



„Europejski Fundusz Rolny na rzecz Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich: Europa inwestująca w obszary wiejskie”.

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Polish Innovation Foundation – Multimedia campaign Eat Wisely, Know What You Eat – Short Food Supply Chains a source of innovation for agricultural and rural development.

BUYERS’ CLUBS

Good practice in building Short Food Chain supply systems

based on the Liszki Basket example

Prepared by Paweł Kowalski based on materials made available by the Polish Environmental Partnership Foundation, the Liszki Basket Association and the A-Co company.

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The organisation responsible for the content of this report is the Polish Innovation Foundation, which prepared this report as part of the project ‘Multimedia Campaign Eat Wisely, Know What You Eat – Short Food Chains as sources of innovation for agricultural and rural development’. The author is Paweł Kowalski, who prepared this report on the basis of materials made available by the Polish Environmental Partnership Foundation, the Liszki Basket Producers Association and the A-Co company.



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SUMMARY

The Buyers’ Club is a system for enabling direct sales, which engages both farmers from small farms and small food processors, as well as consumers in a joint collaboration aimed at enabling regular and systematic sales of locally-produced food. Buyers’ Club good practice is presented using the example of the Liszki Basket Buyers’ Club, which has been operating for 5 years, **servicing approx. 500 consumers** (zakupy.koszyklisiecki.pl).

As many as 250 different products are offered for sale, originating from approx. 40 farmers and processors from the Liszki area and from Małopolska. Everything depends on the time of year as the Club is driven by seasonal products. To ensure consumers have a fulsome choice, products which are not produced in the Liszki area are sourced further afield (but not more than from 50 km away). Fresh raspberries or tomatoes are not available in December, simply because they don’t grow at this time of year.

Thanks to a customized IT-support programme – IT PLM, the Liszki Basket Buyers’ Club has built up and continues to grow its scale of operations in terms of the numbers of producers and consumers participating, the variety and number of products sold, sales volume and its impact on invigorating the local economy. Without IT support, the Liszki Basket would not be growing, as organizational costs grow exponentially with operational scale as problems of logistics and accounting appear. This is why more and more Buyers’ Clubs of various type seek out IT tools, which can support or even replace the actions of the Club animateurs and organisers.

To achieve greater and increased impact, and what follows, increased profitability, a customised IT tool was developed specifically to support Buyers’ Club operations. A demo version of the IT PLM tool for supporting a Buyers’ Club is part of this good practice description. Using the IT PLM tool requires that it is adapted to the specific needs, conditions and potential of the Buyers’ Club in question – just like the organisers of the Liszki Basket Buyers’ Club.

A demo version of the IT PLM support tool is available at:

<https://prostoodrolnika.pl/uzyskaj-dostep-do-demo-plm/>



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I. INTRODUCTION

More and more people are concerned with the origin and composition of the food they buy. This translates into growing demand for an opportunity to buy vegetables and fruit grown without chemical fertilizers and pesticides, cold cuts made without additives, artisan cheeses or sourdough bread without additives.

It turns out, however, that it is not so easy for farmers to meet this demand as processing and sales of such products by farmers was constrained by a variety of regulatory limitations. With the introduction of new regulatory measures enabling farmers to sell their processed products directly to consumers in the years 2017-8, especially a new regulatory form of sales – Agricultural Retail Trade – legal barriers have been reduced greatly. A much more significant barrier relates to the challenge of consumers obtaining verifiable information as to origin of food products. In turn, farmers and small food processors using traditional production methods, especially those located far from cities, have to deal with the challenge of accessing a larger group of consumers on a regular basis.

The challenge of distribution and sale of food products produced by small and geographically dispersed farms and small food producers is coming to be recognized more and more frequently as a key barrier as market demand for buying directly from farmers grows, but remains largely unfulfilled. This growing interest translates into numerous attempts to develop and implement various types of novel distribution system based on shortening the value chain or ‘social’ and ‘geographical’ distance between producer and consumer.

The Buyers’ Club is an example of a solution to the challenge of connecting producers and consumers for mutual benefit, providing at the same time a means for revitalizing the social and economic development of rural areas.

The offer of the Liszki Basket Club comprises primarily products from the Liszki region.





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The good practices presented in this report along with the software demo for organizing a Buyers’ Club is based on the practical experiences of the Liszki Basket, which has been operating continuously for over 5 years in the Liszki region just outside Krakow.

The Liszki Basket is introduced also in two films:

- <https://youtu.be/wRC5gXmavWs>
- <https://youtu.be/7mqQgic2aNc>



II. WHAT IS A BUYERS’ CLUB?

A Buyers’ Club is a specific form of group purchasing of local food, which connects individual producers directly to individual consumers, in line with the philosophy of a short food chain that seeks to eliminate unnecessary intermediaries. The formula is simple. On the one hand, there is a group of local farmers and small food processors, and on the other a group of consumers. The two groups co-create the Club through the animation of individuals or an organisation, who actively help make connections and support the process of regular, weekly sales.

Producers look for regular buyers of their products, deciding upon what products they offer, the amounts available and product prices. In turn, consumers gain regular access to fresh food of known origin, produced locally in the region where they reside. Food sold in the Club is considered local, if it is produced in a specific geographical area, typically no more than 50 km from where the consumer lives.

The Buyers’ Club engages producers and consumers in joint action, which is aimed at generating benefits from cost-savings arising from elimination of intermediaries. The producer is not only able to retain as income a greater proportion of the final sales price, but also secures regular sales. In turn, the consumer gains access to quality products at competitive prices, as the Club offers a choice of similar products from different producers. But most importantly, the consumer has ready access to products, which are not available in shops.

