

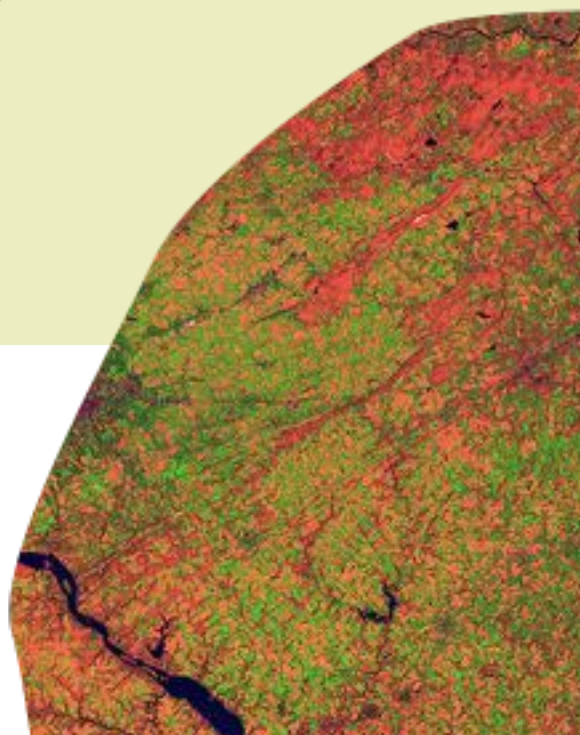
Title: Farmer's Market – Mercato Contadino Roma e Castelli Romani

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**Occupy Climate
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FORMAS



“Farmer’s Market – Mercato Contadino Roma e Castelli Romani”

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Where this grassroots initiative is implemented?

The Farmers Market grassroots initiative is implemented in Italy, in many different location both in the Metropolitan City of Rome and the Castelli Romani area, a broad undelimited region including numerous towns outside of Rome in the Lazio region of Italy. The neighbourhoods and areas in Rome where the Farmers Market takes place are Rome Capanelle, Rome Eur Torrino, Rome Cinecittà, Rome Prenestino and Rome Infernetto. As for the municipalities outside of Rome in which the market has its locations we can find Ariccia, Albano Laziale, Marino, Genzano di Roma, Pavona, Frascati, Rocca di Papa, Grottaferrata and Monte Compatri.

Who are the promoters?

On the market’s website the promoters are described as an alliance of high-quality farmers and a network of consumers engaged in local purchasing groups. The names of the parties involved are “Associazione KM 0 – Consorzio Agroalimentare di Filiera Corta e dei Mercati Agricoli” (association of farmers) and Provincia di Roma (public institution).

Who are the beneficiaries?

The main beneficiaries of the farmers' market are the general users, the purchasing people. By coming to the markets and choosing to eat farmer’s food, they enjoy fresh, KM 0, organic products. Generally, the user can find seasonal vegetables of any kind, fruits, fresh eggs, fresh bread and pizza, local olive oil and olives, local wine, local dried fruits, local cheese, mozzarella and local cold cuts.

Passersby, families and couples can also enjoy the community’s market by strolling through the stands and being part of various activities taking place. For instance, in the Rome Eur Torrino Farmers Market is offered entertainment for children during Sundays.

The ones also benefitting from the initiative are the farmers themselves. Selling their products in this short supply chain system means they do not have to obey to big corporation rules and they can be paid fairly for their work while reducing the intermediary and transportation costs.

How does this initiative engage with climate? Does it tackle mitigation, adaptation, both or other dimensions of climate change?

The Farmers Market tackles primarily mitigation as a dimension of climate change. Doing the shopping in this market means purchasing “fresh products, that respect sustainability and biodiversity, soil fertility and landscape protection” (cited from the market’s website). This is possible because farmers plant and grow their own products and are directly the ones selling them at the market. Products are also harvested in relatively small plots of land, which ensures their high-quality. No third party is involved in this whole process. In other words,

this system of harvesting and directly selling used by local farmers avoids the exploitation of workers and the cultivated soil itself.

This local way of farming is also anti-corporation. It gives a possibility to farmers to subtract themselves from restrictions and rules of big companies, that more than often do not care neither respect nature's balance. In fact, on the Farmers Market website is stated that the initiative is "against the absurd control of international corporations on the global food system". In addition, with this market consumers "finally have the opportunity to choose" where to buy their food.

What are the main objectives? What are the main values?

On the market's website are listed numerous objectives and values by which this initiative has been taking place for 15 years.

Regarding the objectives, we can find and cite here three defined goals reading the online statements: "make it easier to choose to fill your table with good, fresh, seasonal, local (km 0), genuine, tasty, organic, and typical food products, with IGP, DOC, and DOP certification", set "fairer prices for producers and lower costs for consumers thanks to the reduction of intermediary and transport costs" and "safeguard the agro-food monuments of our territory." The Farmers Market is able to achieve this while fighting "against the absurd control of international corporations over the global food system" and the system "of multinational companies that use ten times more energy than what is required in a small farm to produce the same amount of food."

