



# Local branding

## How to guarantee “true” local food



Webinar 29<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (h. 11-13 CET)  
CoP Sustainable Food Systems

# Outline of the webinar

- Introduction on the theme of Local Food Branding
- Discussion will unfold by answering the three following questions:
  1. Why and how to set rules about “true” local food?
  2. How to signal the local origin of food on the market?
  3. How to guarantee purchasers on the local origin of food in an effective way?
- Contributions from local initiatives in the area of Lucca
  - Sapori di Camaiore (“Camaiore flavours” initiative)
  - Slow Food presidia Lucca
  - Coldiretti Farmers market
- Insights from ROBUST partners/LLs/CCCoP
  - General contributions
  - Snapshots on local initiatives of local branding
- Wrap up and conclusions



# Introductory notes

# Branding local food: why?



- Local food is often sold on short food chains, where farmers and consumers directly interact following domestic quality conventions.
- Growth of interest in local food increases complexity in local food chains:
  - Increase in demand attract new forms of supply: professionalization and massification
  - New actors enter in local food business: specialized farmers and professional purchasers (e.g. public procurement)
  - New forms of intermediation between supply and demand arise (ex. La Ruche)
  - Higher heterogeneity in “local quality characteristics” of food
- Increased information asymmetry and opportunistic behaviour in local food markets generate room for more formal ways of quality signalling.

# Branding local food: what?



Branding local food is not just a matter of putting something on the label.

Branding should be conceptualized as a **process** with some main **steps**:

- To define what is the content that should be signalled through the brand (common rules)
- To build a common quality brand and collective initiatives to support the brand on the market
- To set-up some form of guarantee about the “content” of the brand.

# 1. Why and how to set rules about “true” local food?



- Issues potentially arising: how do we define local?
  - Literature has extensively been debating on the meaning of local
  - Controversies in terms of what different actors perceive and communicate as local
- Local: a matter of **provenance** or also a link to **local specific resources and *terroir***? Local food and origin food
- Specific issues:
  - The place of local agrobiodiversity
  - The place of organic
  - “Local” in processed food and in traditional recipes



# 1. *Why and how to set rules about “true” local food?*



The many functions of the rules:

- 1) Managing **unfair competition**: avoiding free-riding, also between producers inside the local system
- 2) Reflecting on, and defining a shared concept of local food, both for producers and consumers (**internal quality convention**)
- 3) **Communicating** clear characteristics to consumers.
- 4) **Regulating** :
  - Rights of use of collective quality labels
  - Access to some marketing channel (e.g. public procurement, farmers market ...)

How to **define rules**?

- The relevance of the rules setting process: participative techniques
- The role of local public authorities



## 2. How to signal the local origin of food on the market?

- “Local” can be considered as a *credence* attribute, generating information asymmetry and the possibility for sellers of opportunistic behaviour
- Need to provide a **clear and credible signal** to customers-consumers as regards the provenance, origin and quality of food.
- Branding can be considered as a partial substitute of:
  - direct relationship that helps both producers to signal the “local” attribute and consumers to check it
  - long-term relations often established between producer and consumer that also share some personal values, thus allowing trust
- **Collective** VS individual branding
- Branding and reputation creation, role of communication





## 2. How to signal the local origin of food on the market?

- Collective branding: a great variety of tools and initiatives
  - Collective trademarks (and geographical collective trademarks) on single products, baskets of products, and baskets of products and services
  - Accreditation of some selling points (e.g. farmers markets)
  - Quality seals on restaurants menus
  - Accreditation of restaurants supporting local producers
  - ...



## 2. How to signal the local origin of food on the market?

- Costs and benefits of collective branding (for firms, consumers, and the whole local system)
- A way to integrate food, culture, and tourism?
- Branding need some forms of organization and governance
- The role of public bodies



### 3. How to guarantee purchasers on the local origin of food in an effective way?

- Need: provide to consumers a credible guarantee as regards the quality and local origin of their produce
- Personal assurance and formal certification: advantages and limitations
- Typologies of certification:
  - First-party certification: the producer offers a direct, formal assurance that it meets certain claims (based on traceable self-control)
  - Second-party certification: an association provides the assurance that their members comply to a set of norms (the case of many geographical collective trademarks in Italy)
  - Third-party certification: fully independent assessment declaring that specified requirements pertaining to a product, person, process or management system have been met

