

“Kleeberger Kistl” – A German Cooperative 24/7 Self-Service Concept for Regional Direct Marketing



COREnet Advisinar:
How Food Hubs Work for Local Farmers
Three Examples from Ireland, Germany, and Romania
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Dr. Sophia Goßner
Bavarian State Research Center for Agriculture (LfL)
Institute for Agricultural Economics
Hans-Loher-Straße 32
94099 Ruhstorf, Germany
www.lfl.bayern.de/kooperative-direktvermarktung



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Agricultural Structure and Short Food Supply Chains in Bavaria



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Agriculture*

- Number of farms: ~100,700 (Germany: 255,010)
- Total agricultural area: 3.09 million hectares
- Average farm size: 31 hectares
- Share of part-time holdings: 63.4%
- Organic farms: 11,900 (420,000 hectares)

Short Food Supply Chains

- 65.8% of farms are diversified, 10.3% of farms are engaged in direct marketing**
- Examples: Farm shops, farmers' markets, direct sales, vending machines, subscription boxes & delivery, online sales, retail partnerships, and cooperative models

Support for Farmers

- Free, state-funded advisory services
- Education and training programs, including diversification and direct marketing
- Targeted promotion of investments for innovation, sustainability, and farm development
- Diversification is a key pillar of Bavarian agricultural policy

* Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism (2024): Bavarian Agricultural Report 2024

** Brunlehner, E.-M.; Dorfner, G.; Spreidler, M.; Beinert, M. (2021): Diversifizierung – Status Quo und Zukunftsperspektiven für die bayerische Landwirtschaft

Limits of Individual Direct Marketing – Cooperation as a Solution



Why New Direct Marketing Models Are Needed

- Labour constraints, rising workload, and staffing shortages
- Individual marketing approaches limit scale and efficiency
- Growing demand for regional food
- Need for flexible, 24/7 access to food



Our Approach: The *Kleeberger Kistl* – a state-funded research and innovation project

- Objective: Establish and evaluate a cooperative direct marketing model for regional farms
- Approach: A low-cost 24/7 supply container (18 m²) combined with real-world data collection
- Output: Practical data and guidelines for replication
- Duration: 2022–2026
- Funding: Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism
→ Low entry barriers for farmers

Kleeberger Kistl: A living lab for SFSC in Lower Bavaria

Cooperative Structure

- 21 farms today (up from 15 at the start)
- Operated by a local innkeeper, helping to minimize food waste
- Scientific support by the Bavarian State Research Center for Agriculture (LfL)

Location

- Rural municipality (~7,300 inhabitants)
- High-traffic intersection of two main district roads
- Opposite a local restaurant (existing customer flow)

Our Role (Research & Support)

- Scientific monitoring and data collection
- Workshops, training, and one-to-one consulting (e.g. food labelling, logistics, marketing, organizational aspects)

Products and Supply

- ~95 regional products
- Average distance: ~14 km
- Exclusively sourced from participating farms (no external suppliers)
- Wide product range (fresh, processed, snacks)
- Digital farm presentation and on-site customer feedback option



How the *Kleeberger Kistl* works – Structure and Business Model

System and Operation

- 24/7 self-service via a vending machine and open shelves
- Integrated telemetry system for real-time sales data
- All products are paid via the vending machine (three-digit code system)
- No registration or access restriction (open access for all customers)
- Central location, operated by the local host
- Farmers supply products independently
- Shared infrastructure reduces individual workload
- Cash and cashless payment methods
- Video surveillance to prevent theft and vandalism

Revenue Model

- Farmers sell products to the operator
- Operator applies a markup (~30%)
- Covers operating costs such as energy, labour, and maintenance

Performance and Sustainability

- Break-even at ~€200 daily turnover
- Self-sustaining since 2024
- Open to new farms to expand the product range
- Designed for long-term operation beyond the project phase



Results, Insights and Future Development

Implementation and Real-World Impact

- Cooperative model successfully established and operational since January 2023
- Economically viable and self-sustaining since 2024
- Proven model for cooperative direct marketing in practice

Data Collection and Key Insights

- Detailed operational data (e.g. costs, sales, customer behaviour, labour input, marketing measures, farmer satisfaction)
- Customer survey: motivations, expectations, and improvement potential (n=114)
- Survey among Bavarian direct marketers on 24/7 retail concepts (n=671)
- Expert interviews with experienced practitioners (n=13)
- Legal framework analysis in cooperation with the University of Passau

Knowledge Transfer and Future Development

- All results publicly available on the [LfL project website](#)
- Knowledge transfer to advisors, farmers, and municipalities through e.g. presentations and publications
- Follow-up project planned:
 - ✓ upgrading payment and checkout systems
 - ✓ further customer research and testing