The positive experience of the Liszki Buyers’ Club as a form of joint selling arises from the fact that the contemporary consumer is used to shopping at specific times in one or two places. This means that producers acting alone have a big challenge as they typically have a limited amount and range of products to offer. For Liszki Basket producers, the benefit is that by offering their products along with those of others, greatly increases the chances of securing sales, saving time and money in the process, as it is the Club that connects them to buyers. Consumers also are willing to pay the price asked, as they also benefit from time savings in gaining access to trusted products from trusted producers, who are not anonymous. Just as in a farmers’ market, the producer operates in a place to which consumers come to buy a



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variety of products.

The Liszki Basket distinguishes its offer by selling local, seasonal products, produced and processed using natural and traditional methods. This is why most of the farmers and producers co-creating the Basket operate organic or traditional farms, with certified production and products. In large part, the farms involved are small, in some cases constituting little more than a garden in which vegetables and fruits are grown primarily for the use of the family involved with only surpluses sold in the Basket. The condition is simple – food must be healthy, natural, free of chemicals and GMOs! Farms and small-scale processing facilities must operate in accordance with regulations, meeting all prevailing food safety provisions.

Product Offering of the Liszki Basket

What products?

SEASONAL FRUIT: incl.: cherries, gooseberries, currants, american blueberries, peaches, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, plums, apples, pears, walnuts;

SEASONAL VEGETABLES: incl.: spring greens, cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, pumpkins, potatoes, beetroot, carrots, beans, kohlrabi, leek, kale, herbs and more;

PROCESSED FOOD AND READY MEALS: juices, syrups, jams, confitures, preserves, salads, pastes, sauces, pickles, as well as perogis and croquettes;

MEATS, COLD CUTS AND FISH: beef, pork, Lisiecki sausage, Mników ham, roast pork loin, country sausage, kabanos sausages, carp from Zator, sturgeon, trout;

BAKERY: traditional kukielki buns, sour bread, seasonal baked foods;

DAIRY: eggs, cheeses, goats' cheese, white cheese, curd cheese, cottage cheese, Bundz cheese, butter, milk, yellow artisan cheeses and other;

HONEY: many-flower, honey-dew, heather, dandelion, rapeseed and others;

FLOUR AND GRITS: wheat flour, rye flour, spelt flour, millet grains and others;

ALCOHOL: wine from local winery in Zagrabie;

CRAFTS: wicker products, lavender products, embroidered cloth, table cloths, necklaces;

SEEDLINGS: tomatoes, herbs, cucumbers and other vegetables.





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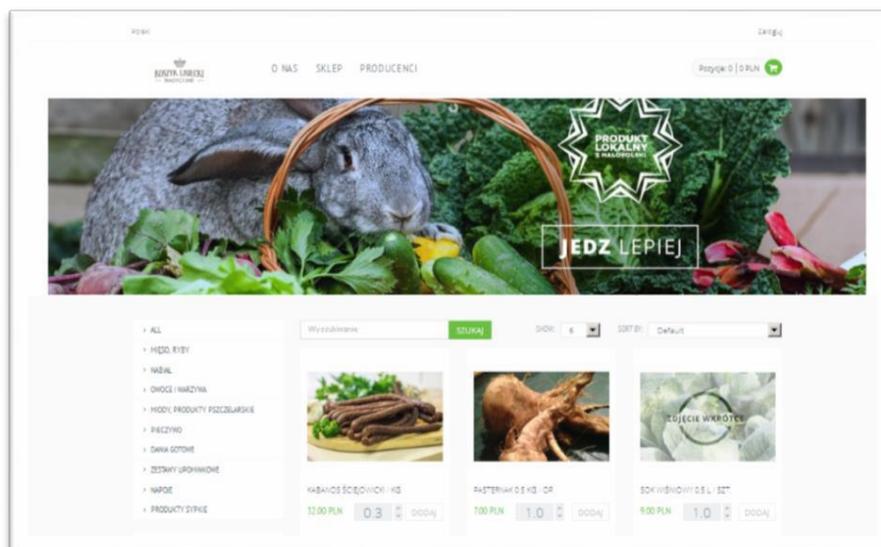
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Farmers participate in all aspects of Club organization and are involved in preparing, packing and delivering food products to collection points or directly to customers. It is they who decide upon prices, and it is they who are the guarantors of quality and authenticity of origin. Consumer trust and loyalty is built not only by the product and its virtues, but also by the knowledge of where, how and by whom the product was produced.

III. GOOD PRACTICE IN CLUB ORGANISATION

Every Club has its own ‘caretaker’ or manager, who coordinates and supports all activities. That is the case with the Liszki Club, which was initiated by Dagmara Pilis, who resides in the village of Kaszów. She received financial, organisational and IT support from the Polish Environmental Partnership foundation. Five years on from its initiation, the Club operates through a dedicated not-for-profit called the Association of Liszki Basket producers, which organises sales. Initially, the Club operated as an informal group of collaborating producers and consumers connecting with one another via email and telephone. Over time an internet platform was developed with a system of IT-supported for ordering and for deliveries – zakupy.koszyklisiecki.pl

The ‘shop-window’ of the Liszki Basket, which is supported by the IT PLM platform, which presents products along with their producers



