

THE GOVERNMENT OF NAVARRE AND EROSKI PARTNER TO SUPPORT THE COMPETITIVENESS AND LONG-TERM FUTURE OF NAVARRE'S AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

- **The agreement establishes a long-term partnership framework through to 2029 to support products from Navarre, foster innovation across the sector and advance sustainability.**
- **EROSKI currently works with 186 local suppliers from Navarre, 86% of which are small agri-food producers, and stocks more than 3,300 products from Navarre across its stores.**
- **The signing of the agreement by Rosa Carabel, CEO of the EROSKI Group, and José María Aierdi, Regional Minister for Rural Development and the Environment, was followed by a panel discussion on generational renewal, profitability and sustainability – the key challenges facing Navarre's agri-food sector.**

Pamplona, 16 June 2026. The Department of Rural Development and the Environment of the Government of Navarre and [EROSKI](#) today signed their first collaboration agreement to enhance the competitiveness and development of Navarre's agri-food sector. The agreement, which will remain in force until 2029, represents a further step in the food retail cooperative's commitment to creating local value. It establishes a framework for joint initiatives to strengthen agri-food production in Navarre – with particular emphasis on products protected by quality and origin designations – while promoting innovation, sustainability, and growth opportunities for producers and businesses. The cooperative currently works with 186 commercial suppliers from Navarre and purchases more than €200 million worth of products from the region each year.

The signing ceremony took place in Pamplona and was led by José María Aierdi, Regional Minister for Rural Development and the Environment, and Rosa Carabel, CEO of the EROSKI Group. Also attending were Asier Guridi, EROSKI's Commercial Director for Local Products, and Natalia Bellostas, Managing Director of INTIA. The signing took place as part of a gathering attended by around fifty representatives from across the sector, including local suppliers, trade associations and institutional stakeholders.

Rosa Carabel, CEO of the EROSKI Group, highlighted that: *"This agreement reflects our commitment to putting EROSKI's full capabilities behind the growth, competitiveness and sustainability of Navarre's agri-food sector. Supporting local production helps strengthen communities and creates a tangible positive impact in the areas where we operate. As a cooperative, we are committed to creating shared value for both producers and consumers while strengthening ties with the rural environment."*

For his part, **José María Aierdi, Regional Minister for Rural Development and the Environment**, underlined the strategic importance of the agri-food sector to Navarre, where it accounts for 6.5% of regional GDP, encompasses more than 1,200 locally based businesses and generates around 30,000 jobs. **Aierdi** noted that: *“At a time when the European agri-food model is facing a critical period as a result of multiple overlapping crises, our products must increasingly compete on environmental and social value, as well as on quality and health attributes, because these are the factors that set us apart and give us our identity. To achieve this, it is essential to build and strengthen partnerships across every link in the agri-food value chain.”*

The agreement establishes a long-term partnership framework to promote products from Navarre, drive innovation and digital transformation, encourage entrepreneurship and advance more sustainable production and marketing models. It also includes initiatives aimed at increasing the presence of products from Navarre in EROSKI stores and enhancing their visibility among consumers, with particular attention to products carrying recognised quality labels and certifications that guarantee their origin, traceability and distinctive value, such as Reyno Gourmet, integrated and organic production certifications, and Navarre Artisan Foods.

The partnership also provides for support initiatives to help producers and agri-food companies address some of the sector’s most pressing challenges. Since 2022, EROSKI has operated a support programme designed to help small producers professionalise their operations and meet the demands of an increasingly competitive marketplace. Currently, around fifty local producers in Navarre participate in this programme, helping to extend a model that guarantees fresh, high-quality food, reduces carbon emissions through shorter transport distances and strengthens the regional agri-food sector.

The agreement further reinforces collaboration between EROSKI and key organisations within Navarre’s agri-food ecosystem, including INTIA and technology centres, to promote projects in innovation, food quality and safety, and to accelerate knowledge transfer.

A Long-Standing Commitment to Navarre

The signing of the agreement builds on an already well-established relationship between EROSKI and Navarre’s agri-food sector. The cooperative works with 186 commercial suppliers from Navarre and purchases more than €200 million worth of products from the region each year. Of these suppliers, 86% are small agri-food producers.

