets would not accept. This is in line with previous studies which found that local sales channels increase opportunities for selling products that would be discarded in the mainstream system (Milford et al. 2019).

Furthermore, the online market places in Oslo and Bristol are not stocking food, and their claim is that this reduces food waste, as the food is delivered directly from the producer to the consumer or kitchen, and only what they already know is going to be sold is harvested or slaughtered. A manager of online market places in Bristol find this to be very different from when they had a physical shop, where being left with surplus food was routine. The manager also explains how they make an effort to sell the whole animal that they purchase, finding customers for each part, and making sausages from remaining off-cuts.

7.1.4 Less packaging

The environmental advantage of reduced packaging was mentioned in several interviews in Bristol, for instance by the representative from one of the Farmers' markets:

> *People prefer no packaging, and when you put the veg (…) right into your bag packaging is missed out, and that is a major sustainability issue.*

Bristol seems to be a city where pollution from packaging is a general concern. The city has a number of shops that only sell food in loose weight, and independent food shops usually have a section with loose weight food. Reduced packaging was rarely mentioned by interviewees in Oslo, but the consumer co-operative in Oslo explained that their producers are required to use as little packaging as possible.

7.2 Food security

Several interviewees in Bristol had thoughts about how local food production is important in crisis situations posing threats to food security, for instance the climate crisis that is accelerating, or the pandemic. One of the representatives for a food organisation in Bristol said the following:

> *I think now, people are very driven by climate change and what's happening with the climate emergency. (…) I also think that during the pandemic, people woke up to the fact that we have quite a fragile food system in this country. Because we do import so much of our food here, and we're so reliant on that, and that when we couldn't, and when we weren't getting hold of things, the farmer down the road became really, really important.*

Some interviewees seemed to have a perception that the existing mainstream food system, which is largely based on large scale farming and international trade, would not be resilient in a crisis situation. One member of a food organisation in Bristol said:

> *With 1,5 °C global temperature increase we will go through climate destruction and if global food systems collapse, could Bristol then feed itself? Today the answer is no.*

The uncertainty of what will happen with climate change is on the mind of many of the interviewees in Bristol. A local food producer said the following:

> *Climate change is going to be a big issue, we don't know yet how that is going to change or impact how we grow, and the weather, and so that's something we constantly have to keep learning about.*

Some of the interviewees explained why local food systems were important in this context:

With the way the world is going, with climate change and social change, those are skills that people need more and more, namely to know about the land and understand the land and know how to feed themselves, how to look after animals and grow things, and how to live in harmony with the land but still being able to take what you need from it, not exhausting it (Local food producer, Bristol).

Another interviewee from an organisation in Bristol had ideas about how sourcing policies needed to be regionalised so that there would be enough staple food (vegetables, cereal, meat, dairy) to feed everyone, and that it was important to build a regenerative agriculture and food economy with a focus on soil fertility. She also believed that with local food systems there would be more economic resilience, with more income going into the local economy.

Similar thoughts were shared by another food organisation in Bristol:

And we're getting bigger institutions more interested in how they source food and how they support the local economy. (…) And we don't know what forces are going to come along in the future, and disrupt things. So, all those changes help.

The COVID pandemic has given some of the interviewees an experience of how the food systems coped with such a crisis, and one of the independent shop representatives said she believed that the close and direct relationships that small shops have with their suppliers makes the suppliers prioritize deliveries to small shops rather than to larger supermarkets.

I think it's the proximity and relationship we have with our suppliers. If you are one of their biggest, most valued customers they are going to prioritise us, whereas with supermarkets, my impression is they got much of their supply chains to negotiate (Independent food shop, Bristol).

In Oslo the climate crisis was barely mentioned in any of the interviews, but there were some interviewees who mention the need to increase Norway's food self-sufficiency, and who felt that local food production will contribute to that. A representative of one of the public authorities interviewed also explained that one of the reasons for them to prioritise urban agriculture is to prevent peri-urban agricultural land getting lost to construction, something that will reduce the potential for future food production.

7.3 Transparency

Many interviewees considered shorter food supply chains to be more transparent, meaning that it is easier to get access to information about how production and logistics have been managed, and whether they are in line with high ethical standards or not. An organisation in Bristol expressed that high food standards do not only concern health and environment, but also working conditions for those who produce the food.

Another interviewee in Bristol talked about how a local food chain can help consumers save time searching for information about ethical standards.

When I am shopping, I want to buy the most ethical version of the product, and by coming in here (an independent food shop in Bristol) there is someone who has done that research for me. I wouldn't like to go into a shop where I didn't think anyone had their eye on the ethics of the supply chain, then I would individually have to go and look at every package, find out where that comes from (Independent food shop, Bristol).

In line with this, a representative of an online food market place in Oslo said:

> *We want to provide access and build information about the uniqueness of the product to the customers (…) In the existing food system we do not know why there is a price difference in the store, we do not know if the producer is well paid, how big the farm is, whether the crops are harvested by hand or by machine. All these factors are not known to customers. But since we work directly with the producers, we can provide such information.*

The representative from Consumer co-operative, Oslo, explained that their organisation was very concerned about consumers having access to information about price and where the food is produced. Similarly, the representative of a REKO ring in Oslo expressed that direct sales create trust among producers and consumers.

7.4 Creating community

With local marketing there is often more direct contact between the producers and the consumers, and this was mentioned as a benefit by interviewees both in Oslo and Bristol. On a practical level, it means that customers can ask questions about the product directly to the farmers, and sometimes they can also request certain items or certain customer services that are not possible with a supermarket. An online market place in Bristol mentioned for instance that people could ask to have their fish fileted in a certain way, and they could also have exactly the quantity they wanted.

Producers and consumers in both cities expressed how this connection also had important social benefits. A farmers' market manager in Bristol explained how the direct contact between farmers and buyers sometimes created a sense of community amongst attendees and the customer base, which gave them a feeling that they were part of and supporting something which was satisfying more than just their utilitarian need for food. The social benefits of selling at a market were particularly important for the farm that was working with people with learning disabilities. Similar things were expressed by the representative of the Farmer's Market in Oslo:

> *One of the most important things is that because there are physical market places, something more takes place than just the exchange of products and money. It is a meeting place between different people, that have something to learn from each other. The farmer gets an opportunity to explain a lot about Norwegian agriculture and Norwegian food traditions, while the customer gets to talk about what kind of products they want and how they use the products. And these things can help to create new products again (…) So this is an exchange of knowledge and also a social meeting place between people, which in that sense is very important and constitutes something more than the monetary value.*

An independent shop representative in Bristol talked about how this type of shop gave a community a different feeling than what "a faceless supermarket" could, and that the independent shop changed the face of the area and made it feel more like a neighbourhood. Similarly, an independent shop representative in Oslo explained that some customers talked about the farmers delivering to the shop using their forenames, since they sometimes would be in the shop when the farmers arrived with their products.

The creation of meeting spaces for people seems to be an important factor for many of the interviewees in both cities. The REKO-ring representative interviewed in Oslo mentioned this several times. This REKO-ring was different than many others, as it took place in a densely populated neighbourhood, and most people walked there from their houses.

I think that one of the most important things about us is that we are in the neighbourhood of people. (…). It is a different atmosphere there, no one drives there to pick up their goods. Everyone comes walking. If they are sick, they have a neighbour who is going, so then they can just send them. We are in the middle of the neighbourhood, right. It helps to create local environment, it is a cultural thing related to it, and not just a shopping function.

The representative of the market on Whiteladies Road in Bristol described the "*community feel about the market, people meet their friends there, stay for a coffee, sit in the wall and chat"* and some farmers highlighted the social part of selling locally. A farmer in Bristol explained that they had an event space for parties, to get consumers to come to the farm. Similarly, a representative of a Bristol CSA described how they invite people, *"light a fire, have some food and soup and stuff that we've made, sit around and have music and fun*". For this CSA it was important to follow the social part of the permaculture principles to which they adhere: "*Fair share, earth care, people care*".

The representative of Oslo municipality explained that they provide financial support to organisations and networks etc. involved in local food production and that an important aim is to strengthen local green entrepreneurship, which also has an important social aspect, e.g., contributing to local communities and building local neighbourhoods.

7.5 Knowledge transfer to consumers

Both the Farmers' market managers and other interviewees talked about how purchasing locally gave consumers better opportunities to learn about the food they eat, compared to when purchasing from a supermarket. For instance, the representative of Oslo municipality emphasised that direct sales increase consumers' knowledge about where their food comes from and how it is produced, making people value food more. The representative from the Farmer's Market in Oslo mentioned that many farmers participating in their markets expressed that selling products directly to consumers made them value their own knowledge in a new way and feel proud as farmers.

Producers who invite people to the farm, such as the CSA farms, were particularly concerned about knowledge transfer. But there were also other farmers who talked about how they wanted to show consumers the "whole picture" and teach them about for instance the importance of circularity in resource use, what it takes to produce food, and all the additional values of farming.

Also involving people in food production … a lot of the growers will have some volunteering or educational programmes going on. It's never just about the food and never just behind closed doors, it's always part of the community that it sits in. I think that's incredibly important (Local food producer, Bristol).

One of the organisations interviewed in Bristol talked about the problems caused by lack of skills among consumers regarding food, not just how it was produced but also how to cook it, which had an influence on health. The representative for the CSA in Bristol also expressed strong ambitions regarding knowledge transfer to their members:

We want to connect people with growing food, and help people, skill them up, help them learn how to grow their own food, how to cook with it… Not that we offer cooking classes, but we've had people say "I've had a complete change of the way I cook because of the veg I get from Sims Hill because it's seasonal"

CSAs in Oslo had similar views, believing that CSA *"helps to change attitudes, values and buying patterns of people"*.

The ambitions for local food systems of a food organisation in Bristol were described like this:

But I think it's about what we do alongside it. It's about empowerment, it's about education, it's about skills, it's about changing habits of people in our society to move back to really appreciating that food ultimately has sat at the heart of progression. Food and farming [were] at the heart of progression and society and communities for centuries, and then in the last sort of 30, 40 years… (…) it's moved us a long way from that.

According to this interviewee food and social development have historically been linked, and now the link has been broken.

7.6 Food diversity and quality

For some of the sales channels in Oslo, food diversity was a strong motivating factor. One of them said this was the main reason why they had started up:

We wanted to challenge an extremely established grocery market in Norway (…) which has huge challenges with regard to diversity in the grocery shops. So, this sales channel was established to promote greater diversity in grocery stores. And then it has developed with the aim to make Norwegian local food more accessible to as many people as possible.

The representative from a Norwegian food organisation explained how the variety of Norwegian food specialities used to be extremely limited:

I started a restaurant 25 years ago at Grünerløkka [a city district of Oslo], and the food diversity of Norwegian products was incredibly low. The Norwegian consumers accepted this, but if you tell young people what it was like, they will think: "Is it possible?" People complain about the product diversity today, but they have no idea how it was. The worst example is apple juice. There was just one type in all of Norway, made from concentrate! And everyone thought that was o.k.

