

How to start a REKO Network

Are you interested in starting a REKO Network in your local area? As a grassroots, self-organized movement to connect farmers directly to consumers, there are no fees to use the REKO model. There are also no infrastructure costs as the system works off Facebook for managing orders and utilizes public spaces and parking lots for the food delivery. What is required are motivated and dedicated volunteers to get a REKO Network started!

Here you will find some key steps to get a REKO Network started.

1. Establish a group of volunteer administrators

REKO administrators play a key role in co-creating their local network with producers and consumers, and have responsibilities for ongoing management of the network. We recommend having several administrators to divide up the work. Having a team is useful for exchanging ideas and establishing your local rules and policies.

Who can be an administrator?

Admins can be farmers, food processors, engaged community members – basically anyone who has an interest to bring more local food to their communities!

2. Recruit producers

The needs of each local REKO Network are unique to their area. The decisions for type, number and size of producers to accept in your REKO Network is up to the local participants. For example, local may mean 100km in some communities, but 250km in others where farms are more spread out. Start by identifying a few producers to cover a breadth of products (vegetables, meat, processed food items, etc) you think are a good fit for your REKO Network and introduce the concept to them. Some REKO Networks have found it useful to hold public meetings to gauge interest, share information and hold Q&As.

Tip

Start small and let word of mouth help grow your network. Create a simple application form using free resources such as Google forms to process producer applications.

3. Set up a Facebook group

A public Facebook group for your local REKO Network is where farmers and consumers connect! Producers post what they have to sell in the group and consumers make their purchase by commenting on the posts. The delivery and pick-up of food then takes place at a set place, day and time.

It is also useful to create a separate private Facebook group for just the local admins and producers to facilitate conversations and decisions, and to troubleshoot any issues or opportunities.

4. Find a location

Find a convenient place for the food delivery and pick-up. It is up to the admins to seek out possible spaces and organize permission to use the space. Common spaces used by other REKO Networks are parking lots and public squares.

Tip

Check to see if you require insurance for the delivery and pick-up point. Most of the time, the producers' own insurance should be enough as REKO is not considered an actual market where sales happen.

5. Decide on logistics

Choose a day, time and frequency for the food delivery and pick-up that is best suited for your producers and consumers. Some REKO Networks run once a week, while others can run less frequently. It all depends on the needs and capacity of your local community!

6. Promote the group

Facebook is a great way to share information on REKO. Have your community share posts to their network and invite friends and family to join your REKO Network Facebook group.

Coverage in local newspapers and other like-minded community organizations are also great ways to get the word out on REKO.

7. Choose a launch date

When there is a sufficient number of producers and consumers in your group, choose a date to launch your REKO Network!

8. REKO Network maintenance

Once the network is established, the admins are responsible for ongoing maintenance of the network. This includes approving producer applications, approving requests to join the Facebook group, and clearing old posts after each food delivery.

Need more help?

- Join other REKO Networks to observe ordering and interactions
- Reach out to other REKO Network admins
- Join global REKO admin Facebook groups – REKO has been around since 2013 and is in over 10 countries! Connect with others to learn from their experience.