

40 ORGANIC DAIRY VENDING MACHINES

Type: Supply chain, take away, circular economy
Country: Spain, The Basque Country

Why it is a good practice?

The innovative idea of placing the milk and other dairy product vending machines in local towns and villages came about due to necessity. According to Ramón Muguertza from the Telleri Zahar Farm in Hernani, the only option for dairy farmers is to sell direct to the public as the prices offered by dairy plants are too low to ensure the viability of a farm. Direct selling eliminates middlemen and enables consumers to purchase extremely fresh, minimally processed, local products at the same price as in supermarkets. Thus, the small farms remain ensuring the survival of local primary industry and supporting rural life, the supply-chain is short, and the community are receiving fresh, natural produce.

About

These vending machines supply full-fat milk, stored at a controlled temperature of under 4° Celsius. Dairy farmers pasteurise their milk at 73°C for thirty seconds at the dairy farm and then transport it in tanks to the vending machines. The Department of Health grants the permits to pasteurise and then distribute the milk for retail sale in the vending machines. Each machine has a total capacity of 200 litres. Cows are milked first thing in the morning and their milk is available for purchase from the machines by 7am. The farmers collect the unsold milk each evening and refill the machines with fresh milk the following morning. A litre costs €1 and a half litre 50 cents. Other dairy products are produced on the farms in the same way as the milk using traditional methods and minimal processing. Farmers use fresh, natural, traditional ingredients and prices are the same as in supermarkets. The Behemendi Association request and process the permits required for the installation of the vending machines. The town councils, then provide the space and the location of the machines for members of the association. Regional and town, governments have implemented measures to encourage this direct selling, and the Basque Government finances forty per cent of the dairy farmer's investment infrastructure.

Result

More and more consumers are opting to purchase milk from the vending machines; consequently, more and more are being installed. They now offer a wider range of dairy products, such as origin certified Idiazábal cheese, yoghurts and sheep's milk and rennet to make junket. All these products are organic.

Healthy

The vending machines provide consumers with direct access to healthy produce, that is of high quality, fresh and flavoursome. The traditional methods used involve a minimum of processing and only essential ingredients are added. As well as this, these dairy products are organic: they contain no toxic residues, are totally non-transgenic.

Sustainable

The vending machines offer consumers a new way of purchasing fresh milk and dairy products. These machines are empowering the community to choose the quality and quantity they want. The vending machines also eliminate packaging as customers provide their own receptacles. The short supply-chain and direct selling cuts costs and means the local farmers will become more sustainable.

Ethical

All involved farmers are acutely aware of environmental issues: they use only natural fertilizers such as manure and mineral ones such as carbonate, calcium and dolomite, and they attach great importance to their livestock's welfare. The animals spend summer grazing in open pastures and when needed their diet is supplemented with organically certified transgenic free fodder.

Dietary requirements

These dairy products are produced using wholly organic methods.