

Spain – innovation example 2

QueRed ASSOCIATION FOR ARTISAN CHEESE MAKERS

www.redqueserias.org



Figure 1

- **Location:** National network (also part of a European network FACE)
- **HNV system:** Dairy (goats, sheep, cows), farms are mostly grazing systems
- **Scale of operation:** 300 members throughout Spain (200 are producers)
- **Timespan:** Established in 2013
- **Keys to success:** Association directed by small-scale producers with full transparency, independent from government and public funds, active members encouraged by a dynamic director, low members' fees at the beginning

Problems addressed by this example

One of the main problems for HNV Farming is the economical weakness of farms. One way to become more profitable is adding value selling cheeses or meat in short supply chains. But the poorly adapted legal framework (especially the implementation of EU food hygiene rules) is a real constraint for small-scale producers that face expensive requirements that make business unfeasible. This is the problem addressed by QueRed.

Story in a nutshell

QueRed is a national association of artisan cheese producers for the adaptation of rules and bureaucracy to the reality of artisan cheese dairies. The association also organises training for producers, exchanges among producers in a googlegroup, collective participation in cheese festivals and markets, looking for collective contracts for transport and insurance. Besides cheesemakers, QueRed has also an important group of future cheesemakers that find in the association support and help from more experienced producers, and it is also a way to assure the continuity of the association. QueRed is the only association in Spain that represents the interests of small-scale cheese dairies at national level and in 4 years of life has achieved legal reforms that are improving the situation of farmers on the ground.

What does QueRed achieve for HNV farming?

- Specific legal changes in Spain.
- Publication with official approval of several crucial documents on adaptation of rules and bureaucracy to the reality of artisan cheese dairies (see notes).
- Training for producers, exchanges among producers, collective participation in cheese festivals and markets, looking for collective contracts for transport and insurance.
- Support for future cheesemakers.





Figure 2



Figure 3

Achievements

Approval and publication, by the Public Health Ministry, of a document with examples of interpretation of EU food hygiene rules in small-scale cheese dairies. This work was done by QueRed and negotiated with national (Public Health Ministry (Aecosan), Agriculture Ministry (Mapama) and regional competent authorities).

http://www.aecosan.mssi.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/noticias_y_actualizaciones/noticias/2017/aplicacion_higiene_queserias.htm

Guidelines for the improvement of the hygiene package implementation and proposals of exceptions and adaptations for farmhouse and artisan cheese dairies. This work was done in collaboration with Slow Food Italy, Slow Food Macedonia and Ardahan University (Turkey) and the aim is to help EU candidate countries to implement EU Food Hygiene Regulations in an adapted way for small-scale productions. <http://www.pmproje.com/upload/icerik/flex.pdf>

Approval of the European Guide for Good Hygiene Practices in the production of artisan cheese and dairy products.

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/biosafety_fh_guidance_artisanal-cheese-and-dairy-products.pdf

Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact of QueRed's work for HNV farms, but positive effects can be expected for farms that choose to develop small-scale cheese-making.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

Indirectly, the work of QueRed should help to maintain some individual HNV farms.



Figure 4

How does QueRed respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

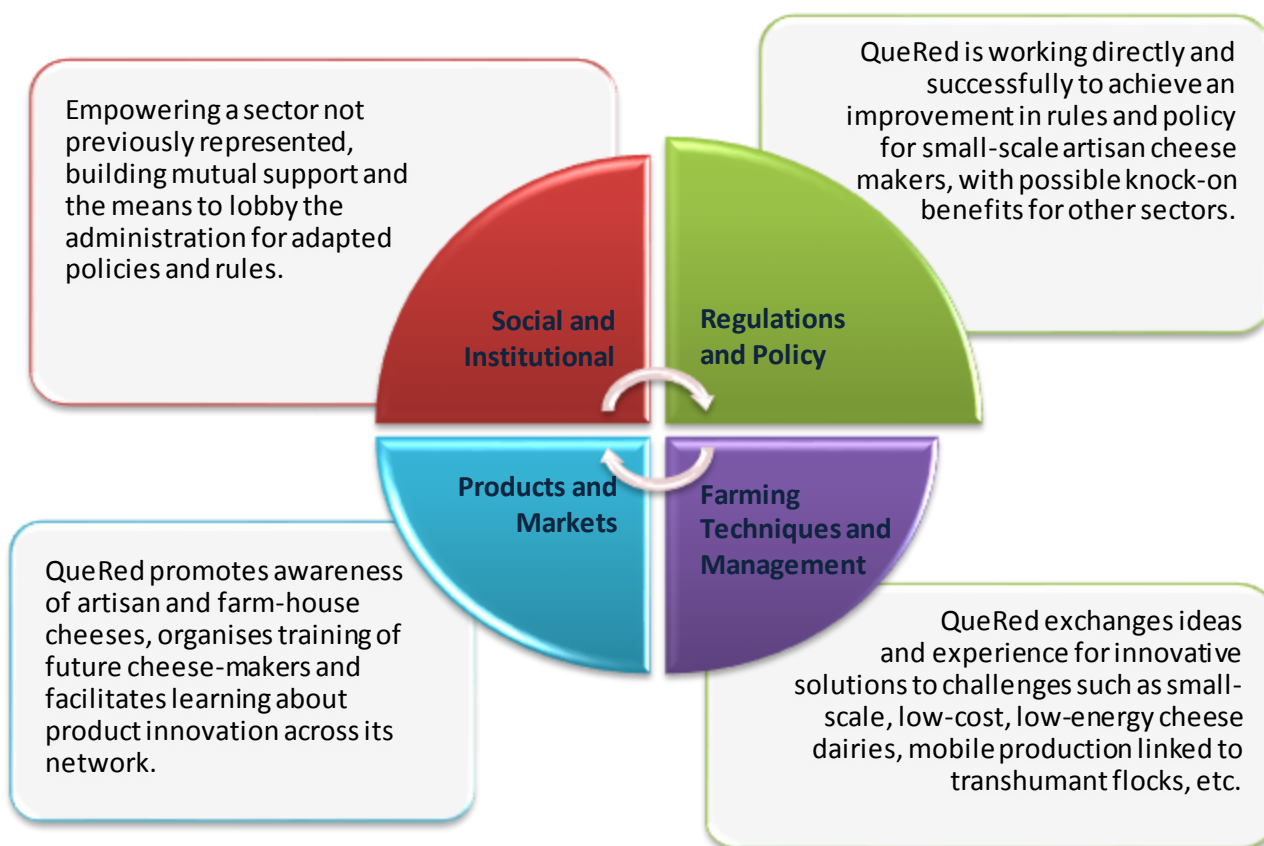


Figure 5 The framework HNV-Link used for evaluating innovations for high nature value farming.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- A brave and risky beginning, starting the association without funds, and undertaken actions of a high level.
- Independent from government and public funds.
- Association managed and directed by small-scale producers, with complete transparency.
- Active involvement of members, encouraged by a dynamic director.
- Low members' fees at the beginning, to recruit members and show them over time that the association is working well.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- QueRed could be replicated in other countries and also for other kinds of products, not only cheese.
- It is important to have a technical team of high level for preparing reports and proposals to administrations showing the problem but also offering the solutions.
- With transparency and good purposes, interesting people approach the association ready to help.

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