### *3. How to guarantee purchasers on the local origin of food in an effective way?*

Some characteristics of a guarantee system adapted to **small local systems**:

- Simple and understandable to operators
- Opportunity for including multiple certifications (organic/local/environment etc.)
- Cheap (for small operators)
- Easy to communicate to consumers
- Participatory
  - Emphasis on continual improvement and dialogue, not only on compliance
  - Group certification and internal control systems are opportunities for small producers

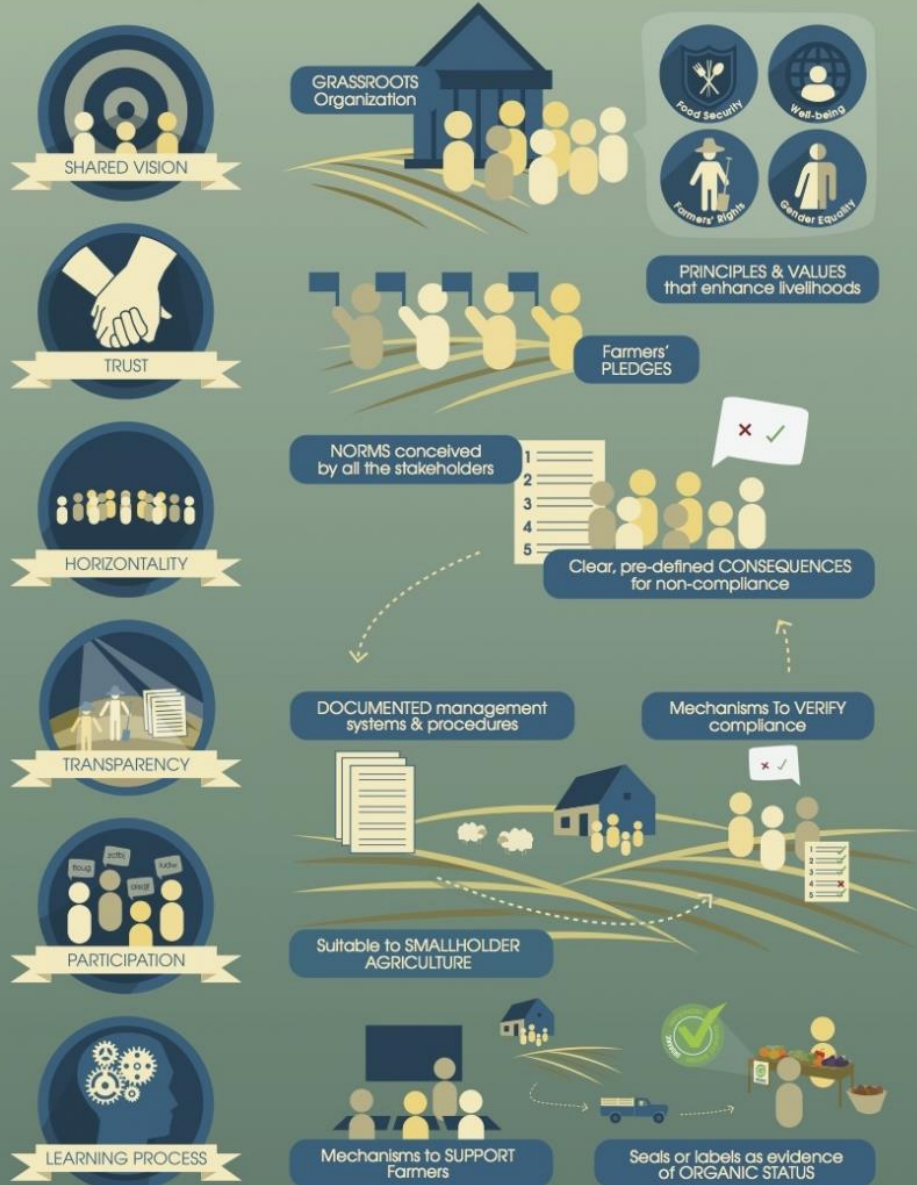
Newly emerging tools aiming at involving producers and consumers in **formal** guaranteeing specific qualities of products → PGS



