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The Promise of Short Local Food Supply Chains

Popular science summary, Silvia Fernández Fernández

In the picturesque rural landscapes of Spain, a food revolution is quietly unfolding. The driving force? Short Local Food Supply Chains (SLFSCs)

These innovative systems of SLFSCs are not just about bringing fresher, tastier produce to your table; they are a lifeline to the local economy and a beacon of sustainability. The study reveals that they can contribute positively to both small producers and consumers, giving them the possibility to participate in the decisions taken on the food system and enhancing personal relationships and trust.

Imagine walking through a vibrant market in rural Spain, where every stall bursts with the colors and scents of fresh produce. You, as the consumer can benefit from the highest food product quality that also matches with the local heritage of the place. The consumers from these areas showed a pronounced preference for this local production that is considered healthier and tastier. They value transparency and are conscious about ensuring local livelihoods support. For them, the choice to buy locally is a choice for quality and trust, overshadowing the allure of supermarket convenience with the charm of community-centric shopping.

But why focus on these chains? Because they embody a solution to several pressing challenges that the food system is facing right now within the environment and the incapacity of smallholders to compete with larger enterprises, even though they are responsible for feeding a huge amount of the population. Apart from the benefits, the findings indicate a strong desire among rural residents to support this short and local supply chain, due to they recognizing the

health and sustainable benefits (for the environment and local economy) that these products offer.

While exploring the nuances of rural food dynamics, we stumbled upon several questions that we discuss in the study: Is there sufficient demand in these regions to cover local agricultural production? Is it possible to rely solely on these systems? What is the paradigm of this type of model and what other actors are needed in this system?

Our approach, which marries rigorous data analysis with real-world interactions, paints a compelling picture of how SLFSCs could reshape rural Spain's food landscape. By focusing on the direct connections that enrich both producers and consumers, this study not only reaffirms the value of local food systems but also highlights the potential for significant social, economic, and environmental impact. Through the lens of Valle del Jerte and La Garrotxa, we see a future where rural communities thrive through the principles of food sovereignty and agroecology—where every meal is a testament to the power of local ingenuity.

This exploration into the impact of SLFSCs in rural Spain not only uncovers the potential for a more sustainable food future but also invites us to rethink our own food choices and the impact they have on the world around us. The full thesis can be downloaded from <https://lup.lub.lu.se/studentpapers/>.