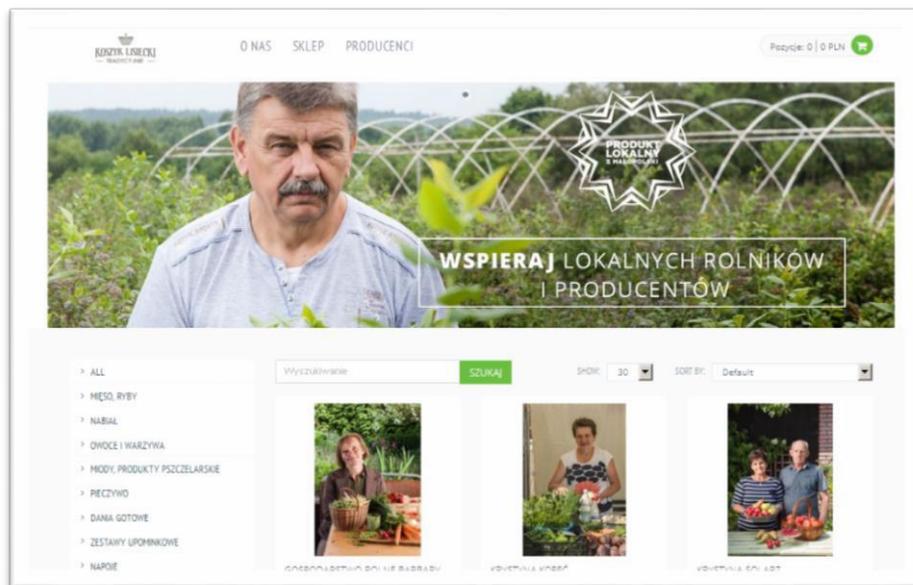


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The Liszki Basket operates on a weekly sales model, with collections every Thursday. Participating producers include in their sales price a provision for covering costs of organising and selling in the Club, including costs of IT support and financial transaction management. For two years now, the Club has been competing in the marketplace without external financing in the form of a grant or subsidy. On an ongoing basis, depending on the time of year, there are approx 30-40 producers involved (depending on the season) and approx 500 consumers who buy regularly.

Basket consumers have access to complete information about the products and the farms, from which the products originate. They can, should they so wish, visit the farm, meet its owners, see how food is produced, what is used to fertilize vegetables, what the animals eat or view the process of cheese or pickles production.

Basket consumers place their orders on an internet platform, accessed through a web-page. Sales take place once a week in the form of a 'sales session'. Vegetables and fruit are picked typically on delivery day or the previous day. Other products, such as cold cuts, pierogis, breads are made on an ongoing basis in response to demand. Thanks to this formula, everything is always fresh.

- The Club has its own caretaker/manager, who seeks out farmers and food processors for collaboration and also seeks out interested consumers. The manager works with producers to prepare the weekly sales offer, to finalise the product range and pricing;
- A new Club offer is prepared each week, and made available to consumers via the internet platform and via email supported by Freshmail. In the case of the Basket, the offer is sent out every Monday;



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- Customers place their orders via the internet platform from Monday to Wednesday;
- The manager uses the platform to place orders with farmers, specifying what products, in what amounts and in what packaging need to be delivered to the collection point following closure of the ‘sales session’ on Wednesday afternoon.
- The ‘logistical centre’ is also the collection point, where products are sorted and packed into boxes assigned to specified consumers in accordance with their orders. Each consumer has their own box;
- Consumers come and collect their orders in person at the collection point every Thursday from 4 pm – 7.30 pm. Payment is in cash or by card;
- Following the session, financial settlements take place and preparations begin for the next session.

The difference between a Farmers’ Market and a Club is that in the Club format we are dealing with food products that have been sold on collection day (each producer knows what they have sold, to whom and at what price). At a Farmers’ Market, we are dealing with food that the producer hopes to sell. It is important to note that the Buyers’ Club is not an alternative to the Farmers’ Market, but a supplement, offering both producers and consumers a convenient way of buying and selling local food, which is increasingly in demand. In the Liszki Basket Club, there are many producers who do not sell in the Farmers’ Market as the scale of their production is small.

Boxes are coded with the order number at the collection point of the Liszki Basket Buyers’ Club at the Rohatyna Tavern





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Chata Kryspinów, Cholerzyn

The Liszki Basket Buyers’ Club collection point in Liszki deals with approx 40-100 orders each week, depending on the season.

PROCEDURE FOR ORGANISING BUYERS’ CLUB OPERATIONS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE LISZKI BASKET

ACTIVITY		RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
AGREEING OFFER FOR UPCOMING SESSION			
1.	Contact with producers to determine product offering list for upcoming session.	Club Manager	Fri – Mon
2.	Collection of descriptions of products, producers and photos from producers	Club Manager	Fri – Mon
3.	Przygotowanie zbiorczej tabeli ze zmianami cennikowymi	Club Manager	Fri – Mon
4.	Wprowadzanie produktów na stronę internetową, tworzenie cenników producentów	Producers with support from the Club Manager	Fri – Mon
DISTRIBUTION OF OFFER FOR UPCOMING SESSION			
1.	Signing off on final offering	Club Manager	To Mon 12 noon
2.	Distribution of offer to Club Buyers	Club Manager	To Mon 12 noon
MANAGING ORDERS			
1.	Registration of buyers (one-time)	Club Manager	Ongoing
2.	Dealing with Consumer queries related to the offer, placing orders, product availability, technical problems associated with the internet platform.	Club Manager in collaboration with producers	From Mon 12.00 noon to Weds 12.00 noon
3.	Coordinating numbers of orders placed.	Club Manager	Mon to Weds



