

## **Summary Marije Klever, 2015 Nuffield The Netherlands Scholar**

The question raised at the start of this Nuffield Scholarship was:

**How are farmers are connected over the world in markets and product chains and how this connection can be strength-end.**

During the research I found new insights, new idea's and new solutions which I will share in this summary.

- ❖ International foodchains are dominated by a few major players which have the advantage that capital, knowledge and logistcts are centralised which makes them very efficient.
- ❖ Making international foodchains more suistainble from a farmers point of view is no great priority for those mayor players.
- ❖ Some international foodchains who are connected over the world, could be organised in a more sustainable manner from a farmers point of view.
- ❖ Farmers within those international foodchains do not experience problems, even if those foodchains as whole could be organised more sustainable; they do not feel they are the problem owner.
- ❖ Consumers are not connected to the foodchain, which makes them not critical about it.
- ❖ Farmers who are not organised cannot influence international foodchains, farmers who are can also not influence international foodchains but they can participate in them.
- ❖ Niche markets are key in starting new international foodchains, this connects a certain group of farmers to a certain group of consumers.
- ❖ Critical consumers are needed for niche markets and food education is needed to make people aware of the world behind food.
- ❖ Innovation is key to niche markets, to create new advantages for consumers
- ❖ Farmers who are organised can create innovation more easily
- ❖ Niche markets are made possible by product innovation, innovation on farm level or within the foodchain

Conclusion and reflection:

Foodchains could be organised more sustainable. International foodchains are not easily chanced because they are well organised and dominated by a few giant players who have no interest in making them more sustainable for farmers (profitable and environmental wise). Farmers do not feel they are the problem owners if it comes to making international foodchains more sustainable because they focus on their farm rather than the foodchain in total. This can be explained because individually they can influence their farm and cannot influence the rest of the food chain. Therefore farmers can participate in international foodchains themselves but need to be organised to do so. Firstly they need to be organised to share rescourses (money, knowledge, quantity, logistics). Secondly they need to be organised to be innovative. By being innovative they are able to open up niche markets, which is crucial when competing bulk products as a respectively small quantity on the world market.

Furthermore if farmers are organised they need to connect to consumers. Therefore consumers need to be better informed (food education). Consumers could be connected to farmers by internet and social media. If farmers are organised and connected to consumers, consumers can communicate their needs and farmers can innovate on those needs. Through this connection the foodchain can be changed from a chain to a food circle in which the power is not centred in the middle of the chain but is shared within the circle of producers and consumers.

*Please note: Nuffield NL scholars all make an English summary that will be published in the Nuffield International database. Their findings can be presented in many different ways and can be in Dutch or English. Please contact the individual scholar if you want to get to know more about his/her study.*