

THE COEUR PAYSAN STORE IN FRANCE

MANAGED BY ASSOCIATED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

In the Alsace Region of France, [42 farmers have partnered](#) to create and manage a 400-square-meter store that sells their products directly to the local market.

[The Coeur Paysan Store](#), created in Colmar in December 2016, is part of the trends and practices of direct sales from producers to consumers, developed in different countries in recent years through production-sale agreements or meeting places agreed. *Coeur Paysan* represents a step forward on this path, creating a permanent and structured space where producers and consumers express their commitment to maintaining high-quality local agriculture, which creates wealth in the territory and guarantees biodiversity.

In this store are sold products whose quality and local origin are guaranteed by the commitment of each producer. The products cover all the food needs of a family: fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy products, but also beers, wines, fresh bread, fish, eggs, spices, teas, pasta, flour, jams, honey...The local farmers who own the Coeur Paysan store are gardeners, arborists, cattle or sheep farmers, milk and dairy producers, winegrowers, gatherers, brewers, fish farmers, beekeepers. [All the products sold are fresh and seasonal, or processed by the farmers themselves.](#)

The producers' farms are located less than 40 km from the store. Delivered over short distances and with suitable packaging, local products have a low ecological footprint. In addition, the majority of products in the store are presented in bulk, allowing the consumers to buy only the amounts they really need

To implement the store, a *Société pour Actions Simplifiée (SAS)* was created, a company that provides services to all. The 42 producers participate in the new company as shareholders.

The economic model of the store management is simple. Farmers own their products until they arrive at the cashier for payment. Therefore, farmers are responsible for the delivery of their products and ensure their presence in the store for at least two half days per month, to establish a direct relationship with consumers, informing about their products and receiving their opinions and suggestions to adapt, as much as possible, the supply to the demand. At the time of payment, the store takes a commission of 22 to 32%, which allows it to cover its operating costs.

Products are sold at a fair price that compensates the producer's work without any intermediary. Producers are responsible for setting the prices of their products, taking into account the local market and the standards of the other associates in the store. Compared to the prices of local wholesalers and traders, fruits and vegetables are less expensive, while some high-quality products, such as artisan cheeses, which are not sold in ordinary supermarkets, shall be more expensive. For the



overall purchase, a family can spend less at Coeur Paysan than at ordinary local stores

In addition to the features mentioned, the Coeur Paysan website highlights the following [relevant advantages of the innovative solution adopted](#):

- *It allows to value the biodiversity and the historical knowledge of the producers*, offering for sale varieties of fruits and vegetables discarded by large distribution chains that favors standardized products. For example, over 35 species of tomatoes grown by a producer, only two are accepted by ordinary supermarkets. The Coeur Paysan store represents from this point of view a solution to ensure the biodiversity of the territory, encouraging farmers to recover as many old varieties as possible and the corresponding ancestral knowledge of cultivation and breeding, avoiding their extinction.
- *It contributes to a healthy and high-quality diet*. Fresh products, worked according to the natural growth rate, offer an incomparable flavor. Harvested at an optimal level of ripeness, fresh seasonal products marketed without delay result having the highest level of their nutritional qualities. Processed according to responsible practices, these products maintain their nutritional qualities. Taking into account the growing demand for quality food products, consumers who shop at the Coeur Paysan store find producers committed to the origin, quality and freshness of the products sold. The traceability of each product is certified by the producer himself, *putting an end to the anonymity of food*, as underlined by the Coeur Paysan's farmers team.
- *It contributes to the development of agricultural activity and the territory as a whole*. Farmers are essential actors in local economic development. By creating a permanent space for the direct sale of local agricultural products, the Coeur Paysan store is an innovative solution that allows small producers not to depend on traditional distribution networks, which leave them very low profit margins, generating risks for economic sustainability of farms, discouraging the younger generations to continue family activities and increasing rural exodus. In addition, with the adopted approach, Coeur Paysan contributes to the preservation of the environment and the diversity of the landscapes, to the conservation of the knowledge transmitted from generation to generation, and to the protection of local employment.

In three years of operation, Coeur Paysan has demonstrated its success in terms of sales and is currently planning to expand its activities by opening store branches in other towns. It has managed to capture the growing demand of the territory's consumers for high-quality food, to increase farm incomes and to produce new jobs, in the store and also in the farms of the associated producers.

Agricultural producers in other regions and territories of France are planning the implementation of self-managed stores inspired by the values and management methods of Coeur Paysan.

To know more

[Coeur Paysan website](#)

[Coeur Paysan in Facebook](#)



[Cœur Paysan producers](#)

[Video in Youtube](#)

[Article in Coeur Paysan sitio web](#)

[Article in francebleu.fr](#)

[Article in mondialisation.org](#)

[Article in en institut-commerce-connecte.com](#)

[News in Cœur Paysan website](#)

[Article in estrepublikain.fr](#)

[Trophée de l'Alimentation Europe 2020](#)

[The State of the World Biodiversity in FAO website](#)

[*The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* FAO 2019](#)