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4.	Mail-out of reminders to Club members to place orders	Club Manager	Tues, Weds
5.	Close of sales session.	Club Manager	Weds 12.00 noon
6.	Producers receive information about orders to be realised	Club Manager	Weds
7.	Sales reports according to producers and invoices for producers	Club Manager	Weds
8.	Preparation of report on orders for collection by consumes, with corrections/adjustments taking into account related to actual supply.	Club Manager	Weds
ORDER COLLECTION			
1.	Organising product delivery	Club Manager	Weds afternoon, Thurs morning
2.	Sorting orders into boxes	Club Manager	Thurs.
3.	Sorting boxes according to collection point	Club Manager	Thurs
4.	Allowing collection, issuing receipts.	Club Manager	Thurs 4 pm to 7.30 pm
5.	Financial accounting	Club Manager	Friday & Monday
6.	Settling accounts with producers, payments	Club Manager	End of month
IMPLEMENTING / OPERATING INTERNET PLATFORM (IT PLM)			
1.	Coordination of platform related activities	Club Manager with IT PLM support	Ongoing
2.	Dealing with technical issues, introducing modifications, testing, using demo version	Club Manager with IT PLM support	Ongoing
3.	Introducing producers to the internet platform (especially in relation to meeting product orders)	Club Manager with IT PLM support	Ongoing
4.	Updating internet platform (programming updates)	Club Manager with IT PLM support	Friday
MARKETING/PROMOTION			
	Preparing upcoming offer as newsletter (graphics, text) plus text for email	Club Manager	Friday
	Updating Customer data-base (incl adding paper based applications) from excel to Google Disc to Freshmail.	Club Manager	To Mon. 12.00 noon
	Updating internet platform with offer	Club Manager	To Mon. 12.00 noon
	Mailing to Basket Consumers via Freshmail	Club Manager	To Mon. 12.00 noon
	Preparation of post on facebook/social media with current offer	Club Manager	To Mon. 12.00 noon
	Monitoring session in Freshmail and analysis of statistics, updating date-bases, e-mail addresses	Club Manager	Friday - statistics
	Monitoring session of facebook	Club Manager	Friday - statistics
	Preparation and mail out of reminder (graphics, text)	Club Manager	To Tues. 17.00
	Preparation of other promotional materials/activities related to the Club	Club Manager	Ongoing



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In sum, what is needed to organise a Buyers' Club:

1. Determine the characteristics and parameters of the products to be sold (e.g. local products from local producers) in the form of an **OPERATIONAL POLICY OF THE CLUB** (an example policy of the Liszki Basket Buyer's Club is available on request);
2. **PRODUCTS OFFERED FOR SALE**, which are delivered to points of sale by producers (in accordance with the approved Policy);
3. **WEEKLY SALES OFFER OF THE CLUB** (initially this can be in the form of an email message or a pdf attachments – examples from the Liszki Basket Club available on request, or in the form of an internet shop using the IT PLM software);
4. **SINGLE OR MULTIPLE POINTS OF SALE**, where consumers can collect the products ordered. The point of sale needs to be equipped with crates/boxes, in which the consumer will find his/her order and a refrigerator, which is essential for some products, including cold cuts, dairy products, meat etc. The point of sale must fulfill health safety standards or in other words, standards set by the Sanitary Authority for all points of food sale. It must be equipped also with, for example wash basins and running water. At the point of sale, there must also be a cash register and other devices essential for sales (eg. a terminal for accepting credit cards).
5. Operating a Club requires a **MANAGER (a physical person)**, who operates for and behalf of the **CLUB ORGANIZER (a legal person)** which can organise sales in accordance with regulations (in the case of the Liszki Basket, it is the Association of Producers of the Liszki Basket). The manager organises the whole process of preparing the offer, placing orders, logistics and product collection, using the IT PLM software with support from a person proficient in its use and team for packing the boxes and organising the collection in the point or points of sale (typically, the need is for 2 people at the logistics point and 1 person in each point of sale).
6. **IT PLM SOFTWARE** supports the organization and growth of sales, which is a consequence of increasing numbers involved on both the buying and selling side, increasing number and variety of products offered for sale and sales volumes, while limiting the costs that go with such increases. The Demo version of the IT PLM is available as part of this good practice case study.



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IV. HOW TO RECRUIT FARMERS/FOOD PRODUCERS FOR THE CLUB

The owners of small farms and small-scale processing, who operate through the Liszki Basket have the opportunity for much better market access. In consequence they can expect greater profits, especially as they are co-creators of the Buyers Club and as members of the Association of the Liszki Basket Producers, they can operate with lower margins than those of shops and they can decide upon a joint marketing and development strategy.

The farmers/producers can also count on support for the development of their own individual production and business activities from organisations collaborating with the Association and also from the customers, who have an interest in assuring continuous supply of local products that meet their needs.

Every method that successfully recruits farmers and food processors is a good one, if it proves effective. There is no magic formula. Preparing an inventory of producers active in the geographical area of interest is an important step, but this is time-consuming and costly. Data bases maintained by agencies, non-governmental organisations, agricultural chambers and others operating in an area of interest can often not be accessed and they are often not kept up-to-date in any case. Nothing is as effective as personal face-to-face contact and conversations with local farmers and food producers.

A local poviát or municipal government can be extremely helpful by inviting farmers and small producers to information meetings. Collaboration with the relevant Agricultural Advisory Centre or Agricultural Chamber is very much recommended as these institutions work with farmers on an ongoing basis and usually have a good orientation ‘on the ground’. It is also worth noting, that you can usually find in the Chamber, Local Action Group, local government or Advisory Centre people who are advocates of locally-produced food, who are very much concerned with working out ways how to make locally-produced food more available to consumers.

In the case of the Liszki Basket, everything started from a handful of passionate individuals, who wanted to get access to locally produced food for their own needs. They recruited the first producers to the Club, arguing that the initiative would bring benefits to the places in which they live and work. The first food producers to be recruited were larger farmers, producing larger volumes for sale in markets or to wholesalers. But soon there were also food producers who had not previously been selling as their production was focused primarily on meeting their own needs. The Basket initiative was interesting for them as it gave a possibility to sell surpluses once their ‘home’ needs were satisfied.

