

The ASAT Charta – Romania

(ASAT - Asociatia pentru Sustinera Agriculturii Taranesti/The Association for the Support of Peasant Agriculture)

The general principles of ASAT partnerships

1. The general philosophy

This Charter defines the values, principles and commitments that those who want to be part of an ASAT partnership must subscribe to.

The objective of the ASAT partnerships is contribute to and develop sustainable agriculture and to promote urban-rural solidarity. The partnerships aim to provide consumers with safe food at a fair and accessible price. ASAT supports the idea of consumers becoming consumáctori (consumer-actors).

2. The general definition of ASAT

An ASAT partnership is an association between a producer and a consumer-group organized with the aim to support peasant agriculture, to help with preserving and saving local proximity farms and sustainable agriculture. ASAT aims at preserving peasant agriculture in socially equitable and environmentally friendly forms.

ASAT seeks to ensure that consumers can buy quality food at a fair price and to ensure that they can choose how their food is produced.

Consumers also have the opportunity to participate in the preservation and development of local agricultural activities that respects the principles of sustainable development.

Each ASAT partnership brings together a group of consumers and a proximity producer in a partnership formalized by a contract. Each consumer commits to buy early in the season part of the production. And the producer commits to deliver quality products produce according to the ASAT principles.

3. The general ASAT principles

ASAT partnerships are founded on the following principles:

1. A small scale production with crops and livestock adapted to the local context;

2. A production that respects nature, the environment and animals, biodiversity, soil fertility, a production without chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides, and with an sustainable water management;
3. Good quality products: tasty, healthy and environmentally friendly
4. Support for local peasant agriculture;
5. Solidarity and active links with all local actors involved in maintaining sustainable agriculture and fair trade;
6. Respect the labor rights of those working the farm (including for seasonal workers)
7. Promoting transparency in the acts of purchase, the mode of production, transformation (processing) and sales and distribution;
8. Accompanying producers to self-sufficiency
9. A direct link between proximity producers and consumers is essential to promote short distribution chains
10. A partnership ASAT for each producer and her/his local consumer group;
11. Formalize and enforce contracts in each season between consumers and producers;
12. No intermediary between producers and consumers, no product can be purchased from the producer and resold to consumers;
13. Establishing each season a fair price between producers and consumers;
14. Frequent informing of consumers about the workings of the farm and about their products
15. Solidarity with the producer in case of natural hazards;
16. An active consumer participation ASAT in the administration of the partnership
17. Raising awareness among ASAT members about the peculiarities of CSA

4. Create an ASAT

ASAT is a partnership between a group of motivated consumers who want to support peasant agriculture in the proximity of their city, and a peasant/farmer/producer.

The group must identify a local producer who is committed to the general principles of ASAT specified in Section 3. Consumers favor contracts with local producers .

Once identified the producer, the group of consumers will make at least one visit to the farm farmer. Finally, consumers and the producer will establish together a mode of operation in accordance with the principles of the Charter, and also write down a contract .

5. Operating rules of an ASAT partnership

5.1. Contract

The contract is established between the consumer group or its representatives and producer. The contract covers one production cycle. The contract includes regular distribution of the products by the farmer in an agreed place, and at an agreed time according to a fix schedule agreed with the consumer group.

The contract should specify the list of planned products, which the producer seeks to regularly provide to consumers.

On the other hand, consumers are committed to pay in advance part of the yield. In case they leave the partnership they are committed to find a replacement.

The manufacturer shall undertake every effort to meet its commitments and provide quality products to consumers in the amount and installments set.

5.2. The purchase of complementary products

ASAT members that wish to buy complementary products (meat, cheese, fruit, honey, etc.) must create another agreement. They will identify other potential customers interested in this type of products.

5.3. Cost of products

The producer together with consumers determines the cost of supplied products (vegetables, fruits, meat, oil, honey, etc.). The manufacturer shall undertake all efforts to provide an appropriate quantity of products suitable for the price paid by consumers.

In the ASAT system, the price calculation must take into account the costs of the farm. The calculation of the price must be totally transparent.

The producer must consistently provide information to consumers to enable them to check whether the terms of the contract are met.

If the producer is in a situation that does not allow the supply of products in sufficient quantities and this happens for reasons beyond his control - natural disasters or incidents meteorological contingencies (prolonged drought, extremes in temperature, acid rain , hail, pest invasions, etc.) - the manufacturer must immediately inform the consumers on this issue.

5.4. Production

The mode of production must respect the principles of this Charter.

ASAT and its consumers can help a farmer to develop into a model farm the respect for nature and the environment. The contract will set clear development goals.

All products (vegetables, fruits, cheese, eggs, poultry etc.) must come from the producer's holding. No product can be bought and resold. On the other hand, any other complementary product delivered in the partnership must be covered by another specific contract between the consumer and the producer.

A schedule of delivery should be done before the season starts by common agreement between the producer and the consumer. Together they establish a list of products and a delivery schedule that must be respected.

5.5. Delivery and distribution

The delivery must be made directly by the producer. This is essential in order to keep the connection between consumers and producers. The distribution is carried out by the consumers.

If the consumer is out of town or in vacation s/he must find a replacement to pick up the basket.

5.6. Payment

Consumers are financially committed during a full season. They will make a payment in advance for some or all of the baskets that will be delivered. The objective is to enable the producer to have a fund strong enough to make the necessary investments or to cover various costs to prepare the next season.

Payment shall be done in one, two or more installments fixed by agreement between consumers and producers.

However, special arrangements can be established payment for people who have some financial difficulties.

5.7. Internal communication

Consumers and manufacturers will use different modes of communication to disseminate information, conduct joint actions and fostering a transparent behavior.

5.8. Evaluation

An evaluation of the partnership must be done periodically by all stakeholders. This allows assessing whether the original objectives and the Charter are respected. Also, these meetings help to improve the functioning of the partnership so to meet the consumer needs better.