He highlighted that processing local resources is an opportunity for farmers to learn and develop new skills and believed that this motivates young people to pursue a career in agriculture. He particularly pointed to the development in cheesemaking and cider production, which has resulted in a large variety of new products in Norway.

Related to this is food quality, which was also mentioned as a motivating factor by interviewees in both Oslo and Bristol. With a wider selection to choose from, there can also be room for food with higher quality, something that can be particularly important for chefs who order local food. A producer in Oslo was talking about how their unprocessed, fermented dairy products had a quality that was not possible to get anywhere else, which explained why it was popular among consumers.

One of the Farmers' markets' representatives in Bristol described the food at the market in this way:

A lot is fresher and better, and if you are going to eat meat, I would buy it from the Old Sodbury Lamb farmer. It might be little more expensive, but it's going to be many times better.

The argument for many also seemed to be that when food has travelled shorter, it is likely to be fresher, and therefore is of better quality.

To me it's probably like, freshness, you are shortening that time spent in transit or in warehouses, we can have something that has been picked that morning on the shelf that afternoon, ready for someone to eat that evening. For people who live in a city I think that's quite hard to find. (Independent food shop, Bristol)

7.7 Counterweight to the mainstream food system

For some interviewees, both in Oslo and Bristol, mainstream sales channels had negative connotations, and being a counterweight to them seemed to be an important motivation to support local, short food supply chains.

Particularly in Bristol there seemed to be a strong wish to push back against supermarkets, who were perceived as large and powerful. One of the interviewees working for a food organisation in Bristol was particularly critical:

I'm not sure what is good about supermarkets. They [don't] teach people about where food comes from, they give you an unrealistic idea of what food should cost or how it should be produced. They prop up [bad environmental practices], even their organic ranges come from sources that are still having intensive organic farming and still having a detrimental impact on the environment, and often from areas that are running disgraceful human rights practices (…) Supermarkets, in this desire to be as cheap as possible and to be competitive against each other, are destroying the planet (…) they'll promote bad food and ready meals and horrible snack foods.

Other interviewees offered different critiques of supermarkets, but pointed to the effects that supermarkets have had on consumer attitudes and their expectations of year-round availability.

Supermarkets have been a big contributor to this culture of everything is there all year round [on demand]. That's not necessarily OK. There's too much choice and availability and that's skewed people's perceptions of what is realistic to take from the world around them. But [supermarkets are convenient] and that works for people. I'm not suggesting a utopia where everyone grows all the time, but the balance is all wrong and supermarkets are very unbalanced places (Local food producer, Bristol).

The same strongly negative attitudes to supermarkets were not observed in Oslo, although the power of the large supermarket chains and the negative environmental impact of industrial farming was also mentioned. However, in both cities, there seemed to be a perception that local marketing creates an alternative to the mainstream food systems.

7.8 Direct support to farmers

Several interviewees opined that buying from local producers implied more support to the local economy than buying through mainstream marketing, and that buying from local producers meant that the money is invested locally. The online market place Good Sixty only allows independent shops, not supermarkets, and justifies it like this:

When you spend with a local producer, it has a much greater economic impact in your local community than if you spend with larger supermarkets. (…) Big businesses have been damaging to that high street and to these small shops. His *(the founders) idea was to get these shops online so that they can compete with larger supermarkets and larger delivery services such as Amazon fresh.*

In Oslo, the REKO ring volunteer interviewed also emphasised the market's contribution to the local economy.

Furthermore, in both Oslo and Bristol local food marketing sales channels and retailers explained how they never used their negotiation power to try and negotiate prices that disadvantage producers. The ideal instead seemed to be to give small-scale farmers access to a market, pay them a better price and cut the number of middlemen to let the farmers have a larger share of the price consumers pay.

We carry out intermediary functions including distribution and everything related to sales as efficient as possible, so that the farmer can be left with more and the products become cheaper (Online market place, Oslo).

This would in turn make it possible for producers to be both environmentally and economically sustainable, even with a small farm.

Local marketing was also seen as something that could give farmers more control of the production process and help them realise a dream of creating a living based on the farm's resources. For example, one of the farms in Oslo had many ambitions beyond merely creating economic income. The farm is in a hilly area and the topography makes mechanisation impossible, hence they have chosen a different path. The farmers (a couple) have a strong emphasis on using all the resources provided by the farm for production, and they felt that this was a way of creating more than just food as a raw material. They also explained how these ambitions were incompatible with selling through the mainstream system:

We have a small farm and right from the start it was very clear that if we were to live on the commodity prices that you get from selling to the co-operative, it wouldn't be possible to run the farm, or get an income the way that we want. The aim has always been to run the farm as a holistic enterprise that we both can live off. (…) It is about seeing the farm as something more than just a food producing thing, that only provides food. It also cultivates the landscape, helps us to preserve traditions and history. It helps to create jobs, a sense of accomplishment and life values for those who need it. It is so many elements that you are buying, which you lose when you just sell the raw material as a food item (Local food producer, Oslo).

8 Marketing and market opportunities

8.1 Selling a story as well as a product

In general, local food producers and sales channels in our cohort are small-scale, with little money to purchase marketing services, so they do it themselves. In Bristol some of the organisations working with local food are acting as intermediaries if someone is looking for a local product, producer, or somewhere to sell their product. But in general, little is done in terms of generic marketing of local food products in Oslo and Bristol.

Two very common marketing strategies in both cities is social media (typically Facebook and Instagram), which is free.

> *For instance, say we get a particularly lovely new supplier, either they're local, they've got a really good story or there's something really ethical about them, then we'll try and talk about them on social media. And then my team in the shop are quite good at maybe writing a blackboard about why we love a certain team producer (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

One producer in Oslo and one sales channel representative in Bristol said they sometimes used leaflets for marketing. The producer distributes them into mailboxes in the neighbourhood and the sales channel would hand them out in the city centre. The Whiteladies market representative in Bristol believed the market advertised itself to people passing by, and they also suggested that being long-established was something that helped to attract customers. Many producers also seemed to rely on "word of mouth", people spreading the word around. Inviting people to open days on the farm is another marketing strategy. In both cities several interviewees talked about how they got newspapers to write articles about them, which is free advertisement.

It is important for both producers and sales channels to have a *story* to tell and to sell, a theme that was often brought up in the interviews. Many, both producers and sales channel representatives, talked about how they were selling something more than just food. As one of the sales channel representatives in Oslo said: "*We have to, firstly, create a story and secondly, communicate that story*."

The story behind the food could be about different things. The representative for a food organisation interviewed in Oslo talked about how it was important to tell a story that made consumers feel connected to the farm:

> *But I think the connection is really important and the customers (…) feeling connected to the farmer is something that really helps sell the product. And I think you see with a lot of people in the city this romanticism around the good life in the countryside, you know, and I think a lot of customers want to feel like they're a part of that, want to feel connected to that somehow. And it needs to share that aesthetic beauty somehow. And I think the big thing we come back to is this story of the good life close to nature. I think that's the story that connects (…) best with Norwegian culture. This kind of like historic, romantic, you know, pastoral good life (Food organisation, Oslo).*

Another producer in Oslo emphasised that their story was not about idealising farm life, but rather to show "*the values in Norwegian agriculture and proper food production"*. They wanted to sell the story and the job they were doing in an honest way, and to show the *"work, values and mindset that lies behind"* the food they produce.

That you are honest about what you are actually doing. Because there is so much dishonest marketing, people are very concerned that what they see, that it should just be nice and neat and a lot of nice idyllic stories, but it is not really like that (Local food producer, Oslo).

This was also something they felt had been a key to their success:

It builds itself up without us having to market so much, we have many who follow us (…). We notice that when you dare to be different, and be who you are, that is what makes people open their eyes and get interested (Local food producer, Oslo).

The representative for the CSA interviewed in Bristol had a different story that they wanted to convey, which was more about being part of a transformation towards a better food system:

We think we have a story to tell, as part of how we think the food system needs to be transformed (…), so I think, people who really get that whole story, as opposed to people who think it's a different way of getting a veg box, you know, they get it.

This is in line with what a sales channel representative in Bristol conveyed, that they had a story to tell about how they answered to the needs of people to take care of the environment as well as local businesses:

Our model is quite innovative and gets lots of media attention, especially during a time when we have to be a lot more conscious about our carbon footprint and we should be supporting local businesses and reducing our food miles.

A challenge with selling food with a story, that was mentioned by sales channels in both Oslo and Bristol, is that the story has to be refreshed and kept interesting. This is especially the case if you are trying to get mainstream media to write about it. For instance, a new type of sales channel, like Oslo Kooperativ, will generate interest when it's new, but after a while everyone will have heard about the concept, and then it gets more difficult to get journalists' and the public's attention. Consequently, something new has to happen, for it to become newsworthy.

Some interviewees also mentioned selling an experience. An independent food shop representative in Oslo said her most important marketing strategy was to create a good atmosphere in the shop: "*it has to be a good experience to visit the shop*". And one of the CSA farmers in Oslo said she "*did not advertise the CSA as a product, I advertised it as an experience".* In line with this, one of the producers described how it was important to be active and responsive to people at markets, and to create relationships. This points back to the previous section "Creating community"; it is both a motivating factor for working with local marketing, but also a sales strategy.

But marketing local food is not only about the story and the experience: most of the interviewees in both cities also talked about the quality of the product itself, that they perceived as fresher, organic or contained no additives, tasted better and so on. Hence, the product itself remains very important.

Some of the interviewees also talked about how different types of farmers needed different types of sales channels, depending on their personalities and type of production:

Our experience is that not all small-scale local food producers fit all sales channels. They need to find out what is right for them. Some are good with people and are well suited for the Farmer's Market. Some are better with a pc *and sell better on REKO or via apps. Others will focus on volume and streamlining and are best suited for supermarket shelves (Farmer's market Oslo).*

For instance, for people who are more introvert and shy, selling at a market may not be the right thing. One of the organisation representatives interviewed in Oslo talked about how farmers using social media would maybe need to expose themselves and their lives, something not everyone would feel comfortable with:

How much do you want to sell yourself? Sharing personal information and posting pictures of your children and all these kinds of things on social media. And that's a conversation that came up quite often (…) how comfortable are you with selling yourself in order to sell your vegetables and if that is off limits, what other kind of possibilities could you pursue?

8.2 Market opportunities and growth potential

All interviewees were asked about future expectations for direct sale of local food in their city. It seems that most believe there is a potential for further growth both in Bristol and Oslo, but their replies varied with regard to whether this would depend on availability of more producers and products or on increased consumer demand for local food through short supply chains.

In Bristol, one food organisation representative said:

At the moment the pinch point is the production, not the market. None of our producers are struggling to sell, therefore we are not focusing on the market, we are focusing on producing more food.

Meanwhile, an independent shop representative said the opposite: "*We're quite lucky in Bristol, because there are hundreds of local suppliers."* Similar contradictory claims were made in Oslo, with some stakeholders saying that there are not enough producers, while others, particularly some of the interviewed sales channel representatives, were reporting about lack of demand for their products.