## Participatory Guarantee Systems

KEY ELEMENTS

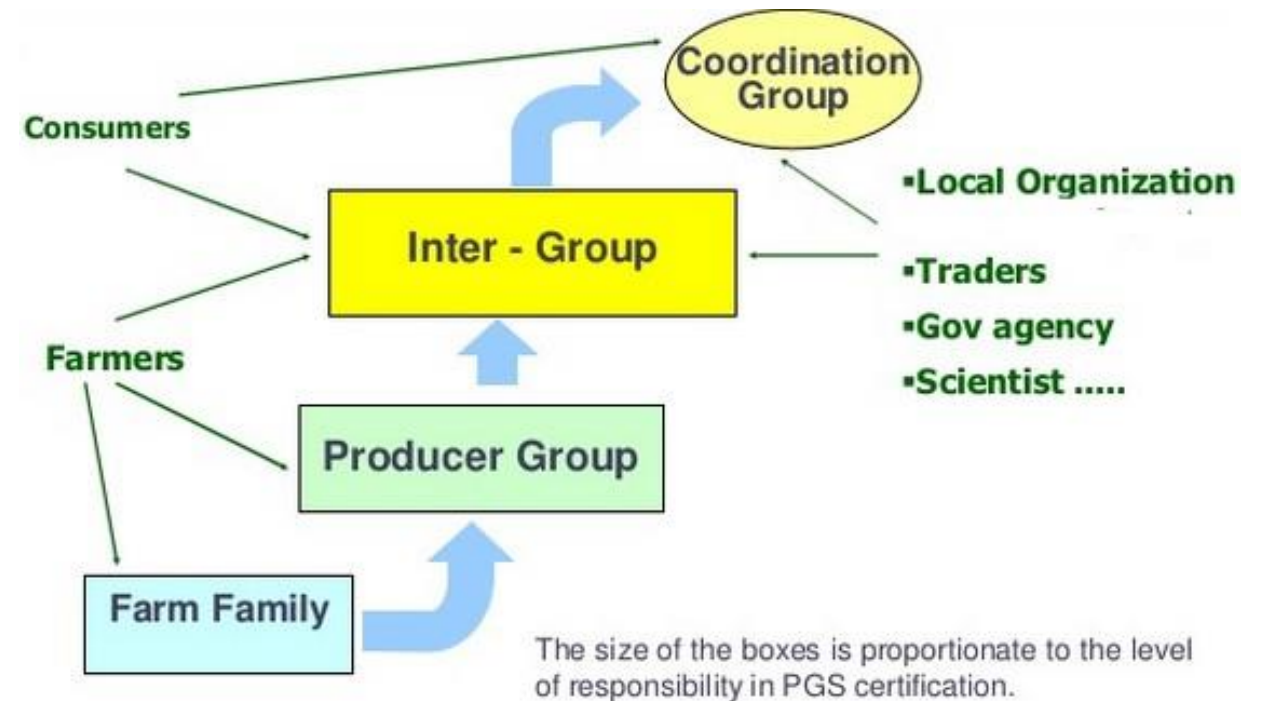
FEATURES



## 3. How to guarantee ...

"Participatory Guarantee Systems are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange." (IFOAM)

PGS developed in Organic agriculture





# Contributions from local initiatives in Lucca province

Aim: take issues and lessons from real  
life



# Campagna Amica Farmers market

Leonardo Puccioni (farmer)

*The experience of producers involved in Coldiretti  
Farmers market*





# Slow Food Lucca Compitese Orti Lucchesi

Marco del Pistoia

*They are currently reflecting on the opportunity to promote a PGS approach to the Presidia of Fagiolo Rosso di Lucca and Pomodoro Canestrino*



# Sapori di Camaio

Alvaro Pardini (coordinator of Sapori di Camaio initiative)

*Sapori di Camaio aims at promoting local food on the local market, also by means of a collective brand*

# Insights from ROBUST partners

- Mojca Hrabar and Jurij Kobal
- ...

# Concluding remarks

- In the local arena multiple interpretations of “local food” are competing
- The more the concept of local succeed on the market, the higher is the confusion and unfair competition
- Collective brand is one among many tools for communicating and guaranteeing local food – not good for all (both producers and consumers)
- The social value of a “local brand” for food depends on the “quality” of underpinning specifications and on an appropriate guarantee system
- Participatory guarantee systems can play an important role for increasing awareness of the actors in the local food system

# Thank you very much!

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