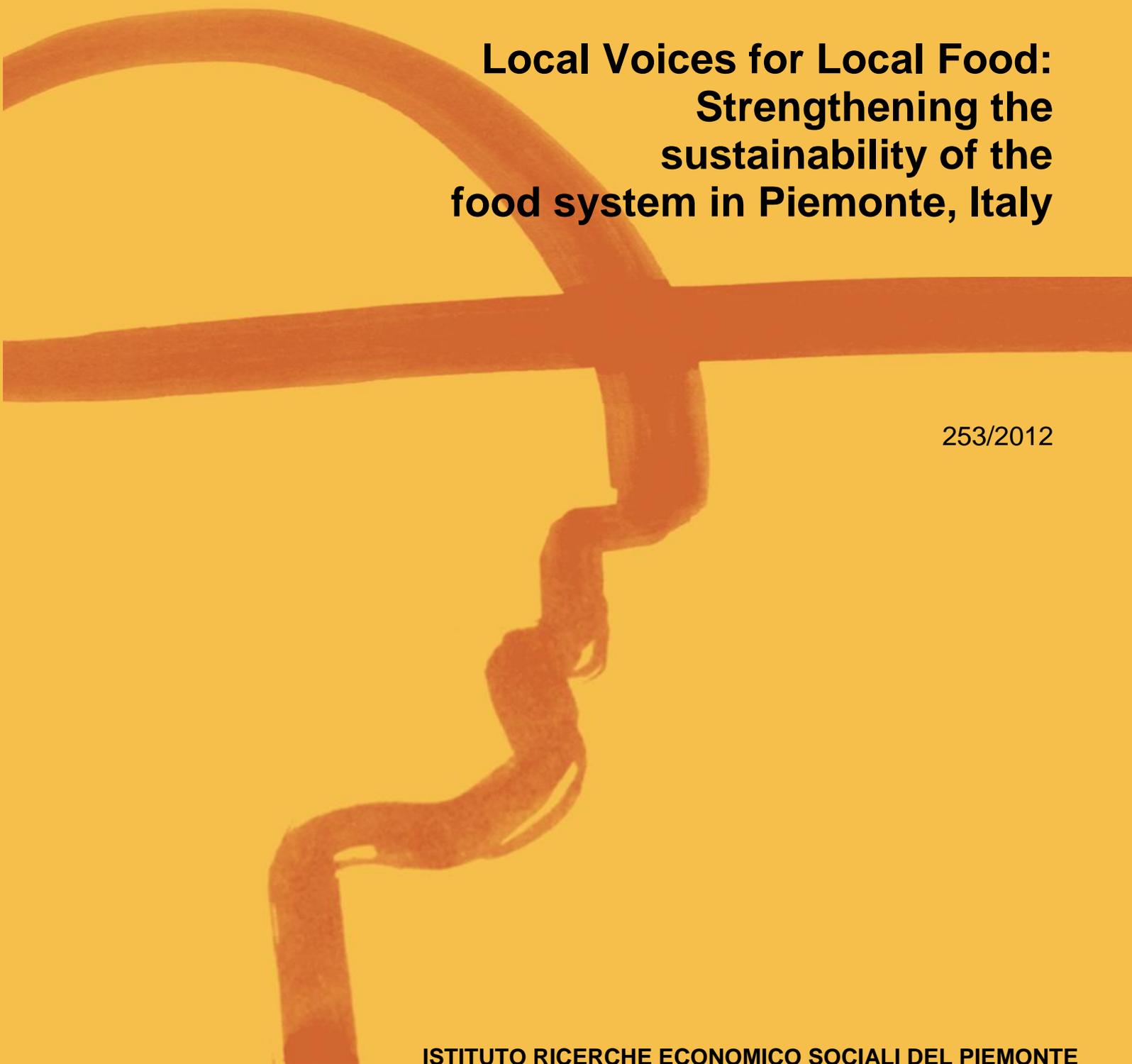


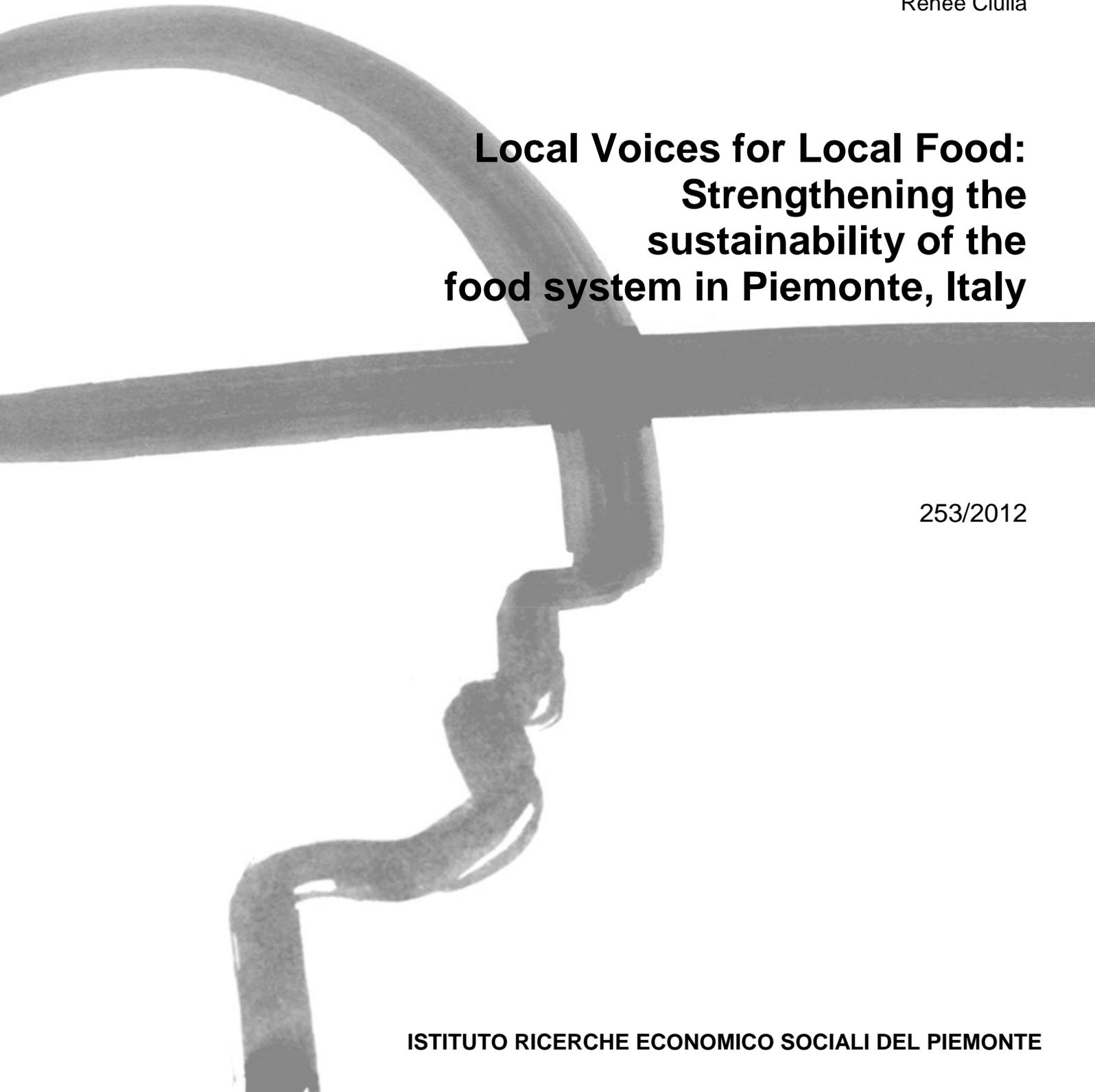
Renè Ciulla

A large, stylized orange graphic that resembles a thick, curved line or a stylized letter 'C' or 'G'. It starts from the left edge, curves upwards and then downwards, ending near the bottom center. A horizontal bar crosses it in the middle.

Local Voices for Local Food: Strengthening the sustainability of the food system in Piemonte, Italy

253/2012

Renè Ciulla



**Local Voices for Local Food:
Strengthening the
sustainability of the
food system in Piemonte, Italy**

253/2012



L'IRES PIEMONTE è un istituto di ricerca che svolge la sua attività d'indagine in campo socioeconomico e territoriale, fornendo un supporto all'azione di programmazione della Regione Piemonte e delle altre istituzioni ed enti locali piemontesi.

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- ▶ rassegne congiunturali sull'economia regionale;
- ▶ ricerche e analisi per il piano regionale di sviluppo;
- ▶ ricerche di settore per conto della Regione Piemonte e di altri enti e inoltre la collaborazione con la Giunta Regionale alla stesura del Documento di programmazione economico finanziaria (art. 5 L.r. n. 7/2001).

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Mr ALBERTO CRESCIMANNO, the person who undertook the data processing, the maps design and assisted with the interviews.

The research was carried out between September 2010 and April 2011.



FOREWORD

Farming, self-sufficiency and all things related to food have been a personal interest for almost as long as I can remember. Even as a six year old first visiting the Amish in the state of Pennsylvania, USA I was convinced that growing food was the direction for my life. Decades later, after working on several American and European farms and beginning an edible landscaping business, it was clear that my interest in agriculture was only deepening. Furthermore, my Italian roots have always tied my farming interests to the culture, people, food and agriculture in Italy. During graduate school at UMB in Aas, Norway, I conducted my thesis research on the feasibility of my state of New Hampshire to have a more sustainable food system. This research project with IRES was an ideal opportunity to conduct a comparative study and determine which steps are needed for the region of Piemonte to achieve an increase in local food production while also attempting to directly help local farmers. This piece of the project was a lifetime dream come true.

Several people have helped contribute towards this research and I am deeply grateful for their inspiration and advice. From IRES Piemonte I would like to thank Fiorenzo Ferlino, Alberto Crescimanno, Stefano Aimone, Stefano Cavaletto, Maurizio Maggi, Carlo Dondona and Giovanna Perino.

I am forever indebted to the brilliant organic farmers I met Piemonte who shared their life stories and who toil endlessly to provide healthy products for this exceptional region. The connection they have to their land and their respect for the environment provided constant inspiration.

Renè Ciulla





SUMMARY

During the months of September through March 2011, agricultural producers from every province in the Italian region of Piemonte were interviewed with open and closed questionnaires at public markets, festivals, cooperatives and farms. The ten questions related to their farm demographics, agricultural funding, organizations that assist local producers and barriers, opportunities and success stories for selling local food in Piemonte

The goal of this research was twofold; to better understand the perspectives and challenges of small Piemontese producers and to determine how problems can be solved in order to increase the amount of local food in this region. Comparisons to the burgeoning local food movement in the USA were made in order to offer possible suggestions for future policies and growers. Similar research was conducted by the American researcher in 2010 which provided an ideal comparative background.





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QUESTIONARIO PER GLI AGRICOLTORI



INTRODUCTION: FOOD SYSTEMS

Limitations of global food system

The innocent and necessary act of making a 21st century meal at home is often dependent on a system of food production which is intricately linked to the use of fossil fuels in the form of pesticides, packaging and distribution. Critics argue that this global production and transportation of food is an unsustainable and broken model pointing to dwindling oil reserves estimated to be 1,000 billion barrels (Worldwatch Institute, 2002). To place this in perspective, it will only be 300 years before the oil reserves that took eons to form are exhausted. If food production and distribution is forced to become more localized due to oil depletion are we prepared for this dramatic shift?

Proponents of a globalized food system question how producers in Third World nations will feed themselves if developed nations stop purchasing items such as avocados, Argentinean beef and coffee. Although transitioning to a locally based food system doesn't imply immediate consumer spending to circulate 100% within their own locale, there could be longterm benefits for developing countries from a "local shift". The expenses of global food distribution has "forced" importers to pay very little to Third World producers in order to retain their customers whom are accustomed to paying very little for the products. Coffee growers, for example, earn 10% of what consumers pay for coffee in the supermarket whereas cocoa growers receive less than 4% the price of a chocolate bar (Bowden, 2002). Raj Patel (2007) claims that the, "...business of farming is, at the end of the day, constrained by the playing field of the market." Farmers are continually faced with foreclosure threats and fewer options while agribusinesses increase their control and power. In 2007, 40% of the world's trade in food was controlled by transnational agricultural corporations forcing farmers to comply with the wishes of big business (Patel, 2007). Is big business really necessary in our food systems? Perhaps as consumers purchase more from their own locale, Third World farmers will once again produce food for *their* locale and start strengthening their regional economy.

In addition to social costs, today's food production has environmental ramifications related to long transport miles. A ton of bottled water generates 3.8g of carbon monoxide, 5.75g of nitrogen oxide and 0.5g of hydrocarbons traveling just one mile by road (Bowden, 2002). Brian Halweil (2002) stresses that some of the worst "culprits" are high-value items with low caloric content such as lettuce, fruit and frozen foods. For example, a head of lettuce grown in the Salinas Valley of California and shipped to Washington, DC requires 36 times more energy in fossil fuel to ship than it provides in food energy. A typical meal prepared in Iowa using imported potatoes, cabbage, roast, tomatoes and peppers totals 2,577 miles whereas a comparable meal of Iowan ingredients reduces the miles to 74 (Halweil, 2002). A study by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture found that 16 fruits and vegetables consumed from a mainstream grocery store in Iowa traveled 25,000 miles whereas the same fruits grown locally traveled 716 miles (Bedford, 2006). Figure 1 displays how much further conventional produce traveled than the same items grown and consumed in Iowa, USA (Pirog & Benjamin, 2003).

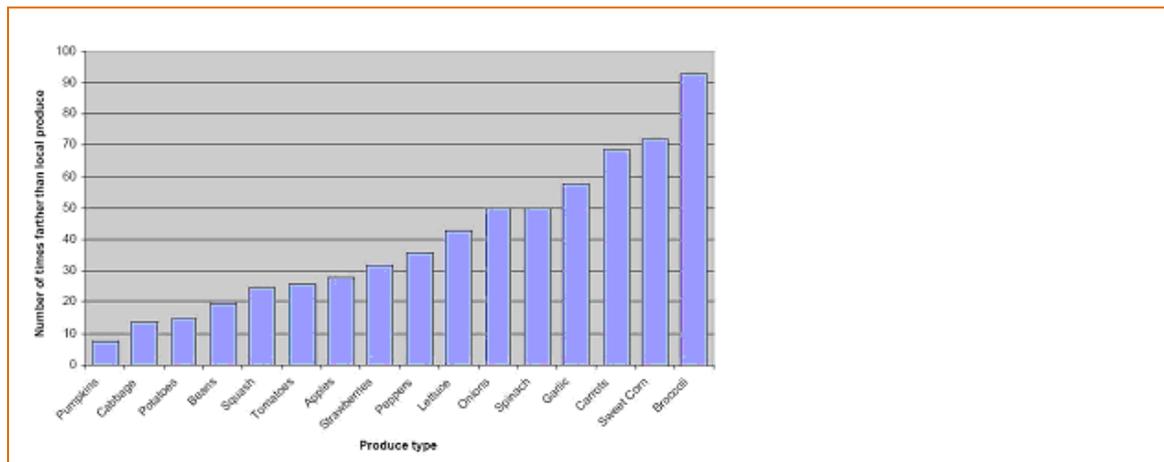


FIGURE 1. ADDITIONAL DISTANCE TRAVELED BY CONVENTIONAL PRODUCE COMPARED TO LOCAL PRODUCE

Source: Pirog & Benjamin, 2003

It is worth at least considering the role of localized food systems given their historic success at feeding small, sustainable communities (Mark, 2007; Moorhead, 2009; Tate, 2009). Stepping away from the prevailing food system to produce foods native to an agroecosystem isn't about taking a giant leap forward. It implies taking small steps back to study the regional food supply history and looking forward by analyzing the needs of consumers and producers. Every country, region and town has different requirements and preferences with numerous solutions. Those who eat and those who grow need to work together to find the best answers for their locale.

Localized Food Systems

Economic incentives

One outcome of new networks and relationships from localized food systems is regional economic revitalization. A 2001 Minnesotan study noted that farmers in the region were selling an average of \$912 million in farm commodities and spending \$500 million on farm inputs. The consumers were spending \$500 million on food purchased from outside Minnesota which the researchers claimed could have been put back into the local food system (DeWeerd, 2009). In a Chesapeake Bay study, farmers earned, in total, \$70 million more each year than they spent to produce their crops but needed to source \$375 million in farm inputs from outside their region. Consumers meanwhile spent \$400 million on non-local food totaling in a net loss of \$700 million (DeWeerd, 2009). Most of the profits from the system were flowing to supply industries, service industries and the financial sectors instead of the farm and rural community. A study by Dave Swenson demonstrated that if Iowans purchased a quarter of their produce from Iowa farmers \$139.9 million would be created in economic output and more than 2000 new jobs in Iowa (DeWeerd, 2009). The researchers' logic assumes that instead of, "creating new jobs in the economy it is shifting those jobs around" (DeWeerd, 2009).

Successful examples

Examples exist across the globe of societies that thrive on a healthy localized food system. Regardless of the drastically different climate from Piemonte, Italy, the island of Cuba offers



an exceptional example of how local agriculture can become the standard when no other options exist. In the early 1990's a local food production revolution swept through the country when a sudden scarcity of food on the island followed the collapse of the USSR (Mark, 2007). With daily caloric intake plummeting from 2,900 calories to 1,800/day Cubans began, out of necessity, to start spontaneously growing their own food. The city of Havana is now growing enough food to feed each resident with 8.8 ounces of fruits and vegetables every day with fair farmer prices guaranteed. A less drastic but equally detrimental process could infect the region of Piemonte as oil supplies steadily decrease and prices continue to soar.

In the rural town of Todmorden, UK a sustainable food system vision, *Incredible Edible*, was born in 2007 not out of necessity but from motivated residents. They plan to make the town entirely self-sufficient in food production by 2018 and in less than two years, a third more of the townspeople of Todmorden grow their own vegetables, almost 7 in 10 people buy local produce regularly and 15 times as many people are keeping chickens (Moorhead, 2009). Other projects include a 50m-long polytunnel, greenhouses, a jam-making center, wood shop for chicken huts and a vegetable garden at nursing homes.

In 2004, Hardwick, Vermont in the USA began strengthening their local food system with the idea to grow and sell food while also creating value-added products such as wood finishes that use dairy by-products. With the establishment of the non-profit, The Center for an Agricultural Economy, education and networking opportunities are provided for those involved in the local economy (Tate, 2009). This "agricultural economy" has inspired five new food processing businesses and created 75 new jobs in a town with less than 3,200 people. The actors involved in this movement stress the pertinence for rural jurisdictions to provide economic development assistance to agricultural entrepreneurs (Tate, 2009). Determined individuals worldwide are making positive changes in how their communities are feeding themselves and are ultimately creating jobs, health, food security and wealth in their region.





AGRICULTURAL OVERVIEW: ITALY AND PIEMONTE

In 2007 the majority of Italian agriculture (86% of total) consisted of specialized farms (inea.it) but even so, statistics from the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry and SINAB (National Information System of Organic Agriculture) indicated that in 2007 there were a total of 51,065 organic agricultural operators (45,115 producers, 4,739 in transformation and 194 importers) (Manzo, 2007). The land area for organic production totaled 1,148,162 hectares (increase of 7.6% from the preceding year). The main production was cheese, following by land in fields and pastures, cereals and olives. The regions with the most land devoted to organic production were Basilica and Calabria with Piemonte reaching 3.3% of organic land in comparison to conventional production in the region (Manzo, 2007). The territory of Piemonte is 25,400km² with 43.1% as mountainous, 22% extended hills, 17.3% as land plain and 17.6% in urban areas (www.europa.eu). There are a total of 4.3 million inhabitants with only 38% living in rural areas and 62% located in urbanized locations.

The Italian Census of Agriculture estimated in the year 2000 that there were 1,528,265 ha cultivated in Piemonte and 36,927 ha were devoted to organic agriculture in this region. Piemonte agriculture is characterized by family farms (97% of total farms and 80% of UAA) with an average size of slightly more than 13.3 ha. The majority of the agricultural surface area in Piemonte is devoted to permanent fields and pastures, and produces only 7.2% of Italy's annual vegetable production (Istat, 2010). Data from Coldiretti in 2002 showed that there were 10,920 wine producers, 23,600 fruit and vegetable farms, 3,300 rice farms, 30,218 in grain production, and 16,582 producing other items. The vast majority of surface area is devoted to fodder production with 648,049 ha, followed by cereal production at 300,742 hectares, then rice at 120,841 ha and grapes for wine production at 51,951 ha (Coldiretti.it). Fruit production (28,056 ha) and vegetables (11,836 ha) are cultivated on a smaller scale. In 2003, Coldiretti estimated that in Piemonte there were 40,015,000 chickens, 3,142,000 laying hens, and 883,360 cattle for slaughter.

In reference to certified organic production, in 2007 there were 2,123 organic farms in Piemonte while 333 operators were involved with product transformation (Ronco, 2007). Interestingly, the number of organic operators in 2000 numbered only 1,655 (only 1.4% of the region's agricultural operations) showing an increase of almost 500 farms in those 7 years (Corsi, 2007). The majority of producers in 2007 were located in Cuneo (64%) while Torino accounted for 9% (Ronco, 2007). Approximately 49% was dedicated to grass and pasture, 22% to cereals (mostly rice), 16% to woody agricultural products (chestnut and vineyards), 7% to forage and 5% for industrial plants (sunflowers). Animal farming included 20,000 head of cattle (only 2.5% of the entire census), 7,400 sheep (8.4% of total), 4,300 goats (9% of total), 16,500 swine (2% of total) and 282,000 poultry (Corsi, 2007).

In 2007 it was noted that the highest *values* for organic production were for fruit, cereals (rice), tomatoes and industrial plants (soy and aromatics) (Corsi, 2007). In the same study conducted by Corsi (2007) it was concluded that the best sales outlets for cereals, eggs and industrial plants was wholesale, whereas direct farm sales were superior for selling potatoes and vegetables. Sales channels for milk at the time were only wholesale and cooperatives. However, Corsi (2007) found that transformed products were almost entirely sold directly from the farms (products from cereals, preserves, herbs in oil and wine and items from meat and milk). Even still, 68.8% of sales from organic operators in 2007 were sold to wholesale buyers, 8% through cooperatives, 6.6% directly from farms, 2% at markets and 1.7% from specialized shops (Corsi, 2007).

**TABLE 1. PRINCIPAL INDICATORS OF THE AGROFOOD SYSTEM IN PIEMONTE**

		Piemonte	Italia	Fonte
Imprese agricole iscritte al Registro delle Imprese	Numero	72.107	972.940	Infocamere (2004)
	% su tot.	15,7	16,2	
Occupati in agricoltura	Numero	70.108	1.075.307	
	% su tot.	3,8	4,9	
Produzione totale agricola ai prezzi base (correnti)	Milioni di euro	3.432	443.120	Istat (2003)
Valore aggiunto agricoltura	Milioni di euro	1.940	29.275	
	% su tot.	2,2	2,6	
Valore aggiunto agricolo per occupato	Migliaia di Euro	27,7	27,2	
Industria alimentare – unità locali	Numero	5.564	73.832	Istat Censimento
	% su tot.	1,6	1,4	
Industria alimentare – addetti	Numero	39.472	444.649	Industria e Servizi (2001)
	% su tot.	2,4	2,3	
Industria alimentare – incidenza dei 5 comparti con maggiore connessione agro-alimentare locale*	Numero			
	% su tot.	23,8	23,4	
	% UL	36,9	43,3	
	% addetti	4,1	9,1	
Export agroalimentare	Milioni di Euro	2.410	18.678	Istat (2003)
	% sul totale	8,1	7,2	

Source: Aimone et al., 2005

One of the challenges facing the agricultural production systems in Piemonte is the encroaching urban sprawl especially in the areas located between the cities of Torino and Asti. The irreversible damage to precious layers of fertile topsoil is a threat not only environmentally and biologically in terms of biodiversity loss, but also has a deleterious impact on the longevity of the future food security for the region. As in many parts of the world, this is a direct result of more families that want to live in rural-urban areas (Cassibba et al., 2010). Data from the General Agricultural Census showed that between 1990 and 2000 the agricultural area of Piedmont shrunk by 4.3%. Furthermore, a report on regional land use from the Regione Piemonte in 2009 reported an *overall loss of 19,042 hectares* (over 47,000 acres) in the years between 1991 and 2005 (Cassibba et al., 2010). This data corresponds to a consumption of almost four hectares (10 acres) of land being consumed every day by cement despite relatively stable population dynamics (refer to Table 2) (Cassibba et al., 2010).

TABLE 2. CONSUMPTION OF SOIL, VARIATION OF SOIL CONSUMPTION AND THE POPULATION IN PIEMONTE (1991-2005)

Anni	Consumo di suolo (%)	Variazione del consumo di suolo (% 1991=100)	Andamento della popolazione (% 1991=100)
1991	4,9	100,0	100,0
1998	5,2	105,7	100,4
2001	5,4	108,4	99,2
2005	5,7	114,2	101,7

Source: Regione Piemonte, 2009

Data from IPLA mapped the soils of the Piemonte territory on a regional scale dividing land use into three classes based on its agricultural and general production abilities. They



concluded that from 1991-2005, 1,915 hectares of first-class land in Piedmont were lost (equal to 1.89% of the class), 6,877 hectares of land in 2nd class (1.93%) and 5,792 hectares of land in 3rd class (1.85%) (Cassibba et al., 2010). Again, not only does this signify a risk for landscape quality, biological functions of the soil and slope stability, but the very food production potential is being placed in jeopardy.

Agricultural Extension and Coldiretti

Today in Italy, farmers in need of agricultural assistance generally rely on advice from the farmers union of which they annually subscribe. There is currently no free state-funded public service for agricultural producers in Italy such as the agricultural extension service in the USA. Agricultural extension (a combination of advisory services, research and farmer training) began in the middle of the XIX century in Europe when the industrial revolution began improving production (Paffarini & Santucci, 2009). During this time the majority of the population worked in agriculture and as a way to introduce new techniques many countries adopted advisory services.

In Italy, however, one of the first created advisory institutions was in 1870 known as the Cattedre Ambulanti (Itinerant Teaching Post) which was established by banks, land-holders and public institutions for farmers' training and advisory (Paffarini & Santucci, 2009). After a few years, the Cattedre Ambulanti promoted the idea that farmers needed to take charge of their own production, sales and distribution. As a result, many farmers' co-operatives were established in Italy in order to produce and distribute machinery, farm equipment, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and feedstuff as well as giving technical support to producers. In 1890 a joining of co-operatives created Federconsorzi and in the middle of 20th century they had 50% of Italian agriculture in 5,000 stores with over 2,000 consultants available for member farmers and clients. This example of a successful model is similar to the Danish model of extension service (Paffarini & Santucci, 2009).

Some argue that the American system of co-operative agricultural extension is more advanced and efficient that began 100 years ago created inside state universities (Paffarini & Santucci, 2009). This service currently represents a significant driving force for American agriculture and surprisingly in Europe it has only been adopted in Scotland. The American Cooperative Extension System is a nationwide, non-credit educational network. Every state has an office at its land-grant university as well as a network of local or regional offices staffed by experts who provide practical and research-based information to agricultural producers, small business owners, youth, consumers and others in rural communities of all sizes free of charge.

The agricultural knowledge system in Italy can be divided into two parts: organizations connected with the firms that produce fertilizers, seeds, chemicals, animal feed, etc and the system of public services for farmers, connected with national and regional agricultural institutions. These two systems seldom, if ever, worked together and according to Paffarini & Santucci (2009), "...the private sector believes the public sector is wasteful and ineffective and the public one thinks the private takes advantages of the good faith of farmers." There is a need for the public system of services to commit to helping the small-scale farmers who are reluctant in using the private advisors because they are very expensive (Paffarini & Santucci, 2009). Since 1972, agricultural issues are the responsibility of the regions, whose public institutions implement European funding. As a result, there are almost 20 different organizations for agricultural extension and, at least the public institutions, have no technical



tasks but instead focus mostly on the coordination of their own organization. Despite these various drawbacks, the real problem with the Italian extension system is that there is *not a continuous commitment* from the public institutions since their survival depends on the availability of European funds, especially those attributed to rural development (Paffarini & Santucci, 2009). For example, in the period 2000-2006, European policy neglected advisory activities and many regions did not replace the European funds with their own. Unfortunately, this has created an agricultural extension system characterized by a high turnover of personnel, low specialization of firms and continuing changes of administrative procedures (Paffarini & Santucci, 2009).