A key and deciding argument for farmers and small producers was (and continues to be) sales and access to customers who are specifically looking for fresh, tasty and chemical-free food. From the point of view of the farmer or food processor, the cost of participating in the Club is primarily an issue of time and money. Producers get actively involved, if the Club brings them time savings (eg. they don’t have to go to the farmers’ market) and financial benefits (the



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margins in the Club are much smaller than those in shops, leaving a greater part of the final sales price in the pocket of the producer).

Signing contracts, declarations and other documents – at least at the start – discourages collaboration. Appeals for joint action are also typically not very convincing. What counts is securing individual benefit (especially from sales) from the joint action of the Club, which makes participation from the producers point of view justified. Once the Club becomes a regular sales channel for the producer, it is possible to start discussing developing collaboration of the Club as a whole. In other words, if individual benefits arise from joint action of the Club, farmers and small-scale producers will continue to join.

Organisers or initiators of a Buyers’ Club – especially if they are non-governmental organisations – typically seek grants and other forms of financial support. This was also the case with the Liszki Basket. It seems that such an approach is inevitable, but it is worth keeping in mind that the sustainability of the venture is not related to the level of financing secured, but to the competitiveness of the venture in the market-place. The key factor is the organisational arrangements and the costs of maintaining these. Buyers’ Club ventures get into problems, when they become dependent on external financing or subsidies. Too often, when the grant or other form of external financing ends, the venture collapses if the participating buyers and sellers are not prepared to cover the organisational costs of the venture.

Getting producers to identify with the Club is the key to its success and to ensuring their effective engagement. In the case of the Liszki Basket Club, it is important that the venture is above all a venture of the producers who sell through the Club. It is they, who determine the policies of the Club and its operational principles, shaping its growth and development. This means that the financial and other benefits generated by the Club must in the first instance meet their needs, and not the needs of an intermediary. In many cases, NGO-initiators of Clubs operating on behalf of farmers and producers, de facto become intermediaries.

It is important to note that the process of recruiting producers is always unfinished. It is one that seems tiresome and time-consuming, but over time this leads to ever stronger ties between producers and between producers and consumers. A community emerges, which in turn creates a brand, which is recognised, and in consequence leads to competitiveness in the market place. It is the farmers and the producers, who offer their products for sale through the Club, who build its reputation. Over time, it is the producers who determine the needs of the Club, which are a function of their circumstances, ambitions and plans in relation to those of those buying in the Club. In this way, the Club becomes also a tool for working out solutions to individual problems and challenges, such as tax issues, production processes, legal issues and others that arise from the functioning and development of the Club.



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The Liszki Basket Club promotes its producers, products and the region of origin as a single integrated message.

I love discovering new tastes

Renata Czak has a small farmstead located in Cholerzyn. She grows fruit and vegetables mainly for her own use. The surplus is sold through the Koszyk Lisecki Club. **Eggplants, peppers, tomatoes, onions, courgettes, parsley and dill grow profusely without artificial fertilisers and pesticides. A small flock of happy chickens runs freely in her garden. The birds are only fed with home-grown grain and vegetables.** Renata also makes various preserves, using old traditional recipes, which she creatively modifies. She loves to discover new flavours and aromas. Her dumplings (pierogi) (filled with spinach and feta cheese) and croquettes (fried pancake rolls filled with meat, cabbage with fungi or spinach) are among the popular readymade dishes purchased by Liszki Basket customers. – *The secret to good dumplings is a good dough and good balance between the ingredients used for filling* – says Renata.





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Producers and their products build the Buyers’ Club brand

From traditional animal farming

To czym karmi się zwierzęta w hodowlach przemysłowych może przyprawić o zawrót głowy. Hormony, sterydy i antybiotyki dodawane do pasz (często GMO) nie wyparowują w cudowny sposób po ubiciu zwierzęcia i ten toksyczny koktajl zjadamy potem w szynce czy kiełbasie.

W Koszyku Liseckim znajdziemy mięso i wędliny wyłącznie z lokalnych, sprawdzonych i zaufanych hodowli przetwarzane oraz wędzone w tradycyjny sposób. Bez konserwantów, stabilizatorów, chemicznych dodatków smakowych i aromatów. Klub Zakupowy współpracuje z trzema masarniami: firmą Bekonik Barbary Konik z Mnikowa, rodzinnym przedsiębiorstwem Artura Siudka z Czułowa (Wyrób Wędlin Artur Siudek) oraz Wędlinami Tradycyjnymi Lucyny Lenik z Rybnej. Bekonik słynie ze swojej mnikowskiej szynki, kiełbasy krajanej, schabu, pieczeni i nagradzanego na wielu kulinarnych konkursach - pasztetu z kurczaka. Wszystkie wyroby oparte są na starych, tradycyjnych recepturach. Produkcja wędzonek odbywa się w wędzarniach opalanych drewnem bukowym oraz olchowym. Firma i produkty: szynka z Mnikowa, kiełbasa wiejska tradycyjna, schab tradycyjny oraz pasztet z kurczaka.



Contact: Bekonik, 32–084 Morawica, Mników 400, Poland tel. +48-12 350 12 15



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It is important to take into account the fact that not all producers will be producing and selling year-round, depending on their specific situation. Some will also leave as soon as they secure a group of loyal customers or if they find another distribution channel is more beneficial for them. Others will participate because of sentimental or collegial motivations, and will not be seeking to increase the scale of their sales. The key to the success of the Basket has been (and still is) keeping an openness to all producers from the Liszki region and to producers who produce products in line with Club credo adopted by its organisers, which are not available locally, but demanded by customers. In the case of the Liszki Basket, the key criteria are:

- Processed and unprocessed products produced in the first instance in the Liszki region (Liszki municipality and surrounding municipalities), and in justified cases (e.g. lack of a local source) from other parts of Malopolska;
- Products from small farms and small-scale processing employing non-industrial methods, which are chemical and additive-free.