In Oslo the Farmers' market representative gives the following description of the agricultural region nearest to Oslo:

Akershus is an area with a very short distance to a large population and market, but there are very few doing direct sales there. And it has a little bit to do with culture and the type of farms there and a little bit with good job opportunities outside agriculture. We see a little more interest now than five years ago, but there is still very little interest among farmers there to try direct sales as a method.

But most sales channel representatives in both Oslo and Bristol seemed to be satisfied with the availability of producers and products, even though an independent food shop representative in Oslo explained that some products had to be imported (e.g. from Sweden) because there are too few organic producers of certain products in Norway. Other sales channel representatives (e.g. REKO in Oslo, and Whiteladies farmers' market in Bristol) explained that they sometimes had to turn down producers applying to sell at their markets if they already had the same foods on sale via existing producers.

Some stakeholders talked about how both producers and sales channels were struggling economically, and that more consumers buying from local sales channels would have been helpful, as highlighted by the owner of an independent food shop in Oslo

If there only were 10% who bought this kind of food, then there would be room for more. But there is not room for many. And very few are making profits.

The replies do not give a clear indication of whether it is lack of supply or demand for local food that defines the current situation.

Demand can be dependent on characteristics of a local area. The customer base for the Bristol farmers' market is reliant on activity in the area during their opening hours. When there was a change in the area with offices moving to other places, it reduced the number of people who came to the market during their lunch break. And when customers failed to come, the farmers also dropped out.

Several interviewees mentioned that increasing demand is made difficult by the fact that food sold through local sales channels is often more expensive and therefore not an option for everyone. It was claimed that only rich people can afford local food, or that local food, for instance at the Farmer's Market in Norway or the REKO-rings, was only purchased for special occasions and not for every day grocery. Other sales channel representatives contradicted this, and an independent shop in Oslo said that although the food she sold was more expensive than at the supermarkets, she did not think her customers were better off economically than other people, but they were people who were concerned with good food and chose to spend money on it:

Actually, there are many who are not well off who choose to spend money on good food and are concerned with that. So, my impression is that they are planning well and thinking it through.

9 Locality and origin

In local food marketing studies, a question often raised is what “local” actually means. Questions regarding localness and the importance of geographical distance were also raised by some of the interviewees in our study

How far away can a local producer be from the city? Is it 30-40-10 km? What is it like, when does urban agriculture begin and end, etc., etc. Then you are back to the old discussions about local food. What is local? (Food organisation, Oslo).

In both Oslo and Bristol, it seems to be an important marketing strategy to brand something as local, but none of the interviewed sales channel representatives could point to clearly defined guidelines or criteria to define “local producers”. Farmer’s Market in Norway explained that they did not accept products mainly based on tropical ingredients. The REKO-representative explained that they had no such restrictions, but producers had to provide information about the origin of the ingredients used in their products. This REKO-ring had also developed a matrix to select producers, prioritising those located close to their delivery place and who sold products based on local resources. The need for certain types of food to stay fresh is an important factor which makes it difficult to sell very far away. Moreover, the consumer co-operative in Oslo explained that geographical distance to their producers was primarily limited by how far the farmers were willing to bring their products.

The need to offer a diversity of products makes sales channels willing to supply food that has travelled far. One of the digital sales channels in Oslo purchased food from almost anywhere in Norway and explained that they could not agree internally on what local meant. But given that the distance from Oslo to Sweden is much shorter than from Oslo to most of the rest of Norway, there seem to be more emphasis on nationality than on kilometres of distance. Some of the producers also emphasised that closeness to the city was important for their sales. For instance, one producer located in the outskirts of Oslo, who transported his products to restaurants and shops in the Oslo city centre, expressed a wish to be closer to the market.

I myself think it’s almost on the edge to call it local when we sell to Oslo. It would have been even cooler to sell to the local community. There are probably people here. But there is no interest yet. My big dream would be to have a farm located 10 or 20 minutes from the center of Oslo. Then it is local. It’s an hour to drive now.

Another producer explained that selling directly rather than through wholesalers and in the supermarkets makes the producer more visible and shows the locality of the farm in a better way:

It puts the farm on the map. It is not just a liter of milk from somewhere, but from this place here. Then you see that it is individual farms that produce all the liters of milk and not just «TINE» (Norway’s largest producer, distributor and exporter of dairy products. (Local food producer, Oslo).

It was difficult to get a clear indication of how important it was for the consumers that the food should be locally produced. A question raised several times was how important it was for food to be local compared to it being produced in an environmentally friendly way, and it was said that this would vary between food products as well as between consumers.

One of the independent food shop representatives in Bristol gave the following example:

I think it depends on what it is, you know, wherever possible, if something's made in and around Bristol, then that obviously makes it slightly more attractive because it has to travel less miles. But then, you know, these things can be nuanced. I could buy rapeseed oil from a farm in the Cotswolds, but they are using pesticides and weed killers and things like that and destroying their hedgerows. So, it might be better for me to then buy olive oil from an organic cooperative in Italy. So, I think these things are always more nuanced.

10 Barriers for local marketing

Many of those interviewed for this project, both producers and sales channels in both cities, were struggling to make ends meet despite their hard work, and clearly many need to improve their economic situation. This section gives an overview of the main challenges and barriers for producers and sales channels, including, where relevant, explanations of the underlying causes.

10.1 Small scale producers

Many challenges and barriers for increasing local marketing in Bristol and Oslo can be explained by the fact that the producers are generally small-scale. With smaller volumes there are fewer opportunities for economies of scale, and unit costs for production, marketing and deliveries increase. The effect is strengthened by the fact that many have a large variety of different products, for instance vegetables that need to be organised and bunched separately.

> *A local farmer who wants to process locally and to have a local value creation, have a volume which is much smaller, we have seen that it is challenging to handle very small volumes (Online market place, Oslo).*

Unit costs are also high for producers who want to send small volumes directly to consumers, as explained by this Bristol based cider producer:

> *Unless you're doing 20 packages a day, you don't really get a good price whereas if you're doing a lot… so a bigger company would be paying a third of what we pay to ship stuff.*

Low production volumes at farm level also make it difficult to make a living, and many local producers have work outside the farm to secure their income. Furthermore, low income makes it difficult to pay workers for full-time positions. One of the CSA farmers in Oslo said that she employed a gardener but he quit because he had to work in another full-time position. Similarly, a Bristol CSA farmer said their low incomes made it difficult to pay growers enough to keep themselves, a problem expanded by the fact that housing in Bristol is expensive.

Because of low incomes many local producers carry out marketing and deliveries themselves, in addition to farming. A producer in Norway described how taking care of customer relations and doing deliveries is time consuming, especially when using many different sales channels. But it is difficult to hire someone to help when the farmers, with their stories and personalities, are part of the marketing strategy. Furthermore, it is difficult for local food producers to expand their production because being small is part of their identity and business model. One of the sales channel representatives in Oslo told the story about a goat cheese producer who won the second prize in the World Championship in cheese, but who did not want to expand with more goats, nor to increase the price. She just wanted to continue as it was, because she was afraid of losing her identity and connection to her product. Hence the sales channel could not sell her products, because there was not enough.

Low income is also a barrier for future development and investments on the farm. A producer outside Oslo explained that they had many ideas for new projects, such as to build a kitchen for processing their produce and establish a farm shop, but they could not finance it themselves and did not want to make an investment that would leave them with a huge debt.

10.2 The extra ethical workload

Many local marketing farmers use production methods that are more environmentally friendly, such as organic or regenerative. This often increases the workload, for instance if they mainly use handheld tools (typical for market gardening), or restrict themselves to only employ local resources for feed and fertilising. But by using these methods the products are seen as more sustainable than mainstream products, and this may generate a higher willingness to pay among consumers. As one of the sales channel representatives in Oslo explains: «*It isn't exactly industrial agriculture. It's hand-picked potatoes".*

But the extra income generated from selling an ethically identified product may not always be high enough to compensate for the extra work, and for many local marketing farmers it is difficult to make a profit.

> *A very big challenge is that it is difficult to get paid enough for it to be financially profitable. We are completely dependent on volunteers to do what we do. And the fact that food is so cheap in Norway, really, that people are used to not paying so much for their food makes it difficult for us to make it financially stable with regard to labour (Local food producer, Oslo).*

To overcome the challenge with high workloads and low incomes, many producers have volunteers, unsalaried or working for food and lodging. People are willing to work as volunteers because of the farms' focus on environmental and social sustainability or because they can learn new skills, such as organic production methods, or because volunteers simply enjoy the experience. Volunteers can be useful, but they often do not have relevant competence and may be less able to commit to staying for a long time.

Many local producers have other activities in addition to food production, related to for instance education, social networking or helping people with learning disabilities. The representative for the City of Oslo explains:

> *It is a big challenge that it is so difficult to make money from food production. It is a big job that one should not underestimate. A lot of resources must go into it. And what you get out of it is very limited (….) We see that in the City of Oslo, most people who sell food also sell something else, a service. That is why we have a lot of focus on entrepreneurship. For example, they have a type of work training, they work with young people or there is some other form of value creation in it than just food production.*

Some of the producers interviewed for this project, such as Elm Tree Farm in Bristol, rely to a much larger extent on being a provider of education and support for people with learning disabilities, than a food producer. This can create both barriers and opportunities.

> *We've found with restaurants and cafes, the people-focused way that we work can create issues. We're tied into an agreement we have to fulfil on a regular basis, or certain quantities. It's interesting how that can conflict with the people care that we do. The shop or the market outlet are the things that work best for us. (…) I love the challenge of trying to combine the production side with caring for people who in some cases have really quite high support needs. But we still manage to do that in a way so that they are fully involved in the work of the farm and they are part of the local food economy in Bristol (Local food producer, Bristol).*

But even producers who do not have other income than food production, may still have other aims and ambitions, for instance in terms of educating people:

> *We want to make more of an impact and educating people and helping get these issues out more in the general public. And that takes a lot of time and effort and resource (CSA, Bristol).*

The local marketing sales channels also seemed to be concerned with environmental and social sustainability, and this can be both beneficial and challenging. One of the Oslo sales channel representatives described how they have higher transport costs than other companies because they pay the drivers well to avoid “social dumping”.

Some of the sales channel representatives were also concerned about reducing food waste, and in both Bristol and Oslo there were descriptions of the challenges and extra work implied of buying, and then selling the whole animal, so that nothing would go to waste.

> *We call it a jigsaw, you got the whole animal, you have to take it apart and then put it back together, and you have to make sure that you sell everything (Online market place, Bristol).*

10.3 The challenges with direct contact

One of the positive attributes of local marketing is that there is more direct contact between farmers and consumers. It takes time and requires personal skills to establish and maintain a good relationship with customers through direct contact, and this can be a challenge for some farmers.

