

EVALUATION OF SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS IN A RURAL AREA

Levente Komarek¹, Árpád Ferencz¹, Anita Csiba¹

¹University of Szeged Faculty of Agriculture, Institute of Economics and Rural Development

One of the priorities for rural development is the establishment of Short Food Supply Chains which means reducing distance between local producers and local consumers and prioritizing local markets. In our work, we aimed at mapping the place of local producers within the distribution channels and evaluating local producer groups. We were looking at what tender opportunities producers are utilizing that can directly or indirectly link them to the Short Food Chain Program. To this end, we have set up several hypotheses. Firstly, we assumed that the change in consumer habits greatly influences producer's supply. Second, we investigated whether producers choose the sales channel where they can sell at the highest price or where the most products can be sold. Our hypothesis was also that more and more of the local producers are also involved in product processing. The research was conducted via questionnaires, during which 265 forms were filled out at traditional markets and also at cafeterias and restaurants. Small and wholesale producers are both involved in short supply chains, however, this form of sales is mainly used by small businesses in Hungary. Our surveys also reveal the need to broaden the use of SSC channels, which could, among other things, help increase both demand for processed products and willingness to engage in this activity. Our research reveals that young producers primarily opt for sales channels where they can sell at the highest price or where the most products can be sold. In contrast, older producers often also show emotional investment in their marketing practices. Unfortunately, in many cases, consumers associate farm products with high prices and fluctuating quality, and they are also missing the option of home delivery. The in-depth interviews show that public catering companies primarily choose products acquired through SSC based on price. At the same time, some caterers regularly buy from local producer as they want to establish long-term clientele through quality service.