It is important to encourage producers to seek out certification for their products, including organic food certification, but not to make this a condition of participation. It is the producer, who must come to recognise that a specific type of certification of a product, will bring with it benefits.

In the Liszki Basket, for example, more and more participating producers have opted for certification over the years. It is important to remember always, that it is not the certificate that counts, but the guarantee of quality and authenticity associated with the producers. Participating producers have come increasingly aware of this fact over time, and so as a result, constitute something of an internal quality control system. Individual producers accept that falling short on quality or accusations of food fraud of one producer will have negative repercussions on all sales of all Club producers. This means that Club producers not only identify with the brand, but also actively protect the authenticity that lies at its heart – local products of traceable origin.

The experience of the Basket shows also that the greater the variety of products offered for sale and the greater the choice of specific products (eg. eggs from several producers), the greater the individual sales of all. There are over 200 products on offer in the Liszki Basket at present. It is worth remembering also that it is not just price that counts. Over time, consumers buy products from their favourite trusted producers, taking into account taste and also their own personal product preferences. As a consequence, it is not the cheapest products which are the most sought after.



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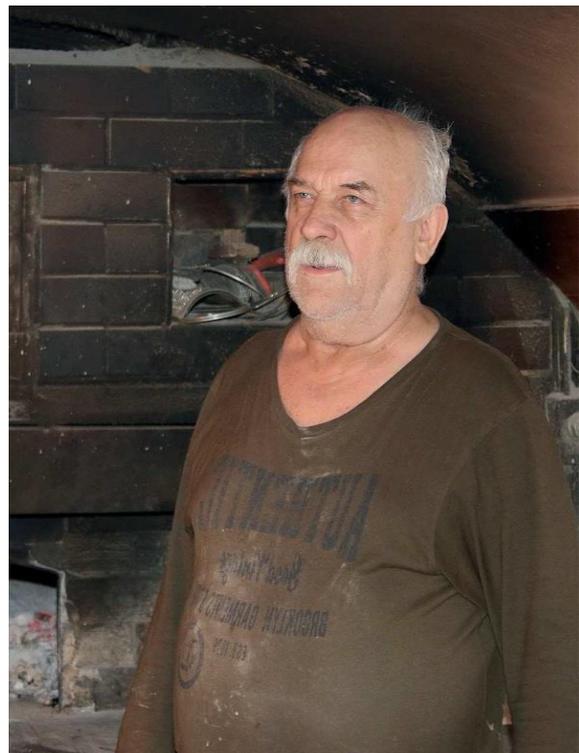
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Brioches baked with love

Wood ovens, used to bake delicious, fragrant breads and traditional wheat brioches (kukietki) from the Liszki region are over 90 years old. – *The ovens were installed at the same time, when our house was built – in 1923 – says **Władysław Kowalik**, owner of the legendary bakery in Liszki. But the bread making traditions are even longer. – My great – grandfathers baked bread and my parents baked bread. Now I teach my son the tricks of the trade – adds Władysław. Dough for cakes, rolls, pies, flat breads and breads is all mixed at the ground floor of his home and in the basement. After forming and rising, the baked goods are baked in the historic ovens. The smell of baking bread permeates throughout the neighbourhood.*



- We only use the well tested flour mixtures. We do not use any chemical additives or agents. We bake breads using only the sourdough leavener – wheat, wholemeal, rye, graham bread – added proudly the baker. Wheat brioche (“kukietka”) is baked using a 400 year old recipe. – We add our expertise and heart. That’s why it is the best.

More: www.piekarniaregionalna-liszki.pl

Contact: Piekarnia Regionalna, Liszki 15, Poland tel. +48-12 280 71 12



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Often consumers also buy products from Club producers outside of the Club, for example at the farmers’ market or directly on the farm. Producers can also arrange to deliver individually to homes of consumers or to workplaces, if this is convenient for both sides. There is no compulsion to sell through the Club. Such practice does not harm the operations of the Club. On the contrary, it encourages to buy through the Club. This is why the Club should operate points of sale with regularity, providing easy and convenient access for consumers involved.

In organising the Club, a key goal must be to generate on the part of producers, individually and collectively, a capability for strategising on marketing and sales, including pricing policies.

V. HOW TO RECRUIT CONSUMERS FOR THE CLUB

The Buyers’ Club formula is not an universal solution for all consumers. It appears to be most appropriate for example for families with children, who buy with regularity and pay special attention to quality and origin of food products. It is a sales model that meets the needs of consumers who want:

- regular access to tasty, seasonal, fresh food, which is free of chemicals and GMOs;
- to buy legally food of known origin – directly from small farms and small-scale producers;
- to limit their environmental impact by buying food that has ‘travelled’ for no more than an hour, is fresh and was produced using traditional methods (home-made cold cuts, cheeses, preserves), but at competitive prices;
- to support small farms, by buying their products at fair prices.

Liszki Basket clients value especially the fact that they can buy products from a known producer, that they are healthy, tasty, traditional and fresh. They can be certain that what is sold is what is available in line with the natural farming season. A big plus is the opportunity to ask questions on an ongoing basis about the products on offer, about ordering and also collection.

As with recruiting producers to the Club, all methods that are effective for recruiting consumers are good. But the experience of the Liszki Basket suggests that personal contact with customers and potential customers is of greatest significance. Such contacts can be made through organising a farmers’ market, festival or other event that attracts potential customers, giving them the opportunity to taste the locally-produced products and meet the food producers.