Similarly, the direct contact with local producers can be valuable for chefs, but it takes time. A sales channel representative in Oslo explains how some of the restaurants prefer to have the producers deliver in person:

> *And the reason they want things delivered directly is that it is close and relationship-building. And I agree, but if you are going to defend a higher price into the ordinary management of the restaurant, then you basically do not have much time to talk to ten different farmers every week.*

Some of the interviewees in Oslo talked about the difference between the Farmers’ Market, where there is a direct contact between consumer and producer, and the REKO-rings which is more efficient for the producers, but there is less dialogue. One of the organisation representatives explains:

> *So, it (REKO) is effective, that’s why people like it. You go in, you find right away your order, you pay, you come to pick it up, you go home. While the farmers’ market is more of an experience beyond just buying this and that product (Food organization, Oslo).*

Whether consumers prefer the farmers’ market or a more efficient delivery of pre-ordered food, depends on their personalities. The Farmer’s Market in Oslo tell that although many consumers love being at the market to enjoy themselves, there are also some that find it more convenient to just get their food delivered quickly.

One of the CSA farmers in Oslo also explained that even though involving consumers into the production was an important success factor for her, it had also led to conflict and loss of harvest, because the CSA shareholders were not sufficiently skilled in vegetable production.

The fact that people gain ownership of the place is a huge success factor. People have walked in and out of my house, taking initiative and are willing to pay if there is something that needs to be paid for, anything like that. I think it is a success factor, but it has also been the factor that has contributed to conflicts and occasionally bad crops, because there are very different opinions about how things should be done.

10.4 Lack of professional expertise

Small-scale producers of local food have many different tasks to perform and as they often do not have the option to employ professionals, they do everything themselves. In addition, some producers also lack relevant education in agricultural production methods. One of the CSA farmers in Bristol explains:

Our growers had a fair amount of knowledge and experience about growing, but they had never done field scale growing or run a CSA before. And the rest of us were pretty much novices in the whole thing. We were more about wanting to do something than having loads of practical skills. We have learned a lot on the job.

Other farmers may be very professional when it comes to production, but, as pointed out by a Bristol producer, the skills you need for being a good grower are often the opposite of the range of skills you need for being good at marketing, such as maintaining relationships and selling. It was also said that some producers lacked understanding for how sales channels work, for instance regarding the need to have a certain markup in order to be profitable. This independent shop owner in Oslo explains:

One of the biggest challenges of working with local farmers is that they also need to be educated about what it takes to run a store. (…) For instance, I got an offer for lamb ribs and the farmer suggested I could buy it for 400 NOK and sell it for 500 NOK per kilo. And then, if you take away the VAT and shipping, there is nothing left. So many have very unrealistic expectations of what a retail price should be in relation to us having something to live from. And everyone who works with us earns less than 200 NOK an hour and works hard.

The same shop owner explained that she had noticed that one of the producers she was buying from, advertised the product on Facebook at the same price per unit that she had to pay for it, and she had to explain to the producer that since her shop bought large quantities, they should also pay a lower unit price compared to the consumer retail price.

According to some of the sales channels, there are some producers who do not consider the time they spend on transport and deliveries as a cost, and therefore are not interested in paying for such a service. As explained by one of the online market place representatives in Oslo that offer transport services:

We know many producers who do not want to sell via us. They say it is cheaper to do it themselves. But we know farmers who are in the barn in the morning, then drive their car for 2 – 3 hours to deliver their products which typically takes up to three hours and then drive home again to the barn. So, it's an interesting assessment and appreciation of their own time.

Some of the sales channels are also run by volunteers instead of skilled workers. Examples are the REKO-rings and Oslo Kooperativ, although Oslo Kooperativ has an employed administrative leader. Lack of professional expertise can be a challenge in these cases. One of the producers in Oslo explained that it can sometimes be a challenge that the volunteers administrating different REKO-rings have different opinions on how the markets should be managed. And the consumer co-operative in Oslo explained how they cannot sell from many different farmers because it takes a lot of time for the volunteers to explain to them how and where they deliver their produce.

An additional problem is the volatility of the local sales channels. A producer recalled how they had invested energy into building a relationship to a sales channel that went bankrupt, and they lost contact with all the customers who used to buy their product from that sales channel.

Another challenge that was mentioned by a producer in Bristol, was that the sales channels did not always have the cash-flow to pay the producers at the time of delivery, which was a great disadvantage for the producers who had to wait for their payment.

10.5 Competition between local food producers and between sales channels

A topic often brought up, particularly in Oslo, was that when the producers are selling their own products, for instance at the REKO-rings, it can be hard for them to determine the price they should sell for. It seemed to be a challenge that some local producers considered their production a hobby more than an income generating activity, and they would offer low prices that could outcompete those who are trying to make a living. One of the organisation representatives in Oslo explains:

> *When it is a hobby, you view your input of time very differently than when it is a profession, and so I think one of the big challenges we've had as well is trying to convince people to monetize their time, which has been very difficult. And, so, a lot of these entrepreneurs continue to subsidize their businesses with their own free time, and as such you have this business model that includes exploitation. And ultimately, I think what the challenge with that is that it creates an economic model within the market that's unsustainable for farmers who do want to monetize their time, because then their costs are much higher. So, I think that becomes a really big challenge as well.*

Competition between producers was also mentioned by another food organisation in Oslo, in relation to REKO-rings:

> *And then it is also, in a REKO-context, a challenge that you get into the ancient competitive situation, and you start competing on the retail price. It becomes a negative spiral.*

Another interviewee in Oslo described that when the REKO-rings started to proliferate, the small independent shops were losing customers, so that producers were in a sense competing with themselves through the various sales channels. This implies that there is currently a limited pool of customers.

The problem with competition is perhaps larger with sales channels such as the REKO-rings, where there can be many producers offering the same type of product. The Whiteladies Farmers' market in Bristol avoids this by having mainly one producer per type of food product.

Competition among sales channels was also sometimes brought up. In Oslo REKO and Oslo Kooperativ have lower costs because they are run by volunteers, and they compete with other sales channels who are trying to make a living. The representative from the consumer co-operative in Oslo conveyed that he could understand the frustration of these other sales channels:

If you are going to make money then it is frustrating if someone like us does it just because we think it is nice and fun.

In addition, as the number of sales channels has increased there is more competition for customers of specialised products such as organic vegetables:

Since 2003, the availability, hence the opportunity to buy organic vegetables, has become much better, quite simply. It is easier to buy through the grocery chains, it is easier to buy in specialty stores and home delivery services and REKO. There are many channels that did not exist before. So, there is less reason for many to choose us (…) to the extent we can say that we compete with someone, it is a tougher market now (Consumer co-operative, Oslo).

For the producers the increasing number of options to buy local food can be a challenge. Consumers are quickly attracted to innovations and new trends, but might also easily leave them again.

Furthermore, as pointed out by the Farmers' Market in Oslo, there can be competition among sales channels not only for customers, but also for producers of local food:

There are very many different initiatives regarding local food, and some will be indirect competitors, and some will be almost direct competitors. Not necessarily for customers, but just as much for producers.

10.6 Slower and more unpredictable deliveries of diverse products

As already illustrated, local food is often provided by small-scale farms focusing on social and environmental sustainability with for instance less use of pesticides and better animal welfare, and they are often less professional with less own capital than large-scale producers. With all these factors, deliveries to buyers become more unpredictable, and it is more difficult to deliver a consistent, uniform product. For the local food sales channels, these aspects can be a challenge. One of the operators of an online market place in Oslo claimed that "*Consistency and predictability are the most important factors, much more important than price*" when they select producers. Likewise, sales channels and producers in both Oslo and Bristol explained that some customers expect quick delivery of exactly the product they want.

Availability is "alpha and omega" in distribution of local food on the private market. You want to order today and have it delivered today, ideally (Online market place, Oslo).

A sales channel representative in Bristol also explained that it can be problematic when the product they buy is not what they were expecting:

Sometimes they don't deliver on time, or a product is not what we thought it would be, so when we're talking about farm animals, most of the time a farmer can select an animal in the field that they say is going to be like this or like that, but sometimes it can be larger or smaller, or have different bone structure (…). And then delivery gets complicated (Online market place, Bristol)

An independent shop representative in Bristol explains why this can be a problem for their customers:

If you go to a big supplier, you might get 500 g pack every single time. [With] A lot of the smaller suppliers, you get what the cut weighs. People coming into these kinds of shops, I think, expect some consistency in what they pick up, that it *will always weigh the same, that they don't have to look at the package and see what that costs. I think people view us more as a supermarket than a local shop in some ways, people would like consistency (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

The Farmer's Market in Oslo explained how they have tried to get their producers to deliver more standard sized products, but that producers are reluctant to do this as it requires time and capacity.

When sales channels, retailers and restaurants buy from small-scale local producers they often have to make the orders much further in advance compared to buying from wholesalers, because the producers need to harvest before delivering. One of the independent shop representatives in Bristol explains:

With wholesalers I'll order some carrots today and they'll literally come tomorrow. With salad leaves, which we order from local suppliers, we have to give them, like, two weeks' notice (…) If I'm thinking of it operationally, we'll always find it much easier to use national wholesalers, they have a far bigger reach (Independent food shop, Bristol).

In addition, purchasing from local producers can be challenging because they are less available as they do their marketing in addition to many other activities:

Often, they are small teams, so when I am calling them, they are out in the field picking the produce, you know arranging all the logistics is often on a smaller scale, it could be a one-person team, so that can be difficult just from a logistical point (Independent food shop, Bristol).

Sourcing from local producers can require more administrative work because buyers have to order from many small, different producers. This was pointed out by independent shop representatives in both Bristol and Oslo:

We have more than 50 suppliers, so there is quite a lot of coordination, many to keep dialogue with. It is really both a strength and a weakness, because it is a lot of work. (…) we have bought some products through wholesalers, but then they charge a little for that, of course (Independent food shop, Oslo).

One of the food organisations in Bristol gave the example of a restaurant well known for sourcing locally, and which told their wholesaler that they only want British produce, but this turned out to be very difficult and gave the restaurant extra work adjusting the menu when they were given non-local products.

Furthermore, some local products are not available during certain periods of the year. One of the independent shop representatives in Bristol explained that when the quality of local produce matches their needs, they will buy locally. But they also need to have a range of different products all year round, resulting in the need to buy some types of food, such as broccoli, from wholesalers.

Some of the sales channel representatives in both cities also explained that buying imported goods from a wholesaler is easier and cheaper, and it is possible to take out a higher margin. But selling mainly imported goods is not possible for a sales channel whose profile is to sell local products.

It would benefit us financially to use only wholesalers, but we would lose our selling point with 'organic, local, ethical', we wouldn't be what we are intending to be anymore. So, I think there is a careful balance between how much we can source wholesale, and some of it will always have to come wholesale, but we *need to make sure that our shop has a good representation of local, independent, direct supply (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

10.7 Travel costs and margins

Logistics and transportation seem to be important barriers for increased local food supply. As mentioned previously, many local producers do marketing and deliveries themselves to save costs, and this can be very time consuming:

Some people have to go the pure direct route to the customer to get the highest markup but you do so much work doing that and I know people who are veg growers and they spend two days a week at market, one day packing veg boxes and delivering them, so three days out of seven is just selling and not doing any growing on those days (Local food producer, Bristol).

