

A report presenting best practise
"Learning and increased awareness for change"
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Benchmarking for progress

To make a good environment for exchanging experience and enhance new knowledge the organisation "Lokalproducerat i Väst" has created several networks for different segments of local food production. These platforms gives a reliable context where colleagues within the same segment can discuss current challenges and opportunities. To gain this contacts and create new business relations is of great important when you have a need or wish to take next step in your business. You can also use these networks for arranging visits to see new techniques, different kind of production processes or business models. Within the networks you can arrange tailor-made competence-enhancing efforts. Here is an example from the dairy network.

The small-scale dairy network

A growing interest of added-value products for milk-producers is a result from falling milk-prices and low investment incentives. Start-ups of new small-scale dairies in West Sweden have been in focus for West Sweden in the REFRAME project. The priority for the small-scale dairy network has been exchanging experiences in equipment, packaging and process methods. In focus for the past year has been to add value to the products. Another issue has been to update the quality control routines. For this the project has committed expert competence for educational purpose for the participants in the small-scale dairy network. The network has also been of importance socially, an area where you can find people with similar interest, where you can find support and advice. Producers often have the same kind of challenges and the network is an easy way to support each other. The participants of the small-scale dairy network have been well spread throughout the region, which has been positive out of competition.



One of the farmers in the small-scale dairy network

A challenge for the network is to foresee the consumers' reactions on new packaging for dairy products, other than the all over reign tetra package. First step was the milk automats where consumers fill up milk in their own bottles. This concept works well for selling at the farms, but in retail – would that work at all? The regional food agency Lokalproducerat i Väst have an important role in monitoring trends and translate this to new innovative solutions for small-scale production. The development of new products, making a wider product range is still in progress. We see that this makes the business more stable. The risk is growing without necessary preparation, quality control routines and market analysis. A production process is never stronger than its weakest link. Gaining new knowledge, finding new business partners or work on the sales pitch is of great importance before taking the next step. What about the milk automates at retailers? It's certainly an eye-opener for consumers, to learn about local food. But in the end, the solutions have to be easy for the customer. Many milk automates changed over to bottled milk after a while. Another challenge is also to get a good cooperation with the retailer. This person needs to be actively involved to make fast-moving consumer goods like milk and yoghurt work logistically. When it works we can see good example of profitable milk producer and retailer, both gaining on the locally produced theme in the shop. And by using best practices also within the network it gives courage for others to keep on their efforts in growing their profits and volumes.

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