Social media, especially Facebook, are essential, alongside other promotional activities that draw attention to the Buyers’ Club and its offer. But sales – in contrast to declarations of



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support or number of likes or registration numbers – are what counts. And in this regard convenience and ease of access to the point of sale is the most important factor. **In the case of the Liszki Basket, Facebook is an important is an important factor, but not the deciding factor when it comes to recruiting buyers.**

Liszki Basket facebook page is important, but not the deciding factor

<https://www.facebook.com/KZ.koszyklisiecki/>



The Liszki Basket is above all for those, for whom getting to the base collection point in the Rohatyna Tavern in Kryspinów not far from Balice Airport in Kakow does not constitute a problem. Most clients collect their purchase after collecting children from school or as an add-on to more extensive shopping in nearby supermarkets or on the way home from work. The key thing is to ensure that the consumer integrates buying from the Basket into the culture of their



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home. It is important to create a regular ritual out of buying from the Club, especially in terms of getting used to collecting purchases in a specific place at a specific time.

The consumers participating in the Liszki Basket Buyers' Club constitute part of a community, which like the producers, identifies with the brand. Over time, the preferences of individual consumers come to be better known, and so new products can be introduced to the Basket offer that respond to their expectations. Some consumers also organise logistics groups, in which several families join together informally, taking turns to organise collection of orders on behalf of the group.

Consumers value recipes and other suggestions from producers, especially where these relate to getting the most out of their products (sample recipe below)



Tradycyjne szpecle z borówkami

Czyli inaczej kluski kładzione. W Małopolsce znane od czasów zaborów. Proste w przygotowaniu kluski możesz podać zarówno z mięsnym sosem, jak i owocami.

Składniki:

szklanka mąki

2 jaja

szczypta soli

szczypta gałki muszkatołowej

pół szklanki ciepłej wody

2 łyżki masła

Dodatek do podania:

cukier puder

fruzelina borówkowa lub świeże owoce borówki amerykańskiej

Sposób przygotowania:

Składniki wymieszaj porządnie w misce, odstaw na kilka minut i zamieszaj raz jeszcze. Zagotuj lekko osoloną wodę w garze. Rozsmaruj cienką warstwę ciasta na lekko mokrej, drewnianej desce. Długim nożem odciń naj kilkunastomilimetrowe kawałki i trzymając deskę nad garnkiem, wrzucaj kluski do środka. Po wypłynięciu gotuj je dosłownie minutę. Powtarzaj te czynności dla każdej „porcji z deski”. Kiedy wszystkie szpecle będą już gotowe, podsmaż je delikatnie na maśle. A na końcu posyp cukrem pudrem i w zależności od pory roku dodaj świeże borówki amerykańskie lub fruzelinę.



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For consumers, personal and personalised contact is key as it draws attention to the unique character of the product and those who produced it. This is something that is reinforced with each session. The option of buying directly from the producer outside of the Club and visiting the farm or food processing facility is very welcome. On occasion, self fruit-picking events are organised on the farm, e.g. peaches, which means financial savings to consumers and the benefit of engaging directly with the farmer. In practice, not many consumers take advantage of this opportunity, but most value the potential or possibility of connecting directly with the food producer.

In the early days, the organisers of the Liszki Basket sent out the offer by e-mail only. Today with a large number of registered consumers (over 500!), a personalised offer is sent out each week using Freshmail (www.freshmail.pl), which is a system for organising e-marketing campaigns. In addition, so-called reminders and the offer in pdf format is also sent to clients, who prefer this form of contact. As email accounts of consumers get filled, personalised emails really matter. The ritual of buying each week in the Liszki Basket Club is the key – zakupy.koszyklisiecki.pl

A sample offer mailing, which is sent out via Freshmail.

Plus 100% 10:42

Stowarzyszenie Producentów Rolniczych i Przetwórców
to me

Mail niezczysty? [Czytaj w przeglądarce](#)

Kochani,

Na zdjęciu wyeksponowałam **ogórki**, bo teraz są najlepsze **do kiszenia i marynowania**, i dużo osób o to pytało. Tak więc teraz jest ten czas - za 2 tygodnie może być już problem. Zadbaliśmy o to, żeby ich było dużo. Ci, którzy są z nami dłużej, wiedzą, że warto je brać, bo ogórki wychodzą świetnie.

A zatem w tym tygodniu do przetwórstwa polecamy: **ogórki, borówki amerykańskie** (myślę, że tańsze już w tym roku nie będą, więc to najlepszy moment na robienie zapasów) i **jeżyny** (za 2 tygodnie może ich już nie być). Borówki najlepiej zamrażać albo robić z nich konfitury, jeżyny są dobre na nalewki, soki, galaretki, dżemy (do dżemu dodajcie trochę rozmarynu - będzie potem świetnie pasował do kaczki).

Acha - **w tym tygodniu nie mamy mięsa** - Ania Siudkowa jedzie na wycieczkę a u nich nie ma więcej ludzi, którzy mogliby nam przygotować zamówienia.

Mięsożercom zostają **wędliny i ryby** a przede wszystkim pozostają nam **jaja, sery, pieczywo, pierogi, gołąbki** i najważniejsze teraz produkty czyli owoce i warzywa. I oczywiście możemy popijać **ziołowe lemoniady, herbaty** i ... najpyszniejsze w Małopolsce **winko**.