They have "made [their] small contribution, without any public funding, to save many small local farming businesses, to ensure good food for the citizens of our territories, to revitalise the local economy, to create value and social capital, and to stop the consumption of agricultural land" with the help and cooperation of "Libera, Greenpeace, Medici senza Frontiere, Emergency, Legambiente, the Castelli Romani Park, Castelli Romani Green Tour, Castelli Social Tour, and many other local associations [...], guarding [the] squares which have become public spaces for the defence of the rights of producers and consumers, and for the defence of common goods."

While stating this, the Farmers Market also share a rich description about their motivation and values, that can be grouped into three categories.

The market's project of "agriculture and [...] gastronomy [...] liberation", as often times mentioned, starts from the fight for workers' rights against an unjust agri-food system. On the website's page, under the section "Who we are", farmers have strongly claimed that "with quality local food products, [they] have reclaimed our life", and again, they are fierce about saying "no to the unjust international system of food production and distribution" meanwhile demanding "the right of producers to fair remuneration for their work and the right of consumers to food sovereignty, to the free choice of good food".

The second category of group values is about the shaping and protection of a community and its food. They praise the "principles of food sovereignty and biodiversity", stressing the necessity and importance of being "part of a food community in which the game rules are set by local producers and consumers", teamed up for "a shared project for improving one's existence and for liberation from the tyranny of agro-industrial products and large scale distribution (GDO)." There cannot be a "no" "to a correct diet, to healthy and genuine food

products, to shopping by saving on transport and commercial intermediary costs between producer and consumer, while gaining in quality and reliability".

Lastly, the third category of group values is in all regards to the environment and the necessity to protect it by not altering its own harmony. Although less clearly, the farmers spend a few words on the website about the importance of a "lower environmental impact and greater energy savings"; something deeply intertwined with disdain for "the anonymous plastic food that travels up and down the roads of the world, on wheels and hulls that pollute".

What is the timeline? Are there already visible effects?

The initiative started in 2010, international year of biodiversity. Looking to the visible effects, the Market's website states that "thanks to the Mercato Contadino of Castelli Romani many daughters and sons have resumed the agricultural activity of their fathers" and "pushed to improve quality levels of production, through conservative and eco compatible farming techniques, with low environmental impact".

Nonetheless, the Farmers Market has been constantly giving KM 0, organic products to thousands of families, becoming a weekly reliable source of food in many areas in Rome, other than a place for the market's community to get to know each other and spending time together taking part in entertainment activities.

Who are the actors involved? What is their background?

The actors involved in the market's initiative are the promoters: Associazione KM 0 – Consorzio Agroalimentare di Filiera Corta e dei Mercati Agricoli, which is an association of Italian farmers, and Provincia di Roma, which is the roman public institution. In this scenario, another actor could be found in the consumer as a single, or as a group. In this case, the background of a consumer, or consumers, is very specific to place of living, their culture, social status and is also intertwined with the reasons given for purchasing fresh products at the Farmers Market, and not in supermarkets for instance.

Which limits (institutional, physical, social, etc.) does it encounter?

Even with a short analysis, it is possible to find three main limits to the Farmers Market initiative. Firstly, the market hasn't a permanent establishment. While it is certainly a strenght for reaching as many people as possible in relatively broad area of Italy, it can also be seen as a shortcoming. The criticality relies in the constant necessity of third places or third parties to have the market taken place. If, for any reason, those spaces in question cannot no longer offer permission to set up the Farmers Market, farmers no longer can sell their products anymore. This could have been the case of the Torrino Eur Farmers Market, since the place where it takes place, the Stardust Cinema park complex, was about to be shut down.

Secondly, the market does not receive public fundings, even if the public institution of Provinca di Roma is told as a promoter of the initiative. This may disadvantage farmer's work since the market is not affiliated in any way to big corporations or companies and so is not "financially protected" in any way.

Lastly, the market is not sponsored, neither online nor offline. The Farmers Market has both a Facebook and Instagram page, but in the neighborhoods where the market takes place there

is no advertisement of any kind. This does not invite new customer base, especially young people that may not know about the initiative.

How would it be potentially replicable in other settings?

The Farmers Market is totally replicable in other settings. The main feature of the initiative is the existence of a deep network of people, which mainly may consist of farmers and organisers of the weekly market events that aim to be as frequent as possible. Another feature beneficial to the replication of this type of market is a large public or private space where the farmer's stands. Other than this, is also required hard work from the farmers in order to sell their produce!

Is this initiative conducive to broader changes (law, institutional arrangements, long term sustainability or community preparedness, etc.)? If yes, which?

This initiative could be conducive to broader changes regarding the control of big corporations over local farmers and their compensation for the farming work, but it is not. The community is not openly working as a critical mass to fight against disagreeing political laws or rules.

Sources

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