Many local producers sell through more than one sales channel, which increases the workload. A producer in Oslo explains that as new REKO-rings have started up in the area, their workload has increased:

[There are now] very many REKO-rings. When it started it was a bit like the consumer had to move to a ring, there were not that many, and then it was easier to get sales on each ring. Now there are so many REKO-rings that the sales on each place is low, and then you have to go out every evening to sell at a different REKO-ring (Local food producer, Oslo).

For the producers, selling larger quantities to one or just a few buyers can help reduce the workload.

We sell a lot to private people, but there is also a lot of work then. So, we experience that it is important to have some good hotels and restaurants and niche shops that carry our production a little more (Local food producer, Oslo).

However, many of the sales channels only buy small volumes. A local food producer in Bristol explains:

The problem with restaurants is that you have to deliver and that takes a huge amount of time, and some of the restaurants are only ordering £50 of mushrooms once a week.

An online market place representative in Oslo emphasised that sales channels that take care of the transportation of products from farmers to consumers make life easier for farmers as they can focus on what they do best, e.g. to produce food. However, when selling via wholesalers and retailers they each take a markup of the end price. The dilemma is that a high markup drives the consumer price up and makes it difficult to sell large volumes. A lower markup gives a lower consumer price which can drive sales volumes up, but it reduces profits per unit sold.

It is more efficient, but delivering and distributing food is so pressured on the margins, that you are completely dependent on volume to get something out of it (Online market place, Oslo).

This producer from Bristol describes the dilemma he is facing between losing the markup to a distributor and having a high workload with deliveries.

If you sell through a distributor, they take so much of the cost that the profit margin is annihilated. Or if you want to supply lots of restaurants, you'll spend two days driving around.

10.8 Competition with mainstream

When asked about challenges, there was often mention of competition between local sales channels and mainstream supermarkets and wholesalers, particularly on price. One of the independent shop owners in Oslo explained how this makes it difficult for them:

We only just manage financially, and that is because we work for low pay and have not had too high rental costs and are willing to work hard. It isn't possible to compete with the ordinary supermarkets, who often set cheap prices to entice customers.

The shop owner explained that the challenge is that supermarkets can afford to sell food cheaper than what it is worth, which gives consumers a false impression of the value of food.

Buying from supermarkets is also more convenient for consumers:

For consumers it is convenient, on every corner, selling all you need. And the mainstream wholesalers have everything in one place, a larger selection (Online market place, Oslo).

Likewise, a sales channel representative operating with online sales and home delivery felt strongly the competition from other mainstream online platforms operating in the same area:

Our biggest challenge is that we are trying to compete with really big delivery services where they try to deliver orders more quickly or use imported products.

For small, locally sourcing sales channels it can be a challenge to sell to large restaurants because they already have agreements with wholesalers. This is called "kick back", and it implies that the restaurants get an increasingly higher reduction in price the more they buy from the same wholesaler, which creates economic disincentives to purchase from other, for instance local, producers. A sales channel representative in Oslo describes it like this:

The «Kick back» and existing agreements make it almost like a fortress that we have to enter. You can smash your head into it, and nothing happens.

Competition with mainstream is also a challenge with respect to public procurement. Public procurement rules make it difficult for local food producers to compete in the bidding process. One sales channel representative in Oslo explains that contracts are made by categories, but local food procurers cannot fulfil this because they cannot deliver imported goods. They believe that getting a sales contract for public procurement requires dedicated specialists in the municipality.

Increasingly there is also competition with mainstream sales channels selling local food. In Bristol it was mentioned that local food now can be found in mainstream supermarkets, sold at a low price. Furthermore, organic food is more common in supermarkets now than previously, and for the local sales channels with organic profiles it's difficult to compete with them on price.

It was said that supermarket food is sometimes marketed to give an impression of being local without it necessarily being so, to attract customers interested in local food. One sales channel representative in Bristol explains:

Those supermarkets were very clever about identifying whether customers really have affinity with farmers' markets for instance, and you see, (…) the advertisement is within the supermarket itself, having a sort of market aisle with barrows with fruits and vegetables, and the advert showing a sort of friendly butcher and all the rest of it, handing in your meats and produce and so on (...) and of course people like convenience, and there is one [supermarket] on every street corner.

One of the local sales channel representatives in Oslo also mentioned that the higher price of local food compared with supermarket products is not always followed by an equally higher quality, which makes competition with mainstream more difficult. The same person also questioned whether local food would always be more ethical than mainstream. For instance, there are not many small slaughterhouses in Norway and local producers cannot sell animals that they slaughter on their farm due to food safety regulations. Hence most animals are taken to slaughterhouses far away, just like animals from farms selling through mainstream sales channels, with the possible animal welfare issues that this can imply.

10.9 Inconvenience and customer attitudes

Purchasing from local sales channels and producers can imply a willingness to pay a higher price, make an extra effort, and to wait longer. Local vegetables are seasonal, and you cannot always choose what you get from your local veg box scheme or CSA, which means there is less freedom of choice when buying locally.

Obviously, some people think "oh this is something I'd really like to support" and then they join, and they find it's a little bit more hard-core than they, I mean they might be transitioning from going to the supermarket and getting all their veg there and then, they can't quite deal with the fact that have to go pick up veg every week and they can't pick what they like necessarily, and some people just find it too much hard work (CSA, Bristol).

Similarly, one of the interviewees in Oslo argued that the system for ordering and delivering products at REKO rings is too inconvenient for many customers.

It is not convenient enough, that you have to go to a Facebook page and order and get it once a month. It is a treat you give yourself when you need something extra and want to give a little extra to the farmer. But it will not be the channel to buy groceries from (Online marketplace, Oslo).

According to a food producer in Bristol consumer demand for convenience was the root of the main difficulties with running a well-functioning sales channel:

What happens is people start out with a good idea, they want to help the people, the primary producers, the ones who are actually doing the work, they want to optimise the amount of money going into the primary producers' pockets. But as time develops all the costs associated with the modern consumer experience where they want to order it all one day, get it delivered at a specific time the next day, that has a huge associated cost package with it.

The representative of the consumer co-operative in Oslo said that people often do not understand that their sales system is different, that it is not like a shop:

We have a challenge to communicate what we are really doing. Suddenly, we get grumpy emails from people saying: I am allergic to onions, can I order a bag without onions? Then we say: No, sorry, we cannot make exceptions but you can change it in the group. And then they get frustrated. (…) People have shopping the way it is done in the grocery store so much inside their brain, and that is difficult to change.

Restaurant chefs might also need to plan some days ahead if they are going to purchase locally, because deliveries are slower than if they buy from mainstream wholesalers. One of the Oslo sales channel representatives explains that the chefs find ordering local difficult because of their work routines:

It is a challenge that the chefs work so much and prefer to keep it as simple as possible. Often, they just send text messages to the wholesaler; «The same as last week». It is not very efficient, because it is easy to forget (Online market place, Oslo).

The search for the cheapest food product is also a consumer attitude that causes challenges. As the consumer co-operative in Oslo describes:

We have been brainwashed to believe that if you do not buy the cheapest, then you have been fooled, price is all that matters. And it is a very simplistic understanding of trade, of sales, everything, but is so difficult to change. Someone has to take the pedagogical task to explain to people that this is not the way it works.

This same point was made by an independent shop representative in Bristol, who says she thinks that although the price difference between their products and the supermarket can be justified, communicating that on the shop floor is very difficult. The same person also pointed to the challenge that some consumers require perfect, uniform products:

With the supermarkets you got consistency, everything looks perfect (…). All of our vegs are a bit wonky, there is that customer deception.

10.10 Lack of support from organisations and from public authorities

One of the Oslo organisations pointed out that the way local food systems work, either the consumers must pay the extra price, or local food production must be subsidised.

Norwegian farmers, especially livestock farmers, rely heavily on government subsidies. However, subsidies for vegetable production are given per hectare which disfavours small-scale producers who typically grow more intensively on very limited space.

Public authorities interviewed in Oslo confirm that agricultural policy generally stimulates larger farms, and that it is important to look at the potential of smaller farms.

I do not think, for example, that the farmers' association and the smallholders' association think that people who rent land to grow vegetables in a market garden, should have the right to apply for subsidies or investment support, etc. I do not think they are quite there yet. So, there is work to do over time then. (Public authority, Oslo)

This was also emphasised by one of the organisation representatives:

> *Local processing was something that Norwegian agriculture has abandoned, it contradicts everything one thinks about food production, because it is inefficient and not scalable etc. (Food organisation, Oslo)*

Bristol has made important advancements in terms of food policy compared to other cities, yet one of the organisation employees interviewed expressed her frustration about how it is still difficult to get access to public land for cultivation:

> *In Bristol you have a lot of political will, we got the golden thing [Going For Gold], there is a lot of how we need to feed people, and there's just complete disconnection from the things that are necessary for that to happen (Food organisation, Bristol).*

Another related aspect mentioned is the lack of agricultural advisors and horticultural training courses applying sustainable growing methods.

11 COVID

In March 2020 governments in both Norway and the UK implemented strong measures to prevent further spreading of the COVID19 pandemic. Several long periods of lockdown followed until early 2022. This severely affected the food industry, including local food producers. For long periods restaurants were not allowed to open, which strongly affected local producers who supplied them. Furthermore, people who were in quarantine were restricted from shopping. In addition, many people were worried about getting contaminated and therefore avoiding ordinary shopping situations. The UK experienced higher contamination levels and imposed a more severe lockdown than Norway, with for instance stronger restrictions on leaving the house and meeting other people.

The interviews for this report were carried out in the autumn months of 2021, during a time when in both Bristol and Oslo most people were vaccinated and there were relatively few restrictions to ensure social distancing. Given the severity of the events that the food sector had been through with the COVID pandemic, all the interviewees were asked about how this had affected their business.

11.1 Increased demand

In Bristol, many of the interviewed local producers and sales channel representatives experienced increased demand from consumers during the pandemic. This was particularly the case for sales channels offering home deliveries.

One of the producers recalls:

> *The number of people ordering veg boxes from us went from in the five hundreds to in the top nine hundreds. And it stayed steady. (…) It felt like it was exactly the kind of project that in a pandemic, people would say they needed. (…) And we were able to get more wholesale in from other farms because they weren't supplying to restaurants. (…) And people started sending us chocolate and thank you cards which they had never done before. And every month we made a decent income, which we've never done before (Local food producer, Bristol).*

Also, the independent shops in Bristol experienced increased demand from consumers, who purchased both home deliveries and food directly from the shop. One shop reported that sales went “up through the roof in the two big lockdowns”. The independent shop representatives believed that a likely explanation to why this became a period of growth was that they were more able than other businesses to provide food throughout the pandemic.