Plus zostają wędliny i ryby a przede wszystkim pozostają nam jaja, sery, pieczywo, pierogi, gołąbki i najważniejsze teraz produkty czyli owoce i warzywa. I oczywiście możemy popijać ziołowe lemoniady, herbaty i ... najpyszniejsze w Małopolsce winko

Z owoców poza borówką i jeżyną, możemy zająć pierwsze **malinki i śliwki**. Potem będzie ich więcej i może stanieją, więc na razie tylko na zajądanie.

Z warzyw polecamy w tym tygodniu pierwsze gruntowe **pomidorki, marchewki i papryczki, kalafiora**, dla koneserów mamy też **kwiaty cukinii** w wersji z małymi cukiniami lub bez. W szczególności zaś zachęcam w tym tygodniu różnokolorowe **buraczki z botwiną** - czerwone, żółte i w biało-czerwone krążki. Można łatwo zrobić niezwykle efektowne salatkę - małe buraczki szybko w całości upiec w folii, lodygi proponuję podusić na maśle z miodem a liście pokropione olejem i solą ususzyć w piekarniku na chipsy (moim zdaniem smaczniejsze niż z jarmużu). Do tego **kozie sery** albo **feta** albo co wam jeszcze do głowy przyjdzie :)

Poza tym oczywiście jest dużo innych warzyw - **kapusty, sałaty, cebulki dymki, jarmuż, kolendra kwitnąca** (jemy z kwiatami i ziarenkami), **cukinie, fenkuł, różne warianty "sałatopodobnych" warzyw, ziemniaki i wiele innych**. Jak ktoś ma potrzebę, zarezerwowaliśmy też trochę **sadzonek** ziół i warzyw do uzupełnienia.

Zapraszam na fejsbuka i sami zapraszajcie znajomych do polubienia - nieustająco potrzebujemy klientów :) <https://www.facebook.com/KZ.koszyklisiecki/>

Przypominam Koszykowy plan wakacyjny - będziemy 8, 22 i 29 sierpnia.

Przypominam:

1. Zamawiamy do środy do godz. 12.00.
2. Zabieramy ze sobą opakowania lub siatki do zabrania produktów. Prosimy o przywiezienie słoików i szklanych butelek.
3. Odbiór WE CZWARTEK w Cholerzynie 361 „Chata Kryspinów” w godz. 16.00 – 19.30.

Zapraszamy do sklepu <http://zakupy.koszyklisiecki.pl/> pamiętajcie, że zawsze możecie poprosić o pomoc telefonicznie tel. 602 739 273 lub mailowo e-mail: zakupy@koszyklisiecki.pl.



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VI. LEGAL AND TAX ISSUES

The Buyers' Club is first and foremost a form of selling food and functions de facto as a kind of shop. This means that the food offered for sale must be produced, processed, stored and sold in accordance with prevailing sanitary and tax rules for retail. The Buyers' Club can sell any product that has been produced in accordance with prevailing regulations. It is important to note, that it is the food producer (not the Club) who is responsible for assuring food safety.

In the light of current regulations, the organisation operating the Club is responsible for all sales issues with respect to tax authorities, including operating a cash register and accounts. Such an organisation in effect buys from producers in order to re-sell to the end consumer. In the case of the Liszki Basket that organisation is the Association of the Producers of the Liszki Basket. The legal status of the product suppliers to the Club are of no significance. It can be a farmer operating under the Marginal, Local, Limited regulation, or regulations governing agricultural retail trade, direct sales or direct supplying. It can also be a business, operating in accordance with small business regulations. The form is not so important. The important thing is that production and sales are legal.

As many of the producers engaged in Buyers' Clubs (this is also the case in the Liszki Basket) are farmers, who produce only for their own needs, an important role for Club organisers is to help them choose the legal form for selling that is most appropriate to their circumstances.

VII. OWNERSHIP AND OTHER ISSUES

The experience of the Liszki Basket indicates that it is possible to attain sustainability of the Buyers' Club, if three conditions are fulfilled:

1. The scale of sales must assure individual benefits for those participating (both producers, as well as consumers and the organisers), which arise from the joint or group actions of the Buyers' Club.
2. There is ongoing experimentation and continuous effort to adapt the functioning of the Club as an organisational form to the range of products offered for sale, the adopted sales strategy and the IT tools that are used to support Club operations.
3. The Club organiser has full branding rights to the Club and acts, in the first instance, for and on behalf of the producers who co-create the authenticity and so the value of the Club as a brand.



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VIII. IT TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING CLUB OPERATIONS – IT PLM

Most Buyers’ Clubs in Poland operate on a small scale, typically engaging no more than a dozen or so farmers and food producers and several dozed consumers. One reason for this is that there are organisational barriers arising from increasing the numbers participating, increasing the range of products offered for sale and increasing sales volumes. Organisational costs increase with scale, especially relating to logistics and settling transactions. This is why more and more Buyers’ Clubs are looking to IT support tools, so that these support or even replace activities of Club organisers.

At relatively small scales (eg. 10 producers, 100 consumers), Club operations can be built on shifts by volunteers, who make use of simple excel tools and telephones. That is how the Liszki Basket operated at the outset. But with increasing scale of the venture, effective organisational arrangements are needed – ones that reduce (rather than increase) costs of operations.

To support attaining greater scale, greater impact, and in consequence assure sustainability of the venture, a dedicated IT PLM software was developed by the A-Co company at the request of the Polish Environmental Partnership Foundation. The IT plaform was created in a way that it can be adapter to the specific needs, circumstances and potential of a Buyer’s Club operating in a specific locale. The organisers of the Liszki Basket have adapted the software to their own needs.

A demo version of the IT PLM platform is part of this good practice caase study and can be downloaded along with instructions

<https://prostoodrolnika.pl/uzyskaj-dostep-do-demo-plm/>