Coldiretti is the largest farmers union in Italy and although it is necessary for farmers to pay for their services, this organization is one of the national leaders for local food initiatives. Some of their consultancy and technical assistance includes feasibility studies for development projects, marketing and strategic planning projects, design assistance for rural development measures, support for training, dissemination and experimentation, market research and lastly, communication and promotion of quality food products (coldiretti.it). For example, Coldiretti organized a large farm education exhibit at the Chestnut festival in Cuneo with hands-on activities for children as well as adult education about agriculture in Piemonte. In Piemonte, Coldiretti has 198,287 members and over 1,400 offices. One initiative, Campagna Amici, was started in 2000 with the intent to educate consumers about the provenance of their food and to regenerate local agriculture. Projects include food education in schools, educational farms, general agricultural development, promoting fairs, typical markets and direct sales from farms. There are currently 15 Campagna Amica markets in the province of Torino alone which run from 3-7pm in order to be available for people after work and school hours.

The Association of Solidarity for the Italian Countryside or ASCI (Associazione di Solidarietà per la Campagna Italiana) (www.rfb.it/asci) is also worth mentioning. They are a network of volunteers that provide free services when and where they can for farmers and those interested in conserving the environment and growing food free of chemicals and GMOs. For example, ASCI recently offered two free courses in Collegno (TO) for farmers interested in learning how to save their own seeds. It was a focused on biological production systems and several dozen farmers from around Piemonte attended the two 8-hour courses taught by a volunteer agricultural expert from Liguria.



LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT: ITALY AND PIEMONTE

The term “local food” has different meanings in different places. Hulsink and Dons (2008) describe three definitions of local food as regional/typical, locally sourced (fresh and processed) and indigenous (common and rare items). They argue that locally sourced (processed), rare indigenous products and regional items have the strongest ability to protect biodiversity and strengthen rural development. The present report refers to local food as products that are sourced solely from the Piemonte region of Italy, and therefore items with a short supply chain. Some of these foods are also typical, traditional products that are at risk of becoming endangered due to changes in consumption and production habits.

In 2009, there were 63,600 farms in Italy selling directly to consumers, which was an increase of 4.7% from 2008. In fact from 2001 the number of farms has grown 64% which further emphasizes the growth of this market (Gardini et al. 2009).



FIGURE 2. EVOLUTION OF FARMS IN ITALY WITH DIRECT SALES

Source: Gardini et al. 2009

In 2009 wine demonstrated the highest amount of direct sales in Italy (34%) followed by fruit and vegetables (30%) shown in Figure 3. Besides the actual farm as a location for local sales of products, in Piemonte about 15% are sold in city shops and 40.5% sold at sagras (annual traditional festivals). Interestingly, in 2009 it was estimated that direct farm sales in Italy were worth 3 million euros indicating a serious financial value of this movement in addition to numerous societal benefits. Although Tuscany currently holds first place for direct sales value, Piemonte placed second in 2009 with 15.4% of the national value (Gardini et al. 2009).

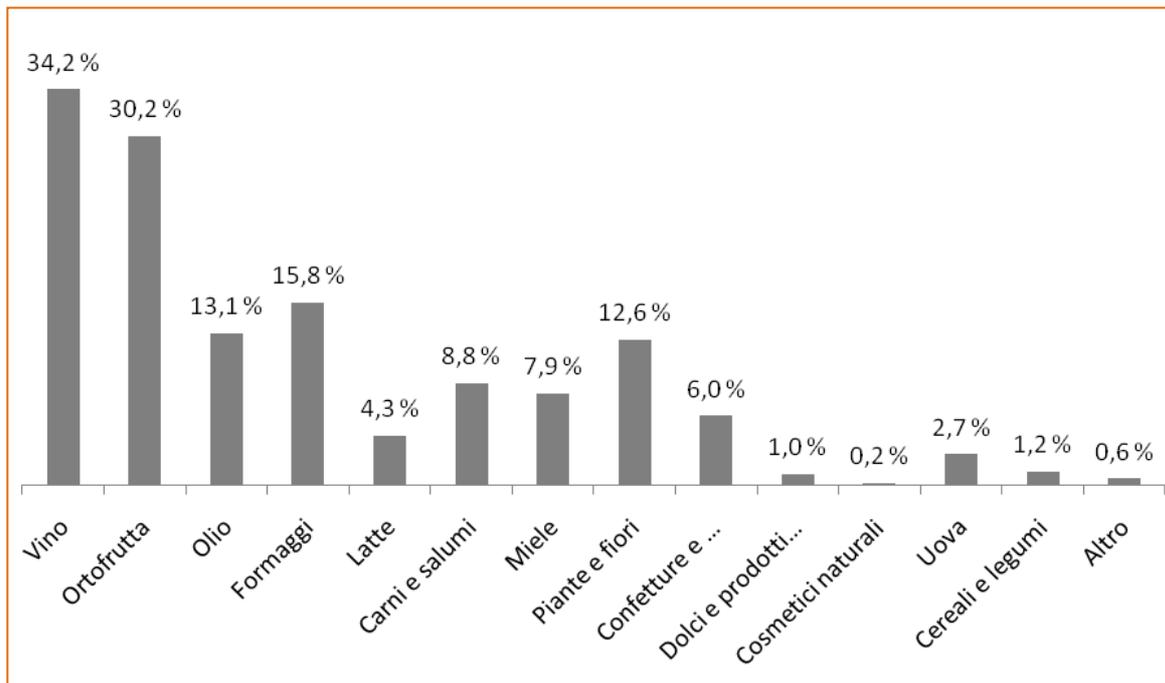


FIGURE 3. 2009 TYPOLOGY OF DIRECT SALE ITEMS IN ITALY

Source: AGRI 2000 Elaborazioni osservatorio internazionale sulla vendita diretta

As indicated in Table 3, in Piemonte the numbers are slightly different than the country averages, showing direct sales of wine in 2009 reaching 60% of the total with 10.4% for fruit and vegetables, 9% for cheese, 8.7% honey, 11% eggs and 7% for meat and salami (Gardini et al. 2009).

TABLE 3. PRODUCTS IN DIRECT SALES DIVIDED BY ITALIAN REGIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST

The consumer motivations in Italy for purchasing directly from farmers in 2009 included:

	Nord Ovest	Liguria	Lombardia	Piemonte	Valle d'Aosta
Vino		18,20%	22,70%	60,10%	32,70%
Ortofrutta		60,70%	16,30%	10,40%	18,20%
Olio		30,40%	3,10%	-	-
Formaggi		10,90%	32,20%	9,10%	72,70%
Latte		0,40%	11,00%	1,20%	9,10%
Carne e Salumi		2,80%	15,30%	6,90%	7,30%
Miele		12,10%	7,30%	8,70%	14,50%
Piante e fiori		10,10%	29,90%	4,90%	9,10%
Confetture e Conserve		6,10%	8,80%	1,50%	15,00%
Prodotti Della Panificazione		-	1,00%	0,20%	-
Uova		0,40%	0,80%	11,20%	-
Cereali		-	1,20%	0,80%	-
Altro		-	0,50%	0,10%	-

Source: Gardini et al. 2009

freshness and quality of the products (71%), savings, taste and lastly food safety. Furthermore, it was noted that consumers are also considering the fact that buying directly supports the local agricultural economy. Data from Gardini et al. (2009) also indicated that Italian consumers that were *not* buying direct from farms was a result of three things: a scarcity of nearby farms, not knowing which farms sold directly or a lack of time for this



form of shopping. The price differences between directly purchased products and those from mainstream shops were also explored in the study and the majority of Italians believed that the prices were too high.

Aimone & Cavaletto (2009) claim that a short food supply chain is not a new phenomenon in Piemonte because the regional agricultural traditions have always been characterized by social relations based on direct sales. Of course with the advent of globalization came supermarkets and products from around the world. In recent years local food in Piemonte has been seen as something in opposition to mass-produced food and this new appreciation is giving small producers an opportunity to sell directly to consumers. These researchers concluded that in order to increase support from Piemontese consumers for local food, stimulus is needed by local institutions to increase the number of market outlets throughout the region as well as better organization of distribution logistics in urban and peri-urban areas where supermarket competition is strongest (Aimone & Cavaletto, 2009).

In consideration of organic items sold in Piemonte, a study by Borri et al. (2009), analyzed the sales of organic products that were sold in three marketing channels within the region. Unsurprisingly, the geographical location and altitude of the farms, such as those in the mountains, created a need for new marketing channels to meet the difficulties of production in these locales. The results confirmed that the short chain is better suited to small farms, possibly because these channels appreciate the more labor intensive operations of these small businesses (Borri et al., 2009). The survey also highlighted that 20% of organic producers chose not to market their item as organic when sold locally because emphasis was freshness and locality. In conclusion the study highlighted that the short chain in Piemonte is best suited for vegetables, potatoes, fresh fruit, processed fruit production and wines (Borri et al., 2009).

Results from Corsi (2007) indicated that the three most prevalent problems for organic farmers in Piemonte (299 interviewed) included difficulty finding sales outlets for their products as well as those that could pay a satisfactory price, technical difficulties related to production and the cost of production in relation to the cost of sales. Regarding farmers' future intentions, 64% indicated that they would maintain their current activities, 79% were "satisfied" with their livelihoods, 3.4% planned to reduce activities and 18% planned to stop all farming (Corsi, 2007). The main reason for reducing operations was related to meager outlets to sell and the elimination of subsidies. Excessive costs and complicated bureaucracy of organic certification was another reason for stopping organic production. The authors emphasized the need to find solutions for the problem of marketing organic products as well as finding less traditional channels for sales (Corsi, 2007).

According to Menegat (2010), who conducted a detailed analysis of farmers in the Canavese area of the Torino province, producers have two choices for selling their products in Piemonte: directly to consumers or through a middle man. Direct sales often happen through a market but another important emerging possibility is supplying products through joint purchasing groups. Menegat (2010) noted that although selling to wholesalers allowed for more rapid sales of their products, the economic conditions are less favorable than with direct sales. However, at the general markets in Piemonte there now exists too much competition for local producers because of the cheap products imported at very low prices. Furthermore, most small fruit and vegetable producers cannot meet the level of production necessary to sell to large-scale distribution services. Menegat (2010) found a promising solution for the producers in Canavese which combined the fact that, "...local demand for vegetables is constant, substantial and largely favorable to products with recognizable places of origin." In fact, it was concluded that consumer demand for local food through organized



purchasing groups exceeded the supply in this area, highlighting opportunities for future growers.

Piemonte Strengths for Local Food: Small farms, GAS groups and markets

The region of Piemonte has several strengths and opportunities regarding the advancement of its local food system. Numerous small family farms are still supplying much of the region with their products and take advantage of a fertile river valley replenished by mountain-sourced waterways. There is a wide variety of agricultural products produced in Piemonte including wine, artisanal cheeses, raw milk, honey, numerous vegetables and fruits, hazelnuts, rice, salami and meats.

Another strength in this region are the 170 distributors of raw milk which present a unique and convenient opportunity for citizens to purchase healthy milk from local producers (milkmaps.com). Furthermore, in September of 2009 Piemonte totaled 71 cooperative buying groups, known in Italian as Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS) (retegas.org). It can be seen in Figure 4 that in 2009 Piemonte had the third highest amount of GAS in Italy with 71 organized groups, following Lombardy and Tuscany.

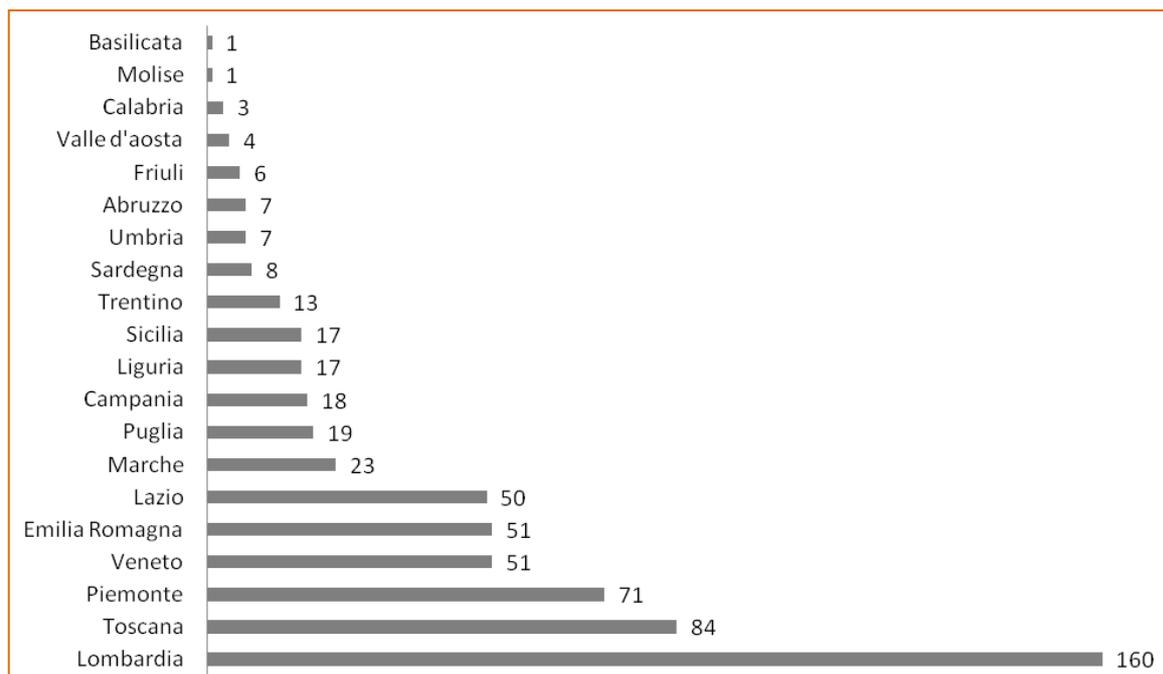


FIGURE 4. 2009 GAS ACTIVITIES FOR EACH ITALIAN REGION

Source: AGRI 2000 Elaborazioni osservatorio internazionale sulla vendita diretta

A report by IRES in January 2010 analyzed some of the motivations for forming these purchasing groups. Results indicated the reduction in the distance food travelled as well as forming relationships with local farmers. Environmental reasons (reducing packaging) were next, followed by a perceived increased wholesomeness of local foods. A reduction of costs was also a factor through these bulk wholesale orders. Although the total economic and volume weight of the purchases are small (averaging 100-200 euros/family/year) the IRES study insists that the fact that these groups are independently forming is a sign of significant social change. There are formal and informal groups with different ways of organizing how



the goods will be distributed to the various members (some with warehouses, and Association leaders, etc). Another collective buying group known as GAC (Gruppi di Acquisto Collettivo) was formed to help people in disadvantaged neighborhoods to access affordable nutritious food. In January 2010 there were 500 families able to take part in this form of public assistance. A third buying scheme in the Piemonte region is known as GAP (Gruppi di Acquisto Popolare) which aims to buy directly from manufacturers and eliminate the mainstream distribution chains. These exist throughout the entire country and the main focus is on the price, followed by quality and point of origin. The products are usually distributed at weekly market stalls as well as pick-up points with refrigeration for meats. In regard to the producers of these cooperative buying groups, one of the most promising results is that this collaborative purchasing has allowed farms to survive that were otherwise in grave financial situations. It was noted by IRES that the need exists for public support for these solidarity buying groups in order to provide more people and farmers the opportunity to take part in such a functional, fair and ecological form of food consumption and distribution.

Furthermore, weekly public markets abound in Piemonte located in several towns in each province. The national farmers union, Coldiretti, has also formed farmers markets specifically for local producers through a movement called Campagna Amica. Torino is home to the largest open air market in Europe, known as Porta Palazzo, located in Piazza della Repubblica. In a covered area behind this Piazza is Porta Pila where the local farmers sell their products. Recently, a project known as “Rururbal” began which is funded by the EU (around 45,000 Euros) and co-involves the Piemonte Regione and the three main farmer’s unions: CIA, Coldiretti and Confagricoltura (La Stampa, 2010). The first phase of the project gave new exposure to Porta Palazzo with posters explaining where the farms are located (and distance from Torino) as well as the importance of purchasing local food. Each farmer is also required to have a card that tells the number of km from Torino and the vegetables of the current and following month. Around 80% of the 67 farmers come from 30 km around Porta Palazzo, mostly in the Torinese hills and only 11 farms are more than 50 km away (La Stampa, 2010).



products (Adua, 2010). In comparison, France held 164, Portugal 116 and Spain with 129. The majority of Italian PDO and PGI products are vegetables (32.5%), extra virgin olive oil (22%), cheeses (19.7%) and preserved meat (16.8%) (inea.it). The majority of PDO and PGI products (60%) come from Northern Italy with Emilia Romagna leading, followed by Veneto (inea.it).

As of December 31, 2010 Piemonte boasted 2,857 producers of DOP, IGP and TSG products (Adua, 2010). The official website of Regione Piemonte lists 13 DOP products and 4 IGP products including several types of cheese, fish, hazelnuts, meats, rice and chestnuts (regione.piemonte.it). These products are regulated by the EU laws; Regolamento (CE) n. 510/2006, del Consiglio to protect PGI items and for PDO products there is the Regolamento (CE) n. 1791/2006 del Consiglio (regione.piemonte.it). There is also a regional booklet describing products from the “Paniere” (or basket) of Piemonte typical products to educate consumers on these items and give value to the products for the farmers producing them. In Piemonte there are over 350 official typical products recognized and the booklet helps to locate the area of provenance as well as the mode of production. For example, the tomino di Talucco is a fresh or aged cheese from goat milk whereas the Bettelmatt is a cheese from whole milk that predominantly comes from a race of cows that forage in the Bettelmatt Alps produced only at the end of June until September.

Historical Roots of Slow Food in Piemonte

It is pertinent to consider the role of the international organization, Slow Food, when speaking of agricultural and food issues in Piemonte. It was three decades ago that this organization first began, in the town of Bra, to educate about alternative modes of food production and consumption from mainstream industrial food systems. Slow Food chose instead to emphasize local, traditional food customs as a way to preserve agricultural biodiversity and overall food system sustainability (Hulsink and Dons, 2008). Interestingly, the original members of the group stemmed from volunteers of the Italian Communist Party (ARCI) that resulted from uprisings of the agricultural and industrial laborers a century ago. Today the popularity of Slow Food has spread internationally including over 80,000 members that have embraced the grassroots character of the movement: every group of members can choose their own board members and decide which activities they will organize around the theme of “good, clean and fair” food. In 1996 the first bi-annual fair called Salone del Gusto was held in Torino, which still today focuses on traditional and high-quality food products. Several noteworthy annual festivals and international organizations have been created from the original Slow Food idea born in Piemonte, including the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, the University of Gastronomic Science in Pollenzo, the Ark of Taste for endangered and rare plant varieties, Terra Madre (an event in Torino where thousands of food communities from around the world convene) as well as Cheese, Slow Fish and Slow Rice festivals.

According to Hulsink and Dons (2008), three business dilemmas are related to the emergence of the Slow Food organization. The first is whether small-scale local food production can solve global food problems. A second issue is related to the “friction” created in the Langhe area from the “gastronomy cluster” created by the local Slow Food and the group’s mission to spread the movement throughout the world and the third dilemma identified by Hulsink and Donas is related to the social goals of the movement and the private interests of small entrepreneurs and businesses. Local food has repeatedly shown



up as a solution to several of the issues that Slow Food addresses but, especially in the Langhe region where it was born, poses the question of whether the focus should be stronger on assisting their own agro-food system instead of continuing such a global push. The challenge for Slow Food internationally has been maintaining the small-scale artisanal production processes of items that have become mainstream due to increased consumer demand. Furthermore, the organization needs to stay rooted in its beginnings and not forget about the local food needs at home in Piemonte. Hulsink and Dons (2008) contend that there is “no localism without cosmopolitanism” which is true for the Slow Food movement that created a new social paradigm and is directly linked to the popularity of local and regional items in this region.



SUSTAINABILITY OF PIEMONTE FOOD SYSTEM

It was estimated by the Istituto Marketing Agroalimentare (IMA) Piemonte that only 7% of the total food bought in the region is actually sold through direct sales by farmers. With over 2 million people in Torino's metropolitan area, there is need for far greater agricultural production in order to meet the current food needs of the region as well as marketing initiatives that educate consumers on local products. The following important questions should be asked of Piemonte to determine its future sustainability;

- * How vulnerable are we to disruption in food supply?
- * Where do our calories come from? How many are produced in our region?
- * What are the easiest interventions our community can make to enhance our food security?
- * What are the bigger policy interventions and food system redesign goals?

Once the locations of food products for Piemonte are found, calculations can be made on their *food miles* (the distance food travels from where it is grown to where it is ultimately purchased or consumed by the end user). This term has become common among food system professionals when describing "farm to consumer" pathways of food. A specific way of measuring these distances is a Weighted Average Source Distance (WASD) to calculate food miles by combining information on the distances from production to point of sale and the amount of food product transported (Pirog & Benjamin, 2003). The formula for the WASD is:

$$\text{WASD} = \frac{\sum (m(k) \times d(k))}{\sum m(k)} \quad \text{Source: Pirog \& Benjamin, 2003}$$

k = different location points of the production

m = weight (amount) from each point of production, and

d = distance from each point of production to each point of use (or sale)

In the USA, several food system researchers have used the WASD equation to calculate food miles. A study by Pirog and Benjamin (2003) applied the equation to the food system in the state of Iowa and found the average WASD for locally grown produce to reach institutional markets was 56 miles, while the conventional WASD for the produce to reach those same institutional points of sale was 1,494 miles, nearly 27 times further.

Completing these equations for Piemonte would possibly reveal similar extremes in mileage. How much can be produced locally to feed the current Piemontese population? This relates not only to the number of producers, climatic variables and consumer education but to the practicality of the soil's production potential in this region. The following soil map of Piemonte (Figure 6) illustrates the agricultural potential of the region. Unsurprisingly, the most fertile land is located in the plains but the remaining land (Class 5-7) is suitable for grazing certain animals in appropriate seasons.

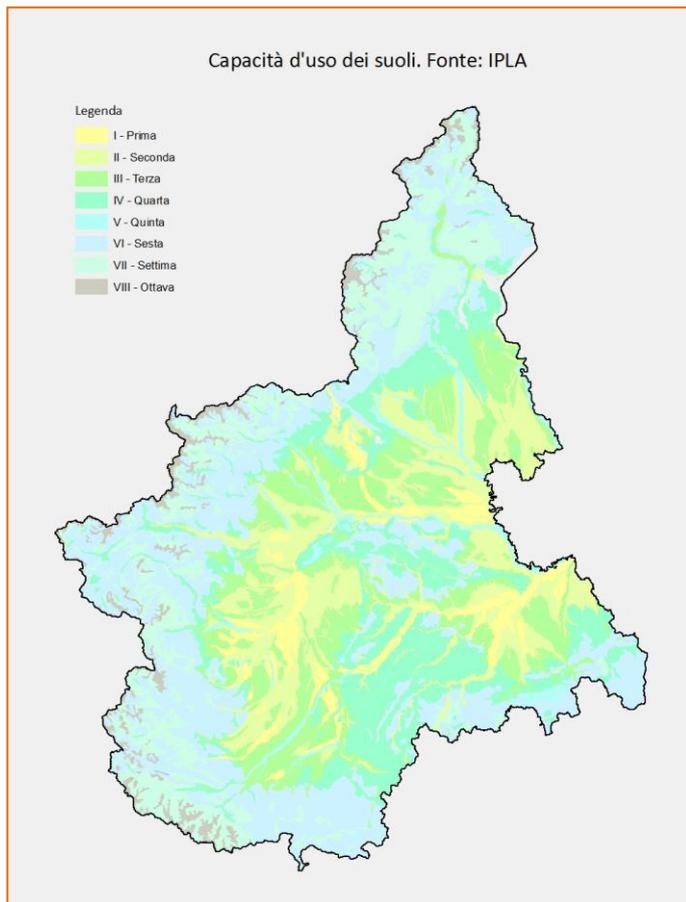


FIGURE 6.
CAPACITY OF SOIL USE IN
PIEMONTE, ITALY (LEGEND:
PRIMA=FIRST CLASS

Source: I.P.L.A. (Istituto per le piante da legno e l'ambiente in Regione Piemonte)

Another relevant issue relates to a 2010 Statistical Report from the European Union that found the region of Piemonte had a long-term unemployment rate of 2.5-4% (shown in Figure 7). Although this percentage is lower than all the southern Italian regions, it is the highest of all the regions north of Rome. The role of a more localized food economy in this region could stimulate employment opportunities on several levels related to production, transformation, distribution and sales.

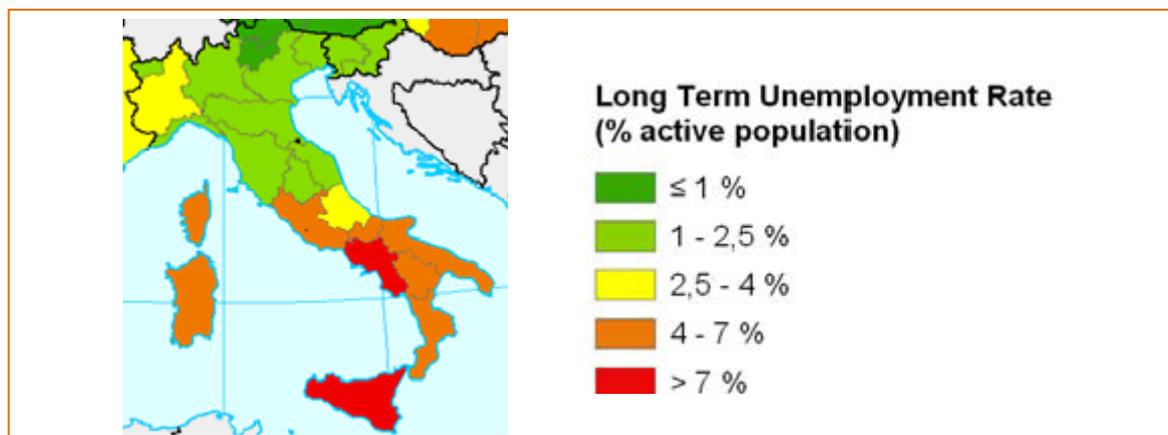


FIGURE 7. 2010 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN ITALY SOURCE: EU STATISTICAL REPORT, 2010



A detailed comparison of the environmental sustainability of food procured and consumed locally in Piemonte versus globally has not been analyzed in this study but it is a valid aspect to consider. Environmentally, locally produced items are not always more sustainable than those from farther away. The size of the agricultural system (industrial or small-scale), production methods (chemically dependent or using renewable sources), means of transportation and type of storage facilities are all issues that should be considered. For example, apples produced in Piemonte under convention conditions (high spraying) and stored year-round with refrigeration might require more energy inputs than those grown sustainably in New Zealand and shipped to Piemonte.

In 2010 Coldiretti contrasted the differences between CO₂ emissions and gas consumption of foods from Piemonte or abroad. The gas consumption is based on driving a van (locally) versus transportation in a plane. The following examples in Table 4 demonstrate the differences in oil and gas consumption as well as CO₂ emissions from food that is produced and transported locally within Piemonte versus foods imported from abroad.

TABLE 4. COMPARISONS OF CO₂ EMISSIONS & GAS CONSUMPTION: LOCAL VERSUS IMPORTED FOOD
CONSUMPTION OF GAS OR OIL AND CO₂ EMISSIONS EXPRESSED AS KG/KG OF PRODUCT PRODUCED

Item	Beans Piemontese	Beans Canadese
Provenance	Saluggia (VC)	Canada
Distance	40 km	6,355 km
Consumption of gas or oil	.0009 kg	3.9 kg
CO ₂ Emissions	.0029 kg	12.2 kg
Item	Beef Piemontese	Beef Argentina
Provenance	Cavour (TO)	Argentina
Distance	50 km	11,180 km
Consumption of gas or oil	.0012 kg	6.7 kg
CO ₂ Emissions	.0035 kg	20.8 kg
Item	Apples Piemontese	Apples South American
Provenance	Pinerolo (TO)	Chile
Distance	41 km	13,000 km
Consumption of gas or oil	.0010 kg	5.8 kg
CO ₂ Emissions	.0031 kg	18.3 kg
Item	Wine Piemontese	Wine South African
Provenance	Canavese (TO)	South Africa
Distance	64 km	8,000 km
Consumption of gas or oil	.0015 kg	4.4 kg
CO ₂ Emissions	.0047 kg	13.2 kg

Source: Coldiretti, 2010

A 3-year research project at the University of Torino, Agroinnova, is studying the sustainability of local fruit and vegetable production as well as possibilities for better fruit conservation (Il Sole, 2010). For the next three years 15 students will be involved with this research and the director of the project, Maria Lodovica Gullino, will be a relevant source for these issues.