> *When it came to COVID we saw more resilience in our supply chains, having that close relationship with our suppliers and proximity to suppliers, we didn’t have that many issues in terms of shortages (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

> *We were managing to get hold of things like flour and eggs at a time where a lot of businesses were struggling to get hold of those (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

In Oslo, primarily the REKO rings and the farm sales outlets experienced increased demand during the pandemic. The consumer co-operative in Oslo and the CSA farmers who were interviewed did not experience a rise in demand from consumers wanting to become members. One producer’s experience was that the 2021 season had been more difficult than 2020, because restaurants that they used to supply to had quit. The Oslo experiences seem to be rather different from Bristol, which could be both because the lockdown in Norway was less strict, and because veg box scheme deliveries are less common.

11.2 Reorganising the supply chain from restaurants to consumers

With restaurants forced to close an important sales outlet disappeared for many local producers. It became necessary to reorganise the supply chain so that local food previously sold to restaurants could be sold through other sales channels. In Oslo this also affected one of the online market places which primarily caters to commercial kitchens.

> *It strangled the sales quite effectively. We lost 90% of our customers from one day to the next. It was demanding but perhaps more demanding for the producers. Many have built up around commercial kitchens and, clearly, they are sitting there with all the risk themselves. (…) They were sitting there with large amounts of produce that they didn't manage to sell. So, we switched to direct sales and helped the producers with that. Many went to REKO which is great, but very demanding.*

Similarly, one of the producers who used to sell directly to restaurants explained that it was very demanding when these restaurants suddenly had to close. Still, she managed to see the positive sides of being forced to make changes:

> *At the same time, it makes you more creative. We have been talking about this with subscription sales since we started. Corona meant that now we just had to try it. It made us creative and that was good* (Local food producer, Oslo).

In Bristol the 'Bristol Food Producers' did an important job in sharing information among producers and sales channels to reorganise the local food supply chain, so that producers previously selling to restaurants could instead cater to home delivery schemes, either from shops or directly from the producer. A new organisation, the Bristol Food Union, emerged during the pandemic to provide food to people in need. In Oslo, Hanen organised Mat*larm for the first time in 2020. This is a local food festival taking place in Oslo, which initially aimed at producers who had lost a large part of their market through restaurants, hotels and catering as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. It is now becoming a yearly event.

Apart from the challenge of selling the food that was produced, the Farmers' Market representatives in Bristol and Oslo mentioned the challenge of following Covid19 regulations regarding social distancing, contact tracking, individual hygiene etc., while running the market. The Farmers' Market in Oslo claimed that it was "twice the work for half of the amount of sales".

11.3 Lasting change in attitudes?

In Bristol some interviewees talked about how the pandemic had increased people's awareness of the importance of local food.

> *There was such a huge public awareness about supporting local producers, it became a national outcry that we have to support our local producers and our local food shops. That didn't feel niche anymore, it felt like everyone who could, would support local independent shops, and it was very much in the public awareness, I think (Independent food shop, Bristol).*

> *People weren't going to supermarkets, they were walking and wanted to stay in their local area, they were thinking about the natural world more, where their*

food comes from and their health, I guess. It was a freak year but fantastic for us, obviously financially but also getting more customers in and getting better known (Local food producer, Bristol).

Similar thoughts about a change in attitudes were not expressed in the interviews in Oslo.

Despite the belief that many people had gone through a change of attitudes to local food with the pandemic, the experience from Bristol seems to be that the situation is returning back to normal, pre-pandemic times. One of the independent shops in Bristol that had started with home deliveries and experienced a strong rise in sales during the lockdown, had the following experience:

And then as the lockdown ceased, every time sales have dropped. And now I think with total freedom, sales are returning to their previous patterns.

12 Solutions

We have looked at the various barriers and challenges pointed out by local food stakeholders. During the interviews we also asked what they saw as possible solutions to the challenges they faced.

12.1 Building a collaborative framework

Some of the challenges mentioned in the interviews point towards more collaboration between stakeholders as a possible solution. In both cities, local food marketing is happening in a fragmented way, with many different sales channels that are not collaborating, and in some cases competing with each other both for products and customers. One of the sales channel representatives in Oslo points to dialogue and collaboration as a possible solution:

> *I think it's about working together. We do not solve this problem alone, it is not a new player who comes in and solves all the problems for local food. I really believe in talking to each other, and in Oslo we have tried to encourage dialogue.*

In Oslo there are also far fewer organisations working with local food than in Bristol, and the ones that exist are not collaborating systematically with each other. Furthermore, an employee from the City of Oslo explained how the different city departments are not working together in a strategic manner towards common goals on sustainable food policies:

> *There are many governmental agencies involved that need to collaborate, and healthy food, sustainable food or food production, there are so many ambitions, but it's not very centralised, there isn't one big strategy that everyone can relate to. So, we are working for our strategy, but it's difficult to say who has ownership and resources, as everything is run politically. So, if one agency doesn't have that commission from the top level, then we can't impose on someone to buy local food, for instance. It's a bit like that, that's one of the challenges.*

Hence there seems to be a need for more collaboration between producers, sales channels, organisations and policy makers, to work together towards common goals for instance in the form of policy measures that can be implemented for the benefit of local food systems.

12.2 Digital platforms

Digital platforms and online sales channels with home deliveries are becoming increasingly popular in both Bristol and Oslo, and when looking for solutions, digital platforms are something that could be considered.

One of the farmers' market representatives in Bristol mentioned how they as a physical retail space felt the competition from digital platforms:

> *A challenge that we physical retail spaces face nowadays, is that people increasingly in the first instance turn online for whatever it is they are looking for.*

One of the Oslo producers talked about how the new digital platforms have been helpful, but they are working in a fragmented manner, and they would have wished for a more holistic approach.

> *It is important to have systems that work, and that is probably part of the failure. There are no good platforms to group your sales. You have Dagens, and then you have to deal with them, and then you have Dyrket, and they have their platform,*

and then you have Vipps[37] *and so many platforms so, digitalization is very good and important (…) but no one has looked at it holistically.*

In the interviews there was discussion about how challenges perhaps could be solved if stakeholders collaborated on providing information about available locally produced food to customers and created a centralised system for deliveries.

One of the food organisations in Oslo also pointed out that since Norway is a country with a relatively small population and the food market is thus limited, there isn't really room for many different digital sales solutions, which makes collaboration necessary. He suggested a collaborative system which also included storing capacity for local food in the city centre.

There are many challenges related to creating such a centralised, digital system for marketing local food. The success of such a system is dependent on having large enough volumes to obtain economies of scale, and a large enough variety of products to be interesting to a sufficient number of consumers.

Moreover, online markets and digital platforms are the first preference for neither all consumers who wish to buy local food, nor for farmers who produce it. For some consumers, shopping local food online may be less interesting than buying from a physical shop, market or CSA, where they can see, taste and touch the products, and possibly even meet the farmer. It will also be more difficult to create community between producers and consumers and between consumers without physical contact.

And you have the overall experience at the Farmer's Market. You taste, you bring your children, the market offers a totality that nothing digital can replace.
(Farmers' Market, Oslo)

With digital platforms, knowledge about agriculture can still be distributed through social media, e-mails and so on, and perhaps even more effectively with the use of photographs, films etc., but the effect might still be different from what is obtained through person-to-person conversation and a visit to a farm. Farm visits could still be made possible through open days, opportunities for doing voluntary work and so on, but this may not be the same.

Some interviewees mentioned that small-scale farmers do not have time or skills to follow up marketing through digital solutions. The Bristol Food Producers talked about how they had tried to get a structured overview of the local producers and their offers, by for instance making a list of members and Facebook groups. The problem was that since farmers were busy it was difficult to get them to go online and update the information, hence contact between producers and buyers still happened informally. In addition, farmers sometimes lacked the technical skills needed for using digital solutions:

People come in thinking "technology", app on the phone, do this and that, but most of the farmers I know have this old like Nokia phone 'cause you can't break them, but you can't use a smart phone or apps. That's an interesting thing that happens with markets, the businesses coming be like "tech, tech, tech" and forget to consult with the farmers about how they want to work (Food organisation, Bristol).

[37] https://vipps.no/

This interviewee suggested that such a centralised digital solution would require that someone else would have to call the farmers to get information about what they had available, referring to a project in the city of Manchester which had this system (Manchester Veg People[38]).

Other interviewees in both Bristol and Oslo said that lack of digital skills was not a great challenge, and that the farmers managed this quite well.

Another challenge with a centralised, digital system, as pointed out by an Oslo sales channel representative, is that it would require more standardised sizes and prices for the products, which can be difficult for small-scale local farmers.

12.3 Governmental and organisational support

As described in Section 7, there are a number of potential social, economic and environmental benefits from local food systems, which could motivate governments and other organisations in both cities to support these systems.

One of the independent shop representatives in Bristol has a positive view on the support given by the Bristol City Council:

> *I think that generally, their agenda was pretty good when it comes to local food. I think we're really lucky in Bristol, it's not the same everywhere.*

One of the producers in Oslo explained that there is a need for more financial support to help local, small-scale producers achieve a secure level of income.

> *There is no profit even if it looks like there is, because I have not taken out a penny, and I have put in so many working hours. But then "farming is a lifestyle." But if all farmers thought like that, then I think that would not be right. There must be an economic awareness around this. One must be able to include the working hours. And when I think about subsidies, if we want to grow food in Norway, then we must be willing to pay for it. And I think farmers should get a regular, good salary for the work they put in.*

Small-scale (and, by default, urban) producers found it difficult to qualify for agricultural subsidies under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), (Curry et al. 2014). Although the UK is now outside the CAP, the extent to which post-Brexit agricultural subsidy reforms will support local food systems is not yet clear. Historically, charitable foundations, as well as some municipal pioneers and a handful of private (often organic) food companies, have championed innovation, networking and research to strengthen the local food sector, not least in Bristol and South-West England, although this has been less common in Oslo. Farmers in Norway rely heavily on state subsidies, and small-scale food producers are generally less eligible to these subsidies (cf. Section 4). In Norway support can be obtained through the municipalities and county councils as well as through "Innovation Norway", a government fund that supports investments at farm level. This can be very useful for start-ups, which sometimes need to make substantial investments.

Access to land and training for those who want to start small-scale growing are also ways for public authorities to support local food systems. In Oslo there is already an "Incubator programme" for people who want to start small-scale vegetable production. They are given access to a small area where

[38] https://vegpeople.org.uk/

they can practise cultivation and sales before getting their own land to produce on. There is so far no equivalent programme in Bristol. In both cities access to land for those who want to cultivate for local sales is a challenge, and public authorities could play an important role here by providing access to public land.

In general, providing courses in both cultivation and marketing can be useful, especially as many of the farmers who are selling food locally lack formal education in these fields. In Norway the County Governors of Oslo and Viken and of other regions have lately organised courses in market garden vegetable cultivation.

Access to locations for Farmers' markets is another form of support that governments can provide. In Bristol it was mentioned that roofed market spaces, which neighbouring Bath has, is particularly attractive since wet weather can be a challenge. Government support can also be in the form of purchasing locally produced food for public procurement.

12.4 Changing consumer and chef attitudes

One decisive solution to many of the difficulties outlined above by producers and sales channels could be an increase in demand for local food. As suggested, this would require customers to consider paying more for local food than they are used to, and changing their expectations about convenience and seasonality.

