



CHAVET Open School in France
16th – 19th February 2011

In order to prepare European agricultural schools for new challenges, the partnership CHAVET had planned 2 open schools. One took place in Poland and the second one, in France which dealt with "Society and consumers" with the objective of preparing the seminar in Hungary in May.

The open school in France welcomed 12 foreign representatives coming from 6 different countries (AT, BE, HU, IT, PL, SE) and several professionals from France.

The 3 day open school had been constructed to understand, through examples the future challenges to vocational education and training in relation with consumers and society.

France is well known for its cuisine, either for the quality or the variety.

One of the realizations of this, is the classification Unesco label "the french meal as an immaterial patrimony of the humanity". Another consideration that french cuisine is good, is also the social links created with the pleasures of sharing and associating wines and local produce.

The ministry in charge of this is the ministry of agriculture, food, fishery, rural affairs and spatial planning (Maaprat in french).

"Eating well it's everybody's business", says the National Plan for Food established by the Maaprat.

1°) Welcoming by the representatives of Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fishery, Rural affairs and spatial planning to give an overview of the actions in France about food – consumers – and evolution of the demand of the public and the link with the agricultural schools

– Mrs Rebecca Akrich - Discussion

Who is Rebecca Akrich ?

After being a teacher for few years in an agricultural school she has decided to join the directorate of food in the Maaprat where she has worked on food policies and the different actions which could be achieved.

The National Plan for Food has 4 objectives :

- + Everybody has the right of good quality food
- + To offer a wider range of good quality food
- + To develop the knowledge and information on food
- + To promote french cuisine as a patrimony

The main idea is to make a social pact between the farmers and consumers to find on the market enough food for everybody particularly in the respect of the environment.

An encouragement to the main actors of the food chain to be involved in the philosophy "from the straw fork to the table fork" , or "from the farm to the table ", with the idea of making farmers producers of food and not just raw materials bringing them closer to the consumers.



2°) Besides the national policy, there are individual initiatives for example :

Direct sales from the producer to the consumer.

Visit of Patrick Boumard green houses – Rambouillet (Suburb of Paris) a vegetable producer who sells directly to his clients "Baskets of vegetable".

Who is Patrick Boumard?

After learning in an agricultural school about cattle breeding, and working in farms, he then decide to go back to school to learn how to become a shepherd , followed by a part time job in forestry. An opportunity arose after he had thought about it for a while, Patrick and his wife decided in 2007 to cope with the challenge of producing vegetables under unheated greenhouses and try a direct sale of good quality food to the public.

In 2011, they sold 200 baskets per week directly in some agricultural universities in Paris as well as their own premises on Saturdays.

Some consumers are ready to pay more because they can see where the product comes from and as it's local, maximum of 30 - 40 Km from his greenhouses.

An interesting discussion about his experience, what he learned at school, which skills he needs and what do his clients expect, which changes have been made for the last years and next years, went through between Patrick and the group, in front of a nice cup of home made coffee.

The conclusions are: he could do more but his space is restricted by his neighbours who are big farmers, he would have liked to learn more about selling and buying products and about "real" economics at school.

3°) Visit of Rungis : the main food sales platform of Paris – Marché d'Intérêt National (International food Market for professional buyers)

Explanation of the trade circuits of fish, poultry, beef, cheese, fruits vegetables and flowers – Mr Yves Guy – Head of the economics and statistics service of Paris region

Who is Mr Guy?

After studying as an agricultural engineer, he worked for 12 years as a chief educational greenhouse expert in an agricultural school.

Then he moved to Paris and now besides his job in Rungis as a statistician, likes to be a guide for groups in Rungis market starting his job at 4.30am.

Rungis represents only 10% of the trade of food, but it is 7 767 Billions € a year, 1200 enterprises, 12 000 employees and 1 462 000 tons of food.

4°) Explanation of the supermarkets organization, they represent 80% of the trade of food.

Who is Noël Jousse?

He is a teacher in agricultural school in Nantes and his topics are the marketing, economics and trading of products particularly of food.

He presents to us the supermarkets organisation, their power, and the pressure they make on producers and on consumers.



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5°) Visit of small market of St Germain des Prés and the restaurant of the J'GO

Who are Régis, Olivier and Denis?

Denis Méliet lives in Toulouse and has got a big attachment to the terroir and its local products. He decided to open a restaurant in Toulouse, and then to open another 2 in Paris with his 2 partners Régis Daudignan and Olivier Montgabure.

The market opens every day and offers seasonal varieties of vegetable and fruits coming from producers who respect the environment and have a willingness of providing good quality and safe to eat food.

The fruits and vegetables come from the south west of France, stay one day on the display shelves and then are transformed in jam, compotes, soup, purée...etc and are either sold on the market as long life conservation or go the restaurant for the menu proposed to the clients. They defend the local products and help in their way the farmers to be better known and also their food distribution to larger towns „ This method encourages "From the farm to the table" with no intermediate, in the respect of the producer buys his products at a decent price so he can make a living, at the same time respecting the environment.

Conclusion

It's a real public concern. The mass production and mass selling by big conglomerates (Saveol, Pomona, Leclerc, Auchan...) have a big influence in our society, what ever the European country you live in (80%).

Rungis has got links with London, Madrid and Brussels markets.

Despite the huge quantity of food concentrated in one place and the "ballet" of trucks it represents only 10% of the whole sales.

That leaves around 10% for innovative private enterprises, like Mr Boumard and the J'Go Team.

Ministries national plan, innovation, education and information of the young generation seem to be the key of finding a good balance between producers able to sell good quality products for a reasonable price which consumers are ready to pay.

Sophie Blainville-Wellburn
CHAVET coordinator EUROPEA France