In the United States, a study by the Wallace Center analyzed the supply and demand of local food for New York City and how this city can source more local food. Their conclusion was that the problem was not finding local food but reshifting the current infrastructure to work for local food providers, such as those that would like to enter school systems (Cantrell, 2010). Understanding the logistics behind the food industry giant and largest food distributor, Sysco Corporation, was a necessary first step. And fortunately for small family



farms and future food purveyors in New York, this \$40 billion corporation had a change of heart nearly 10 years ago, when they recognized a serious weakness in their business model. Originally, Sysco achieved a leading position by offering its customers, such as schools and hospitals, the lowest prices and most convenient service (Cantrell, 2010). However, their focus on achieving efficiency resulted in a very narrow product selection that many customers were starting to reject. Restaurant chefs and school cafeterias, for example, were beginning to ask for products that Sysco could no longer obtain easily from this industrial approach to food sourcing (Cantrell, 2010). For example, most of Sysco's 185 regional operating units in the United States offer only two varieties of apple: Red Delicious and Golden Delicious. Their customers started demanding fresh-picked apples, more varieties and the farmer story behind the apple, for example. The Sysco initiative started when they realized they couldn't meet these new and changing customer demands without family farms, and their more local, sustainably raised products (Cantrell, 2010). Sysco has now made efforts to build a values-based food supply chain which suddenly resulted in new access for small and medium size farms to conventional food markets. This drastic shift seen from a large food industry is unusual but it shows the importance of including large-scale food distributors in the local food discussion. In order for the city of Torino to greatly increase its supply of food from within Piemonte, food distribution businesses need to be addressed and a cost-benefit analysis conducted.

The economics of local food is another important factor related to its sustainability. How much more do consumers have to pay upfront for locally grown apples, lettuce and potatoes? In these days, industrial agriculture, mass market transportation and large-scale corporate grocery stores have been able to mask the true cost of the food they sell. If the environmental costs of packing and transporting industrially-grown food are considered, the prices would be much different, not to mention ethical and health factors such as whether the workers are receiving fair wages and what chemicals or other dangers they are exposed to in the process. Table 5 provides an example of the price differences between public markets in Torino (local food from producers and imported food also sold at the market) and supermarkets such as Carrefour, Crai and the Coop. Average prices from several markets and stores were calculated. It can be seen that most local producer prices are 1-2x more expensive than the grocery stores, although apples, potatoes and eggs have similar prices. If a taste and nutrition analysis was conducted positive results might swing towards the local produce. Furthermore, several of the items at the grocery stores were sold in plastic, wrapped containers (carrots, valeriana, lettuce, parsely, kiwi, eggs) or thick plastic bags (potatoes, leeks, apples, spinache) which require significant resources to produce but are another hidden cost of these items.

**TABLE 5. FOOD PRICE COMPARISONS IN PIEMONTE, 2011**

February 2011	Torino Market: Local farmer	Torino Market: Commercial seller	Torino Supermarket
Chard	€5/kg	€1.50-1.80/kg	
Cabbage	€2/kg	€1.20/kg	€0.99/kg
Lettuce (head)	€6/kg	€2.50/kg	€1.99/kg
Valeriana	€20/kg	€1-3/kg (depends on size)	€6/kg
Spinache	€5/kg	€2.50-6/kg	€3.20/kg
Chicoria	€7/kg	€10/kg	
Leek	€3/kg	€2-3/kg	€1.49/kg
Carrots	€2.50/kg	€2.50/kg	€0.99/kg
Potatoes	€1.50/kg	€0.80/kg	€0.99/kg
Onion	€2/kg	€1.00/kg	€1.29/kg
Parsley	€4/kg	€3/kg	€2.99/kg
Apples	€1.50/kg	€1-2/kg	€1.49-2.89/kg
Kiwi	€2/kg	€1.50-3/kg	€1.29/kg
Eggs	€1 for 6 eggs	€1.20 for 6 eggs	€0.88 - €1.36 for 6 eggs

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Another topic relevant to the sustainability of the Piemonte food system is the proportion of young farmers in the region. An EU Farm Structure survey found that at the EU-27 level there was 1 “young” farmer (less than 35 years) for every 9 “older” farmer (more than 55 years) whereas in Italy the proportion of young farmers is very low (less than 1 for every 20 older farmers) (EU Statistical Report, 2010). This is a particular problem for the economic stability of a region, as young farmers tend to be better trained and they perform better in terms of economic potential (40% more), farm size (utilize 37% more hectares of UAA) and produce 26% more annual working units of labour than elderly farmers (26%) (EU Statistical Report, 2010).

Lastly, the future of energy sources is becoming a hot topic for communities around the world as the “end of oil” looms nearer. What is the most sustainable solution for Piemonte without disrupting an already fragile agricultural economy? Two dominant ideas for new forms of energy production include woody biomasse and fermenting grains. National legislation is proposing building energy from woody biomasse in the Piemontese towns of Airasca, Luserna S.G. None and Vinovo (Arghittu, 2010). Ideally the wood will come from within 70 km instead of relying on Eastern Europe and South America but this isn’t required. For managers that source locally (*filiera corta*) there are additional funds but the pressure to source from abroad with lower prices might be too strong and the “green” certificates don’t have fixed tariffs so are subject to price fluctuations (Arghittu, 2010). In a newspaper from the Val Chisone, critics argue that combustible plants aren’t ecological or convenient for the people living nearby in addition to the fact that it is a contradiction to create clean energy in an area that can’t provide the resources self-sufficiently. They propose that the energy to transport and find the wood should not exceed 10% of the energy produced (Larocca, 2010). These new megawatt plants require about 15,000 metric tons of wood to function and currently most wood is shipped from the Amazon in ship vessels (Larocca, 2010).

Furthermore, several farmers in Piemonte are being tempted by regional funding to shift their grain or maize production over to agrienergy production, essentially fermenting the products to produce methane instead of selling them directly for human consumption. The regional tariff in Italy in 2010 was .28cent/KW, which caused several farmers to convert to energy production due to the current low prices of cereals. In the province of Torino there are 10 plants (2 active, 3 in construction and 5 future projects) but the agrienergy trend is



growing and the forecast is that there will be 50 in the region in 2012. These plants are able to produce energy with maize, barley, rice remains, other cereals or wastewater from livestock but maize has the best performance. One problem is that farmers radically change their production methods and therefore risk the difficulties of returning to the market when they decide to return. The other risk is loss of productivity and fertility of the soil because maize and grain harvests are very nutrient depleting. Converting to this type of production is expensive so a large investment is needed. Profits aren't usually reached until after 4-5 years although some private societies offer 15 years of co-participation. Stefano Cavaletto from IRES Piemonte stated that a plant at 1MW needs 3-4000 t which means for 10 plants 30-40000 t is needed (which is about 2% of Piemonte production). If 50 plants are created as is predicted, this will require 10% of the agricultural production in Piemonte. It is still not clear if the energy produced in this process is higher than the energy consumed. The Piemonte Regione is attempting to solve this problem by forcing farmers to use at least 50% animal and vegetal waste in addition to the biomasse.

One innovative solution is the use of native plant species such as canna which grows readily in Piemonte and has been a proven energy provider. Otherwise, in the USA switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) has been used as a naturally occurring energy source for biomasse production. Switchgrass is versatile and grows in many weather conditions, lengths of growing seasons, soil types, and land conditions. Also, this grass species can be grown on land unsuitable for row crop production, as well as in sandy and gravelly soils. In Piemonte there is also research being done on energy production with chicken manure which might prove to be more efficient than methane through grain production. Further research should probably be done before more farmers are sent into the hurdles of farm conversion.

Role of EU and Italian Agricultural Policies

In 2007, 172.5 million hectares in the EU-27 were utilized for agriculture, of which 60.5% were dedicated to arable crops, 33% to permanent pastures and 6.4% to permanent crops (EU Statistical Report, 2010). With over 13 million farms in the EU-27, organizing agricultural subsidies is not an easy feat. These funds are derived from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which was formed in 1962. Although agricultural expenditure represented nearly 61% of the EU budget from 1988-1992, by 2013 it is expected that CAP spending will only be 32% (excluding rural development) (europa.eu). Originally the CAP was created to increase agricultural production in Europe to create greater self-sufficiency, but in time this led to wasteful food surpluses. Instead, today the CAP aims to provide farmers with a stable income while adhering to the needs of the market and several environmental and animal welfare requirements. The direct link between increased payments for increased production has been severed. In 2009 Italy was the fourth largest receiver of the CAP budget of €56.781bn, receiving €6.08bn (commonagpolicy.com). These subsidies come from what is known as the 'First Pillar' of the CAP. In the 1970s it was decided that the CAP needed more focus on rural development and local needs with less emphasis on agricultural industry that has a narrow sectoral focus (Dwyer et al. 2007). Eventually after various political stages this blossomed into the 'Second Pillar' of the CAP which covers funding for rural development initiatives through the Rural Development Regulation (RDR) of 2000 (currently the RDP 2007-2013). For this 7-year period a single fund named the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) has been created to finance policies within the EU-27 (EU Statistical Report, 2010). The importance of rural areas can



be highlighted by the fact that in the EU-27, these areas represent 91% of the territory and 59% of the population in 2007. Furthermore, although most economic activity is in urban areas, the rural areas generate 48% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) and provide 56% of the employment (EU Statistical Report, 2010).

The funding period of 2007-2013 has allocated almost 10% of the CAP budget for the Rural Development Plan (RDP). At least with a percentage of the RDP (under the LEADER program which is placed in Axis IX of the RDP) there is an emphasis on building community-based capacities in local areas, as well as monitoring and evaluating stakeholders. It was a significant shift away from the mainstream CAP that was mostly supporting the major agricultural commodities such as cereals, beef, sheep meat, dairy products, olives and wine (Dwyer, 2007) Support now exists for agri-environmental activities, farming in “Less Favorable Areas”, training of young farmers, improving processing and marketing of agricultural products, renovation of villages and protecting rural heritage, marketing of quality agricultural products, diversification of agricultural activities as well as several other measures.

From the beginning, the need was stressed for variety and flexibility of the RDPs for each EU member country. In some countries (such as Sweden, France and Austria) the RDR is delivered through a national plan whereas in others it is through regional programs (Germany and UK) and still others have a mix of both (Spain). Every country allocates their funds differently depending on their needs. Critics stress that the budget of the RDR is small in comparison to the overall CAP (Figure 8). Furthermore, countries that were historically institutional cultures are not preoccupied with local aspirations despite the fact that programs with a ‘bottom-up’ approach have been noted to be more success in the long-term (Dwyer et al. 2007).

In 2010 Italy received 9% of the total funding from the EU’s RDR totaling €9bn in addition to €8.6bn for national and regional public expenditure (Casati et al., 2009). In 2009, the region of Piemonte received 444.82 Meuro from the RDP, in comparison to Sicily which received 1,279.20 Meuros (Casati et al., 2009).

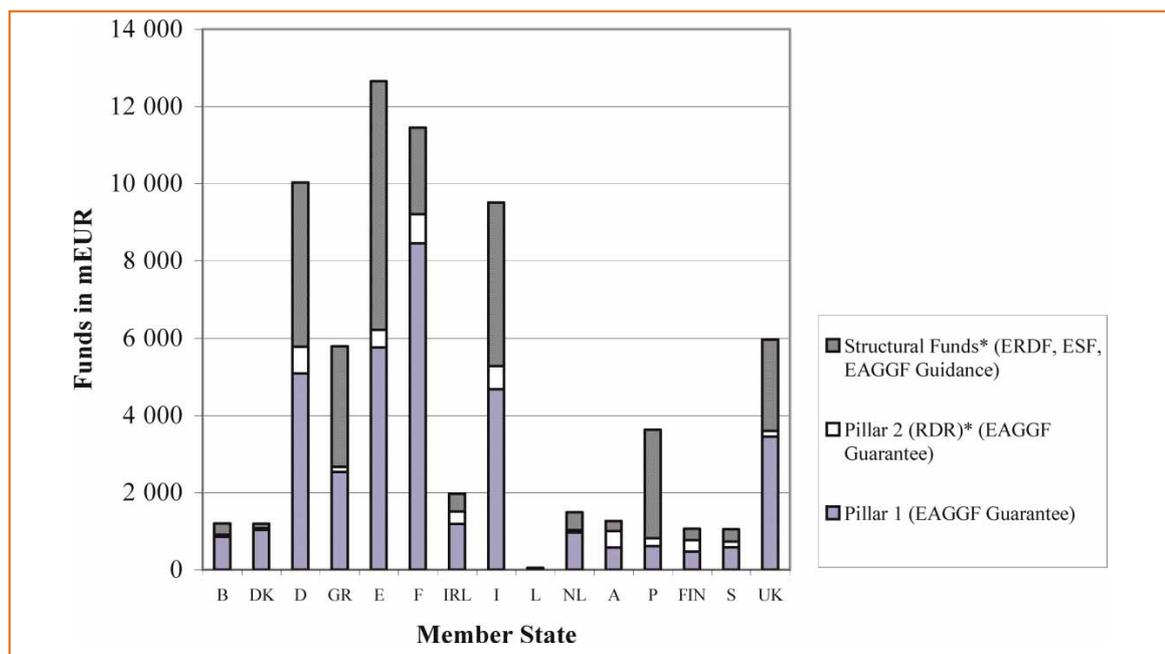


FIGURE 8. STRUCTURAL FUNDS (ESF, ERDF AND EAGGF-GUIDANCE) IN THE MEMBER STATES

Note: Annual average expenditure 2000-06

Source: Casati et al., 2009



Council regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 outlines the goals of rural development funding; to complement the market and income support policies of the CAP. It is explicitly written that "...rural development, cannot be achieved sufficiently by the Member States...and can be better achieved at the Community level...and by concentrating on its priorities, the Community may adopt measures..." which is an extremely important aspect for the success of any rural development project (eur-lex.europa.eu). Furthermore, Article 5 of this law admits the need for, "...a set of measures on training, information and diffusion of knowledge, setting up of young farmers, early retirement of farmers...use by farmers of advisory services and on the setting up of farm advisory services." The law also states that, "There is a need to improve consumers' awareness of the existence and specifications of products produced under the aforementioned quality schemes" (eur-lex.europa.eu) which is an equally crucial step to keep farming as a viable lifestyles.

One particular Italian law passed March 5, 2001 has had various effects (possibly some unintended) for small producers in Piemonte. The piece of legislation is officially called Il Decreto Legislativo 228/01, but is better known as the Legge di Orientamento. The intentions of this law were to innovate and modernize the sectors of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, for example by placing more consideration on the role of agricultural services that exploit the land and instead recognizing the multiple beneficial roles of agriculture, of preserving rural heritage and ways to utilize agricultural business as a tool of market transparency and information exchange among producers. Sales procedures were also simplified in the sense that complicated city-granted authorizations were removed and replaced with simple communication for direct agricultural sales to the public. As a further step to assist producers, the law states that it is not necessary for a producer to produce 100% of the items sold to consumers and that 49% can be purchase for others. Although in certain times of the year this is particularly helpful for vegetable and fruit producers, it is also a law that has been taken advantage of without enough control at the markets.

Piemonte Agricultural Funding

Several normative instruments are relevant for Piemonte agriculture. One of the most important is funding from the EU RDP 2007-2013 (known as PSR in Italy). The region of Piemonte will spend €1,029,159,096 for the period of 2007-2013 which was divided into four sectors (regione.piemonte.it). These divisions are known as Axis' and include improving the competitiveness of agricultural and forestry sectors, assistance for the environment and countryside, increasing the quality of rural life and lastly, support of local bottom-up projects through the LEADER program (Goetz, 2010).

For the 2009 period there is also the Regional Law No. 12/2008 which approves contracts for the construction of market areas that will directly sell agricultural products by providing €700,000.00. The aim is to develop short food chains and relationships between consumers and farmers as a way to reduce the number of commercial intermediaries (regione.piemonte.it).

Another means of financial support comes from the regional law 13/99 which maintains 2 million euros for the development of organic agriculture. During the period of 2000-2007 there were 102 projects financed that were related to research and experimentation of vegetable and animal production (Ronco, 2007).



Lastly, there is a program for the development of organic agriculture known as D.G.R n. 65-15203 – L 488/99. Three actions were taken in 2007 including monitoring (€ 300.000), reconversion of methods of production (€250,000) and initiatives to sustain and promote organic agriculture (€185,988). Two phases included a survey of the data of current organic farms with 1,760 interviews and the second phase was an attempt to improve the financial benefits of 150 farms that converted their methods of production between 2005-2006 (total funding of €96,419) (Ronco, 2007).

Comparisons of EU and USA Agri-Environmental Policies

Several differences in agri-environmental funding opportunities are apparent between the USA and Europe as well as how funds are channeled. The United States policies in regard to agri-environmental assistance originated in the Great Depression of the 1930s and by 1985 Congress had devoted federal farm legislation to conservation issues for the first time (Goetz, 2010). At this time Congress also provided for a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which every five years alters its funding. In 2010, the CRP had running costs of €1.5 billion of which a significant percentage is committed to producer education and technical assistance to farmers and landowners through nationwide local soil and water conservation districts and agricultural extension agents (Goetz, 2010). State and local governments also appropriate funds to support similar efforts. Some examples of agri-environmental measures administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (€782 million available in 2008) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (€33 million in 2008) which both provide cost-sharing to landowners and producers that exhibit conservation/environmental improvements.

In general, agri-environmental policies in the USA are aimed at preserving farmland, improving soil and water quality and increasing wildlife habitat (Goetz, 2010). The goal is to enroll eligible farmers who can deliver the greatest benefits at the least cost. In the EU, agri-environmental policies have similar goals but also include cultural preservation and ensuring that farms remain viable and continue to contribute to rural communities. An overall statement can be made that in Europe the goal is to ensure that farmers, "...deliver environmental benefits based on good farming practices" (Goetz, 2010). While policies from the EU stress the benefits that working farms provide to the environment, American policies have tended instead to emphasize the benefits of leaving land idle. Rural development initiatives between the two countries also differ. The EU emphasizes "modulation", where member states have to transfer a certain amount of money to the Pillar II Rural Development Fund which is then spread to all member states. Funding in Europe mostly derives from the second pillar of the CAP which assists rural development programs that are divided into the four Axis' described previously. For the funding period of 2007-2013, the CAP's fixed budget amount is €369.8 billion and, for example, in 2007~70% was dedicated to single farm payments, ~20% for rural development and ~10% for other projects.

When looking at direct agricultural financial support, Goetz (2010) concluded that on average, during the years 2006-7 the overall US federal subsidy was €29.3 per hectare compared to €289.4 per hectare of UAA for all member states in the EU-27. Furthermore, Goetz (2010) compared farm subsidy data against value added data, measured in producer prices. In the US total federal farm subsidy amounted to 12% of value added in the farm sector whereas in the EU it was 35%. This is related to the high amount of crop subsidies in the US channeled to ten major crops (mostly wheat, corn, soybeans, rice, and cotton but also



oats, barley, sorghum, minor oilseeds and peanuts). Conclusions pointed out US agri-environmental programs are too narrow in focus with most attention placed on soil erosion and land retirement.

Governmental Support for Local Food in USA

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the average age of farm operators was 57 years which means *half of all current farmers are likely to retire in the next decade.* (usda.gov). Furthermore, farmers over the age 55 own more than half the farmland in the U.S. but the number of new farmers and ranchers over the age of 35 is increasing, as does the number of smaller farms and ranches nationwide. To address the needs of this changing generation, the USDA *Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program* was created from the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 and recently released that there is about \$19 million available for 2011 (usda.gov). In 2007, approximately 21% of family farms met the definition of a beginning farm: operated by one or more operators who have 10 years or less of experience. Through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the USDA there are direct and guaranteed loans available for beginning farmers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources. According to the FSA, a beginning farmer or rancher is,

“an individual or entity who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years; meets the loan eligibility requirements; substantially participates in the operation; and does not own a farm greater than 30 percent of the median size farm in the county” (fsa.usda.gov).

The current deputy secretary of Agriculture under the Obama administration, Kathleen Merrigan, has spurred several USDA initiatives to support the growth of local food in communities across the nation. The program, *Know Your Farmer Know Your Food*, offers grants in several areas. In regards to Rural Development, one program, *Farmers Market Promotion Program*, has awards of \$100,000 to

“...help communities support local food systems through direct marketing...[such as] farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture, and agri-tourism. Priority is given to projects that increase access to local foods by low-income consumers, develop training and educational programs for new direct farm marketers, or provide professional training for market management” (usda.gov). There is also a *Value-Added Producer Grant* (\$300,000) for producers wishing to sell directly to schools or who need help marketing a value-added product such as ice cream. The *Business and Industry Guarantee Loan Program* works to help new and existing businesses access capital. The USDA co-signs a loan to the business owner guaranteeing to pay a portion of any loss that might occur and with a lower interest rate. This has been profitable for those wishing to invest in a mobile chicken slaughtering facility or add more equipment to add a new value-added product to their business. Another rural development initiative is the *Communities Facilities Program* which supports rural communities that would like to purchase community equipment or facilities with an average loan of \$665,000 (usda.gov).

Under the USDAs 2008 Farm Bill appropriations were allowed for the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to organize the *Environmental Quality Incentives Program* (EQIP). The program “provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers, ranchers and owners of private, non-industrial forest land that promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality as compatible national goals” (nrcs.usda.gov). EQIP offers financial and technical help for producers installing conservation practices on agricultural land. There are no priority areas; eligibility extends to cropland, pasture, hay land,



forestland or any area with crops/livestock being produced. Applications are evaluated on a ranking system based on the level of environmental benefit achieved. Generally contract lasts 1-10 years and payments are up to 75% of the eligible costs (total limit \$300,000) (nracs.usda.gov).

One example of this program in action is with the increased implementation of seasonal high tunnels (over 100 approved in the state of NH alone in 2010). This assistance has been a great boon for winter farming and helps contribute to the sustainability of the state food security. Another program offered through EQUIP is the *Organic Initiative* which aims to help producers of all commodities meet their conservation goals, including those transitioning to organic farming and currently certified organic producers (nracs.usda.gov). The following organic practices are funded:

- Composting facility
- Conservation cover
- Cover crops (vegetable living mulch \$375/ac, organic grain \$140/ac, organic legumes \$210/ac)
- Fencing (deer exclusion \$10/ft, prescribed grazing with woven wire/board \$5/ft)
- Mulching to reduce erosion and retain organic matter (small vegetables and fruit \$406/ac)
- Organic transition activity (crops only: \$2,000/plan, crops and livestock: \$2,500/plan)
- Pest Management (IPM \$155/ac, bird exclusion \$2700/ac, invasive plants \$750/ac)

Results

Equipped with the aforementioned background information, interviews were conducted with 248 farmers Piemontese farmers beginning in September 2010. Closed questionnaires were used (please refer to Annex) which were designed to analyze several demographic aspects of the farms, lifestyle choice, funding options, barriers and strengths for local food sales, various needs such as processing facilities and what steps are needed to improve the regional local food system. Markets, regional agricultural festivals, teaching farms, agriculturally productive agriturismos and relevant conferences were chosen as interview sites based on their location (in every province of Piemonte to provide more generalizable results), success (such as the case in Biella with PiProBi) or weaknesses with local food sales (ex. Casale Monferrato, Torre Pellice, Ceva, Domodossola and Borgo San Dalmazzo). The following map (Figure 9) specifically illustrates the market and farm locations in Piemonte, Italy visited during this research from September 2010-March 2011 where detailed interviews were conducted.

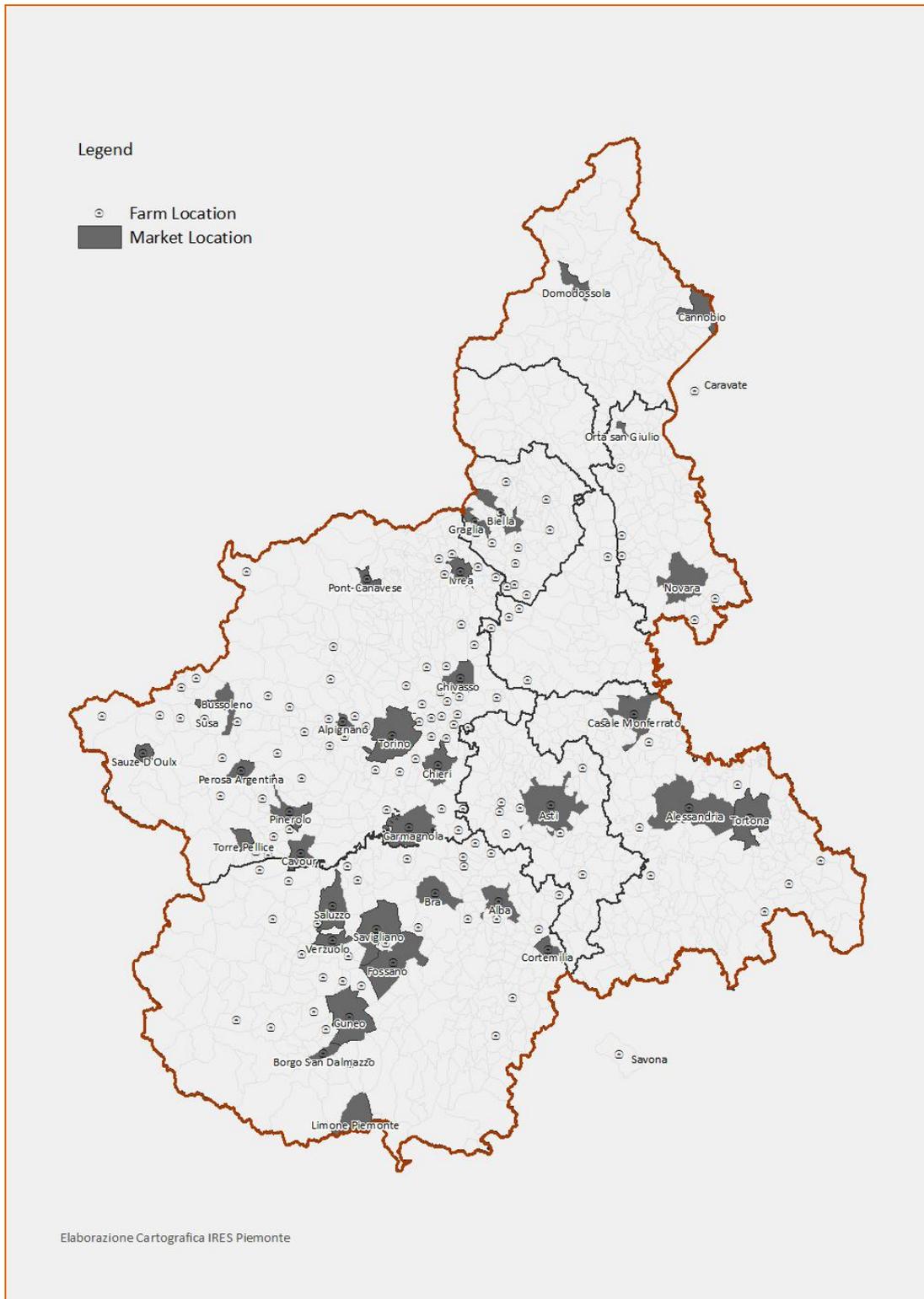
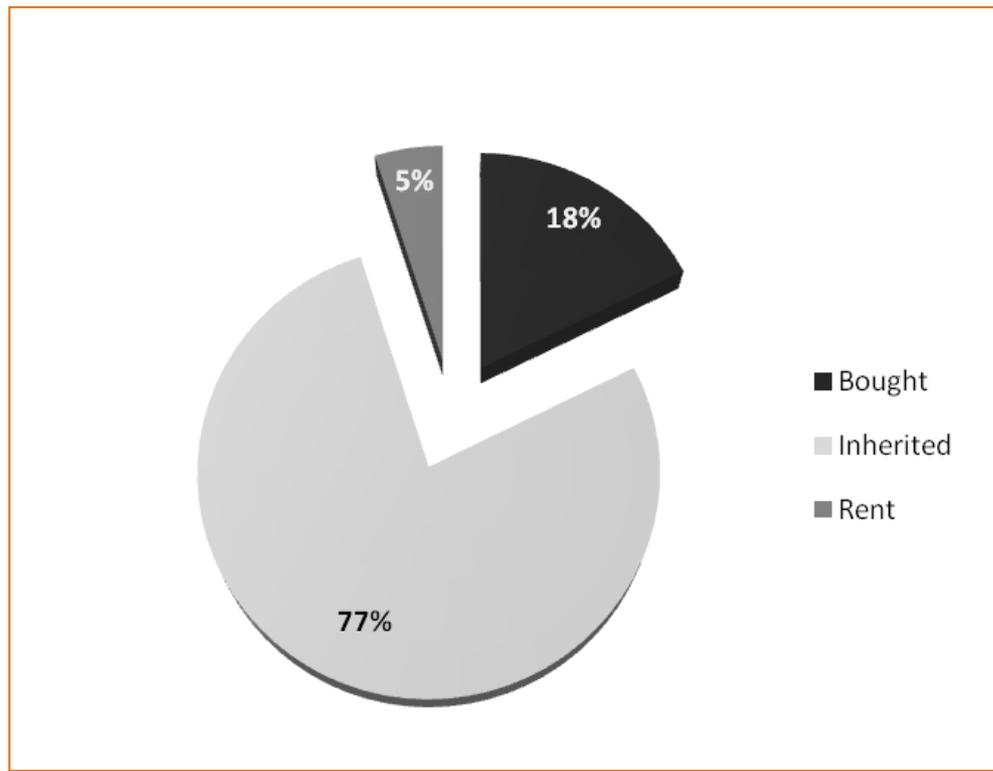


FIGURE 9. PIEMONTE FARM AND MARKET LOCATIONS OF FARMER INTERVIEWS
Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011



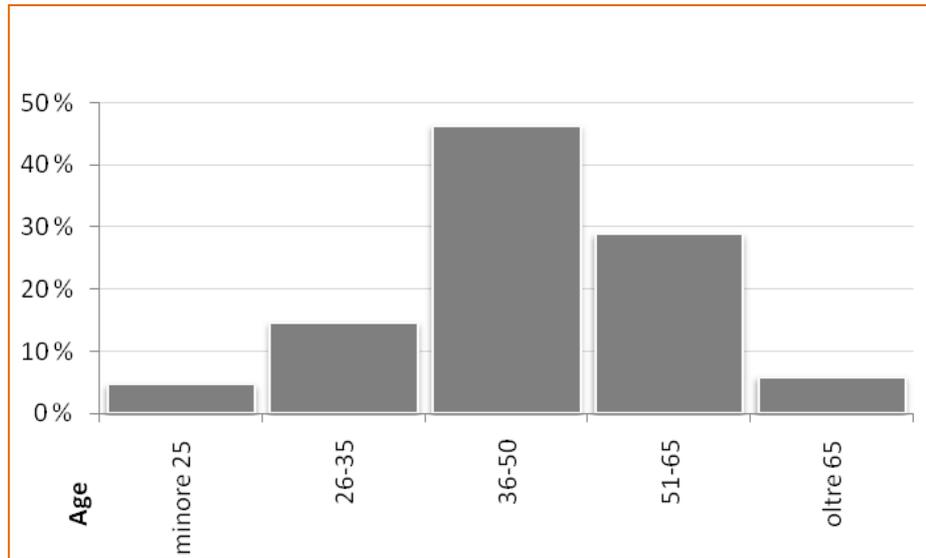
Statistical results



GRAPH 1. FARMER LAND ACQUISITION

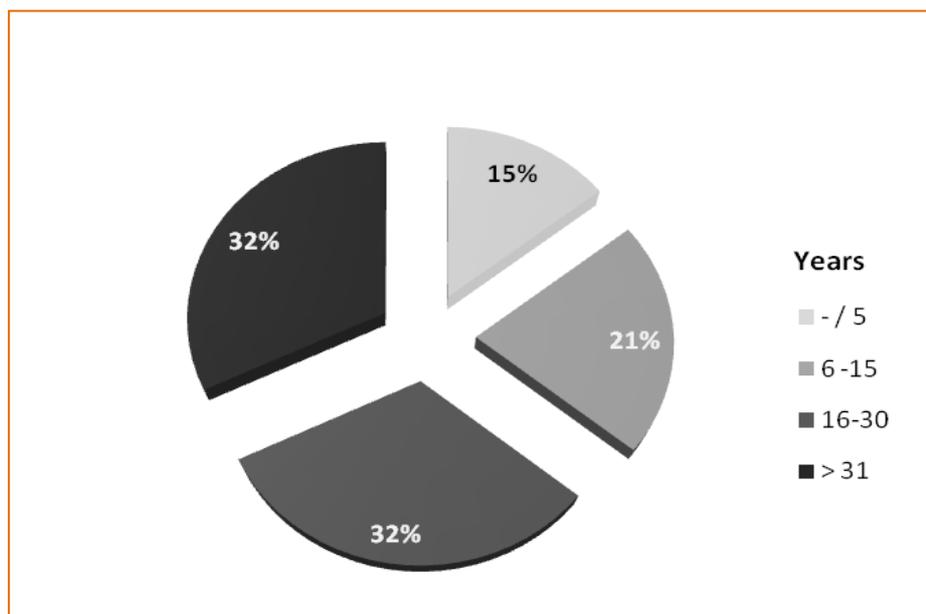
Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

In Piemonte, the vast majority of farmers are cultivating land that has been in their family for many generations. There are very few cases of rental land available and with the high prices of land, buying an agricultural enterprise is almost impossible for most to obtain. Opportunities do exist however for renting land from current landowners or clearing abandoned land in rural mountain areas for agricultural purposes. These situations require creative and innovative approaches or simply searching in remote areas and inquiring about alternative land uses. Although most elderly land owners are skeptical about loaning their land to strangers, there were some cases of farmers willing to assist young growers, sometimes accepting little or no payment.