One of the interviewees in Bristol had a rather pessimistic view on this:

> *It's a lovely idea that there will be lots of tiny little mushroom and veg growers dotted around the land, but it's not going to happen. It can't unless we have a complete change in society and people stop moving around so quickly, that they don't need to go on holiday three times a year or even once a year, unless there is a complete systemic change in people's mindsets, you're not going to be able to support lots of small people. It's too much work for not enough money (Local food producer, Bristol).*

Many interviewees in both Oslo and Bristol kept coming back to the need for a change in attitudes among consumers. A representative for a food organisation in Bristol believed that direct contact of consumers with farmers could contribute to such a change:

> *So, I think that when people have a thought about food, and they know the person who has who has grown it or produced it, then they won't always go for the cheaper one.*

This is in line with what a producer in Norway said, that farmers building a relationship to the consumers and teach them about agriculture helped the consumers understand the need for their support, not only in terms of buying the products:

> *If you manage to build a relationship, that's what we notice, manage to build a relationship with the private customers, then you can build on that, because then (…) they are willing to understand more and they realize that it's not just about what they've paid for, but it's about building a support system around you. And then building good customer relationships is very important (Local food producer, Oslo).*

A Bristol CSA representative explained that when they started up, they received valuable help from dedicated people, which indicates that searching for such people when getting started can be a good strategy.

We did have lots of good will, and some connections, there is much interest in Bristol about transforming the food system, so we were able to get some people to commit, what we call pioneer members, they were willing to join before we had any veg to give them. That helped.

One of the independent shop representatives in Bristol believed that Brexit had led to an increased interest in local food, and she hoped there would be a self-reinforcing cycle, that more demand for local food would be a basis for more supply, increasing demand again and so on.

Well, I would hope what that means is because UK producers are selling more food in the UK, more people will be encouraged to grow more produce and produce more food in the UK. And I certainly think that you're already starting to see a slight shift because of Brexit. Because of that, you know, there's more and more demand. Yeah, market with increased demand. That's actually one of the solutions: that people will be willing to buy more and to pay more.

It was also mentioned how people need to change their attitudes when it comes to food in general, and some people need to learn to cook from scratch with the vegetables that can be grown locally.

12.5 Changing the mainstream

As mentioned earlier, a challenge for local food systems is that mainstream outlets appropriate the marketing strategies of the local, alternative sector, which can undermine its novelty and niche appeal. Although this was presented as something negative, an interviewee also pointed out that there is a possibility that the mainstream systems are being influenced and actually change, and that they will start sourcing more local and sustainably produced food.

But the supermarkets are in a way copying the local. They have at Waitrose, for instance, they have posters, saying that these [products] are local, yes, locally produced and so on. And they will start to make that ambience more… they'll make it smell more whole food, and they will in their community have cafes and stuff. But then maybe some of the supermarkets will actually really seriously change their business model (Food organisation, Bristol).

13 Discussion

13.1 The struggles of local marketing

Our findings indicate that in both Oslo and Bristol many local producers and sale channels for local food face economic challenges. Their income is often low in relation to the number of work hours they put into the business. An explanation for these struggles could, to some extent, be that we are in an early phase in the development of new, alternative food systems, with constant changes because of consumer trends, new digital solutions and so on. Some actors that are still not earning income, consider themselves to be in a development phase of «trial and error».

But there are clearly some challenges with local marketing that will be difficult to overcome, even with time, because they are linked with the innate nature of local food systems. Local food producers and sales channels are competing against a mainstream food system which in general is far more efficient, with large farms with cost-efficient production and large supermarkets providing consumers with almost everything they want, whenever they want it. Local food producers are small-scale and they lack capacity. They often have other, ethical goals in addition to making economic profit, which make them less efficient: They want to use local resources in their production, protect biodiversity, educate consumers about agriculture, create community and so on. Having these social or environmental aims can be an advantage, as it creates a story and an ethical profile which may increase consumer interest and willingness to pay. It may also attract volunteers who are willing to work for them for free. However, it may not be enough for their long-term economic survival.

For the sales channels, it can be challenging to work with local producers, as small volumes make it difficult to obtain economies of scale, and deliveries can be slow and unpredictable. Sometimes there are also not enough local producers supplying products, and existing local producers are unwilling to sell through an intermediary sales channel instead of directly to consumers, as this requires them to give up a margin of the final price. Some farmers seem to have a tendency to undervalue the extra time they spend with direct sales, and selling through an intermediary can be cost-effective, especially for producers with a certain volume. However, upscaling production is possible only up to a certain point: becoming too large could imply compromising environmental sustainability goals and distort the image and story about the small-scale, local farm.

There also seems to be a lack of demand, and the sales channels for local food are to some extent competing against each other for the limited market segment of consumers interested in purchasing local food. Competition has the potential to generate growth in consumer demand but can also imply that an already small market segment will be shared between too many actors, making it difficult to obtain the economies of scale necessary for profitability. Competition is also particularly challenging when people who farm as a hobby set a low-price standard, for instance at REKO rings, and thus take market shares from professional producers who are dependent on farming for earning their living.

13.2 Possible solutions

Although some of these challenges will probably never be fully overcome due to the nature of local production and marketing, they could perhaps be reduced.

13.2.1 More collaboration and dialogue

A first step could be more collaboration and dialogue between all who want the local market to grow: Public authorities, organisations, sales channels and producers. This could increase chances of reaching various goals for local food systems, including to increase consumer demand, facilitate marketing and deliveries and ensure stable, decent incomes for local producers.

13.2.2 More economic support

More economic support is an important factor. Many local producers receive support for the social contributions they make in addition to food production, but there could possibly be additional sources. Another possibility is to give paymentsfor environmental services (Lecole, Preget, & Thoyer, 2022) , or develop private sector mechanisms such as Payments for Ecosystems Services (PES). It is also important to ensure that local farmers have opportunities for investment funding.

13.2.3 More efficient, digital, and diverse sales systems

Furthermore, improvements in sales systems that could reduce the costs in terms of both time and fuel (and the corresponding environmental pollution) would be beneficial. More efficient sales systems that are more convenient for consumers, provide food at prices affordable to more people and appeal to other segments of the population could possibly also increase the market share for local food. Such a system would require more collaboration among producers and sales channels, and most likely digital solutions are best positioned to facilitate a coordination of marketing, for instance providing information to buyers about available food and producers. Deliveries could also be coordinated. Creating such a system is not straightforward, there are for instance questions about ownership, responsibility and trust, and to what extent it is possible to keep the direct contact and the transparency that is important for consumer demand. Local food is sold in many different ways in Oslo and Bristol. This makes local food available to a wide range of consumers with different preferences. Some consumers may enjoy going to the farm to harvest themselves, others prefer to buy local food from a shop near to where they live. Some consumers are happy to get a veg box with everything already chosen for them, whereas others prefer to make all the choices themselves. Similarly, producers may be shy, open, like or dislike personal contact and so on. Hence maintaining a diversity of sale options is important, even if also more centralised, coordinated systems are developed.

13.2.4 The story behind the product

For consumers to accept a higher price or a more inconvenient sales system, local food needs to be perceived as better than food sold in the supermarkets. Sometimes local food is superior to supermarket food from a concrete, physical point of view. The quality can be better because of the way it is produced (organic artisanal methods etc.) and because they are fresher, and it may be products that are not available from supermarkets and that consumers really want because they like the taste, not because of their local origin.

However, for some consumers the superiority of a local product is not related to the product itself, but to the effect it may have: because it creates local employment, or because they believe there will be less pollution from transport, or that this food will be available to them also in a crisis situation. A main difference between supermarket and local food products is that there is more transparency. Consumers have more knowledge about where the food comes from and for instance whether production methods are in line with their ethical or environmentally values, or whether it contributes to maintaining food traditions and culture.

Producers and sales channels seem to be conveying information about the local products in the form of stories, or through experiences. In Bristol, more than in Oslo, the story is often about being part of the change towards a more sustainable world, but it can also be just a story about a product that is different and interesting, and about the good farm life that many people would like to live but cannot. Sometimes the stories contain elements of both the idealistic and the idyllic, and it can be difficult to disentangle the two from each other.

The “stories behind the product” are very important, and our findings suggest that training producers, salesmen and chefs in creating and communicating these stories could further strengthen this sector.

13.3 Differences between Oslo and Bristol

There are many similarities between the local food systems in Oslo and Bristol, but there are also some differences. Most of the these can be explained by the differences between the two countries, Norway and the UK, in their mainstream food systems, government influence and population attitudes.

13.3.1 Consumer attitudes towards supermarket chains

One of the differences between the two cities seems to be that although the supermarket chains in both cities are seen as large and powerful, the perceptions seem to be more negative in Bristol, where “beating” the supermarkets seems to be an aim in itself. In contrast, in Oslo selling local food through supermarket chains is not uncommon and, in some interviews, it was referred to as a good option. One can only speculate on reasons behind this, but it could be due to the fact that in Norway the supermarket chains are seen as less powerful than in the UK since also the national agricultural cooperatives run by the farmers and the farmers’ unions have a strong influence on the mainstream food system, as discussed in the Introduction.

13.3.2 Food diversity as motivating factor

Another difference is that the food diversity seemed to be a stronger motivational factor in Oslo than in Bristol. This is probably due to a history of very little food diversity in Norway, which could be linked with the power of the national agricultural cooperatives, who over the years faced little competition and were slow in taking up international trends. But the explanation could also be that Oslo has historically had less food diversity than Bristol due to geographic (climate and topography) and cultural factors.

13.3.3 Concerns about food security and environmental protection, and trust in authorities

Bristolians seemed to be more concerned about both food security and environmental issues such as food packaging and climate change. The latter is supported by the statistics presented in the introduction, showing that Britons in general are more worried about climate change than Norwegians. The statistics also show that Norwegians have far stronger trust in public authorities than Britons, and this is possibly part of the reason they are less worried about climate change, as they are more prone to have faith that the authorities will take responsibility, including when it comes to solving global, environmental problems.

Britons do not have this same trust, and this may explain some of the differences in the data collected from the two cities. In section 3 our data reflects a range of city-level food networks in Bristol. All are inspired in some way to achieve not simply support for local food enterprises, but strive towards radical and structural changes in the city's food system towards a higher degree of sustainability. In Oslo these types of organisational agendas are missing.

In Bristol there is also more alarm about poverty and the need to provide sufficient healthy food to low-income families. This also corresponds to the statistics showing that Bristol and the UK has lower incomes and higher levels of diet-related ill-health) and higher crime rates than Oslo and Norway.

There are also different types of economic support available in the two countries: In Oslo it is mostly governmental, in Bristol there are also other, private opportunities for funding different food related activities.

13.4 What can the two cities learn from each other?

Having studied local sales channels in the two cities, have we found anything that Bristol can learn from Oslo, and Oslo from Bristol?

