

Brussels, 7th of June 2019

Euro Coop Joins the Celebrations of the First World Food Safety Day



This 7 June 2019 is the first ever **World Food Safety Day**, as decided by the General Assembly in late 2018. The world comes together to celebrate something we all have in common – our right to access to safe and nutritious food, which is essential for all us to live healthy lives. The message conveyed by the UN Food and Agriculture Agency (FAO) is that **from where food is produced, to where it is served, all of us play an important role and have a shared responsibility.**

The theme of the day is ***“World Food Safety Day – Everyone’s Business”***.

Indeed, all operators in the supply chain have a responsibility towards food safety, but none more than retailers, who have a mission of serving daily 500 million consumers in Europe.



On this occasion, **Todor Ivanov – Euro Coop Secretary General** commented: *“Consumer co-operatives are prime contributors in delivering safe, high-quality and sustainable food at affordable prices to their 34 million consumer-members every single day, regardless of the day of the week, be it a national holiday or, in some cases, despite the hour of the day and night. No matter what, people have to eat, so we have to be there for them. Euro Coop members have a long history of protecting the consumer, as they were among the first organisations on national level who fought for the right of all consumers, not just their individual co-op members.*

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Today is no exception. Food safety is something very dear to our heart and inherent to our mission of serving consumer-members, who are, due to the unique co-operative model, our owners.”

Being a co-operative means you put the individual, and not profit maximization, at the centre of your operations. Therefore, consumer co-operatives work tirelessly to provide maximum possible **transparency** and **information** pertaining to the **product’s safety, nutritious value and origin**, among other things. Digitalisation, of course, offers incredible solutions in this regard. **Consumer trust** is the currency with which we operate, so Euro Coop members have made tremendous leaps forward in providing safe food through their own brands – most often known as the **COOP label**. This proves to be the most powerful instrument for our members to implement their **principles, values and ethics** and show consumer-members the real **co-operative contribution** in terms of quality and authentic food and controls **from farm to fork**. Local sourcing is prioritized and constructive partnerships with suppliers are being established.

The COOP label is a guarantee for **quality** and **safety**, because consumer co-operatives adhere to **stricter standards than what the law requires**. Product quality supervision is implemented through a complex system of internal and external control and audits, including **testing by the consumers** themselves – which is one of the benefits of being **member-owned business**. Therefore, self-monitoring and staff training, as well as on-site checks are indispensable to this process which ultimately guarantees prevention of risks or failures.

The **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)** conducted an EU wide food safety survey and presented its results on the occasion of the World Food Safety Day. The Eurobarometer shows that the top three concerns of EU citizens are:

- ❖ The **origin** of food: 53%
- ❖ The **price** of food: 51%
- ❖ The **safety** of food: 50%

Euro Coop is proud that its members are leading the way in each of these three areas. Nothing speaks more than success, and we have a lot of it to share.

- ❖ **ORIGIN:** Coop Italy is the only business operator in the country to have designed and use a laboratory - **“The Electronic Nose”** which can detect the origin of products’ ingredients, thus **guaranteeing full traceability** and **authenticity** of all its more than 4,000 private label goods;



- ❖ **PRICE:** Consumer co-operatives across Europe, and the world, guarantee **high-quality at a reasonable price**, and not particularly low prices. Consumer concerns pertaining to price works both ways – perceptions of **too expensive** or **too cheap**. Euro Coop members do the necessary to respect supply chain relations, while optimizing their internal operations so as to guarantee the most reasonable and affordable price to the consumer.



- ❖ **SAFETY:** Already back in 2017, **Coop Denmark** has eliminated from its private label assortment the **12 most endocrine-disrupting chemicals** and has lobbied extensively the Danish authorities to implement appropriate legislation banning these from the market. Coop has also demanded its suppliers follow suit and eliminate the so-called “Dirty Dozen”, which include polluting washing detergents, pesticides, suspected endocrine disruptors, PVC and phthalates, and chemicals in textiles, among others.

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