GRAPH 2. AGE OF FARMERS
Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

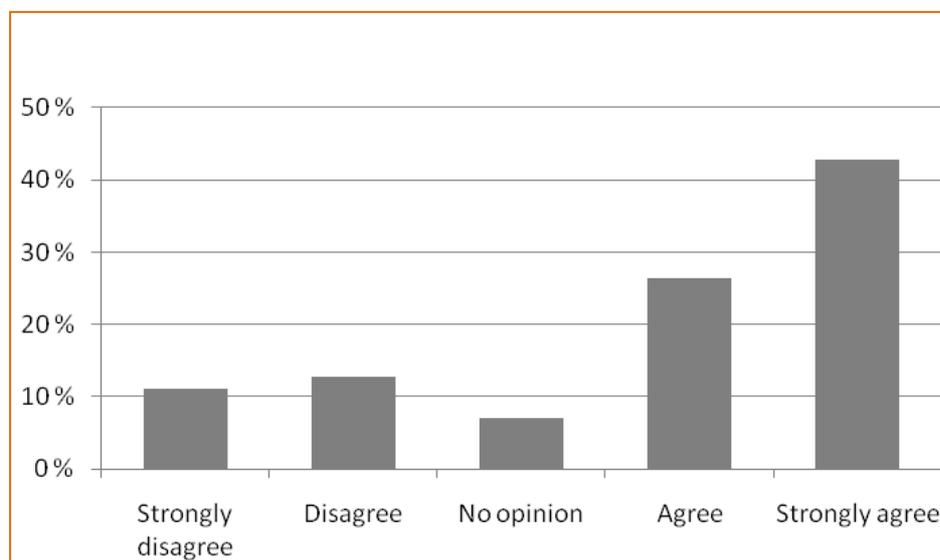
Unsurprisingly, most of the farmers in this research fall in the category of 36-50 years old. Due to the small sample size of the study, these numbers should be read with caution. Furthermore, it was difficult to conduct interviews with several of the older farmers (over 60 years of age) because they often refused the questionnaire or spoke only in dialect or Italian that was difficult for the American researcher to comprehend. A general statement can be made that the younger farmers were seen at the Campagna Amica markets, fieras or GAS gatherings, whereas the older producers were often trying to sell at the general markets. At the same time, the younger, more innovative farmers seemed more optimistic about the sustainability of their careers, as opposed to the older generations that were attempting to sell at public markets despite the fierce competition of the commercial sellers.



GRAPH 3. NUMBER OF YEARS FARMING
Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011



The farmers interviewed in this study cover a broad range of years devoted to agriculture. Several farmers aged 35-55 years old had recently started their careers in agriculture after working a different occupation in the city. Most of these people were returning to family farms, but there were also several whose family had land but not actual agricultural enterprises. In these cases, the business was started anew but took advantage of fertile land, buildings and other infrastructure already in place. These seemed to be some of the most successful endeavors because the entrepreneur wasn't required to buy the property or pay rent, and they also had the worldliness and city-savyness to know how to reach and satisfy the preferences of consumers today. They were often utilizing online sources (for locating new modes of selling items and for searching for funding), as well as actively forming new networks for advertising, finding consumers and increasing effective points of sales.



GRAPH 4. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "IS LOCAL FOOD MORE POPULAR IN PIEMONTE?"

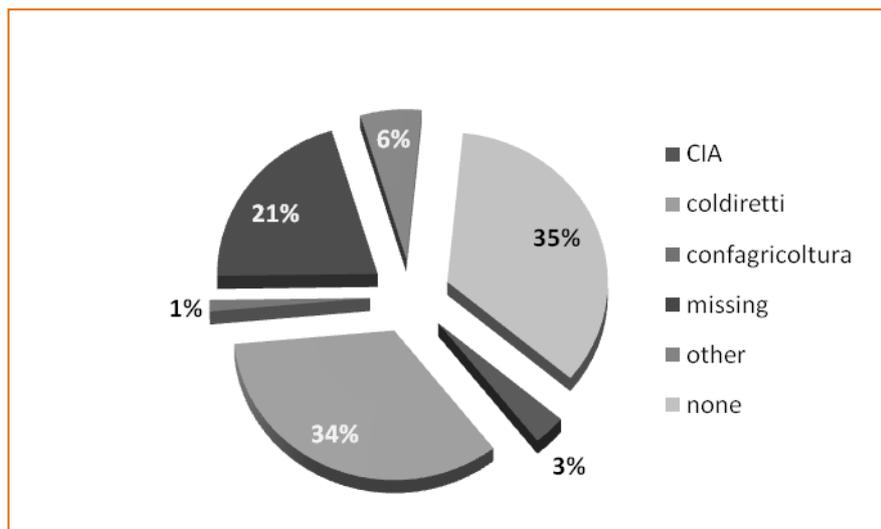
Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

It can be seen that almost 70% of the farmers interviewed *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that local food in Piemonte is becoming more popular. This question attempted to understand whether producers thought consumers were searching more actively in these days for products that were grown or processed within Piemonte for various environmental and health concerns, and this elaboration was explained to the farmers during the interview. When the data was examined more closely, there were no trends at certain markets or farm locations. In other words, even the busiest, most successful markets had a range of responses about the popularity of local food. Interestingly, the producers at Campagna Amica and ASCI markets in Alpignano, Tortona, Torino and Novara rated "strongly agreeing" with this statement despite the fact that farmers at the general markets in these same provinces often "strongly disagreed". This displays a direct correlation between markets that are advertised as "local" and therefore differentiated from the general markets and an increase in sales (and possibly consumer appeal or education).

There was also no correlation between the ages of the farmers and whether they thought more consumers were demanding local in these days. In fact, the ages of farmers in strong agreement ranged from 22-75 years old and the age range for those who strongly disagreed ranged from 24-70 years. No trends were noted in farm or market location, despite the researcher's assumption that the province of Alessandria and Verbania would rank the



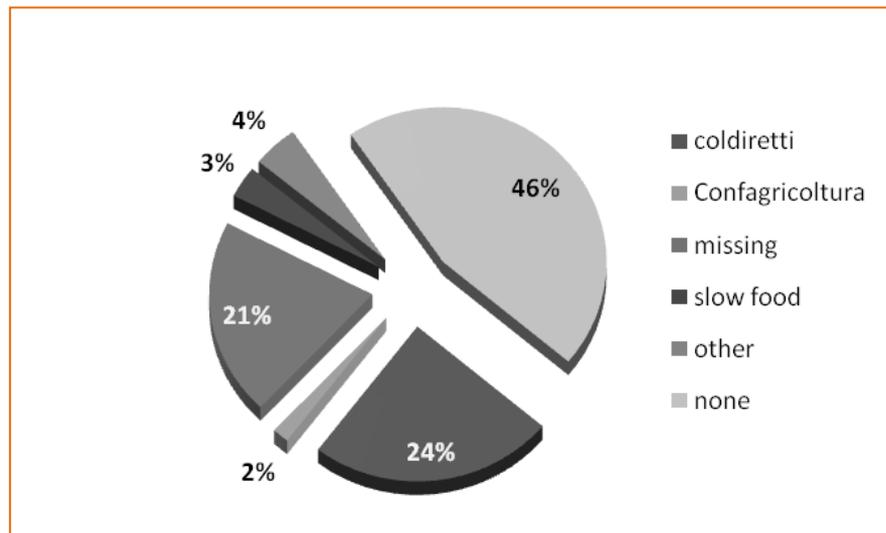
lowest. “Strongly disagree” answers came from Ivrea to Chivasso, Torino to Torre Pellice and from Savigliano to Verzuolo. It was noted however, that the producers who strongly agreed, were also selling their items in places other than only markets. All of the farmers who didn’t think local was more popular, were only selling at the general markets, whereas those who felt the movement was growing were utilizing GAS, direct farm sales, Campagna Amica markets as well as other markets. It could be argued therefore, that to participate fully in the recent consumer demand for local food it is necessary to also know where and how to best meet these new purchasing trends (GAS, online sales, PiProBi system, new market hours and advertising, etc). Knowing the consumers needs and preferences as well as how to reach them, is as important as having a high quality product.



GRAPH 5. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "WHICH ORGANIZATIONS DIRECTLY HELP FARMERS?"

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

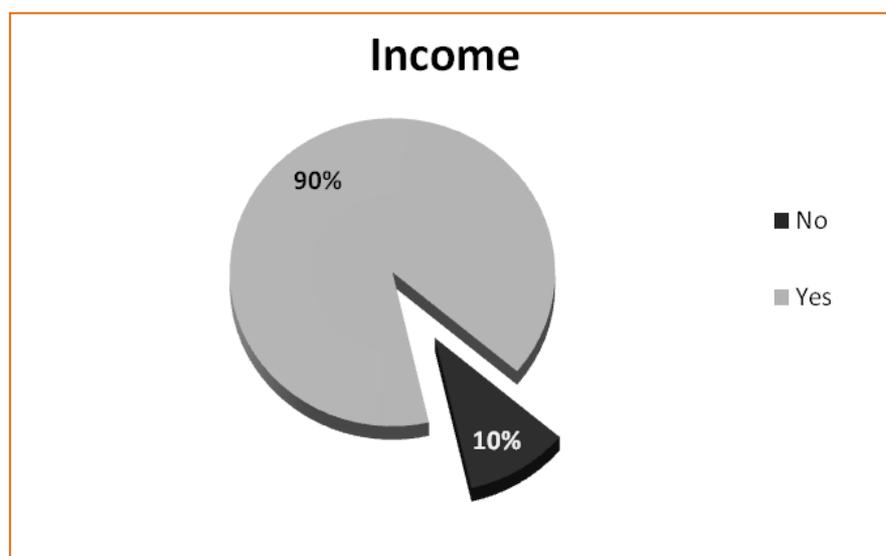
Originally this research was interested solely in whether producers in Piemonte felt that the organization Slow Food was providing them with any direct help. It was noted within the first few days of interviewing however, that this was definitely not the case. In fact, most producers were strongly opinionated that Slow Food was not doing enough or anything on the practical, agricultural level in this region and that this should be increased here in Piemonte, the birthplace of Slow Food. Due to these overwhelming responses, the question was broadened to ask farmers about *any* organizations in Piemonte or Italy that directly help them. The majority felt that there are none and 34% of the respondents mentioned Coldiretti. However, most of the small farmers that were members of Coldiretti seemed to feel obligated to respond with the name of their farmers union, when in fact, after they answered they continued to complain about all their disappointments with Coldiretti. Almost all respondents felt that Coldiretti was, “All talk and no walk.” There were numerous farmers at Campagna Amica markets (and therefore members) who, despite the help with these new markets, were dissatisfied about the lack of assistance from Coldiretti. Some of the “other” responses for organizations included: Pinfruit, Provincia di Torino, the Paniere products, GAS, ICEA, PiProBi in Biella, cooperatives, ASCI and ecomuseums.



GRAPH 6. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "WHICH ORGANIZATIONS INFORM CONSUMERS ON FOOD/FARMING ISSUES?"

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

This question asked which organizations in Piemonte or Italy were educating *consumers* about the issues related to local food and agriculture. Most farmers again, felt that there was not enough assistance in this area, but 24% felt that Coldiretti was helping with the Campagna Amica markets and the occasional information booths they display at some markets. Eight farmers felt Slow Food was helping, and other diverse groups included PiProBi, ICEA, the federation of consumers and CIA. It can be seen that informing the consumers of Piemonte is an area that needs to be improved and cannot be expected from farmers that are already working 70+ hours/week.



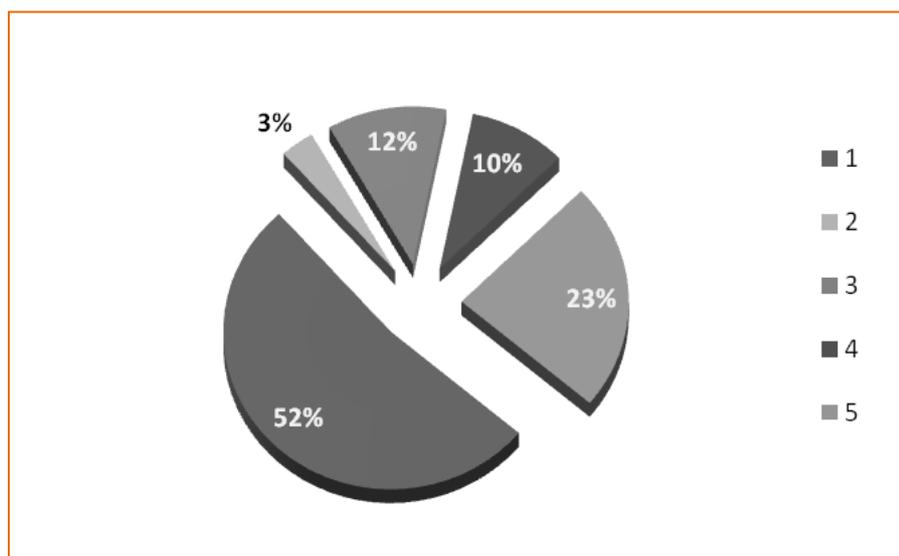
GRAPH 7. RESPONSES TO WHETHER FARMING IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF INCOME

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

The responses from this question indicate that almost all of the farmers in Piemonte (90%) are farming as their only source of income. This can be seen as a strength for the future



sustainability of the region's food system since these are serious farmers who are prepared to produce food in abundance throughout the year. However, it also means that these people are in need of constant, reliable markets or modes of selling. Given the subtropical climate in Piemonte, it is possible to maintain vegetable production all year especially with the use of tunnels and greenhouses. Obviously, for farmers to continue or increase production more efforts need to be made to increase positive connections between consumers and producers such as the PiProBi system in Biella.



GRAPH 8. NEED FOR PROCESSING FACILITIES (1=STRONGLY DISAGREE → 5=STRONGLY AGREE)

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

This question was initially received with confusion or immediately was answered that their farm either wasn't in need or they had already placed the necessary infrastructures on their property. The interviewer provided further explanation that the question was trying to see whether a particular zone/town/area was in need of more processing facilities. Once the producers took time to think about this need as something for their entire community, the answers expanded and were more interesting. In general, there is a need for more community infrastructure in every province of the region. As can be seen in the Figure below, the needs are spread evenly throughout Piemonte. Examples of areas in need include: fruit producers in Giaveno who bring their fruit to Fossano for making preserves, a producer in Lusernetta traveling 60km to Val Lanzo to process apple and pear juice (they can only do some processing in Bibbiana at the cooperative Frutto del Permesso), farmers in Valle Susa reporting that every type of facility is needed because there are currently none (needs included a butchery as well as vegetable and dairy processing), a farmer in Ozzano Monferrato who drives his corn to be milled in Cuneo and in Valle Chisone they need facilities to make sauces and jams. Several requests were made for community mills (ex.Osasco, Moncalieri and Vercelli) as well as many locations that were short on any community initiatives (Lessolo, Rivoli, Pont Canavese, Saluzzo and Savilgiano). Not surprising given the large amount of fruit production in Piemonte, one of the most common needs was for making fruit preserves and marmalades. This type of processing facility is fairly simple compared to butcheries and an example of a community fruit processing facility exists in Biella for future communities that want to replicate their system, as well as in Fossano.

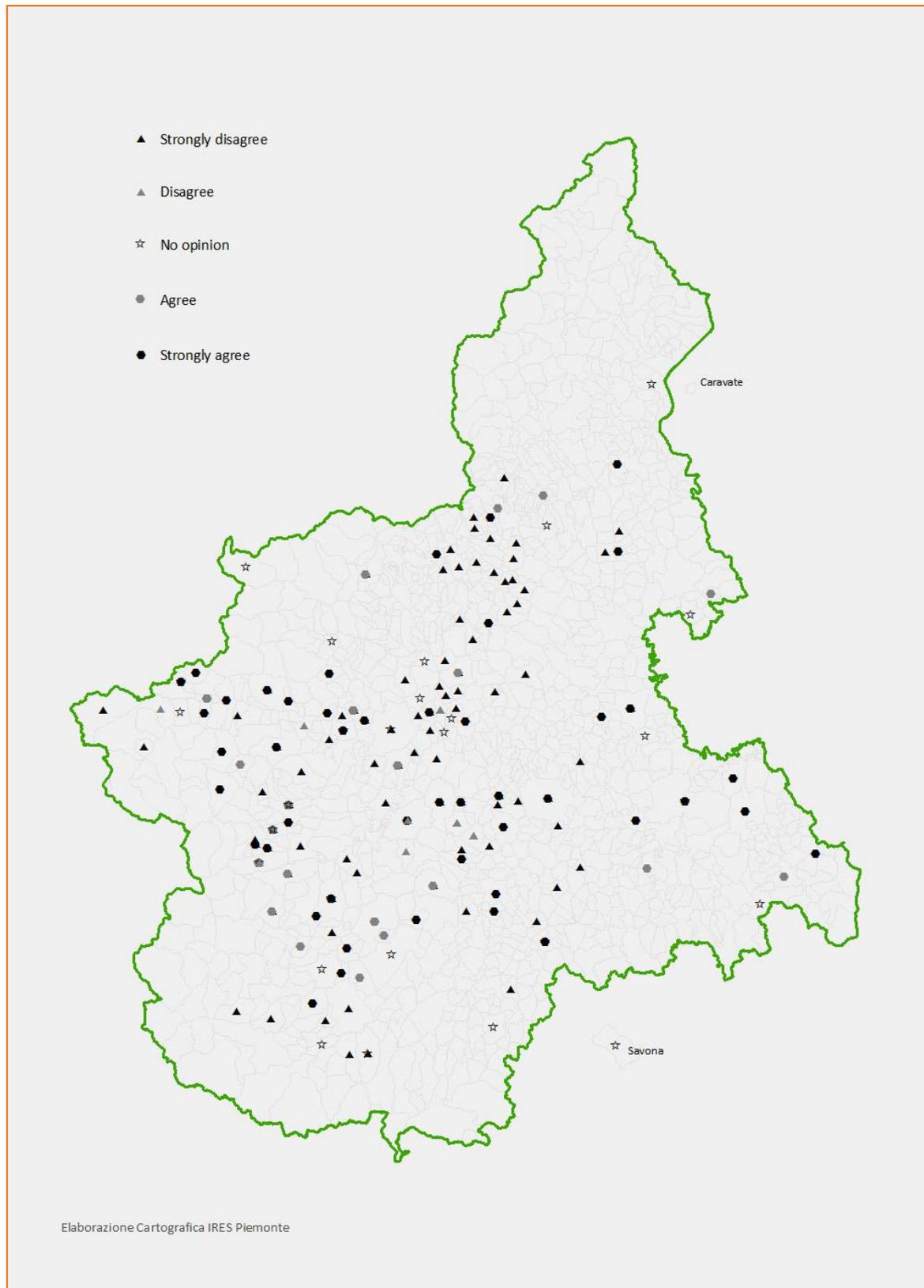
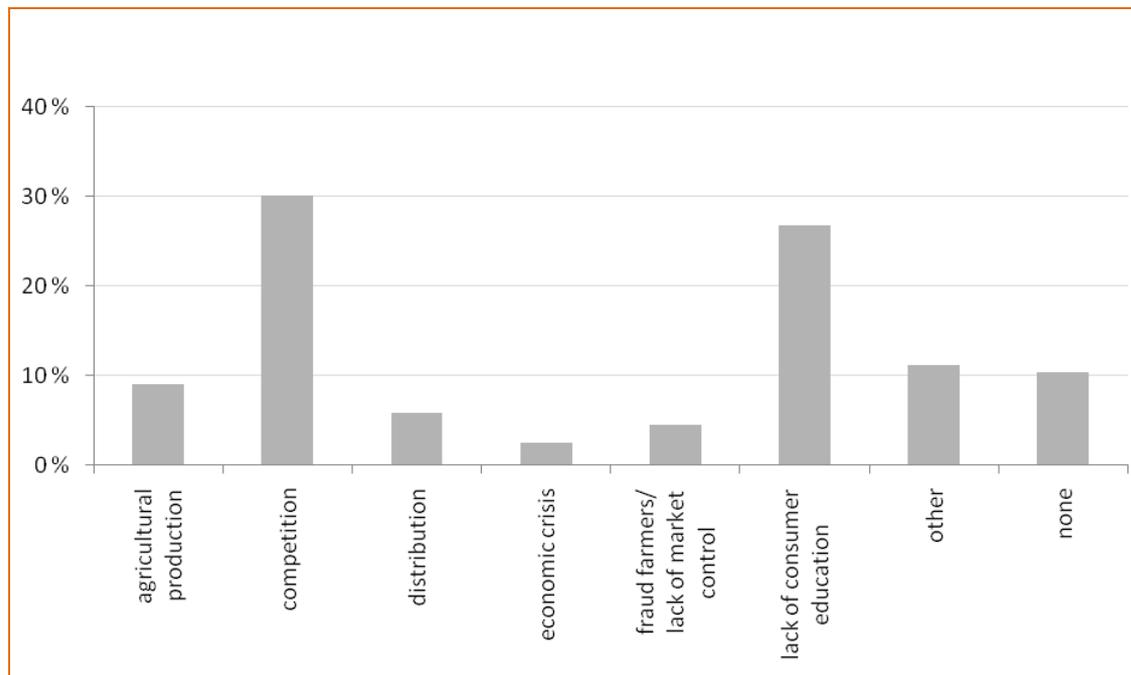


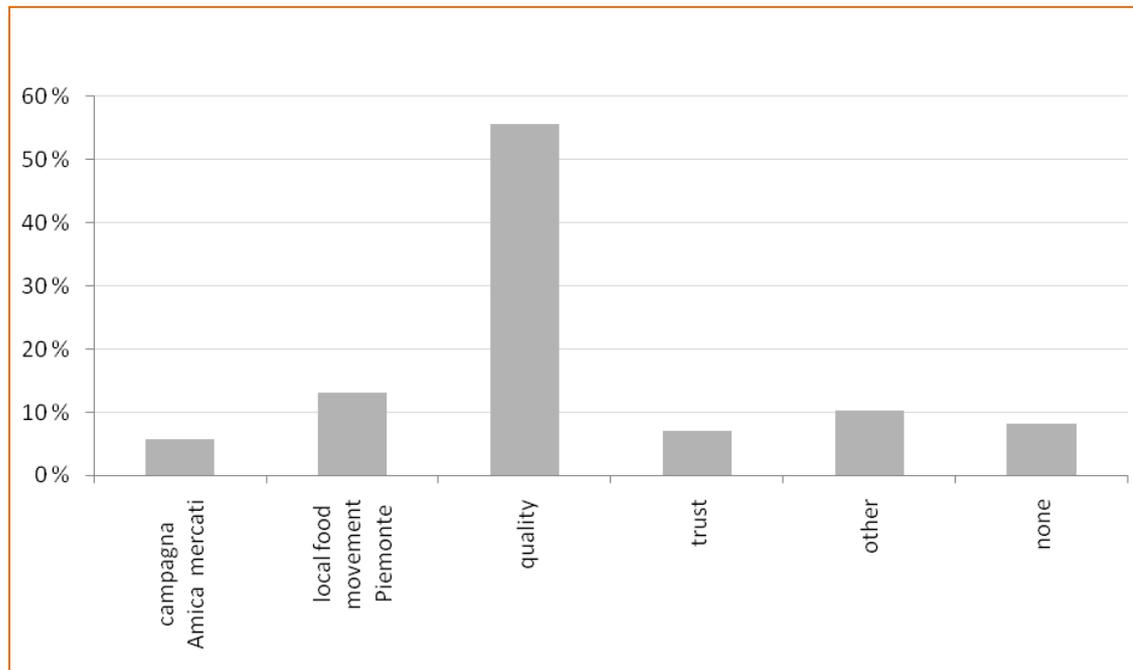
FIGURE 10. LOCATIONS OF REGIONAL NEEDS FOR PROCESSING FACILITIES IN PIEMONTE
Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011



GRAPH 9. BARRIERS FOR SELLING LOCAL FOOD

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

The results of this question regarding the greatest obstacle or difficulty for farmers to sell their items were surprising. Competition from commercial sellers was expected to be a large threat (30% of answers) especially since most farmers are still trying to sell in the same physical space, but the incredible number of responses for “lack of consumer education” was almost as high, at 27%. Farmers were frustrated by the necessity to be both a producer of food and a producer of knowledge about why their food was different than at the general supermarkets (different sizes, shapes, colors, flavors, prices, cleanliness, etc). Many farmers at festivals actually had posters and consumer educational material on fundamental food or agriculture issues that are sadly not discussed in school systems. If children are continually not educated in school or at home about how food is grown and the various implications involved with shipping food around the world, people will continue to only look at prices and local agricultural economies will suffer. “Other” barriers included bee sicknesses, rigid sanitary laws, demand exceeding supply, lack of local butcheries, the *actual customers* (always touching but never buying), the large amount of initial investments needed when purchasing land, the changing culture in Italy of people eating quantity instead of quality, closed mentality of farmers in some of the valleys, lack of consumers at markets and bureaucracy especially involved with applying to PSR or organic certification.



