

City Ede	
Country	The Netherlands
Population	115,710
Title of policy or practice	The Short Food Chain Masterclass
Subtitle (optional)	Empowering farmers and engaging citizens
URL video	<a href="https://youtu.be/hhuJM8e2tJ8">https://youtu.be/hhuJM8e2tJ8</a>
Category	Food Production
SDGs	SDGs: 2, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17.
Brief description	<p>Farmers in Ede and Barneveld participate in the new Masterclass called Producing in the Short Food Chain. Guided by Wageningen Economic Research, the farmers develop products and services for the local market, tailored to consumer demand and based on the strength of their businesses.</p> <p>The municipality of Ede includes a large rural area, hosting many farms. The average farm in this region is relatively small and vulnerable. One way for these farmers to strengthen their position is to shorten food chains by producing for the region, instead of producing for the world market. In this way, farmers become more independent, they can earn more for their primary product and they can shorten the distance with their customer. At the same time, shortening food chains is beneficial for creating awareness of healthy and sustainable food among citizens, as citizens are engaged more in the new production and marketing methods, tailored towards the local population.</p> <p>However, although farmers usually have vast knowledge about farming practices, they lack necessary knowledge and skills about marketing and new business models for the short production chain. Therefore, the municipality of Ede, the neighbouring municipality of Barneveld, farmers' organization Gelderse Vallei and farmers' cooperation Boerenhart set up a master class to empower farmers, in which they learn about producing and marketing for a short food chain. In the first masterclass, 12 farmers learned how to respond to the regional consumer's needs, explore local market opportunities, develop new local products and market their products better. They were facilitated by Wageningen University and Research. The involved partners are planning to keep organising the masterclass over the coming years. Funds are now being organized to start a second masterclass in autumn 2019, so that a growing number of farmers in the region can learn about and develop alternative business models together, by strengthening their position.</p>
Date of start and state (ongoing/completed)	10/2018 Ongoing
Actors and stakeholders involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 participating local farmers;</li> <li>• Municipality of Ede (rural affairs department, food department, economics department);</li> <li>• Municipality of Barneveld (rural affairs department, sustainable development department);</li> <li>• Province of Gelderland;</li> <li>• Wageningen University and Research (Wageningen Economic Research department);</li> <li>• Farmers organization Gelderse Vallei;</li> <li>• Farmers cooperation Boerenhart.</li> </ul>
Approach	1. Preparation:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Information meetings (June 2018);</li> <li>b. Recruitment participants (May – August 2018);</li> <li>2. Masterclass: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Four main meetings (September – November 2018);</li> <li>b. Three in-depth meetings (December – February 2019);</li> <li>c. Excursion (November 2018);</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Knowledge development and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Research (June – December 2018);</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Communication and knowledge sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Final event (April 2019);</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evaluation interviews (April 2019);</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Next masterclass (planned autumn 2019).</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation</b>	<p>The new approach of the masterclass can be divided into three aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New collaboration. Parties with different expertise joint forces for the first time, which strengthened the project. Two municipalities collaborated, so that the scope could be adjusted to the extent of borders of the farming region instead of the municipal borders. The province of Gelderland made the link with the bigger picture: How to expand the programme to more farmers in the province? They co-financed the project and commissioned a study on shortening food chains by Wageningen UR. Farmers organisations and Wageningen UR were also involved;</li> <li>2. Connecting science and policy. Through this collaboration, science and practice were connected. Through Wageningen UR, participating entrepreneurs could get high quality guidance, and they were provided with insights from the conducted study;</li> <li>3. New business models. In the masterclass pioneering entrepreneurs participated. They applied technical and social innovations in their businesses. Moreover, they developed innovative business models. By facilitating farmers, instead of telling them what to do, this masterclass was a true case of doing better things instead of doing things better.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<p>The masterclass primarily has a social and an economic impact. It mainly contributes to MUFPP Indicator 32: Proportion of local/regional food producers that sell their products to public markets in the city. Indirectly, it contributes to the other food production indicators.</p> <p>Twelve farmers developed a new and more sustainable business model. This is a first, but important step towards changing the food chain in the region. The farmers are now working on how to implement their new models.</p> <p>The aim of the masterclass was to have snowball effect through these 12 pioneer farmers, eventually engaging more farmers in the region. Therefore, an important result is that the pioneering farmers are now able find and help each other, whereas before they didn't. The relationship between the farmers was strengthened because of the masterclass.</p> <p>Research on short food chains (led by Jan Willem van der Schans, Wageningen UR) has been conducted and has provided insights on the short food chain and shared these insights with the farmers. Results were: in the Netherlands primary products, such as fruit, vegetables and eggs are overrepresented in the short food chain. Processed products such as meat and cheese are less represented. Results showed that the lack of facilities to process food in the region makes it difficult to produce processed products for the short food chain.</p> <p>More info can be found on the website and in the YouTube video.</p>

<p><b>Inclusion</b></p>	<p>Thematic inclusion: Rural affairs, economics, sustainable development and food departments of the municipalities working together. The themes of sustainable consumption (for citizens) and economic vitality (for farmers) were connected in this project.</p> <p>Social inclusion: Connecting farmers and citizens through achieving more local food in the region.</p> <p>Territorial inclusion: The masterclass is organised by entities from the entire region. The reason for this is that the characteristics of the farming region were used to determine the scope and not geographical or institutional borders. This means that the scope of the project is the entire food valley region. The animal farming region is in the provinces of Gelderland and Utrecht. To start, the municipalities of Ede and Barneveld collaborated.</p>
<p><b>Adversity coefficient</b></p>	<p>The adversity of the masterclass lies in changing the contemporary deadlocked farming system, in which farmers are stuck in the race of upscaling and intensifying the production to survive. The adverse conditions in this case are therefore comprehensive and rather intangible. As the European farming system has already developed a focus on upscaling and intensifying the production ever since the period following the Second World War, many specific adverse conditions related to the deadlocked system are social and institutional.</p> <p>The most important social adverse condition was the difficulty among farmers to rethink this system and to invent alternative ways of production, sales, etc. As farmers have to operate within the current system and are assessed by its success criteria, the system keeps reconfirming itself and allows little room for rethinking it. For example, the current system gets reinforced in the way farmers are educated, in the way they are judged by their colleagues and in the way they are evaluated by governmental institutions.</p> <p>The most important institutional adverse condition is the way the entire production system is organized and the difficulty to change this situation. For example: Subsidy guidelines, zoning plans and contracts with feed- or processing companies, but also the way processing lines are organised, so that it is impossible to track meat and reallocate it for local sales after slaughtering.</p> <p>In the masterclass, these two conditions were identified as the most prominent ones. However, the masterclass has been able to (partially) provide an answer to these conditions, thereby contributing to a more sustainable and equitable food system.</p>