Firstly, we see that both cities have unique sales channels, which could possibly be copied in the other city. Oslo has Dagens, which organises sales and deliveries from local producers to, mainly, restaurants. It also has the REKO-rings, where sales to consumers are organised for free on Facebook, and a consumer co-operative. Bristol has Source food, buying locally and selling via internet to consumers that get the food delivered at their home, as well as GoodSixty, delivering from independent shops. Also, the Five Acre Farm selling to the Tobacco Factory is an interesting model that does not exist in Oslo.

Also, the farmers' markets work in different ways in the two cities. In Oslo they move from place to place each week, whereas in Bristol they are always in the same place. Both systems have their advantages, the habit and always knowing that the market will be there without having to check, and the possibility to reach out to more people who do not need to move large distances to get to the market.

Bristol has many networks and organisations which have done important work for local food over the years, whereas there are not many of them in Oslo. Oslo, on the other hand, has an incubator programme, which helps small-scale vegetable producers in the establishment phase, and something like that does not exist in Bristol.

14 Conclusions

There is an increasing consumer interest in supporting local food production and finding alternatives to products from large-scale agriculture sold in supermarkets. This interest is particularly driven by a quest for more sustainable and transparent food systems. To match this demand, it is however important that local food producers develop business models and find solutions for production, marketing and sale that are economically sustainable.

This report presents marketing strategies and highlights enterprise opportunities and challenges experienced by local food producers and sales channels in Oslo and Bristol.

Several alternatives for marketing and selling local food in Bristol and Oslo have been described, including farm shops, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture and direct sales to small wholesalers, independent food shops, restaurants and online platforms. Some business models for marketing exist only in the UK (such as the dedicated delivery scheme for independent shops) and some exist only in Norway (such as the REKO-rings).

Our research found that local food production and marketing was mainly motivated by anticipated benefits such as environmental sustainability, supply chain transparency, creating community, direct support to farmers, knowledge transfer to consumers about food and agriculture and the role of local food chains as a counterweight to the mainstream food system. In Bristol, concerns about climate emergency and food security are stronger motivating factors than in Oslo, where there seems to be more emphasis on the local sales channels' beneficial effect on food diversity and quality.

Securing economic viability was the most important challenge for both producers and sales channels, which primarily can be attributed to the extra costs associated with small scale and diversified production, carrying out marketing and sales (which typically includes maintaining direct contact with consumers and chefs), as well as the extra time and effort required for a more ethical production in terms of environmental and social sustainability.

Competition with the mainstream food system was considered as an important barrier, particularly with regard to consumer demand, as supermarkets conveniently provide a large selection of less expensive food that can be taken home at any time. Local marketing is usually linked to a willingness by consumers to actively seek out local food and pay a premium for it.

Interviewees in both cities emphasised that there is need for a change of attitudes among consumers and buyers, in the latter case particularly among restaurant chefs. More collaboration and dialogue between and across the different groups of producers, sales channels and organisations and public authorities, was considered important to reduce competition and, instead, create solutions for the common interest. More collaboration regarding online platforms was also seen as a way to create economies of scale and improve efficiency of deliveries. Finally, increased support from public authorities and farmers organisations was considered important to promote local production and marketing, including both funding and subsidies to farmers, public procurement from local farmers and capacity building, and access to land for cultivation and the provision and maintenance of urban food chain infrastructures.

Based on this comparative study, we suggest some examples of how Oslo and Bristol can learn from each other in order to further develop local food production and sales and overcome barriers and challenges that producers and sales channels experience. Clearly, our work is a snapshot and does not cover all the local food enterprises emerging and developing. Yet, in that respect, further comparative work could be beneficial that examines those sales channels that exist only in Oslo or Bristol to see if practices are transferable or adaptable. Similarly, there are examples of fairly similar sales channels (e.g. Farmers' Market) that provide valuable insights for exchange. Shortly before completion of this report, a study visit by Norwegian farmers to Bristol (in September 2022) proved illuminating in identifying commonalities and particularities at the level of the enterprise. We feel strongly that additional practitioner-focused networking could be highly fruitful.

Organisations and public authorities play different roles when it comes to supporting local food production and marketing in the two cities, and these divergences also bring about opportunities for learning. A critical eye could be cast on the ways in which Bristol's many networks, policies and organisations have championed local food over the years and what outcomes have been achieved as a result. Has the city's food system changed, become more diverse in its offer or governance arrangements, or become more socially inclusive? While local food is consistently popular (and our data show real innovation and dramatic upswings in demand during the pandemic), it remains within a market niche and policies to support local production rub up against fundamental challenges such as land availability and security of tenure.

Might new constellations of civil society and private sector actors, such as those highlighted in Bristol, help finance food sector innovation in Norway, where the office of the County Governor of Oslo and Viken, runs an exciting incubator programme to help small-scale vegetable producers in their establishment phase? Similarly, insights from Bristol's long struggle to up-scale local food availability might be less onerous in Norway where faith in the state is stronger.

Finally, as researchers, we are excited by practice-based methods which can offer new ways to promote networked governance of the urban food system, cross-sectoral collaboration and enhance rural-urban interdependence at the regional level. Techniques such as living labs are by now well-tested in urban community and neighbourhood development, enabling a safe space for iterative and co-produced experimentation and prototyping. Ecosystems techniques, such as 3keels's Landscape Economy Partnerships have helped to identify commercial partners and monetise the free services they received from healthy ecosystems to better plan landscape management. Such insights could be extended into exciting rural-urban linkages by connecting inherent opportunities for local food marketing associated with cities, with the rapid advances being made in the field of net-zero-carbon agricultural transition in peri-urban and rural farming. Lastly, recent innovations in the field of payments for ecosystems services hold as yet untapped potential for extending alternative food business models into consumer-producer partnerships which foresee greater access to the countryside in exchange for secure urban-based custom and commitment to the shared values for which local food is a symbol.

Appendix

Interview guide

1. Introduction:

2. Brief description of the focus of the interview: We want to examine different sales models and opportunities / challenges in direct sales of local food in the Oslo area and compare this with Bristol.

3. Privacy statement

4. Ask about recording

Questions

1. Tell us a little about xxxx and the work you do in the organization / company?
2. What works well / less well?
3. What are the key success factors
4. What contact do you have with consumers
5. What would you say are the biggest challenges in direct sales of local food in general?
6. What would you say are the biggest challenges for your company / organization as a sales channel for local food?
7. Do you have suggestions for how these challenges can be solved?
8. Do you collaborate with other sales channels? Have you received public support for the establishment / operation of the sales channel? How do you experience cooperation / support from public administration?
9. How did the corona pandemic and the decline of society affect the sale of local food through your company / organization?
10. Do you think that the potential for increased sales of local food in the Oslo/Bristol area?
11. Why is direct sales of local food important? What motivates you in your work?
12. Does your company / organization want to grow? If yes; What do you think are the most important opportunities and barriers to increasing sales?
13. What are the company's / organization's long-term goals? What does it take for these to realize them?

Thanks!

References

Asheim, L. J., Thorvaldsen, P., & Rivedal, S. (2020). Policy measures to preserve Norwegian coastal and fjord landscapes in small-scale farming systems. *Environmental Science & Policy, 104*, 43-51. doi:10.1016/j.envsci.2019.10.017

Aubry, C. & Kebir, L. (2013). Shortening food supply chains: A means for maintaining agriculture close to urban areas? The case of the French metropolitan area of Paris. *Food Policy* 41, 85-93.

Bugge, A., og Schjøll, A. (2021). Miljø- og dyrevelferdsspørsmål knyttet til produksjon og forbruk av fisk og kjøtt - hva er forbrukernes betraktninger og betenkeligheter? *SIFO Rapport ;6-2021*. ISBN: 978-82-7063-526-9. 90 s.

Carey, J. (2011) Who Feeds Bristol? Towards a Resilient Food Plan. Bristol, Bristol Partnership.

Curry, N., Reed, M., Keech, D., Maye, D. and Kirwan, J. (2014) Urban agriculture and the policies of the European Union: the need for renewal. Spanish Journal of Rural Development, 1: 91-106.

Farsund, A. A., & Daugbjerg, C. (2017). Debating Food Security Policy in Two Different Ideational Settings: A Comparison of Australia and Norway. *Scandinavian Political Studies, 40* (4), 347-366. doi:10.1111/1467-9477.12091

Garnett, P., Doherty, B. & Heron, T. (2018) Vulnerability of the United Kingdom's food supply chains exposed by COVID-19. Nature Food 1: 315-318.

Hasnain, S., Ingram, J. & Zurek, M. (2020). Mapping the UK Food System – a report for the UKRI Transforming UK Food Systems Programme. Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, Oxford. ISBN 978-1-874370-81-9.

Lecole, P., Preget, R., & Thoyer, S. (2022). Designing an effective small farmers scheme in France. *Ecological Economics, 191*. doi:ARTN 107229. 10.1016/j.ecolecon.2021.107229

Majewski, E., Komerska, A., Kwiatkowski, J., Malak-Rawlikowska, A., Wąs, A., Sulewski, P., Goals, M., Pogpdzinska, K., Lecoeur, J-P., Tocco, B., Török, A., Donati, M & Vittersø, G. (2020). Are Short Food Supply Chains More Environmentally Sustainable than Long Chains? A Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of the Eco-Efficiency of Food Chains in Selected EU Countries. *Energies, 13*(18), 4853. Retrieved from https://www.mdpi.com/1996-1073/13/18/4853

Milford, A. B., Lien, G., & Reed, M. (2021). Different sales channels for different farmers: Local and mainstream marketing of organic fruits and vegetables in Norway. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *88*, 279-288.

Milford, A. B., Prestvik, A., & Kårstad, S. (2019). Produksjon og omsetning av økologisk frukt, bær og grønnsaker gjennom alternative salgskanaler. *NIBIO rapport*.

Milford, A. B., Spissøy, A., & Pettersen, I. (2012). Grensehandel–utvikling, årsaker og virkning. Notat (Norsk institutt for landbruksøkonomisk forskning: trykt utg.).

Refsgaard, K., & Johnson, T. G. (2010). Modelling Policies for Multifunctional Agriculture and Rural Development - a Norwegian Case Study. *Environmental Policy and Governance, 20*(4), 239-257. doi:10.1002/eet.549

Renting, H., Marsden, T.K. & Banks, J. (2003). Understanding alternative food networks: exploring the role of short food supply chains in rural development. *Environment and Planning A* 35(3), 393-412.

NIBIO
NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF
BIOECONOMY RESEARCH

NIBIO - Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research was established July 1 2015 as a merger between the Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research, the Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute and Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute.

The basis of bioeconomics is the utilisation and management of fresh photosynthesis, rather than a fossile economy based on preserved photosynthesis (oil). NIBIO is to become the leading national centre for development of knowledge in bioeconomics. The goal of the Institute is to contribute to food security, sustainable resource management, innovation and value creation through research and knowledge production within food, forestry and other biobased industries. The Institute will deliver research, managerial support and knowledge for use in national preparedness, as well as for businesses and the society at large.

NIBIO is owned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food as an administrative agency with special authorization and its own board. The main office is located at Ås. The Institute has several regional divisions and a branch office in Oslo.

Cover photo: Robert Sjursen

nibio.no