GRAPH 10. STRENGTHS FOR SELLING LOCAL FOOD

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Although a small percentage of farmers could not think of any strength that they had for selling local food, the majority responded with organoleptic characteristics of their product such as freshness and flavor as well as terms like health, organic, genuine, local, reliability, typical products and natural. “Other” responses included: old varieties of fruit, the love for the earth, markets in general, enjoyment of farming, being female, attractiveness of the market stall, home deliveries, wine, salad greens, honey, kiwi and pears.

What help would you like from organizations, the Piemonte region or the state?

There were a wide range of answers from the following question and some of the most relevant have been summarized below:

- Farmer from Borgo D'Ale at Chivasso market, “I need help to valorize products and help against the competition and corruption among the liars at the market”
- Farmer from Viverone at Ivrea market, “I’d like to see more help for young farmers and to change the location of this market”
- Another farmer in Ivrea from Alice Castello also emphasized that much more help for young farmers was needed
- Farmer from Isolabella in Carmagnola at a Campagna Amica market, “Coldiretti is only words and it’s crazy we have to pay them for nothing. I want to see control at the markets and for everything to be labeled from where it is coming from!”
- Another farmer at Carmagnola market from Poirino wanted more Campagna Amica markets to be created in Piemonte



- A farmer from Cassato at the Biella market lamented, “The urban police don’t do enough control at the markets and even when they do, they have no agricultural knowledge so it doesn’t really help. We need a different monitoring system.”
- Farmer from Biella at Biella market would like “more support for building more greenhouses”
- Farmer from Oviglio at Alessandria market, “Coldiretti only takes money but doesn't understand the reality of small farmers”
- Farmer from Bagnolo at Savigliano market, “We need more control here...no one comes to monitor this market and it’s even worse in Saluzzo”
- A farmer from Susa at a festival in Susa would like to see more products valorized in Val di Susa
- Another farmer at the market in Susa from Meana di Susa thinks, “It’s time for the farmers to work together. We are all too disconnected and if we came together maybe we could be more successful as a group.”
- Farmer from Venasca at Verzuolo market asked for more assistance in mountainous areas for small producers and for the markets and producers to be better controlled in her area.”
- Farmer from Roure at a Paniere market in Torino complained, “PSR needs to be developed better and for money to be available for farmers over 40 yrs as well as more help in the mountainous areas because it costs more there to do everything.”
- Farmer from Cortemilia at Alba market, “Coldiretti does nothing in reality to help the locals in this area but they like to come and plant their yellow flags at markets as if they have just landed on the moon and now own the spot”
- Farmer from Diano D'Alba also at Alba market who sells ostrich meat and ostrich eggs, hazelnuts, and makes pasta and sweets, “We are in great need of community processing facilities in the wine regions. The wine terraces around Alba have become a large-scale monocrop and it makes it almost impossible for farmers that produce something unique and different. Almost all of our sales are through tourists because there is not enough education to the citizens about local agriculture.”
- A vegetable farmer from Poirino at a Paniere market in Torino dreams of the day, “...Piemonte will be the first region in Italy to enact and enforce a law that farmers must produce at least 90% of what they sell.”

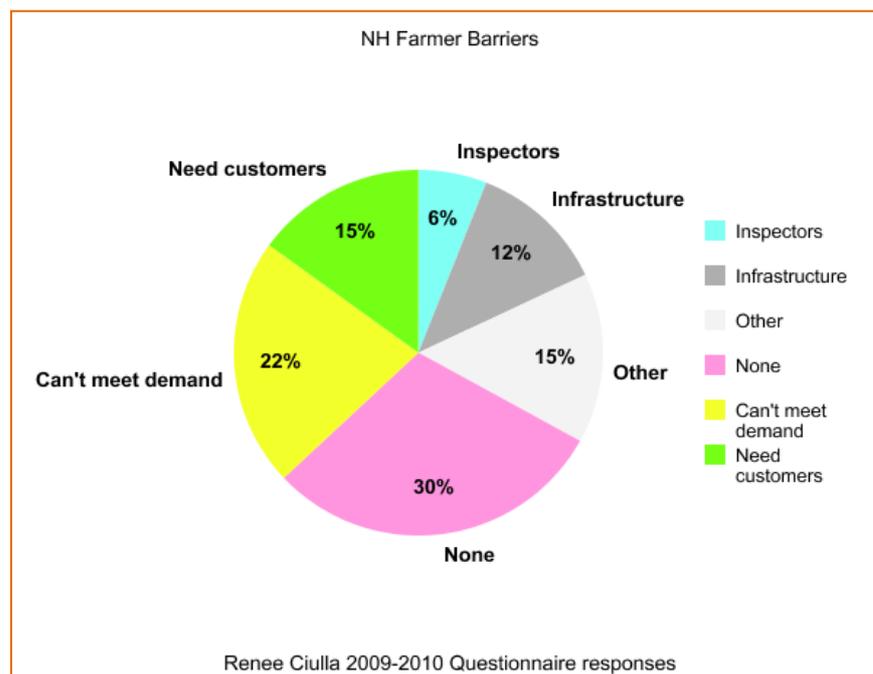
Some of the most common requests for help or change included clearer communication between the region and PSR as well as changing the “PSR point system” because this makes it very difficult for farmers who are established to receive any help for innovations. Farmers also want to see more consumer education and advertisement about the differences between local and imported foods such as was done near the Porta Palazzo market in Torino. Dozens of farmers also wish for a way to help young people acquire farmland or connect people with farmers that have abandoned land. In the months of November to February farmers were justifiably also requesting better protection from the cold and wet weather. Most didn’t have any hope of ever using public institutions for a market in Italy, such as is often the case in the USA, but online sales and GAS offer some solutions.



Comparison to local food research in New Hampshire, USA

The researcher completed similar work in the state of New Hampshire (NH) in 2009-2010, interviewing a total of 452 consumers and 73 farmers. Although the number of farmers is too low to generalize, it is however representative of those contributing to winter markets in the state. Different from the results of Piemontese farmers, the NH data revealed that 64% of the farmers purchased their property, 11% are renting or leasing land and only 19% inherited the farm from their family (as opposed to 77% in Piemonte).

Furthermore, the barriers faced by farmers in NH differ from the ones expressed by the Italian farmers. In NH, most farmers had no mentionable problems and the second most common complaint was that the consumer demand was more than they could supply (most farmers ran out of produce before the morning market ended). Processing facilities are also needed in NH as well as solutions for meeting state inspection guidelines for small-scale meat and dairy producers. In the future producers and consumers in Piemonte need to find a balance between supply and demand because supply seems to exceed demand in most areas outside Torino province. This region can use the local food movement in New Hampshire as a viable example because it demonstrates that even in a very cold climate, local growers can be supported year-round when consumers are educated and more aware of food system issues and market locations.



GRAPH 11. COMPARISON FARMER LOCAL FOOD BARRIERS: NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011





PIEMONTE PROVINCIAL MARKETS

In Italy, the markets seem to function the same as they did for the past several decades despite significant societal and global changes. It's time to organize new hours, locations and modes of reaching consumers. Farmers are trying to sell during hours when most people are at work, competing to sell sometimes in the same Piazza against commercial sellers with drastically lower prices while battling snow, rain and bitter winds. Furthermore, consumers are misinformed or not educated at all about the differences between locally produced items and those imported from abroad.

Cuneo Province

Cavour – Tuesday

On the Regione Piemonte website this market was listed as hosting 45 agricultural stalls but in reality there were much less and only approximately 7 local producers. Most of them were over 60 years old and complained about the scarcity of customers. There were two young farmers who seemed tired of the waiting and were eager for solutions. The market was visited on a warm day in October around 10:30am and although consumers were active near the commercial sellers, there were very few shopping from the producers. The local farmers are organized underneath a covered pavilion with the commercial sellers forming a semi-circle around them.

Cuneo

The public markets in Cuneo are a difficult place for local producers to “stay afloat” as a result of the increasing numbers of large commercial stalls. On Fridays in Piazza Virgilio there are only local farmers (9 in November). By 11am there were no consumers and almost all of the farmers were gone or packing their things. "In the past it was very busy but now there are supermarkets and too much competition from abroad" lamented one farmer. The local CIA office stated that they only help their own members and they were not familiar with any GAS groups in the area and most of the employees had never heard of the meaning of GAS. In regards to assisting the local food movement in Piemonte, CIA organizes only *one monthly* market in Torino. Based on farmer comments from this research, the GAS groups are a more beneficial sales system than the markets so it's unfortunate that this organization is not in the political position to assist with disseminating information about these opportunities, which do in fact exist in the Cuneo province. It would also be great to see organizations connect farmers who have similar needs to one another for some camaraderie among the local growers and less competition. Fortunately Coldiretti in Cuneo organizes several markets solely for local growers including the cities of Barge, Borgo S. Dalmazzo, Ceva, Costigliole Saluzzo, Fossano, Mondovi, Piasco and in the city of Cuneo on Corso Francia four days a week.

Savigliano – Tuesday

This market had about 15 local producers located in a section separate from the commercial vendors arranged in a long row facing each other. It was a well balanced mix of ages and genders. Most complaints focused on the lack of control at the market and too much competition from each other (local producers) as well as the commercial sellers located in the



Piazza 15 meters away. This area is in need of more GAS groups as well as information about how to start them. Other complains included the scarcity of processing facilities (mostly only in Fossano and Carmagnola) the lack of a Campagna Amica market and one farmer suggested more products be valorized in this area. It was disappointing to learn how little the farmers knew about each other despite sharing such a close space for so many years. Instead of feeling the pressure of competition from each other, a GAS might offer a solution. For example, one farmer said, "I didn't sell any eggs today because the egg producer was here" but if they all worked together to either form a group of consumers interested in buying directly every week or specialize with a few products it could be a more effective system for all.



FIGURE 11.
MARKET IN SAVIGLIANO

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Saluzzo – Wednesday

There are two markets for local producers in Saluzzo on Wednesday. One is located close to the center covered by a pavilion in Piazza Garibaldi. There were 15 stalls but only 7 were *actual* producers. There was one farmer *producing only half of his items* and buying the rest commercially so he had *everything* to offer and at slightly lower prices, making it difficult for the others to compete who were only selling what they grew themselves. He was busy the entire time while the others were almost always waiting for consumers. The other market is on a very quiet side street exposed to climatic elements near Piazza Risorgimento. There were 6 producers on this road and, possibly because of the falling snow, were absolutely no consumers. Except for our voices, dead silence fell for the 40 minutes of interview time. In general there were no major complaints about market control although at other locations in Cuneo farmers mentioned there were problems at this market. Farmers in Saluzzo mentioned that they would like more publicity about the markets and assistance for young farmers, who they reported are becoming fewer and fewer in this location.



FIGURE 12.
WAITING IN COLD, SNOWY
WEATHER
IN SALUZZO TO SELL LOCAL
ITEMS

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Limone

This town holds a Thursday public market but there are only commercial sellers except in the summer when there are 2-3 producers. The local growers sell apples, a few vegetables, honey, meat, cheese (mostly Castelmagno) and chestnuts. For the most part these farmers prefer to sell at the fieras which play a very important role financially, especially for selling chestnuts. Considering the influx of tourists for the ski season there might be opportunities for selling more local food at some of the restaurants and hotels (such as a winter supply of potatoes, onions and apples). The town of Borgo San Dalmazzo at the beginning of the valley holds Campagna Amica markets during the week and there are GAS groups in Cuneo for future growers to connect with from this valley.

Ceva

This is the second year for the Campagna Amica market in Ceva. It is held every Wednesday in a covered pavilion in a separate part of the city from the commercial sellers with about 10 stalls of mostly older farmers. For local dairy producers there is a large and well-known



cooperative shop in Ceva, Caseificio Cooperativo Valle Josina, based in Peveragno but sells items sourced from several Cuneo producers.

Coldiretti in Ceva revealed that the area predominantly raises cattle and pigs as well as goats and sheep for cheese. There are also many honey and chestnut producers. Currently there are no GAS groups with the closest in Cuneo, 60km away. The director of Coldiretti in Ceva noted that the number of producers interested in working with Campagna Amica is growing although there is no direct help for young farmers that want to find land or connect with farmers that have land. They insisted there are only the Insieme Giovani funds for people under the age of 40 years.

Torino Citta markets

Porta Palazzo

Although this market is busier than the average in Piemonte, most producers complained that 5 or 10 years ago they always sold out and now they are waiting for consumers most of the time. If this market was held during different hours (possibly from 3pm-7pm) they might find that their consumer numbers increase. Almost all of the shoppers were retirees over the age of 65 who have the opportunity to reach a weekly market open only in the morning. The project “Rururbal” is giving new exposure to Porta Palazzo with publicity explaining where the farms are located as well as the importance of purchasing local food. Funds totaled €45,000 from the EU and involve the Piemonte Regione and three farmer’s unions: CIA, Coldiretti and Confagricoltura. This initiative is wonderful from the consumer education perspective, but it doesn’t change the fact that people cannot leave their office to support the farmers during the morning hours which also requires bringing the produce to their homes.



FIGURE 13.
PORTA PALAZZO MARKET:
BUSY BUT SLOWER THAN IN
THE PAST

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Porpora

Approximately ten local producers were at this market but it was difficult to differentiate between the commercial sellers and the local growers. There was mention at this market from several farmers for more control against the lies such as items that are labeled “Italian” which are actually coming from Spain. This is not a direct responsibility of the urban police (who are also not trained to know how to detect these deceptions) but is nonetheless something that should be dealt with by another level.

Foroni

This market was fairly small with approximately 7 local producers. Two of them were from the 3P Piemonte Cooperative, composed of about 100 local farmers. Only one of the farmers interviewed had any knowledge of PSR funding and most of them felt that no organizations in Italy help farmers. Common complaints were about competition at the market (the low prices of the commercial sellers) and the proximity of the commercial stalls that were located right next to them without any indication of the differences between them.

Madama Cristina

This daily market is mostly commercial sellers under a covered pavilion but on a side street, via Gallinari, there are about 12 local producers which fluctuate between busy and bored. Most of the customers are regulars that trust and prefer these local producers and are willing to pay the higher prices. There is a good mix of ages and genders and most days from 10am-noon these producers are busy. All of the producers at this market farm as their only source of income and are farming on land that was in their families. They come from as far away as Asti province.

Eataly – Second Sunday of month

This market is lively and located at the large entrance of Eataly, on via Nizza in Torino. There are about 20 vendors selling soaps, cheese, chestnuts, meat, fruits and vegetables. Farmers come from all over Piemonte with several from Cuneo and also Biella. It would be more helpful for these growers if the market could be weekly instead of monthly because the consumers supporting them are probably making random purchases as opposed to going to Eataly specifically for this market.



FIGURE 14.
MONTHLY MARKET HELD IN
FRONT OF THE FOOD STORE
EATALY IN TORINO

Source: IRES PIEMONTE, 2011



Torino Province

Alpignano – Campagna Amica

There are two Campagna Amica markets in Alpignano. The Tuesday night market (3-7pm) only had two stalls in an isolated, dark parking lot with no consumers. One fruit seller drives over 60km from Pinerolo and it hardly seems worth the gas expenses. He said he knew of no GAS groups in Pinerolo so this was their only option, as well as selling to a GAS in Cumiana. An indoor and more centrally located place would be much appreciated by the sellers.

The Thursday market, alternatively, from 3-7pm was bustling with consumers and is centrally located with ample parking space and great visibility for people leaving work. The vendors (approximately 15 stalls) were a mix of ages with several young producers present and the atmosphere was festive and jovial despite the bitter cold. This is the second year that this market has been organized by Coldiretti and everyone seemed very appreciative of it as well as supportive of each other. It was the first market seen during this research that slightly resembled the spirit of an American farmer's market.



FIGURE 15.
CAMPAGNA AMICA MARKET
IN ALPIGNANO (TO)
ORGANIZED BY COLDIRETTI

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Chivasso – Wednesday

At first glance, the daily market in Chivasso appears to have a fairly large local producer section with an entire row of over 30 producers in a different section from the commercial sellers. However, it was surprising to hear from more than half of the “local” producers that one of their biggest concerns is competition from the fraud farmers that are selling next to them (in the local area). Apparently there are some “farmers” arriving at 5am to “harvest” produce wholesale from the commercial sellers and selling it as “local” as well as buying in bulk from the other local growers and then selling it the next day. Obviously there are no police at 5am to see these illegal purchases but they are also not controlling whether these people own agricultural land. The farmers were pleading for more control at this market. When the urban police were contacted about this issue, they reported that in Chivasso there used to be an agricultural commission that spent a lot of energy on this problem but there wasn't enough money to continue the organization. In these days the police *are* present on the market days (Wednesday and Saturday) but only to control the items that the farmers are selling not the percentage of what was produced solely by them. Usually the police begin at



the side of the market where the commercial sellers are located and don't arrive to the local growers until 11am.

Chieri – Campagna Amica mercato

This weekly market in Piazza Dante under a covered pavilion is quite accessible to the public, especially due to the hours of operation from 3-7pm. All the farmers were knowledgeable about funding opportunities and also felt that local food was surely more popular these days in Piemonte. The market was quite busy and made interviewing a difficult task. There were no complaints about the actual market and instead most people were tired of the need to explain to consumers the differences between local products and those that are mass-produced (such as homemade sausages).

Ivrea

This public market (held on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday) was surprisingly quiet with only a few elderly customers shopping during the entire morning. There is also a Campagna Amica market which possibly garners more consumers but it wasn't seen during this research. The complaints at this market were similar to other markets: too much competition from the others (especially those that are only producing 50% of their items) and the need for more control from the urban police. One farmer insisted that 90% of the farmers there were commercial despite the fact that several were in the local area.

Torre Pellice – Friday

The local farmers at this market (Wednesdays and Fridays) are fairly young (30-50 years) but *everyone* said they were fed up with the scarcity of customers. The location is isolated from the flow of pedestrian traffic (although it is covered) and possibly too close to the commercial sellers who stay busy almost all morning. Sadly, almost all of the 7 farmers interviewed in November 2010 said they are thinking of stopping this work next year because it was no longer financially worthwhile (averaging €50/morning at the market from October-April) with approximately 8-10 hours worth of work including harvesting, cleaning, packing/unpacking, transportation and selling). Alternatively, in the center of the city there are four organic producers with stalls that differentiate themselves from the local, conventional (non-organic) growers under the pavilion. They reported better sales (averaging €100/morning in the winter) and said it was worthwhile to come all year because of the strong relationships they had with the consumers that expected to see them every week. Because of these comments and the general dreary aura of the market, another visit was conducted in January 2011 to share information about a different system of sales such as with GAS or the PiProBi system in Biella. Only two of the farmers expressed interest but the problem was that most of them did not have the internet and were computer incompetent. They also seemed skeptical about any change to their regime despite the fact that the current situation was not viable any longer (from 10-11am there were approximately 5 consumers idling by the stalls and most of the time the producers were casually talking among themselves not even staying at their tables). One organic grower reported that several consumers have asked her to begin a GAS but she personally does not have enough production to supply one. She was positive that there was enough consumer demand to start a replication of the PiProBi system in the Bibbiana/Pinerolo area but that the challenge lies with the closed mentality of several of the farmers. This farmer also mentioned that several of the other “local” growers were in fact not all genuine and that there was absolutely no market control in Torre besides when she pays €90/year for her space. Although there is a Campagna Amica market in Pinerolo, most of these growers have chosen to not be members



due to political reasons. One farmer even reported that his friend was told to “look better” at a Campagna Amica because there was a certain image that Coldiretti wanted to uphold at their markets.



FIGURE 16.
TORRE PELLICE:
DESOLATE FARMERS' MARKET
NEXT TO BUSY COMMERCIAL
STALLS

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Pinerolo – Friday

In Pinerolo there are two markets every week in Piazza Vittorio Veneto which are a combination of commercial and local producers. On a side street nearby there is a daily market of producers which was one of the slowest and saddest markets visited during this research. At 11am in October it was fairly empty except for mostly elderly farmers (approximately 12 farmers) with long, sad faces. Most of them would not complete the questionnaire although the ones that did all complained that there were not nearly enough consumers.



**FIGURE 17.
PINEROLES FARMERS
MARKET FULL OF BEAUTIFUL
PRODUCE BUT LACKING
CONSUMERS**

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Bussoleno

The market in this Val di Susa town was very busy but mostly with vendors selling clothing and imported food. There were only 4 local vendors and they were at the back of the market in an area that was difficult to reach. There were no indicators that they were different than the commercial growers despite the fact that they were all sharing the same space. The sentiments of the local producers included, "this valley is too blocked" in terms of a lack of progressive thinking or for sales outlets.

Susa – Wednesday

This Tuesday morning market places the local producers in their own row with good visibility to the flow of pedestrian traffic and is separated from the general market. Although it was never extremely busy, there was a steady stream of consumers. There were also no problems with market control. Three urban police were chatting in a friendly manner with farmers for over an hour and when I asked about control of "imported items" the police explained that they could "tell the difference between items locally grown and those from abroad" such as their huge size and quality differences such as with apples. Here in a rural area the police are probably more in tune with such variations.



**FIGURE 18.
SUSA (TO) PUBLIC
MARKET**

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Bardonecchia

There is a public market on Thursday and Saturday but only one local cheese producer comes. Several consumers/citizens felt that the town doesn't have enough historical culture to support a thriving local agricultural economy. Speciality items from this town include honey from the mountains and a rare, yellow plum. There are often sheep in pastures in the summer and genepy from the mountains is used for making liquers. Part of the problem for local growers is that the town is mostly deserted except for the summer and ski season.

Perosa Argentina

Halfway down Valle Chisone is the small town of Perosa Argentina with two weekly markets. Sunday is the general market day but there is also a small market of 6 producers on Wednesday. This market was very quiet but the producers were sociable with each other and all proud of the high quality of their items and maintaining a strong relationship built on trust with their customers. These growers expressed an interest in working with GAS groups in Pinerolo for another sales outlet.



**FIGURE 19.
PEROSA ARGENTINA
(TO) PUBLIC
PRODUCER MARKET**

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Biella Province

Biella – Thursday

Every day of the week consumers can find the general market in Biella with approximately 16 local producers forming a border line to the main market. The market was full of shoppers although the local producers seemed to be spending a lot of time waiting to make sales. Two farmers mentioned that they preferred selling to the PiProBi system in Biella because it was more efficient and they could avoid bad weather, but they came to the market to socialize with customers. Several farmers (more than 5) mentioned that there were too many fraud farmers that were selling things that were not their own. One female farmer shared an interesting initiative for next year called Piano de Semina where every farmer has to specifically say what they are growing and on what piece of land. This will supposedly be controlled by the urban police who will also have aerial photos of the property.

Asti Province

Bra – Friday

As the home of *SlowFood*, it was disappointing that in this town it took twenty minutes of inquiring to find the location of the market for the “local producers”. The main piazza for the conventional market is a huge space and seems to receive 90% of the flow of pedestrian traffic. Alternatively, the other market was across town near the train station with only 15 vendors. Some of these vendors were selling commercial items and it wasn’t clear if they were farmers. Possibly due to the lack of market control these commercial sellers have been able to sell in this pavilion location.

Asti



The daily market in Piazza Alfieri is only commercial sellers but in Piazza Catena (located in a much more secluded part of the city) there are around 15 local producers. In the past market control was an issue, but today things are monitored more and there were no complaints in this regard. The biggest problem however was the lack of consumers and several farmers raised their eyebrows when asked whether they could continue this work in the future. There are GAS groups in Asti and more information about where they are located and how they function could serve these farmers well.



FIGURE 20.
**ASTI'S PUBLIC LOCAL
PRODUCER MARKET**

Source: IRES Piemonte

Alessandria Province

Alessandria – Campagna Amica mercato, Piazza Lega

The commercial market in Alessandria is devoid of real producers, so the presence of the Campagna Amica markets is much appreciated by some of the farmers utilizing it. This market is also on Saturday and much larger, and many interviewees mentioned this Campagna Amica market as their main strength for selling their products.

However, there was a farmer from Oviglio who, despite being a Coldiretti member, spoke negatively about them saying that they are “only talk and no action...taking money without understanding the reality of small farmers.” Many farmers also complained that there isn't enough control at this market in regard to prices and also the general monitoring.

There are GAS groups in Alessandria but unfortunately one farmer reported that you must be a “certified organic” producer and although she is 100% natural, she doesn't want to deal with the costs and bureaucracy of becoming certified in order to partake in a GAS. Another farmer complained that there is a law in Piemonte that says she cannot cut her squash in pieces to sell to customers (although this has been seen at almost every other market in Piemonte) and also she cannot sell her dried beans in bags because they don't have a processing license but yet she can sell it from open exposed bags in bulk.

There is a definite need for processing facilities in Alessandria with the following needs mentioned from the producers: tomato sauce, marmalade, honey and several others.



More information about PSR needs to be distributed in this area as well as a solution for connecting them to GAS.



**FIGURE 21.
CAMPAGNA AMICA
MARKET IN
ALESSANDRIA
ORGANIZED BY
COLDIRETTI**

Source: IRES Piemonte

Casale Monferrato – Tuesday

Unfortunately there is a “political battle” among the comune of Casale Monferrato and Coldiretti right now. In the past there was a Campagna Amica market but it no longer exists so the 4 producers at this enormously commercial market were suffocated from the lower prices surrounding them. The demands and criticisms from the consumers were the most severe and difficult observed in all of Piemonte. At one stall a consumer actually persistently fought with the farmer telling her that the chicoria was overpriced and proceeded to tell her why she thought so. Despite the protests the consumer unhappily made a purchase. The farmer tried to explain the lengthy process of cutting back chicoria as well as why the lettuce and broccoli was slightly frost damaged, but the consumers seemed to have no knowledge or compassion about such basic agricultural issues. One customer even asked where the bananas were. In this market and all the markets, placing local farmers side-by-side with commercial sellers is a disaster for producers. Without a separate area educating consumers about the differences in the products and the reasons for the price differences it is a slow death to local agriculture.

An interview was conducted with Confagricoltura in Casale Monferrato. They were not knowledgeable about GAS but knew a farmer, Tinella Barbana, who has created a connection with a private school in Alessandria. Upon calling Tinella she reported that it is almost impossible to enter into the public schools as a farmer but she was able to organize selling local apples, pears, onions and potatoes in Alessandria. She has also helped create GAS groups in Milano and Genova. There is a definite need for processing facilities in this area as well as spreading information about GAS and PSR.



FIGURE 22.
CASALE MONFERRATO
GENERAL
MARKET: LACKING
ORGANIZATION FOR
LOCAL FARMERS

COMMERCIAL →

← LOCAL

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Tortona – Campagna Amica

This is the first year for this Coldiretti market and the farmers were all enthusiastically appreciative for its presence. Every interviewee cited this market as their strong point for selling local food. Although they wished for a covered area or somewhere warm, they confirmed that the consumers were willing to spend more for their items because the Piazza is in a more wealthy area than the general market, and in the summer it was especially worthwhile. The market, however, was almost completely devoid of shoppers for most of the morning in December and it could be questioned whether the producers should instead work together to organize a different, more efficient mode of sales for the winter months. The farmers reported that the Campagna Amica market in Nove Ligure is smaller but that they have a similar amount of consumers. No one was aware of any GAS.



FIGURE 23.
TORTONA CAMPAGNA AMICA
MARKET ORGANIZED BY
COLDIRETTI

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011



During an interview with Sabina Bricola at the local Coldiretti office, Ms. Bricola stated that the agricultural zone around Tortona is quite poor besides the vineyards and that there are only three Campagna Amica markets in the Alessandria province. The number of farmers interested in joining these markets is growing from last year and also with more young farmers. The zone where the market is located is fairly rich with no competition from commercial sellers which made it a perfect choice. She thinks the average consumer in Tortona is too poor to be interested in forming GAS but she also admitted that they had no knowledge of what a GAS was at Coldiretti. Although there are no direct initiatives to help young farmers without land acquire land or meet farmers, they were able to match a young couple from Milano last year to a farm to rent.

Verbania Province

Despite the geographical challenges that this province faces (mountainous and a sparse presence of large cities) there are several small GAS and Campagna Amica markets. In Borgomanero there is a well-organized GAS as well as a weekly Campagna Amica market. In Orta and Omegna the public markets only have 3-4 local growers but fortunately both places also have GAS groups which, although small, provide a new opportunity for maintaining small producers. In general, farmers from Verbania say that the GAS groups are too small to provide much financial stability and that for the most part the markets are necessary in order to receive enough money to survive. Generally only 15% of their annual income is derived from GAS. One of the greatest challenges in Verbania is finding or providing affordable land to new growers and expanding the minds of producers that are closed to new, innovative ideas for improving direct sales.

