

# MOUANS-SARTOUX FRANCE

## SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN SCHOOLS AND BEYOND

*This food policy snapshot is based on an interview with Thibaud Lalanne and Lea Sturton, Coordinators of the Sustainable Food Department (MEAD) and Deputy Mayor Gilles Perole.*

### GLASGOW FOOD AND CLIMATE DECLARATION

Mouans-Sartoux, a city located on the French Riviera, created its first integrated food policies in response to an environmental health crisis in the late 1990s. At the time, an outbreak of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, also known as mad cow disease, led to a political commitment to guarantee access to safe, sustainable food for all. The municipal government prioritized its actions around school canteens and set a goal to serve 100% organic and local food to children. Urbanization challenged this goal, with development encroaching onto agricultural land surrounding the city. With their new focus on food, health, and the environment, the municipality enacted policies to protect farmland and connect organic producers to school canteens. Though Mouans-Sartoux's food policy started with school canteens, it has since grown into a system-wide plan to encourage sustainable production and consumption in the city. Today, Mouans-Sartoux has become a global leader on sharing how other cities can successfully change their local food systems.

## ENABLERS

### SETTING NEW STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Mouans-Sartoux realized early on that its goal to serve sustainable school meals did not align with national school meal standards. In France, public catering recommendations were found to contradict climate and nutritional goals. However, as federal recommendations are not legally binding, Mouans-Sartoux set their own school meal standards: meals provided to children must be nutritious, fresh, seasonal, local, organic, and cooked on-site using high-quality plant and animal proteins. Remarkably, these standards significantly improved the health and sustainability profile of meals consumed inside and outside schools. Through surveys, the municipality discovered that the policy led 87% of families to change their eating habits in favor of organic and local food.

Mouans-Sartoux also innovated by establishing and managing an organic farm on publicly owned and protected farmland. This pioneering agri-urban connection was successful through open dialogue among the municipal government, farmers, schools, and parents. Children were even involved through farm visits and in school canteens, particularly around food waste reduction.

### PARTICIPATORY AND MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

The municipal government initially led Mouans-Sartoux's food policy but quickly set a goal to involve local stakeholders. The SUSTAINABLE RESTORATION OBSERVATORY and the City's Sustainable Food Department, MEAD, were created in 2013 and 2016 respectively to cooperatively strategize actions and evaluate the impacts of the school canteen policy. These two institutions invite participation from agriculture, health, environment, and sustainable development NGOs, universities, research institutes, and municipal departments.

To further engage residents in food policymaking, Mouans-Sartoux will soon establish a food policy council. LE CITOYEN NOURRIT LA VILLE ('The Citizen Feeds the City') is a new municipal project launched in 2020 to serve as a test case for a food policy council. The project invites residents to carry out participatory planning of unused public and private lands to turn them into self-managed farms, including a commitment to redistribute a share of the yields to local social initiatives. A group of residents has already been created to steer the project, and could constitute the first members of the future food policy council.

## BARRIERS

### LACKING NATIONAL SUPPORT AND POLICY MISALIGNMENT

Mouans-Sartoux has innovated to set high standards for sustainable food policies, often despite misaligned or absent national food policies. Firstly, national public procurement recommendations are incompatible with Mouans-Sartoux's sustainability goals. Secondly, there is a dearth of national data to accurately evaluate food policies, especially data related to climate and environmental impacts. While the municipality works with the National Agency for Energy and the Environment to quantify the climate impact of their school meal policy, the national data provided was not precise enough to yield useful results. For example, there was no differentiation in the database between organic versus conventional food. However, the database will soon be updated to allow for more detailed analysis.

Mouans-Sartoux, a city of around 10,000 residents, has set and met ambitious public procurement goals. While this success may be attributed to the City's smaller population size, Mouans-Sartoux is committed to sharing its good practices regionally and internationally, and motivating other cities to follow suit. MEAD disseminates knowledge and actions through various means, including meetings, workshops, exhibitions, and scientific debates. At the European and international levels, Mouans-Sartoux participates in several networks, including the EU's agri-urban project, URBACT, aimed at capacity building and knowledge sharing with cities across the continent. While Mouans-Sartoux's food policy started in response to a food safety crisis in the 1990s, it has since flourished into an internationally recognized systems approach to sustainable production and consumption.

“ An important critique we often receive is that we only achieve our goals because we're a small city of only 10,000 people, but our policies would never work in a bigger city. That's actually untrue, and we work hard to share our practices with bigger cities to show how they can be replicated and applied. ”

## RESULTS OF MOUANS-SARTOUX'S FOOD POLICY

- School canteens serve 100% organic meals, mostly locally-sourced.
- Food waste in school canteens was reduced by 80%, allowing the city's shift towards organic procurement to be cost neutral.
- 112 hectares of farmland around the city are protected from development, and the City provides resources and funding for organic production.
- The City created a new municipal department, La Maison d'Éducation à l'Alimentation Durable (MEAD) or the Center for Sustainable Food Education, to strategize, evaluate impact, and disseminate learnings.