In addition, EROSKI currently stocks 3,367 products from Navarre across its stores, helping consumers access food grown and produced in the region while creating growth opportunities throughout the agri-food value chain.

EROSKI’s commitment to Navarre’s agri-food sector is also reflected in the progress achieved over the past decade. Between 2016 and 2025, sales of locally sourced products in Navarre almost doubled. Particularly strong growth was recorded in categories associated with added value and differentiated quality, including products marketed under the Reyno Gourmet brand and other quality labels, where sales increased by 93%, and preserved

vegetable products, where sales rose by 114%. Significant increases were also seen in categories such as beef (+125%), cheese (+102%) and dairy products (+104%). These figures reflect both the cooperative group's commitment to local producers and the growing interest among consumers in Navarre in products produced in their own region.

Generational Renewal, Profitability and Sustainability

Following the signing ceremony, the event continued with the panel discussion "Generational Renewal, Profitability and Sustainability: The Triple Challenge Facing Navarre's Agri-Food Sector". Alongside Rosa Carabel and Regional Minister José María Aierdi, participants included Berta Anaut, Chair of Nagrifood; Héctor Barbarin, Chief Executive Officer of CNTA; and Iokin Zuloaga, Director of the Meat Division at Grupo AN.

Firstly, Regional Minister **Aierdi** highlighted a number of areas that could be improved to support generational renewal. *"We do not give the agri-food sector in Navarre the recognition it deserves, despite the fact that it creates high-quality jobs. We must convey to citizens that there are 1,200 agri-food companies in Navarre. The future strength of the Chartered Community is closely linked to the growth of the agri-food industry,"* he stated, before going on to argue that *"we cannot suffocate one part of the production chain. It is essential that we all recognise our role while also valuing the work of others."*

Next to speak was the **Chair of Nagrifood, Berta Anaut**, who outlined how the agri-food sector could become more attractive to young people and women. *"We are not going to convince them through romantic notions. We need to show that this is a profitable sector that also allows for work-life balance. Women have always been closely linked to rural activity, but they have not had sufficient visibility or opportunities to access leadership positions. We must be able to communicate that this is an innovative, technological sector with a strong future,"* **Anaut** emphasised. At the same time, she highlighted the importance of *"protecting and supporting small businesses, because supply chains usually break at their weakest link."*

Héctor Barbarin, Chief Executive Officer of CNTA, was the next panellist to speak, describing innovation as the key element that connects generational renewal, profitability and sustainability. *"We need to win consumers back because the share of household budgets devoted to food is no longer as significant as it once was. That is probably because families now have other priorities. Biotechnology and automation can serve as positive drivers to re-engage society,"* he explained. **Barbarin** also praised innovation as a means of reducing costs and creating greater added value. *"Sensor technology and data analytics should help us reduce costs. The focus should be on the fact that, in general terms, sustainability and profitability go hand in hand,"* he concluded.

Subsequently, **Iokin Zuloaga, Director of the Meat Division at Grupo AN**, outlined the needs of young people looking to establish agricultural operations. *"If a municipality succeeds in attracting a young couple who want to work in farming, they need to be supported through agile administrative processes. The conflicts in Iran and Ukraine have led to rising raw material prices, and that is when doubts begin to emerge about whether they have chosen*

*the right path," he argued. In this regard, **Zuloaga** stressed that "if sustainability is not profitable, it is not sustainable."*

For her part, **Rosa Carabel** demonstrated how the EROSKI Group's commitment to local products translates not only into profitability but also into wealth creation for Navarre. *"At EROSKI, we see ourselves as having a responsibility to create stable relationships for local businesses, offering guarantees and commitments that their products will have access to the market."* Looking ahead, she added that *"we need to focus on differentiation, on training our teams and on improving the efficiency of the value chain."*

The event concluded with a series of milestones that participants believe should be achieved over the next five years in order to confirm that Navarre's agri-food sector is moving in the right direction and continues to generate local wealth, employment, business activity and opportunities across the region. These included attracting young and female talent, easing regulatory burdens, consolidating innovation as a source of added value, increasing the visibility of products from Navarre and strengthening public-private collaboration.

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