Verbania

In Verbania there is a Saturday general market in Intra and one Friday in Pallanza. Although it is still written online that there is a Thursday market for local producers in Verbania, 2010 was the first year that it did not occur because there was too much competition from the commercial sellers. It's a pity because the area has several typical products to offer including wild game such as deer and wild boar and the pastures nearby host cattle, goats and lambs. The mountain air ages and matures cold meat such as violino di capra (cured goats leg ham), Ossolana mortadella, Vigezzo ham, mocetta, lard, pancetta and black pudding. Some local alpine cheeses are Bettelmatt and Crodo. There is also Ossolano wine from Nebbiolo grapes and honey of lime, chestnut, acacia, and rhododendron trees. Apples, chestnuts and small fruits are in abundance as well as numerous small artisanal centers in the area that produce preserves, pickled produce, jams and sauces. Within the national park, Val Grande, there exists a cultural group "Le Donne del Parco" of 100 women from the Comune who valorize various typical products and also traditional ways of working.

There are two GAS groups in Verbania; one small (20 families) and the other much larger. Both groups are making efforts to source local producers that are also organic. Vegetables are from farmers in Domodossola and Borgomanero and the rest of the food includes rice, cheese, grains, wine and oil.

Domodossola

The main market in Domodossola is held on Saturday in the center of the town. There were over 20 commercial vendors selling clothing and food in a large piazza. Two streets behind



this piazza (almost hidden) were the producers which were four honey producers and someone selling rice from Vercelli. In the summer there are a couple vegetable producers and cheese. There were almost no consumers in the “local” area and they said they come only to “maintain their places” because in the summer it is worthwhile to come as a result of the tourists and the Swiss that cross the border for lower prices. Some signs at this market to direct people into the area where producers are located would possibly help bring tourists to their location as well as citizens of Domodossola.

The owners of a local agriturismo, La Tensa, and residents in Domodossola, claimed that they never go to the market anymore because there is almost nothing sold from this area, “...all imported from China and the market has lost its original significance.” In this valley they also shared that every year there are fewer and fewer herders that bring their cows up to alpine pastures; something deeply connected to the food culture of this area. It is also very difficult for them at the agriturismo to find anyone interested in helping them work their land, orchards and gardens. The industrial sprawl surrounding this area has attracted lots of industrially-focused initiatives and is intruding on the frail agricultural economy. Even so, La Tensa was confident that consumer knowledge and interest in local, traditional food was increasing which they measure by the fact that their osteria is full for almost every meal.

Cannobio

The Sunday market in Cannobio is an event that hundreds of people attend every week, driving from Switzerland in the north and Verbania in the south, both for the lakeside atmosphere and to make purchases. A shocking number of Asians line the entire waterside walkway (over 35 stalls) selling clothing, shoes and plastic items which dominate almost the entire market. The food vendors are located in a parking lot, and they were all commercial except for one honey producer, which is also the case in the summer. Given the saturation of consumers at this market, it could be a boost for local producers (also from Verbania) if a space could be created for them to sell. However, the competitively lower prices might be too great of an obstacle. Initially growers could seek out the potential for consumers (especially Swiss) interested in creating a GAS-type system in this area.

Orta

For the first time in 2010, Orta held a Christmas festival with a theme of the biodiversity of fruit in the Verbania province. There were several local producers, many of which had old varieties of fruit and shared educational materials, tastings and meetings about food biodiversity. Some antique varieties in Verbania include the purple mountain potatoes, spaghetti squash, parsnips, golden beets, yellow carrots, jujube, black beauty zucchini, white peaches and hundreds of apple varieties. In order for these unique varieties of fruits and vegetables to remain in existence, consumers need to be continually educated and farmers need sales opportunities such as this festival.



FIGURE 24.
ORTA FIORI E FRUTTA
BIODIVERSITY FESTIVAL:
CONSUMER EDUCATION OF
FRUIT VARIETIES

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Novara Province

Novara

In Novara there are two general markets six days of the week. These markets have almost no “true” local producers, but there are two Campagna Amica markets in the city that provide a safe haven for farmers. The producers interviewed at Piazza Largo Leonardi reported that the Campagna Amica market in Piazza Vela has the same number of stalls as theirs (about 11) but is frequented by younger people that can't afford to pay as much as the location in Largo Leonardi. It is necessary to pay €50/year to attend the market whereas the conventional markets cost €50 *every day*.



Some quotes from the farmers include;

“Thanks to this market, my wine is known now by the older people who have advertised it by word-of-mouth.”

“For the most part I feel like Coldiretti is useless and only sits in their office with no actual agricultural knowledge. I want a person that comes to my level to see my problems firsthand and then transmits the info higher.”

“I would like to increase the amusement and entertainment at this market. We should have a table in the center of the market where consumers can sample each of the items offered by the local producers here and at the same time learn more about the local food culture. There should be music too which would help retain consumers.”

“There is a real need here for more publicity about these markets and local food. Most consumers are only looking at the prices so we need more help with consumer education about why our food costs more than the grocery store.”

There is a five-year-old GAS in Novara with 90 families that collects all types of food as well as clothes and shoes. Although there is no website yet they want to create one for the ease of ordering because consumers need to emails their order by referring to a calendar. There is a pick-up location at the organizer’s homes every week.



FIGURE 25.
CAMPAGNA AMICA MARKET
IN NOVARA

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Vercelli Province

Vercelli

In the city of Vercelli there are two markets on Tuesday and Friday which are principally all commercial sellers with only 1-2 local producers. Luckily, Coldiretti has organized two Campagna Amica markets in Vercelli and Borgo D’Ale, which are held once a month on the weekend. These markets are 5 years old and the number of farmers present has remained fairly stable. There are 16 producers at the market in Borgo D’Ale and 11 in Vercelli.

According to Coldiretti, the number of young farmers in Vercelli is not growing because land is impossibly expensive due to the profitability of land in this rice-growing region. The



farmers union, Confagricoltura is more well-known in this region because of their political ties with larger-scale, industrial agriculture such as most of the rice farmers.

There is a GAS in Vercelli (www.gasvercelli.org) with about 80 families (although not all buy every week). Every Thursday night they divide and distribute the items outside on a street in the center of the city which are ordered weekly online. Everything comes from within Piemonte except olive oil from Abruzzo. All of the vegetables, for example, come from Azienda Agricola Massimo Patriarca in Gattinara (VC). For the first time during this research, the Coldiretti office in Vercelli was aware of the GAS group but they explained it was not possible to be affiliated with them because the ideals of GAS are generally too high for Coldiretti to achieve (such as 100% organic, which in Vercelli is difficult with the large amount of conventionally produced rice).





THE VOICES OF PIEMONTE FARMERS

Case Studies

The following farmer “voices” were selected from hundreds based on the following elements: uniqueness and innovation related to agricultural production, seriousness or severity of problems related to local food sales, repetition and relevance of a PSR funding complaint, successful pioneering local food initiatives or as a representative of an area in need of local food development and strengthening. This is certainly not an exhaustive list, as there are endless stories throughout Piemonte which are equally important and waiting to be told. A wine grower in Alessandria summed up the problem of local food in Piemonte saying, “Italians consume more gas than local food.” Also, he was frustrated that he has to drive thousands of miles to sell his wine but he can sell his territory in the form of an agriturismo to foreigners.

1. A farm in Pralormo (TO) that raises cows and pigs for meat production expressed anger and frustration with PSR. They received PSR funding in 2000 and have since invested in many things on the farm: installed solar panels, processing facilities, have become a teaching farm, etc. Now they are applying again for PSR funding but are unable to reach enough “points” which are necessary to get the funding because they already have done too many of the things they could get points for. They feel that they are being punished for their hard work and several times said the system is “Pazzo” (crazy). They are also tired of the necessity to explain to consumers why their natural homemade products don't look like the ones in the supermarket (such as their prosciutto) and they wish more consumer education could be done by the region or Coldiretti.
2. In Perrero (Val Chisone) there is a 40 year old farmer who grows fruit and vegetables and processes honey and marmalade. This land is from his family and he has been growing for 2 years now after leaving a desk job in the city. He feels that local food is definitely becoming more popular even in a place like Val Chisone and one of his greatest challenges is being able to grow enough to meet the consumer demand. He sells to a small GAS group of 20-25 families which is located in the town of Perrero. This group started several years ago and sources only organic food such as oranges from Sicily and pasta in bulk. He began selling to them this year and also goes to the weekly market in Perosa Argentina and to Torino for the monthly Campagna Amica market in Piazza San Carlo. He expressed the need for processing facilities in his valley although they have a community slaughterhouse which people can use with a reservation and he processes his vegetables, fruit and honey himself. He received two PSR funds which total €28,000: Insedimento Giovanni and also one for improving the farm, buying a tractor, equipment and a shop for transforming honey and jam. However, he is disappointed that he has been waiting 2 years for the money to arrive. Continuing to invest in the farm without money arriving is a daily stress for him but he says that for now he can survive on €1-2,000/month.
3. Selling at the market in Crocetta (Torino) is a family-run farm from in Pecetto. The wife is 44 years old and has been growing fruits and vegetables for 15 years. They only sell at this market and claimed that local is becoming more popular despite the competition from the commercial sellers. This market, for example, only had three producer stalls and approximately 25 booths selling items from abroad. These farmers are part of the 3P



- Cooperativa in Torino and felt that their greatest strength was attending local festivals and fieras. She was extremely angry with what she called the “Distortion of PSR”. Echoing the sentiments of other farmers, she emphasized that for farmers already functioning it is almost impossible to get help because they cannot reach enough “points”. As a new farmer with no money it is easier to get funding which is why a lot of farmers are lying and putting the farm in the name of their son in order to say that it is a “new farm”. In the past Simona was able to get PSR funding and also some from the Ministry in Roma for a program, *Women in Agriculture*.
4. A short walk from the Crocetta market in Torino is the Racconigi market where finding the local producers takes a serious time commitment. Dozens of ethnic and commercial stalls line the street for several blocks but five Piemontese producers were located at the very end. One 50 year-old grower from Moncalieri is growing vegetables and flowers on land from his family. He sells only at this market and is a member of the Cooperativa 3P. He explained that 3P functions as a “drop-off shop” in Torino located on Via Carolina Invernizio, 24 where 100 local growers can sell their produce. Then other local farmers can buy from cooperativa when they want to sell "local" items that they don't grow themselves and they have to pay a little more than usual. Giovanni explained that there are about 40 stalls in Torino that sell in this manner. He agreed that local food is becoming more popular in general in Piemonte but that the competition at this particular market is too difficult. He sees his strength as the freshness and seasonality of his produce and in the past he was able to receive PSR funding (insediamento giovani). For now, his biggest request was for Coldiretti to try to do something about closing the borders and controlling customs because otherwise he feels that he cannot “protect his things”.
 5. A farmer located in Bra grows vegetables and fruits and sells only at the market in Bra. The owner is 44 years old and has been growing for 25 years with her husband. She felt that Slow Food was the organization that has done the most to help farmers (understandable since Bra is the International headquarters for Slow Food). Her greatest challenge is the competition from items that come from abroad as well as the “supermarket mentality of customers”. She was able to receive funding from PSR for the 2000-2007 period but she is *extremely* angry about the situation. This farmer claims that originally she was promised to be covered for 40% of her cantina restoration project which totaled €10,000 and was then told (after she took out the loans and made payments on the roof, etc) that instead the amount would only be 15%. She is furious about the lies and thinks there is not nearly enough communication. Unfortunately she says she never would have made these payments if she knew the money was actually not going to arrive. Upon further investigation, it was revealed that the application was made through Coldiretti, but she is now no longer a member. Therefore, she feels helpless about who she can ask for help to resolve this issue which was not completely followed through by Coldiretti.
 6. Three years ago, in the locale of Giaveno in Val Sangone, four young people (two couples of 27 years old) bought a piece of land from which now they make almost all of their income. They also rent another piece of land from a local farmer who does not require payment but there is no contract and he can take the land back at any moment putting their incomes at risk. The farm produces chestnuts, small forest berries, apples (fresh and dried) and marmalade. They sell at markets, festivals and to one of the GAS groups in Avigliana which has over 100 consumers. The email orders arrive every week and it is a very efficient system for selling their items since they are in an isolated area. One of their greatest needs is more processing facilities because they currently have to drive to Fossano to transform their fruit into jam. Regarding funding, they received PSR money



- from the Insediamento Giovani but they have been waiting since 2007 for the money to arrive. Another issue they face is from the ignorance of consumers, the high prices that they need to sell their items and the closed minds of the older people in Val Sangone. Their strengths, however, are in the efficiency of transporting the food a short distance such as Avigliana for the GAS group. They feel that there are no organizations in Piemonte or Italy that directly help farmers. They would like more help for young people to acquire land such as the numerous abandoned plots that they say are located in this valley.
7. In the town of Vespolate, province of Vercelli, is a rice farm with a 48 year old owner who inherited the land from his family. He produces rice and rice flour and sells at markets, on the farm and directly to private families. He stated that although there are 800 farms in Novara that grow rice, *only two* sell locally whereas the rest sell to industrial producers who sell the rice all over the world. He was able to get some funding from PSR for using compost on his land but he struggles with finding efficient sales outlets as well as the lack of consumer knowledge on this subject and distribution issues. He is a member of Coldiretti and is very appreciative of the Campagna Amica market in Novara, but would like to see more efforts made to link local food to schools and hospitals. In fact, local rice would be a very easy food item for cafeterias to start purchasing if the price difference could be managed. This farmer did not know anything about GAS groups in Novara, which could be a great solution for a non-perishable, bulk item such as rice. This farmer was very interested in a solution like the PiProBi system in Biella and was disappointed he could not sell to them since he is not a Biellesi producer. Therefore, he is investigating the possibility of starting a replication in the Novara province.
 8. Another farmer at the market in Novara, located in Landiona, is a family-run farm which grows fruit and vegetables, and is an agriturismo with an ancient restored mill. Recently they received money from PSR to produce marmalade with their fruit which they also use with their small cakes that they sell at the market. They feel that the province of Novara is in great need of processing facilities saying, for example, most of the grapes in this area are being sent to Switzerland to make wine because it is cheaper than anything they can find locally. There is also a need for processing fruit into marmalade. One of the greatest challenges for them regarding local food in Piemonte is the food culture; “people need to eat less but eat quality.” The strength of selling local food for them is the direct contact with consumers and the trust that forms with these relationships. Furthermore, he feels that there are really no organizations that directly help farmers (despite the fact that he is a Coldiretti member). This farm tried to enter a GAS group but they said it was too hard to enter, because this GAS wanted a specific type of farmer. He was disappointed and frustrated and would like to find another way to sell in this manner. Interestingly, this farm is also a teaching farm and one local teacher, organizes lessons at her public school about farming and growing food and then the children visit the farm.
 9. One vegetable farm in Chieri, run by a father and son, shared an inexpensive and efficient system they created for heating their greenhouses. They grow their own corn which they concentrate in bundles and burn to create energy to run hot water through pipes at the base of their greenhouses. They were able to get funding from the region for this resourceful heating system. The land is from the family and they mostly sell at markets (including the two Campagna Amica markets in Alpignano) as well as to a weekly GAS group in Torino of 30 families which is located in Piazza Madama Cristina. Although they plan to continue their farming operation, they are frustrated with the lack of consumer knowledge and feel that there are no organizations that directly help farmers or spread information to consumers.



10. In the Val di Susa up on a hill above Venaus is a unique cooperative started by eight people two years ago that share a passion to grow food and sell it locally. The land was abandoned and quite wild and the owner was contacted about renting the space to these growers. With permission from the owner, Dalla Terra Native was born. It was an arduous task clearing the land, protecting it from wild boars and other animals and tilling. Furthermore, they have expressed the difficulties with working as such a large group. Many meetings have been necessary in order to organize themselves and work efficiently and in harmony. One of the greatest things about them is that they do not want to be isolated but bring society together and share their thoughts on sustainability and how people can best survive in a way that is pleasurable, less energy-dependent and more healthy. They invite people onto the land to learn about growing food and the steps they took to cultivate their land. In regards to funding, they believe that “public funds destroy the market and the only way to survive is to be self-sufficient.” Terra Nativa offers an impressively long list of fruits and vegetables on their website and sell in various methods. These include online orders that are delivered to private homes, direct sales from the farm, festivals throughout the year and the weekly markets of Susa and Venaus. They are hoping to keep their food within a 15km radius to greatly reduce the distances that food is traveling. The owners range in age from 30-57 years and all of them, except for one, plan to make this their only source of income. Their beliefs in a sustainable food system are contagious and they are spreading their message simply by presenting a beautiful abundance of produce at every event they attend which is always meticulously and creatively arranged.

Interestingly another farmer in Venaus complained that the valley was too blocked and that there were not enough opportunities for local growers to sell their items because of the competition from commercial sellers at the market in Bussoleno. A farmer in this situation could consider joining this cooperative or finding other opportunities because he mentioned that he has land he would consider renting to young farmers as a way to increase locally grown food.



FIGURE 26.
TWO OF THE 8 FARMERS
FROM DALLA TERRA NATIVE
IN VENAUS (TO)



11. In San Benigno Canavese there is a project started specifically to promote local food. The farming operation is run by a couple (48 years old) on rented land where they biodynamically produce vegetables following the practices originally promoted by Rudolf Steiner. Currently they only sell their vegetables at the markets in Volpiano, Torino and Leini and are not part of any GAS groups. Unfortunately they have not been able to find any funding opportunities and instead struggle with paying the loans for their rented land. Not surprisingly their biggest complaint is that it is almost impossible to find land to grow food and that it is too expensive to buy. Where they are currently located, land costs approximately €10/sq.meter whereas they reported that land in the hills of Chivasso is only €1/sq.meter. They are currently searching for a new piece of land to rent for next year despite the difficulties of changing homes, which also includes their teenage son. Furthermore, they are not able to receive enough money from this business for it to be their only source of income so they are additionally working other jobs. They do feel that the local food movement is growing in their area and at least they are located near urban areas with sales outlets.

Mauro expressed interest in a computer-based direct-sales system (such as GAS) because the time and effort required for reaching the markets has not been satisfactory for them. This year they finished their produce in January but next year if there are more sales opportunities they will increase their production levels. This case is unusual in the sense that they are the only instance in this research of an older couple attempting to start a new life in agriculture by renting property. Their determination and creative energy is a great contribution for the food security of the Canavese area if a more effective solution can be derived.

12. In 2008 a young farmer (29 years old) started his own farm in Val di Lanzo near Pont Canvese. The property was bought where he grows fruit and vegetables in a greenhouse and outdoors fertilizing with manure from local cow and horse farms. He is also using 700 square meters of land for growing potatoes from a woman that believes in his ideals and doesn't charge him rent. He is able to live with his parents in the village nearby which is a huge help while beginning his business.

This valley is in need of rural development; it's blocked at Ceresole Reale and therefore is quite poor in comparison to the valleys that continue to France. The biggest challenge for him is the closed mentality of the old people in the valley (they all think he is crazy and won't last) and that there are no young people here. At this same time, the isolation of this mountain area helped him receive the amount of his EU funding which would have been much lower in a more developed area. He also claims that it's challenging to grow enough to survive since he is alone and that during the tourist season there are not enough sales outlets. He has asked at almost all of the hotels, restaurants and grocery stores in his valley whether he could sell to them but they all prefer their contracts with large distribution companies. For the most part, he waits at the farm during the summer months for tourists who arrive from two signs on the main provincial road for which he pays €100/year.

This farmer received funding from PSR (2007-2013) which totals €55,000 although he has been waiting for two years now for the money. The awards were for Insediamento Giovani and funds for his van (35% paid by PSR), equipment and a house for transforming marmalade and making honey (55% from PSR). He said it is a requirement that everything purchased must be new which made it very expensive, especially for the van. He wonders if he would have been better off without the funding so he could have bought used equipment. Although there is no funding directly for greenhouses he was able to use some of the money for his €1,000 greenhouse. Originally he went to Coldiretti



in Rivarolo for assistance to apply for PSR funding and they told him it wasn't possible because of the small size of his plot of land. Interestingly, the Confagricoltura office in Rivarolo wanted to help him and therefore he became a member with them and completed the paperwork for PSR with them. He expressed extreme frustration and concern about the fact that in Italy it is practically obligatory to apply for funding through a farmer's union instead because of the insurmountable bureaucracy to do it directly yourself. He's also angry that these unions take 2-3% of the total amount of funding and that he is also required to pay Confagricoltura an annual fee of €100. He feels there is no assistance in return except for the application for PSR. Furthermore, Confagricoltura does not organize farmers markets like Coldiretti, so if he wants to sell at a Campagna Amica market he now needs to become a member also of Coldiretti and pay the yearly fee.

The organization Slow Food awarded him *Maestro del Gusto* in 2010 for his bietola (swiss chard). They chemically analyzed it and discovered it was superior in quality, lack of chemicals and is high in healthy vitamins and minerals, perhaps from the rich earth and glacial water for irrigation coming from the mountains. Another boost from SlowFood came when he was invited by Eataly to cook soup with his pumpkins to serve at a dinner one night. In addition to the organization Slow Food, he feels that the association ASCI (Associazione di Solidarieta per la Campagna Italiana) is very supportive and helpful for small producers.

In the future he plans to increase production considerably in the hopes that he can grow one or two items in bulk to sell to a local restaurant or shop. Also the closest GAS groups are in Ivrea (where there are two, one strictly organic and one more flexible) where he might consider delivering when he has enough produce. He foresees honey as a profitable venture for the future and hopes that with sales from marmalade and honey he can survive the winters. Also next year he will begin teaching elementary students at a nearby public school how to grow vegetables. Each student will have their own small plot and the school has agreed to pay a small amount of money for his time.

Alessandro was subsequently told about the replication of PiProBi starting in Valperga and due to this information he has been attending meetings with other interested growers and has the intention of selling through this new, innovative system in 2011.



FIGURE 27.
ABOVE: YOUNG OWNER OF
ORGANIC VEGETABLE FARM IN VAL
DI LANZO
BELOW: SEASONAL TUNNELS AND
VAN/LABORATORY POSSIBLE FROM
PSR FUNDING

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

13. There is a farm in Caramagna that originally only cultivated wheat and corn for direct sales to consumers but recently shifted in October 2010 to produce biogas after witnessing a neighbor make the same transition. This farmer was thinking about the future of his son and hopes that there is a better future in energy than in food grains. Although they have taken out huge loans and invested heavily in both machinery and buildings, the temptation of the price paid per kilowatt was enough to switch. They still produce some wheat to sell at markets and to Eataly. They estimate that their gross income is €500,000 a year with €220,000 for bank loans and €40/50,000 for operational costs. Their contract with GSE (www.gse.it) provides an all-inclusive rate of 0.28 €/kw and is guaranteed for 15 years.



Only grain and manure (liquid and solid) is used in the biogas production which is a year-round process since the grains never freeze (enough heat is created during the fermentation). The manure is coming from nearby livestock farms and is separated into solid and liquid and then is mixed with the grains in the correct proportions. They bought a truck that has a “mixer” in the back for €100,000. The mixtures must remain in the digestion tanks for a minimum of 60 days with constant stirring from enormous paddles in the tanks for proper gas creation. Two rooms display complex computer screens that constantly monitor the temperatures of every piece of equipment as well as the precise amount of various gases created. The remaining mixture is further separated into liquid and solids, which are spread for fertilization on their fields. Interestingly the farmer was a Coldiretti member for decades but is now planning to switch to Confagricoltura because of political reasons. He feels separated from the KM zero/filiera corta initiatives of Coldiretti and is also angry that they are publicly opposed to biogas production.

14. One farm in Castino (CN), located down a long, narrow dirt road is owned by a husband and wife team of 56 years old whom bought the farm 15 years ago. It is their only form of income producing fruit, vegetables, honey and grapes for wine that is sold to a local cooperative. They felt that there is not a great need for processing facilities in their area (near Cortemila) which is partly due to the work done by the EcoMuseo of Cortemilia which has connected several local growers together. This couple is very aware of PSR possibilities and applied for the Insediamento Giovani by putting the farm in the name of his son (30 years old). They were told 2 years ago that their application was accepted but they are still waiting for the money and plan to wait another year. They are members of Coldiretti and specifically subscribe to the Associazione Produttori Biologici Terramica which is a subgroup of Coldiretti that targets helping organic growers. It began in 1991 and now consists of over 400 groups throughout Piemonte which represents all sectors of agriculture. The farmer stressed that Coldiretti needs to listen more directly to farmers and make more efforts to speak face-to-face.

It is noteworthy that he and his wife can survive comfortably with the salary they receive from this very small farm (less than 2 hectares). By selling their grapes to a local cooperative they receive €10,000/yr and with sales from their honey alone they net €20,000/yr. The vegetables sold at markets and directly at the farm are an additional source of income. Although most farmers (especially young) cannot access land suitable for grape-growing, it is noteworthy to consider the profitable opportunities with honey sales in Piemonte.

15. A farm in Fossano (CN) is a very inspiring mix of activities. This group of three people grow vegetables, fruits and hazelnuts using organic farming methods on 14 hectares and 12 unheated greenhouses. The initiative began 7 years ago on land that came from the family of one of the owners and this is their only source of income, as well as 9 employees that are also involved with a farm restaurant they opened in 2010. They feel that local food is definitely becoming more popular in Piemonte and they are involved with several projects to educate consumers on the importance of KM0. They also have their own laboratory for processing their fruits and vegetable into preserves and sauces, creams and dressings, pickles, and appetizers with vegetables, as well as fruit syrup. In the winter and spring they offer their processing services (with a contract) to other producers who want to preserve their products. The producers leave their items and Irene does the processing into glass jars (about 10-20,000 jars for others each year). Currently they have approximately 8 producers each year that use this service (one from Giaveno and the rest from Cuneo). The additional income provided by the laboratory comes at a perfect time of the year (December-March) when there are less farm activities.



The items from this farm are sold to cooperatives, through GAS groups, in France (where they can sell for double the Italian prices) and at major retail markets such as Eataly in Torino. They sell 8,000 jars/year to Eataly but have not been able to sell their fresh produce due to competition from one large producer in Bra who predominantly grows all the Eataly vegetables (not organically). They also have a farm shop open daily with fresh, seasonal produce and processed items, in addition to other items from nearby organic producers. Andrea reported that initially they tried to sell their items at the general markets in Fossano but the competition from the commercial sellers and the low amount of consumers made it a waste of time. They used the markets as a way to meet consumers who were interested in local, organic produce and from these connections they formed several GAS in Mondovi, Cuneo, Bra, Savigliano, Vicoforte and Fossano. Every week they send their members the current availability of their products by email or telephone. When the orders are received the packages are prepared and delivered on the appointed day. According to Andrea, his GAS consumers are equally concerned with *certified organic* production as well as reducing their food miles (although this clientele prefers home delivery).

At this dynamic farm they firmly believe that small farmers in Piemonte urgently need an alternative from the traditional markets which are becoming less and less of a “farmers market” every day and are “a thing of the past for real producers”. The farmer is currently working with the Comune of Fossano and the Slow Food Fossano group to start a “real farmers market” disconnected from the Campagna Amica markets which are held in Fossano every Saturday and have 7 producers. In general, he feels that the mentality of people in Cuneo is too closed which makes it difficult to start new initiatives. They are especially lacking young growers due to the high price of land and relatively few cities with sales potential. A lot of land surrounding their farm is being “rented” by private companies that have placed dozens of rows of solar panels to sell energy to ENEL. These companies pay €2-5,000/hectare depending on the amount of radiation. Andrea was also contacted by this company but he decided to create energy with his greenhouses instead despite the fact that he only makes €700/hectare.

Furthermore, this farm is an educational farm that offers programs for primary and secondary school students to understand agroecosystems, organic farming and biodiversity of the landscape. The students pay €4-6/day and last year 650 groups aged 3-14 years attended lessons. They currently offer four different courses including:

1. “The Garden and Its Seasons” where students build a garden, plant seeds and manually work in the plot.
2. “The Transformation of Garden Products” gives students the chance to harvest produce and process the items in the laboratory following traditional recipes while also learning to read food and nutrition labels.
3. “Discovering the Agro-Ecosystem” allows students to understand the interaction between crops and the environment by searching for animal tracks and collecting plant specimens.
4. “The Land” educates about the importance of soil health, the nitrogen cycle and the role of earthworms.

There are also courses and guided educational and tasting events for adults to partake in every month of the year. Currently this is the only farm that students from the University of Gastronomic Science in Pollenzo visit. He agrees that the University is too focused on the end product of high-quality food and doesn't include enough practical agricultural knowledge or farm visits outside of their classroom.



Unfortunately it is necessary for them to take out several loans to continue their work. Fifty years ago when Andrea's father began the farm he only needed to invest €7,000 whereas he has taken over €700,000 in loans. They were able to receive some funding from PSR because they are certified organic (they paid €900/year and the region refunded them €700). One of the biggest problems they have had with applying for funds is the short opening times, for example with the PSR Measure that provided for Punto Vendita (Farm Sales) which was only open for 5 days in June (one of their busiest periods on the farm). They feel that there are no organizations in Italy that directly help farmers or that inform consumers enough about the issues related to eating locally. Their greatest challenge is the constant onslaught of supermarkets but they feel the quality of their products as well as the relationship they have with their consumers is enough to allow them to continue this work for many years.



