

SUCCESS OF COOPERATIVE AND PARTICIPATIVE SUPERMARKETS IMPLEMENTED IN SPAIN

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In Spain, the practice of creating cooperative supermarkets has been so successful that eleven cooperative supermarkets already operate in the country, serving more than 6,000 consumers.

Cooperative supermarkets are supermarket-style stores created by consumers. They are cooperatives and consumer associations, and are established as spaces where individuals, not large corporations, decide on their own food choices. Their objectives are:

- Promote good nutrition. Most products are organic and local, sourced from small producers.
- Ensure fair prices. They are non-profit, so profits are reinvested to lower prices without compromising suppliers.
- Ensure democratic management. Supermarkets belong to their consumers, who make decisions and manage them.

In 2022, these cooperative supermarkets in Spain joined together in a network with the aim of uniting their efforts to promote a new model of fair, sustainable, and democratic food distribution and consumption.

Specifically, the following structures are part of the national network:

- Avecinal. The cooperative supermarket in Zaragoza. [Web](#).
- Biotremol. The cooperative supermarket in Alicante, Castalla, and Yecla. [Web](#).
- La Ortiga. The cooperative supermarket in Seville. [Web](#).
- Som Alimentació. The cooperative supermarket in Valencia. [Web](#).
- BioLibere. The cooperative supermarket in Getafe. [Web](#).
- FoodCoop BCN. The cooperative supermarket in Barcelona. [Web](#).
- LA OSA coop. The cooperative supermarket in Madrid. [Web](#).
- Almocafre. The cooperative supermarket in Córdoba. [Web](#).
- Arbore. The cooperative Supermarket of Vigo. [Web](#).
- SuperCoop. The Cooperative supermarket of Manresa. [Web](#).
- Mercatremol. The cooperative supermarket of Alicante. [Web](#)

With their own characteristics adapted to the local context, these innovative practices are inspired by the achievements of the [Park Slope Food Coop](#), the first participatory supermarket created in the 1970s in New York (United States) by a cooperative that has managed to involve 17,000 members. In Spain, the experience of participatory cooperative supermarkets began in 2017 with the creation of several groups following the promotion of the Food Coop documentary in various cities. In 2018, [Som Alimentació](#), the first cooperative supermarket, was founded in Valencia, and in 2020, [La Osa](#) supermarket opened in Madrid. In subsequent years, new projects have emerged, bringing the current total to eleven cooperative supermarkets.

[The Solidarity Economy Portal](#), the initiative hosting the [Red de Supermercados Cooperativos](#) presents the main characteristics of these innovative structures:



In cooperative supermarkets, their members decide which criteria the products for sale must meet, which reflects a strong commitment to organic products, which on average represent 80% of the total assortment. They also protect the source of their products, prioritizing small, local producers whom they seek to compensate with fair prices, especially for fruits and vegetables, where farmers can receive up to seven times more income than in conventional supermarkets. They are not for profit, so they strive to offer sales prices below the market levels without compromising supplier conditions. There are also no managers or hired staff to manage daily tasks, which are supervised globally by a team of people elected at a general assembly.

The first step is to become a partner by investing a variable amount of capital, depending on the supermarket, ranging between fifty and one hundred euros. This way, partners become co-owners. In some cases, partners must also dedicate a few hours to supermarket tasks, such as serving at the checkout, restocking products, or receiving merchandise.

The Network's website emphasizes that in a world where conventional agriculture faces constant challenges, cooperative supermarkets are emerging as a comprehensive, innovative, and transformative solution for farmers, the environment, and consumers. Conventional agriculture is often associated with environmentally harmful practices, such as the excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers. In contrast, cooperative supermarkets focus on offering more sustainable products, many of them organically sourced. By eliminating intermediaries and establishing direct relationships between producers and consumers, they foster a more conscious form of agricultural production that is respectful of the land and committed to preserving biodiversity. One of the fundamental pillars of cooperative supermarkets is the commitment to paying fair prices to farmers. While in conventional supermarkets, producers often receive a fraction of the final price, cooperative supermarkets have shown a willingness to pay up to four times more for farmers' labour. This crucial difference not only meets the economic needs of producers but also restores dignity to the agricultural profession.

The objective of the Cooperative Supermarket Network is to help consolidate and grow its members. To this end, the association offers a series of services and spaces where activities for its members are carried out. The Network supports the promotion of professional management through courses and direct consulting services for Cooperative Supermarkets. It is also a tool for food transformation, working:

- with public institutions to defend a different model of production and consumption, promoting food sovereignty.
- With civil and organized society, creating alliances with other sister organizations and networks, and raising awareness about the philosophy of critical and conscious consumption.

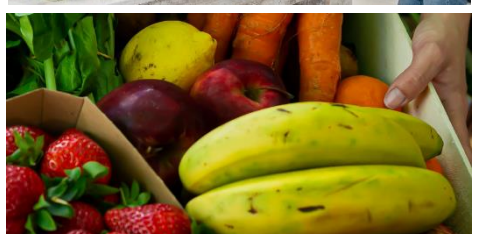
In addition, the Network team works with interested groups to implement new cooperative supermarkets, supporting the entire process from the design phase to implementation, leveraging the experience of those already operating successfully.

After the great success in France of this innovative, sustainable practice of distributing basic goods, the results achieved in Spain once again demonstrate the great potential of participatory cooperative supermarkets. They represent a new consumption model that allows consumers and producers to jointly promote higher-quality, local, healthy, and organic products, contributing to the sustainable development of their territories.

To know more

[Cooperative Supermarkets website](#)

[Red de supermercados cooperativos in reas.red](#)



[Supermercados cooperativos.com](https://supermercadoscooperativos.com)

[Red de supermercados cooperativos in economiasolidaria.org](https://economiasolidaria.org)

[Red Supermercados cooperativos en Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/RedSupermercadosCooperativos)

[Cooperative Supermarkets in ica.coop](https://ica.coop)

[Supermercados cooperativos in climatica.coop](https://climatica.coop)

[Article in elpais.com](https://elpais.com)

[Article in elpais.com](https://elpais.com)

[Supermercadoscooperativos.wordpress.com](https://supermercadoscooperativos.wordpress.com)

[Supermercados cooperativos in opcions.org](https://opcions.org)

[Park Slope Food Coop website](https://www.parkslopefoodcoop.com)

[Video Food Coop](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Interfoodcoop map Cooperative Supermarkets in Europe](https://interfoodcoop.com)

[Supermarches Cooperatifs France website](https://www.supermarches.coop.fr)

[Supermarchés coopératifs & participatifs France Map en framacarte.org](https://framacarte.org)

[Cooperative Supermarkets in frontiersin.org](https://frontiersin.org)

[French Participative Supermarkets IDEASS article 2022](https://ideass.org)