PIEMONTE FOOD SYSTEM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

As previously mentioned, there exist several strengths for the local food system in Piemonte, some of which include the following organizations and grassroots groups. Due to a limitation in the research timeframe, more stakeholders were not interviewed. This list is not prioritized or selected from any predetermined requirements.

Cooperatives

GAS Groups

PiProBi: Model System

EcoMuseums

Coldiretti

Slow Food organization

Cooperatives

Cascina Cornale (CN) www.cornale.it

Il Cornale is an agricultural cooperative based in Magliano Alfieri (CN) and is composed of approximately 80 small and medium sized farms (mostly from Piemonte and Liguria). Their goal is to conserve and promote sustainable agriculture and maintain relationships among consumers and farmers based on a reciprocal system of trust. Through the online system of sales (AgriSpesa and AgriCeste) Cascina Cornale is able to meet their mission. The cooperative began in 1997 with a group of nine small farmers who used the old building of Cascina Cornale for their headquarters. In 2000 they also opened an agriturismo in this cascina and offered farm-based education to school children. Today, however these activities are no longer functioning due to economic reasons. In 2003 they began the online system of AgriSpesa and in 2007 moved the operation to a much larger facility in Magliano Alfieri that resembles a warehouse of supplies where the items are delivered by farmers. There are 3-4 workers and 400 families that are assisted with this delivery service, mostly residing in Milano, Torino, Genova and Como. There are no requirements for farmers that are interested to join and no minimum amount of weekly production. Il Cornale visits every farm regularly to ensure that no chemicals or GMOs are used and that animals are treated humanely. For all of the farmers, selling to Cornale is not their only or main source of income and instead represents approximately 10%. Products for consumers to choose from include pasta, liqueurs, salami, eggs, vegetables, jams, honey, milk and cheese, detergents, flour, herbs, cookies, oil, yogurt, wine and several other choices. Every item listed on the site has the name and location of the producer, their agricultural production methods and a biography of the farm. There is a minimum order amount of €38 for a delivery although farmers do not have to pay anything to enter. The weekly deliveries have one day for the towns: Tuesdays for Alba, Asti, Alessandria and Pavia, Wednesdays for Torino and Milano, etc.

During an interview in January 2011 with the manager, Elena Rovera, it was noted that one of their weaknesses is acquiring more consumers. Demand is *not* exceeding supply here which is a contrast from PiProBi in Biella, for example. They don't advertise and instead depend on word-of-mouth. Ideally, they need to be delivering 200 more crates every week to be more financially sound but with the economic crisis they are suffering. In reality they have enough families signed up as members but on average only 400 actually order per week. This



is one reason why the CSA system in the USA works better for farmers and cooperatives that depend on the annual income of these members.

From an environmental and sustainable perspective it can be argued whether this food transportation system is practical since much of the food is grown over 1-2 hours from Magliano Alfieri and then transported weekly to homes 1-3 hours away. Figure 26 shows the location of most of the farms for Il Cornale (darkest color) as well as the consumer delivery areas (medium shade).



FIGURE 28. LOCATION OF IL CORNALE FARMERS (DARKEST SHADE) AND DELIVERIES (MEDIUM SHADE)

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Elena believes it was more efficient than all of the families driving to grocery stores (one van can deliver to about 100 homes). However, it can be argued that these families are most likely still buying things at the grocery store and that possibly a more locally-based system such as in Biella is more ecological. Elena claims their problem is largely logistical because in Magliano Alfieri there are mostly small farmers who are harder to source from, whereas the larger farms are located farther away (as our most of the consumers). There is another similar cooperative system in Roma, called Zolle (www.zolle.it), whose owner worked for Il Cornale for 5 years before replicating it in Lazio. There are no other cooperatives in Italy who allow consumers to choose exactly what they want and receive items from small farmers. Il Cornale was able to receive funding from five different measures of PSR and they reported no problems related to applying and then receiving the money. Furthermore, there are no Italian laws of regulations that hinder their work.

Elena firmly believes that the farmers markets in Italy these days are

"...lacking common sense...waiting all day to make sales to non-existent consumers because they are all working in offices. In the past, when women were largely stay-at-home housewives it made sense to have the markets during morning hours, but these days it's not as effective for farmers and selling their items online such with as AgriSpesa is more effective. It is hoped that through these deliveries of fresh produce, more women will cook meals and eat together with their families, something that is being lost in many homes throughout northern Italy."



Social Cooperative P.G. Frassati (TO) www.coopfrassati.it

In Piemonte there are 19 social farms with 9 in the province of Torino, 6 in Alessandria, 2 in Asti, 1 in Vercelli and 1 in Cuneo. The Frassati cooperative was founded in 1976 by several volunteers and workers and now includes 300 members that are engaged in the production and management of many social services, education, health and welfare. From the beginning this cooperative prioritized its assistance to psychiatric patients, children, elderly and those that are mentally and physically disabled. The cooperative provides residential centers as well as professional educators to train some of the workers for specific skills and future careers. There is now a network of services for 22 different public bodies and cooperatives in the municipalities of Turin, Alpignano, Chivasso Grugliasco Ivrea Moncalieri, Orbassano, Pianezza, Pino Torinese, Piovascote, Rivarolo, Susa, Susa Valley and Venaria.

Some of the following services are provided by the workers at Frassati Cooperative: grass cutting, plant pruning, planting trees, treating various materials, rodent control, cleaning public buildings and agricultural production. There is also an extensive vegetable farm that includes three greenhouses, tunnels and 6000 square meters of open fields producing vegetables that are sold at markets, festivals and directly from the farm to the local community in Torino. Equipment is often adjusted to meet the needs of the worker's handicap such as tractors, drills, mowers and brush cutters, chainsaws and hoes.

They believe that at their cooperative, agriculture is the instrument that increases the wellbeing of everyone involved. In regards to funding opportunities, there is Misura 311 of PSR from the EU as well as some private funds and funds from the province for disabled people. Frassati cooperative stated that the problems they face include marketing, educating and communicating to civilians about their service and rigid regulations that limit their functioning. They are hoping for new regional laws that ease the administration of these public services.

Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS)

There are numerous GAS in Piemonte with new ones being created all the time. Most of them function similarly with volunteer consumers organizing the bulk orders and one person taking the responsibility of a particular food that he or she will divide at the weekly pick-up location. Most of the GAS groups focus solely on organic food and ethical considerations are also very important such as fair working conditions and various sustainability issues.

Torino

1. One 81-family GAS in Torino was created by a group of neighbors 3 years ago. There are 30 different producers involved of various ages, including Frutto del Permesso from Bibbiana. There is one main pick-up point in Grugliasco as well as via Napione for Frutto del Permesso items. Each of the 30 products are organized by a volunteer family who divides items depending on what each family requests. The main motivations are reduction in prices, supporting farmers and producers directly and also creating a group of conscientious individuals that help each other in times of need. Every week each person makes their order depending on what is listed as available on the website. This is a lot of work for the vegetable growers since they need to organize so many items, but they also have the flexibility to post any of their items online. A follow-up interview in February 2011 revealed that this GAS group is actively discussing finding a new way to



meet their needs. They have discovered that their system is too complicated and too much work with over 80 families to organize. They're very interested to learn more about the PiProBi system and how the computer software used in Biella could improve their purchasing and distributing methods. A cooperative Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) might also be more efficient and effective for both the farmers and consumers involved in this GAS.

2. La Sfinge of Leone Giuseppe in Poirino is the only organic vegetable and fruit supplier for this 200 person GAS in Torino. He enthusiastically agreed that for him selling to a GAS is much more efficient and better than the markets. This group also sources rice, oil, wine, pasta, etc and meets on via Santa Croce 22 Moncalieri at the Sani Habitudine shop as well as in Torino on via Paolo Guidana.

Moncalieri www.lagemmadellavita.com

This GAS began in December of 2010 and currently has more than 65 members who work closely with several Piemontese producers as well as cooperatives in Sicily. The produce is delivered weekly in 6kg and 2kg packs to meet the volume needs of different families. 50% of the packaging is re-used for future arrivals and product quality is one of the aims. The philosophy of "ethics" is closely adhered to with this GAS and after the first purchases they realized it was necessary to create l'Associazione Ecologista di Promozione Sociale La Gemma della Vita (The Association for Promoting Social Ecologist) which is based in Moncalieri, TO. They have worked diligently (albeit voluntarily) to efficiently organize their activities to optimize cost savings without sacrificing quality. They also adhere to the philosophies of "I do something for you, you do something for me". Future projects include energy conservation, efficient transportation and water usage. At the pick-up site they provide permanent information for the other consumers in order to increase everyone's knowledge on sustainability.

Avigliana

There are two GAS groups in Avigliana. One has 70 families signed up (although only 25 are actively involved weekly) and the other is more than 100 families. The smaller one works by a weekly pick-up point of various items in bulk ranging from oil, wine, rice and oranges from Sicily.

PiProBi: The model system

www.piccoliproduttoriabellesi.it

Piccoli Produttori Biellesi (PiProBi) was initiated in 2008 by a group of 5 producers that wanted to sell directly to consumers. They started by joining forces with a local GAS group and began very small, selling only vegetables to about 20 consumers with a pick-up location in a garage. Today they have grown to 25 producers strictly from the province of Biella, selling meat, cheese, vegetables and fruit, honey and marmalade and various grains. They are not required to be organic, and currently there is a mix of conventional, biodynamic and organic producers. This system is particularly helpful for producers that only have 1-2 items to sell in the winter months such as kiwi. This was the case for one producer who was happy to avoid waiting all day in the cold at an outdoor market to try selling only kiwis, whereas instead he brings them one night per week, quickly placing them in consumer's baskets. Monica Arnaldi from Azienda Agricola Momo produces marmalade from her fruit, and she



affirmed that for her this system is also much more useful than waiting all day at a market. Farmers receive the same price selling to PiProBi as they do at the market, which makes it a win-win situation for them.

Today in 2011, there are over 300 consumers and the manager reported that the interest is growing all the time with a long waiting list of eager consumers. In their second year they actually doubled in size but right now they are keeping the size as it is. It only costs €3 to join PiProBi (as a consumer or producer) and €5 to purchase the crate. It took two years to create the software system that they currently use and they had the free help of a local programming company. This brilliant system is very efficient and functions in the following way: every Monday afternoon until Tuesday afternoon the website is open for farmers to enter what they have to sell for the week and the consumers make their purchases. Once the site closes on Tuesday afternoon, the farmers immediately receive the orders and print out stickers with the information. Each consumer is assigned a number that correlates to the consumer's crate number. The farmers make their "orders" (bags of potatoes, pears, Swiss chard, jars of honey, packages of frozen meat, containers of yogurt, etc) and place the appropriate stickers on the items. Then they arrive to the weekly meeting place on Wednesday nights from 5-7pm (in a covered pavilion provided for free by the association, CittadelleArte) and place the items in the appropriate crate. There are several rows of these colored plastic crates, each one containing a number and freezer bag for meat and cheeses. Forty percent of the consumers come to pick up their boxes and 60% have home deliveries. These are provided for free for 17 communes in Biella with a minimum purchase of €10 and the farmers take turns volunteering as drivers for the deliveries (7-9pm Wednesday night and 9-12am Thursdays).

Although there was some funding from the region for this initiative because Biella is a rural mountainous area, there are no paid "employees". At the Wednesday pick-up location there is a woman volunteering to help manage consumers and answer questions and the president of PiProBi (also a producer) is volunteering as well.

PiProBi is very willing to help other provinces start this system and will provide their computer software program for free which can be downloaded off their website. Currently the town of Valperga is attempting to create a similar system, and the contact person is Luigi Vernerio (348 3182973). This will be the first attempt in Piemonte to reproduce this direct sales approach using this particular computer software in another province. The plans are to begin in 2011 and there is already a list of producers that will partake as well as consumers. The focus right now is for Canavese producers and Luigi says there will be more producers than in Biella. To begin they are working with a GAS group in Ivrea, one in Cirié and a small GAS in Torino.

Other areas that might profit from this PiProBi system would be Pinerolo, several towns in the province of Cuneo such as Borgo San Dalmazzo, Alessandria, Bra, Asti, Borgomanero and Novara.



FIGURE 29.
PIPROBI IN BIELLA. ABOVE:
LOCATION OF WEEKLY MEETING
POINT
BELOW: ROWS OF BASKETS
EFFICIENTLY FILLED WITH WEEKLY
ORDERS

Source: IRES Piemonte

EcoMuseums

Cortemilia

The Ecomuseum in Cortemilia is trying to facilitate direct contacts between producers and consumers and promotes the project "Producers of the basket of terraced landscapes of the Alta Langa" which includes 12 producers. The strategy they have adopted includes promoting a common image of the area, its heritage and local food products. There is also emphasis on communicating the products of this territory and supporting actions and initiatives that demonstrate their production. Short food supply chains have been



constructed and the importance of the ecoterracing in this area is emphasized. The beautifully restructured walls at the site of Monteoliveto are the showcase of this project. The hope is to share their experiences and knowledge with other small producers who live and work in terraced areas in Italy and Europe. Regarding regional assistance, the Regional Law 31/95 – Establishment of Ecomuseums Piedmont Region, was initiated for the preservation and enhancement of historical traditions and material cultures.

During an interview with Donatella Murtas, the manager of the Cortemilia Ecomuseo, she stated that there is a lack of funding for this project and that it is in danger of collapsing. Perhaps since the farmers and producers are already “in place” and in contact with each other they can continue the mission of the museum. Although Cortemilia is a tourism destination in summer months, the area remains isolated the rest of the year with few sales outlets for local producers. The boost from this Ecomuseum for local food chains has helped the producers that were initially part of the discussion and hopefully others will join through the network that has developed.

Coldiretti Torino

The President of Coldiretti in Torino confirmed that their Campagna Amica markets are directly organized by Coldiretti (they choose the locations) and it is only open for farmer members of Coldiretti. There are four Coldiretti employees that control these 15 Torino markets. Interestingly there is a list of rigid rules that farmers need to abide by to be certified as a Campagna Amica producer which is more difficult than a typical public market. For example, they are not allowed to sell *anything* that they did not produce themselves whereas regular producers can follow the Legge 228 which states they only need to produce 51% of their own items. All Campagna Amica farmers display a yellow-green label which helps to differentiate them from the other growers. The President felt that through educational farms, education in public schools and advertisement at markets they are educating consumers about the importance of local food. Also, Coldiretti is present at various community events such as a recycling initiative in Piazza Madama Cristina where they educated citizens about compost and food mileage comparisons.



FIGURE 30.
COLDIRETTI STALL:
EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL
ABOUT COMPOSTING
ORGANIC MATERIAL

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011



Slow Food International

International SlowFood Office, Bra

A series of questions was presented to employees at the International SlowFood office in relation to what measures they are taking to directly assist local producers in Piemonte and educate consumers in the region about supporting local products. They were sensitive about our investigation and very few questions were answered. The original questionnaires used in this research questioned farmers about whether they felt SlowFood was assisting them and a vast majority were not in favor of this organization and felt it was a group of rich elites. The question was subsequently changed to ask whether *any* organizations in Piemonte or Italy were providing assistance.

University of Gastronomic Science, Pollenzo

This University, founded by SlowFood, emphasizes quality food from farm-level production to the end product. Originally the University offered very little educationally in regard to hands-on agricultural experiences but they have recently installed a small garden which will be run by the students. There are also more attempts to connect with local farmers. An Agroecology Professor, Ms. Migliorini, is now employed fulltime and teaches Crop Production for undergraduates and Sustainable Agriculture in the master program. Professor Colin Sage teaches Food Geography with a course dedicated to, “Meet your Meat” which educates students about knowing where their food comes from.

Eataly

This large food store focuses solely on Italian Slow Food products with hundreds of items from Piemonte and an assortment of high quality restaurants. Furthermore, there is a monthly farmers market that is described later in this report. Although prices are high and small producers complain that it is impossible to enter because of the necessary high volume, this store is still benefiting several local producers.

Slow Food Festivals

Slow Food festivals highlighting traditional products in the Piemonte region have a real potential to bring attention to local farming. One example of this was seen at the Slow Food Rice festival in Vigevano in September of 2010. Not only were several local farmers present with various rice-based products, but it gave agricultural organizations, cooperatives and GAS groups recognition and a place to sell their products and ideas. One GAS group, Fiume Azzurro, shared the same table as the Slow Food organization in the main lobby which provided them with a visible location for meeting new members and explaining their mission. The Cavour Apple Festival devoted a huge room to Slow Food to educate consumers about the biodiversity of the regions’ apples as well as tasting sessions and information panels. The internationally acclaimed bi-annual festival of Terra Madre and Salone del Gusto held in Torino are further Slow Food events that indirectly support local food schemes. Although producers arrive from around the world, there is significant space dedicated to Italian producers and it is an unique opportunity for consumers to discover and appreciate rare food items from Piemonte to Nepal. Several Piemontese farmers were unenthusiastic about this event because they were angry about the high costs to attend as a local producer.



INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF SLOWFOOD AND LOCAL FOOD PERSPECTIVES

The international organization SlowFood has some implications for local food movements when it directly improves producer sales opportunities through new market outlets or by educating consumers about rare or high quality regional items. Every country has a different approach to the ideals presented by this group depending on their needs and cultural practices. During July and August 2011 research was conducted in Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the United States regarding SlowFood and local food initiatives. Refer to the Annex for the SlowFood questionnaire.

Austria

According to Roswitha Six at the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) in Vienna, Austria the main reasons Austrian consumers purchase local products is for regionality, followed by freshness, nutrition and organic. The regional governments all support their own typical food products which are displayed on the national website www.genuss-region.at, which allows consumers to learn how various foods are produced and where they can be purchased. In regard to SlowFood, there is the Arche des Geschmacks (Ark of Flavor) which describes various rare and endangered food items throughout the country and Vienna is proud to offer their own version of a Terra Madre festival.

Interviews

1. Gudrun Wagner, MSc student of Organic Agriculture at University of Vienna
“In Austria organic food became popular when it began being sold in the large grocery stores such as Maran, Basic and Bio-Supermarket. The problem is that there is no regional selection with these organic items. There is only one CSA in Austria but a few box schemes exist where consumers get weekly boxes of organic food delivered to their door. The main consumer motivation for local food seems to be to reduce food miles and support local economies.”
“Regarding SlowFood there is a Terra Madre Vienna which demonstrates some products that are receiving funding to be protected (ex. grubenkraut, an overwintered cabbage and krainer steinschaf, a race of sheep). It was inspired by the Terra Madre in Torino held in 2006. Each region in Austria has there own SlowFood group but the stereotype exists ubiquitously that it is only for rich gourmands.”
2. Joseph Wagner, Owner of Bio Panaramahotel Wagner
“The Austrians that are interested in regional food are older than 30 years and the younger generations only eat what they see in TV ads.” Joseph feels that the motivations for local food consumption in Austria are flavor and new tastes and this interest is really growing. There are very few young farmers because there is a huge amount of funding necessary and it is very bureaucratic to start a new venture. Even to grow vegetables it is very regulated and requires several permits and he stressed that it is much easier in the USA to take out loans and start your own business.
3. Familie Peter and Waltraud Niel, Organic sheep and goat farmers in Schwarza im Gebirge, Austria
“Our cheese is sold through small farmers markets in the larger cities where there is more appreciation for regional products. The farm was purchased in 1989 with loans and although we are able to survive as a family only selling farm cheese, it is almost impossible



today for our children to try to do the same thing due to land expenses.” She was not aware of any funding for local production, only for organic agriculture. Raw milk is not legally sold in Austria and this is something she is actively lobbying against. Waltraud also felt that SlowFood was not directly helping in any way for local food production and that they were a group of elites.

Switzerland

Although Switzerland is not able to become completely self-sufficient in its food supply they currently provide approximately 60% of their nutritional needs. There are over 100,000 hectares cultivated for wheat, with additional land used for barley, oats and other grains. When the market became oversaturated with food quality grains, the government began compensating farmers for using less fertilizer and provided bonuses for feed grain. Domestic production and processing of sugar beets covers about half of Swiss sugar consumption and rapeseed production meets 1/5 of the nation’s needs. Vegetables are grown by 5,000 farmers and provide for about 50% of the Swiss market (www.agriculture.ch).

Interviews

1. Andi Thommen, Frick, Switzerland; FiBL organic seed saver
“Local food in Switzerland is considered anything grown within the country but ‘regional’ is becoming more popular in the last 5 years.” Farmers markets are generally not very popular possibly related to the fact that the international Coop supermarket sells several regional and local products and takes the place of previously held markets.
Land is very expensive due to the dense population of this country and even though local is popular the number of young farmers are not increasing and small farms are being eliminated all the time. Community-supported agriculture is not very common although there is a good example in Basel of a farm with over 500 members. They were able to receive funding from a wealthy, private source. From an energy and transport angle, choosing local over certified organic can be more environmentally friendly, such as the case with wheat in Switzerland. Organic is usually a mix of Canadian and Romanian wheat whereas conventional is almost entirely Swiss-grown. There is no specific funding for local food production but there are research initiatives to study the sustainability of rural, local farms and county and national funding for rural development (Switzerland can’t receive EU funding).
Regarding Andi’s thoughts on SF; “SlowFood is for the privileged, rich gourmands that like to eat. They seem to be focused on recipes and the end-product, not the farmers or production. There is more being done in Switzerland by organizations such as FiBL and Pro Species Raro to preserve rare or endangered varieties (for example there are >350 varieties of cherries protected through these groups). SlowFood is too particular about the exact area or location of production than the actual variety. For example, Andi claims that Parma ham can be produced with *Dutch pigs* as long as it is produced in Parma. Of course SlowFood has different meanings in different countries but in Switzerland it is mostly focused on recipes and tasty food.”
2. Antonio Caputo, farmer
“Local food” signifies “regional” and is becoming more popular although very slowly. There is very little funding for starting local food initiatives and it is mostly focused on



organic certification or nature conservation. He is aware of SlowFood but feels it is not connected to assisting local food in any way.

3. Irene Etienne, farmer

“Local foods might be slowly growing in Switzerland but in general the Coop and MIGRO [grocery stores] now take the place of farmers markets by selling most of the local and regional farmers’ products.” There isn’t money for local food initiatives because it is mostly for nature conservation such as planting trees (15 CH francs/year for each tree) or for organic certification. One of the biggest hurdles is that in Switzerland the food culture is such that people aren’t very interested in fresh vegetables (as compared to Italy, for example). Meat, potatoes, bread and cheese are the staples such as in Germany. She thinks the main motivations for consumers to support farmers directly is freshness and to reduce food miles.

Germany

1. Holger Mittelstraß, Faculty of Organic Agriculture at the University of Kassel, Witzenhausen, Germany

“Local food initiatives are not generally supported by the national governments. But if a business is clever there are different European funds and agricultural subsidies to support rural development. Several German farmers are already using it for investment in local food marketing and food processing. Local food is definitely becoming more popular in Germany but slowly. It is not nearly as popular as in Italy or France but there are some specialties in some regions.”

Slowfood has some projects working together with farmers but in Germany Slowfood initiatives focus more on sensory tests and cooking. The following website is devoted to the SlowFood items available throughout the country: www.slowfood-marktplatz.de

2. Angelika Plouger, Professor of Food Culture at Witzenhausen, Germany

In Germany, most public funding is given to research and activities linked to food and biodiversity as well as local/regional seeds and breeds. Although many farmers are interested to have their activities funded it is also traders that are receiving a lot of funding. Local food was and still is popular especially linked to holiday regions or nature conservation areas. Furthermore, “organic” people often link their food supply to regional products. On the other side, organic trade is now aiming to get food year round which has no regional or seasonal link. Interestingly, Germans are the largest importers of organic products, highlighting the large consumer demand but most have not taken the next step yet to choose local.

The link between farmers and SlowFood is necessary but because of the German SlowFood board which has been historically linked to restaurants and chefs it is not as strong as in Italy. Now there is a new board which will focus more on linking SlowFood with farmers. One example of a SlowFood item in the region of Hessen is “Ahle Wurst” a typical product from a heavy pig (150 kg and older than 6 month) with a special slaughter and meat preparation (warm) that allows a production without phosphate. This production process is communicated to consumers. Regarding projects that are funded, Ms. Plouger is receiving annual contributions for the course *Food Culture* as well as one about the *Biodiversity of Cherries in Witzzenhausen* which includes a Cherry Education trail educating about agricultural past and present activities. The town agreed



- to plant all old varieties to keep them as a gene bank. It is interesting that with both projects the University is involved as well as the local community.
3. Dr. Ursula Hudson, Board of Slow Food Germany, international issues
“I feel the goals and achievement of this organization are very clear and that there are examples of SlowFood in Germany working directly to assist farmers. This is occurring through local networks such as restaurants, hotels, and hospitals buying from local SlowFood farmers' networks, and also through the ARK project. There are published lists of the Ark products and the Presidium associated with them. I support SlowFood on the issues on biodiversity and fair price for producers. The organic aspect of SlowFood items needs to be carefully looked into since Slow is not necessarily organic, but all organic is not necessarily Slow.”
 4. Doris Haege, MSc student in Food Culture at University of Kassel, Witzenhausen
“The mission of SlowFood is clear but the meaning of the various conviviums is confusing: should they work together or independently? In Germany it is more final product-oriented than with helping the farmers (flavors, history and typical for a region). One example is that spelt grain is better adapted to the sandy and stony soils of southern Germany than wheat and therefore SlowFood groups are working to educate about breads grown with this grain. Regarding consumer education, there are tastings and cooking classes and there is a large SlowFood festival yearly in Stuttgart. The sustainability of SlowFood isn't clear since it's not always organic and this isn't clear to most consumers. The majority of Germans think that SlowFood is a group of elite individuals.”
 5. Katharina Kraiss, MSc student organic agriculture University of Kassel, Witzenhausen
In regard to the local food movement in Germany, “CSAs are very popular in France but it is taking a long time for them to become popular in Germany. One reason could be that Germans are spoiled with large supermarkets like Teugut that provide cheap, organic food. Over the last few years Teugut has offered more and more in their organic selection but nothing regional. In France consumers were almost forced to demand it from local farmers because they couldn't get fresh, organic items from local shops.” Although there is no funding for people that want to buy land there is one group, hofgruender.de, that connects people that want to farm with existing farmers.”
 6. Robert Witlake, Owner of Troki Manufaktur, Witzenhausen (dried local fruits/foods)
At Troki Manufaktur only regional fruit such as cherries, apples and apricots and vegetables and pasta from local grain are dried. About 30% of the purchasing price for the business was provided from the RDP of the EU because Witzenhausen is classified as an “endangered” village. The owners are also members of the regional SlowFood group and believe that slowly people are becoming more educated about the importance of supporting local production and preserving rare plant varieties.
 7. Wolfgang Osthues, Owner of Gruener Bote (organic delivery service in Nordhessen Germany)
“SlowFood is more focused on the industrial system such as big stores and it doesn't really help small farmers. Therefore we are no longer members”. There is no direct funding in Germany for local food and most farmers like Wolfgang prefer to keep government money out of their business to reduce stress and paperwork. The consumer interest in local food is quite strong in Hessen and he is constantly getting requests from new people for his service.



United States

Slow Food

The mission of Slow Food USA is to, “create dramatic and lasting change in the food system by reconnecting Americans with the people, traditions, plants, animals, fertile soils and waters that produce our food. We inspire a transformation in food policy, production practices and market forces so that they ensure equity, sustainability and pleasure in the food we eat.” Several domestic programs have been created including the US Ark of Taste, Renewing America’s Food Traditions, Slow Food In Schools, US Terra Madre Network, and Slow Food on University Campus’.

Interviews

1. Ronit Ridberg, Student Coordinator of the Tufts University, Boston Slow Food group
From a Boston perspective, Ronit feels that the SlowFood groups here do very little to directly support farmers and that most people (including farmers) strongly agree that it is a group composed of elites. However, she feels that SlowFood is doing a great job educating consumers and is one of the best current ways to protect food biodiversity.
2. Dilini Lankanchandra, Communication staff of Slow Food USA in NY, NY
The staff at Slow Food USA in New York City has a different viewpoint on whether SlowFood directly supports farmers, “A significant number of our members are farmers, and we work to educate consumers about buying fresh, local produce to the benefit of the farmers. Slow Food USA also acts as a network of like-minded individuals whom these farmers can work with.” They also feel, “...a large part of Slow Food's mission is education; one example of something that we have recently been working on is a large project to inform people about the Child Nutrition bill going through Congress through our *Time for Lunch* campaign and have them contact their representatives to get the bill through.” Regarding whether SF has a different meaning in different places, they feel that Slow Food tries to have a consistent message across the chapters, but there is still a large amount of freedom for local chapters to individually interpret what Slow Food means to them. Some focus on issues of food justice while others are more interested in creating a sense of convivial community around food. Regardless, all chapters are dedicated to making food good, clean, and fair in keeping with the international manifesto. In reference to food biodiversity, they believe that some of the best ways to protect food biodiversity would deal with the economic and structural issues behind why food biodiversity is diminishing. However, SF methods of selecting certain species with particular cultural value and teaching our members about what they are, why they're important, and where they can get them have also proven to be quite successful. More and more consumers are aware of heirloom varieties of vegetables and rare animal species, which they hope is a step in the right direction for preserving food biodiversity. Unsurprisingly, the staff was in disagreement about SF being an elitist group and they responded that, “One of the ways that we are hoping to move beyond this stereotype is by revamping our membership system. Right now, the \$60 membership fee is out of reach for many people who are interested in the Slow Food movement but have little disposable income. We are working on ways to bring the fee down to \$25 which we hope will expand our membership base to a wider group of people who already adhere to Slow Food principles but may not be able to spend \$60 to join our group.” A number of SF USA's delegates that went to Terra Madre are doing amazing work in keeping their food traditions alive, from growing indigenous food crops in Hawaii to preserving



traditional foods in New Mexico and Louisiana. These small groups of people are building a lot of momentum and getting more and more attention.

3. Billie Best, director of Slow Food Western Massachusetts
Billie strongly disagrees that SF directly supports farmers in western Massachusetts, but strongly agreed that consumer education was occurring. She also thinks it is a group of elites but has a definite ability to preserve food cultures.
4. Michelle Moon, director of Slow Food Seacoast, Portsmouth, New Hampshire
With the New Hampshire perspective, Michelle said, “Slow Food encourages people to support farmers, educates about the reasons for supporting farmers, partners with farmers on events and projects, and promotes farm products, but since there is little direct exchange of money for goods I don't think we could say it *directly* supports farmers in the way that a market does.” However, she believes that SF's greatest strength is in educating consumers about agricultural issues. In NH there are numerous events organized by SF including one focused on New England fish. Regarding the protection of food biodiversity, she feels the methods are indirect. Projects like the Ark of Taste help people develop the initiative to support biodiversity projects and raise awareness of RAFT and other products. But beyond education and awareness, they also need supportive policies, collective action and funding to protect biodiversity as fully as it needs to be protected. She strongly disagrees that SF is a group of elites commenting that of the people she works with, “Some enjoy a moderately affluent lifestyle that you might find among professionals in US urban and suburban areas, but more are moderate income, and some are low income. Among our most active members are independent small business owners, school and museum educators, farmers and other food producers, librarians, retirees on modest fixed incomes, parents of young children, nurses and other health professionals. That diversity of demographics, income, and interest is a strength of Slow Food.” Michelle supports SF for reasons that are most likely shared by most other Americans involved in SF, “I support Slow Food because I believe the industrialized food system we have developed is now having a profoundly negative impact on community resilience, the environment, public health, and the job market. I believe good, clean food should be available to everyone and not difficult to find. I believe that raising and preparing food is vital work and it should be rewarded and encouraged.”

Italy and USA: Local Food Comparisons

Several notable differences exist between the United States and Italy in regard to consumer demand for local food as well as barriers and opportunities for local producers. However, there is a common denominator: consumers are continuing to demand high quality, organic and local items despite the global economic recession and young farmers without family farms are finding creative ways to supply food for their communities with or without funding.

Significant geophysical differences exist between the USA and Europe. Firstly, the land area of the US is three times larger than the EU-15 with less than one quarter the population density (32 versus 119 inhabitants per km²) (Goetz & Brouwer, 2010). With this in mind it's not a surprise that Europeans have adapted to living in close proximity to their agricultural lands whereas in the USA large tracts of agricultural lands are located in the mid-west of the country. Interestingly though, both Europe and the USA have similar shares of the total national land area devoted to agricultural production: about 45% (Goetz & Brouwer, 2010).



In terms of policies, both nations attempt to enhance agri-environmental quality through incentive payments. A difference however, exists with the high percentage of US-farmers that work off farm. The authors argue that this has detrimental effects on “farm program participation and specific farming practices” which new agri-environmental policies should consider as well as assisting with the transfer of land from elderly farmers to new farmers (Goetz & Brouwer, 2010). The consideration of farm multifunctionality in Europe is taken more seriously through policy approaches than in the United States. The US has a focus on market incentives and values whereas European policies believe farmland should be considered for non-market benefits as well.

American Spirit Drives Change in Food Scene

Apart from government support and policies, there exists a strong entrepreneurial spirit in the USA and a drive for progressive change that pervades all American communities. It is often this relentless push from citizens that causes eventual ripple effects with regional and national authorities. A prime example of this can be seen with the local food movement that began simultaneously from young farmers and consumers about 5 years ago. This interest in locally produced foods resulted in an explosion of winter farmers markets across the country held inside various public buildings such as churches, school gymnasiums and heated greenhouses.

A recent analysis of the USDA National Farmers Market Directory showed that there are 898 farmers markets operating across the country, which is an increase of 17% since December 2008 (www.usda.gov). Furthermore, winter farmers markets represent 14% of the total number of the nation’s markets. While many are in warm-weather states like California (140 winter farmers markets) or Florida (45), the top state for winter market activity is actually New York, with 153 markets between November and March (www.usda.gov). Data has shown that keeping farmers markets open year-round is not only good for producers who receive more income, and for consumers wanting fresh local food all year, it is also good for the market community as a whole. In 2006 the USDA surveyed 1,300 market managers and found that farmers markets that are open more than seven months out of the year have *higher monthly sales* than their strictly seasonal counterparts (www.usda.gov). In 2010, the USDA National Farmers Market Directory counted a total of 6,132 operational farmers markets across the country, which is an increase of 16% from 2009.

Examples abound of grassroots initiatives for sustainable solutions to enhance local food scenes. One is the New Hampshire Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (www.nhiaf.org) whose goal is, “to help transform [New Hampshire] to sustainably produce most of its own food and improve our environment by using 100 % renewable energy...” One of the ways they work to achieve this goal is by providing business incubators for young farmers to take advantage of resources and sharing capital-intensive costs. When the new businesses are operationally and financially ready, they leave the incubator, operating on their own. Aspiring farmers will receive extensive consultation from business planning through harvesting and selling their products. They also receive supplies, tools, starter livestock, etc. and share larger equipment with their fellow resident farmers. Furthermore, they are assisting farmers in NH to grown grains, hops for brewing and grapes for NH wine. The director is working to create more cooperatives or food hubs in NH for local growers to drop off their produce and delivery trucks would deliver to various locations.

Another remarkable example in New Hampshire of volunteer efforts driving social change is the organization, Seacoast Eat Local, which is a group of consumers, chefs, growers, and activists who advocate eating locally for ecological, social, cultural, and environmental reasons (seacoateatlocal.org). They are responsible for organizing very successful summer



and winter markets which attract thousands of consumers. Consumer demand paired with the dedicated work of Seacoast Eat Local has now spurred winter farming into a viable addition or alternative to summer growing for farmers in New Hampshire.

Piemonte Research Experiences Compared to USA

Compiling stories from hundreds of farmers in Piemonte revealed notable differences behind local food in Piemonte and the USA. The mentality of the farmers was one difference; in the state of New Hampshire there are dozens of supportive farmers willing to allow young farmers to grow on their land often without charging anything, simply to increase food production and help new growers that don't have land access. Several websites are devoted to linking farmers with those seeking land. One example is New England LandLink which encompasses all the states in New England: www.smallfarm.org. It could be argued that this is a serious issue for young landless Italians because so much of the land is already owned by families and the majority of respondents claimed that their farm was indeed, from the family. There were very few Italian farmers that are leasing land and those that were seemed uncertain about their futures.

Another difference was the concept of community processing facilities. These facilities in the USA can be utilized by several small producers that all share the benefits and therefore the maintenance and start-up costs. Most Piemontese growers already have their own or in general weren't interested in "imagining" a situation where several growers could share or were even aware of the needs of their neighbors. Mobile slaughter units were expressed as being needed in several provinces in Piemonte. These units have rescued small meat producers in the US where most small meat processors have closed down as meat processing became more and more industrial. One example for a large mobile slaughtering of cattle, hogs and sheep can be viewed here: www.mobileslaughter.com, but smaller facilities for chickens are also very popular.

Both countries exhibit creative approaches from organized consumers to buy their food directly from producers without involving a middleman or trips to the market. In the USA the most common system is that of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in which the farmer offers a certain number of "shares" to the public. Typically the share consists of a box of vegetables, but often there are other farm products included. Consumers purchase a share (membership) and in return receive a weekly box of seasonal produce throughout the farming season. The benefit for the farmers are that they receive a large amount of capital at the beginning of the growing season and also that they know exactly how many consumers that are growing for. There is no guessing and wasting produce. In Italy, there are only a few CSAs but the idea is growing. With GAS there is often a large amount of volunteer time necessary for the dividing and distribution of goods and the producers need to wait every week to see the orders of the GAS members. One model that has worked very well in New Hampshire is a cooperative CSA, Local Harvest, of nine farmers that pool their produce weekly and have a pick-up point inside a local church where the prepaid CSA members come every week to pick up their items: www.localharvestnh.com.



FIGURE 31.
WEEKLY PICK-UP: LOCAL
HARVEST COMMUNITY CSA,
CONCORD, NH USA

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

Another difference is market management; farmer's markets in the USA generally have a Market Manager who works directly with the farmers and they also help locate winter market locations, advertise the markets and educate consumers about local food issues. Everyone is always a genuine producer and if there is something they are selling that is not theirs (rare), it is usually labeled as such. If a commercial seller tried to sell at the market it would be obvious and unallowable. In Italy, the markets do not have someone present for the entire market that is responsible for management. Despite the Italian urban police collecting money at the markets, there is not enough control at several markets which has permitted many to break rules.

Due to the historical creation and importance of agricultural cooperatives in Italy, they still seem to be a very strong entity both as a sales outlet and also for adult and child farm education. Cooperatives are something that the US needs more of and should look at the models in Italy. Both countries need to increase sales outlets such as cooperatives in order to more efficiently sell local products and reduce the amount of time that farmers are spending *waiting* at markets to sell items. Farmers are too precious and knowledgeable to utilize their energy in this way.





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF PIEMONTE FOOD SYSTEM

1. Utilize Strengths

Building on the strengths of the existing local food system and the *food culture* of Piemonte can help ensure food security in the future as well as increase the viability of farmer lifestyles. Furthermore, taking advantage of the historical roots of the Slow Food organization is important to embrace while continuing to pressure and challenge this global group to work more directly with Piemontese farmers. It is important for Slow Food to remember their own historical roots and note that high quality and tastes only result from dedicated and hard working farmers, many of which are located in Piemonte and in need of product promotion.

2. Collaboration

Working more closely with other Italian regions and countries that are successfully improving their local food systems is an important next step for Piemonte. In Aosta, for example, one of the most agriculturally productive valleys, Val di Rhemes, is planning an initiative to retain young people in the valley. One of their plans is to build a community dairy processing facility in Rhemes Saint George for everyone in the valley to use. Further south in the region of Tuscany, the province of Pisa provides an award-winning social farm, Bio Colombini, which feeds hundreds of GAS families in 26 different towns. Professor Brunori at the University of Pisa defends the need for small, efficient family farms as the backbone of a strong local food system. When these are secured, typical products emerge as well as direct farm sales, rural services, agrotourism and organic farming. Endless examples also exist in the USA and several of them would find an Italian collaboration exciting and inspiring. Policy change isn't always necessary; often a pioneering spirit and original ideas are enough to spur a movement.

3. Policy Change

- Policy incentives are needed for initiatives that inspire youth about entering agriculture. For those that are interesting, improvements are needed for training and educating how to enter agriculture (finding land, funding, etc).
- Regional communication to farmers needs to be increased about funding incentives such as PSR. The current modes of spreading info (websites, occasional phone calls and few market visits) are not enough to motivate them. Most farmers need to be directly approached by a regional representative at a market such as was the situation with this research. Information was spread during interviews throughout this research and most farmers were grateful.
- Regulations for each town should be devised that properly train the urban police for controlling the markets, the items sold at the markets as well as verifying and visiting agricultural plots (Agricultural Control Commissions). Policy incentives could also create Agricultural Commissions whose role is to voice the concerns of local growers at community and regional meetings.
- As a way to increase the transparency of the items being sold at the markets each comune could implement a "Piano de Semina". The possibility of this type of scheme is being discussed in Biella for 2011 and would be enforced by the urban police who would be required to visit the farm to verify the plot of agricultural land. Also, an aerial photo would be taken of each plot of land which would be displayed at the market stall.



- The Regione Piemonte might want to consider employing someone as an intermediary between the Regione, a research institute such as IRES and small producers with the hopes of increasing the levels of trust by farmers for regional authorities as well as enhancing the accuracy of agricultural research represented in these establishments.
- Numerous farmers voiced concern and complaints over the law officially known as D.lgs. 18 maggio 2001, n. 228 Orientamento e modernizzazione del settore agricolo Legge 228, but more commonly called “Legge di orientamento”. This temporary law (decreto legislativo) still needs final approval from parliament to become official. Follow-up research should be conducted throughout Italy regarding the outcome of this law and whether it should actually be approved. Farmers claim that Legge 228 permits growers to produce a minimum of 50% of their items and purchase the rest elsewhere. Market evaluations need to determine whether this is hurting more than helping honest producers and how monitoring and control can be increased at markets.

4. More control

The lack of market control in Italy seems to be creating a definite barrier for local food sales. If policy improvements cannot be made, another solution needs to be devised. The Minister of Politiche agricole alimentari e forestali, Luca Zaia, promises that fraud farming will be controlled in Piemonte but it's not clear who from their Torino-based office is actually travelling to the markets to enforce this.

5. Signage: Differentiate Local from Commercial Sellers

In these days it takes considerable effort to locate the continually shrinking numbers of local farmers usually slightly separated from the looming banana-laden stalls of imported produce. It is only fair that adequate space and signs be made to educate consumers on the differences between the two types of food, such as the simple board used in Figure 30. More efforts need to be made in the provinces of Cuneo, Asti and Alessandria to name a few.



FIGURE 32.
CLEAR CONSUMER
INFORMATION ABOUT A
LOCAL FOOD MARKET IN
NH, USA

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011



6. Urban agriculture

A small but significant way to increase the local food consumption and consumer education in Torino would be through more urban gardens. An architecture studio in San Salvario, Studio999, is actively working to convert courtyards and rooftops into vegetable gardens. This will not only provide food but educate citizens in this neighborhood about how vegetables are grown and taste the difference between fresh and store bought. Their website and contact info can be found at: www.oursecretgarden.biz.

7. CSA versus GAS

The differences were already described between a GAS and the American CSAs. Most Italians are not familiar with the CSA system and perhaps it is the responsibility of the farmers unions to educate themselves about various ways to improve the current system. Although the GAS system is working well for producers of bulk items like wine, oils, cheese, meats, and grains, it is not the best solution for vegetable farmers who have to painstakingly make custom-ordered boxes every week. Furthermore, several organic farmers at a conference of FederBio complained that GAS consumers are too focused on the price of the food and that several groups are sourcing “Filiera Chimica” because they are not concerned with the agricultural production methods of the food. The other major difference between a CSA and GAS is that with GAS the items are not always nearby. A organic chickpea farmer from the Marche region at the FederBio conference lamented that he was driving his chickpeas all the way to Torino for a GAS but he felt horribly disconnected from the principles of sustainability. *Local* should be a priority in every Italian region, not only Piemonte, which often requires changes in eating habits paired with consumer education.

8. More action from farmers unions

Despite the efforts of Coldiretti there were some disappointments that became apparent during the research. First, this farmers union was for the most part largely unaware of what GAS groups were, where they were located and how they were forming. Although it is not their job to create these groups, it *is* their job to assist farmers and one of the greatest things farmers need help with is selling. Offering information about how farmers can connect with functioning GAS groups would be a very relevant action for Coldiretti. The second disappointment was the lack of direct farmer interaction. This was a complaint heard over and over by the farmers; that Coldiretti spends too much time in their offices and doesn't come “into the field” to hear the real stories of small farmers.

9. Consumer Preference Research

A further recommendation is to know the needs, preferences and motivations of the consumers in Piemonte who are actively seeking local food and also those that not. What items do they want more of? How are they finding local food outlets? Where and when are most purchases made? It is fundamental for the producers and the consumers to work together in order to create lasting change. These two forces alone will possibly be more powerful than any policy change. The following figure demonstrates results from hundreds of interviewed consumers and farmers in the state of New Hampshire where the year round local food movement continues to blossom.

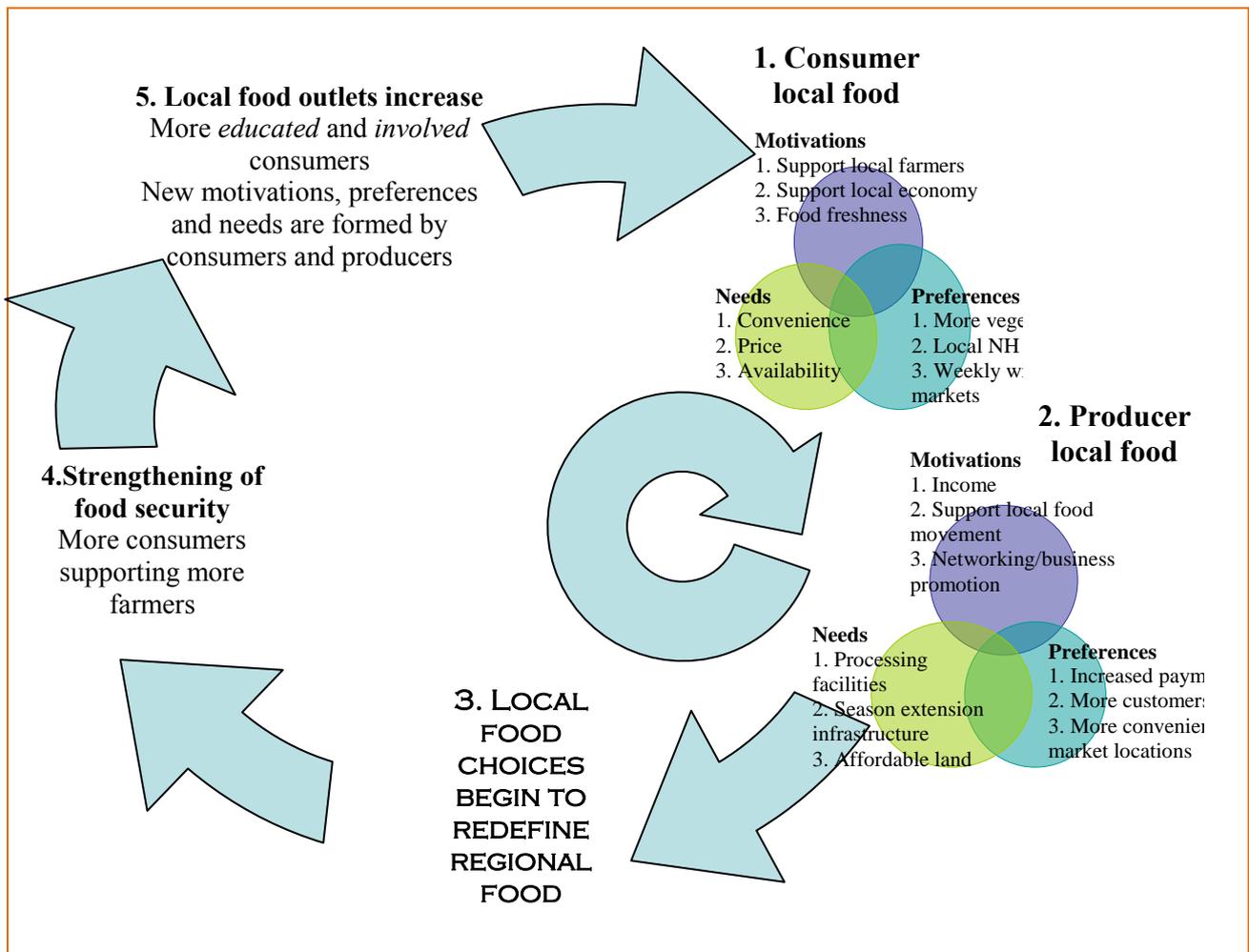


FIGURE 33. STRENGTHENING OF NH LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM: MEETING CONSUMER & PRODUCER VALUES

Source: IRES Piemonte, 2011

10. PiProBi Replications

The PiProBi system in Biella was the most efficient system observed during this research in Piemonte connecting local food to local consumers. Both the consumers and farmers were very pleased with the results of this computer-based sales system and prefer it over the markets. Consumer demand for this service is increasing every year. Possibly one of the best steps forward in Piemonte for increasing the self-sufficiency of the local food system is to replicate PiProBi in every province, especially since the founders are willing to provide the software and their expertise for free. The first attempt to imitate this system is already beginning in Valperga for Canavese producers in 2011 who are currently discussing the best methods for their province. Future research should evaluate whether there is an increase in local food production with this type of system as well as consumer and producer satisfaction surveys.

11. Danger with 'Valorization of Typical Products'

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines valorizing as, "enhancing or trying to enhance the price, value, or status of a commodity by organized action." In Europe, when applied to "typical products", these actions can elevate the value of an item that was often previously



unknown or which had held less economic value before applying a new label or status. When tourists visit a new area, these products are particularly interesting because they are unique tangible and edible clues to the present and historical past of an area. These typical food products were originally meant originate from some small-scale producers following traditional, artiginal methods. It could be said therefore that valorization specifically describes the increase in the value of capital assets through the application of living, value-forming labor in production. One of the risks with valorization is the elevated status and emphasis only on the end-product, “*The Castelmagno cheese*”, “*The Patate di Montagna*”, “*The Genepy di Sauze d’Oulx*”, “*The Carrots of San Rocco Castagnaretta*” or “*The Bue Gras cow race of Piemonte*” to name just a few. During this research it was seen, for example, in the Valle di Susa (specifically in Sauze d’Oulx) and the valleys near Borgo San Dalmazzo in Cuneo, too much emphasis on the *products* but yet not enough *on the producers*. Furthermore, the farmers that are currently producing the products are facing enormous barriers trying to survive by selling locally. Therefore, three problems seem possible to emerge from the above-mentioned valorization:

1. A pyschological disconnection of the product from the hands that produce it as seen by consumers.
2. The superficial heightening of a product that was previously viewed as ordinary food.
3. Mass production that inevitably disregards traditional customs resulting from the pressure of increased consumer demand sometimes internationally.

In regards to the sustainability of a region, these situations can create barriers for increasing local food production. In the past these food products were available and appreciated by the locals; the people that should ultimately be subsisting from the land around them. Instead, today it can be seen that many of these locals are consuming food produced in other countries whereas the visitors to Piemonte are indulging themselves on the “valorized local products”. One example of this can be seen in Val Grana with the production and subsequent valorization of the Castelmagno cheese. Fortunately the cheese is still enjoyed by the most locals in the valley, but it comes with a significant pricetag. Furthermore, although the cooperative La Poiana (which has three shops in Val Grana) claims to strictly enforce that all the requirements of a DOP product are followed, farmers in the valley claim that the cheese is now also made with milk from the valley in order to meet international demand. Technically, Castemagno cheese is only supposed to be from milk obtained from cows pasturing on high alpine meadows (alpeggio) but it was observed that this is changing due to the “success” of its valorization.

Granting typical, local food products status up on a pedestal certainly has real benefits for reinforcing the strength of local food systems, but equal efforts need to be made to include the voices of those working hard to bring these items to our tables as well as attempts to maintain the genuinity and “localness” of the product.

12. Distribution

There are pockets of areas in Piemonte with more agricultural production than demand or more consumer demand than production. Sometimes these areas are very close to eachother and only require more communication among producers. In Novara, for example, they have organized groups specifically for, “Organizing Logistics” which exist to solve this problem: focusing on a balance between production and consumer demand levels. Furthermore, as consumer demand for locally produced foods rises in Piemonte, large food distributors might take interest in changing some of their contracts to include regional producers, as was



experienced with the Sysco Corporation in the United States. There might also be opportunities in Piemonte for entrepreneurs to start more organic, local food delivery services.

13. Piemonte Food System Research

A final recommendation is in regard to future research that could analyze the food security of Piemonte. One step is determining where current food is supplied from and in which ways local food production and distribution can be improved. For the most effective research, various stakeholders in the food system and the farmers should be involved during every phase of the project to ensure that the appropriate voices are heard and suitable action ensues.



CONCLUSION

In reference to the auto-sufficiency of the food system in Piemonte a general statement can be made for the entire region: either a large-scale alternative to the public markets must be created or the current markets need to be revamped. In this case, hours, locations, advertising and the atmosphere of the markets should be improved to offer more a more suitable situation for local food sales. Live music could add an enjoyable dimension as well as other activities that retain consumers. The specific location of each market also needs to be more carefully monitored, as several current markets are not placed in ideal neighborhoods or towns. Furthermore, without proper signage educating consumers about the differences between local agricultural products and those from abroad, small Piemontese farmers will continue to suffer.

As previously stated, to ensure a stable future food supply for Piemonte, the following questions should be analyzed with urgency:

- * How vulnerable are we to disruption in food supply?
- * Where do our calories come from? How many are produced in our region?
- * What are the easiest interventions our community can make to enhance our food security?
- * What are the bigger policy interventions and food system redesign goals?

It seems that these questions have not been explicitly answered despite the fact that a large amount of food supplied to this region has a provenance of unstable countries in Africa and the Middle East where riots are not uncommon. A logical next step for securing Piemonte food security should be finding the answers to these questions and determining how ICT systems such as PiProBi can increase local food production in every province of this agriculturally promising region. When farmers and consumers are simultaneously satisfied such as the case with PiProBi, it is a fundamental phenomenon that should be given appropriate research attention given the ubiquitous necessity of food.

Several farmers during this research noted that they prefer GAS sales more than selling at markets. These responses should be considered in greater depth. *How much more* in weight are they selling to “consumer buying groups” as opposed to the markets and what is the amount of *time they save*? Can this free-time provide opportunities for more production? Is there enough of a demand from GAS groups in Piemonte to furnish a significant increase in production? Furthermore, a noteworthy distinction can be made between the PiProBi system and GAS groups: PiProBi was started by and for the producers whereas most GAS are consumer-driven. Which system is more self-sustaining and successful in the longterm?

A burgeoning movement worldwide is occurring as consumers begin to demand knowing where their food comes from. The momentum of this social paradigm has also rippled to Piemonte where it seems likely to remain. Genuine consumer interest in locally-sourced food paired with the agriculturally rich heritage of this region grants Piemonte the chance to take a giant step forward to secure the the sustainability and security of their food supply.





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QUESTIONARIO PER GLI AGRICOLTORI

**Dov'è l'azienda agricola:**

- Fare l'agricoltore é la sola fonte di reddito? _____ Sì – No
- Il terreno o l'azienda agricola è di famiglia o è stato acquistato ?
- Lei, quanti anni ha? _____
- Da quanti anni fa l'agricoltore? _____
- Che cosa coltivate o producete? Frutta Verdura Altro _____
- Dove vendete? Mercato Direttamente in azienda Negozio All'ingrosso

Per le seguenti domande c'è una scala:

- 1 = fortemente disaccordo
2 = disaccordo
3 = non opinione
4 = accordo
5 = fortemente accordo

1. **Secondo lei, il cibo locale** (di questo territorio) **sta diventando piú popolare in Piemonte**
2. **Produce tutto l'anno, anche in serra?** Sì – No
Se ci fossero aiuti pubblici, Lei coltiverebbe tutto anno?
3. **La sua zona agricola ha bisogno di impianti di trasformazione?**
(es. Mulino, mattatoio, caseificio, marmellate, sughi...) _____
4. **Lei è a conoscenza delle Politiche Regionali riguardo iniziative di cibi locali?**
5. **Al momento, Lei utilizza finanziamenti Pubblici o ha prestiti da banche?**
6. **Può indicarmi le difficoltà/problemi che incontra per coltivare e vendere cibi locali?**
7. **Può indicarmi i punti di forza della sua azienda?**
8. **Per Lei, quale organizzazione aiuta direttamente i contadini?**
Cosa potrebbe fare per aiutare di più i contadini?
10. **Per Lei, quale organizzazione informa e aiuta i consumatori sulle questioni agricole?**
11. **Pensa che nei prossimi 5 anni riuscirà a continuare il lavoro in azienda agricola?**

SLOW FOOD QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1 (strongly disagree) → 5 (strongly agree)
- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. SlowFood (SF) directly supports farmers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. SF educates consumers about agricultural and cultural issues | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. SF is driven by locals (has a different meaning in different places) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. SF methods are some of the best ways to protect food biodiversity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. SF is an elitist group of mostly wealthy individuals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. SF has the potential to preserve/revive food cultures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I support SF for the following reasons: (please elaborate) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
- ex. biodiversity, price, food safety, organic principles, fairness to farmers, etc.



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