

Will heavy goods vehicles keep on rolling through Burgos?

We all remember too well the front-page pictures of an overturned truck carrying explosives back in March last year. The truck was heading out of Burgos on the access road onto the A-1 motorway. Then it was also a tanker carrying diesel.

Some sources consulted estimate that an average of 300 to 400 trucks carrying hazardous materials drive through Burgos City, and that despite the recently passed European Directive on transportation of hazardous materials which toughens up previous regulations.

The new Directive lists up to 4000 materials considered dangerous or harmful. Among the new entries are genetically-modified organisms, hospital and surgery waste, and flammable and corrosive paint.

Transport sector officials argue that there is an overwhelming compliance, which they put to 80%., while bitterly complaining about the excessive cashpenalties that the new Directive imposes.

CONSUMER BASKET

- Today we'll draw our attention the findings of a report contained in a newspaper two weeks ago. This report looks primarily at price and price-related strategies. First, do you know of any promotional tools that chains currently use to attract customers. Those that have to do with price and price discounts.

Many supermarkets have special offers at reduced prices and many discounts such as two for the price of one.

- How about any other strategies that you may have heard of, Yolanda.

For example, give-aways.

- Can I have some examples for our listeners. So you buy detergent, you know, a detergent box, and you get what?

For example, a softener

- Right, that goes with it. Are they usually packaged together ?

Yeah, they are usually packaged together.

- And they are related. Softener and detergent. I think that we missed free samples. Which items are usually given as free samples, Pilar?

Things such as shampoo,...

- Moisturizers, perfumes, scents, .. And how about these in-store demonstrations, Margarita?

They offer make-up, perfume, ..

- Even food products, isn't it right? You know this lady nicely dressed in uniform with this tray offering you a taste of this and that bite-size pieces of , say, chorizo, things like that. Have you ever given it a try?

Yeah, I think it's the only way to get to know new products and get familiar with them.

- The newspaper that printed some visually impressive comparison tables with the three baskets, .. It organized, it structured its survey with three baskets. What's a consumer basket? Just refresh us

The number of items that are included in our daily purchase to be consumed at home.

- So basically they are meant to be the most commonly bought items, is it?

OK

- Why is it that it is so essential sometimes to conduct these surveys, particularly by government bodies? What rates are calculated on the basis of these surveys? Do we know of any specific rate, Victoria, by using the information from these surveys.

You can calculate the Consumer Price Index.

- Is that so vital for our economy? which payments are tied to it?

- let me think, pensions maybe, rents can be tied to it and so could other payments such as unemployment pays, for example. Now let's get down to specifics as I said before the sampling of goods was carried out through three baskets. One of the baskets listed fresh produce. What items would that include Ana?

It would include fruit, vegetables, meat and fish.

- then there was a brand basket and the lowest-priced items basket. As to the first one, did all supermarkets, did all stores stock all of the items selected? Did you check that Victoria?

Yeah, I have found that one of them, Lidl, only stocked six out of the sixteen included in the basket.

- What is the price gap, Yolanda?

In the case of the fresh produce basket the price gap is very high.

- How high?

Sometimes it can reach sixty per cent

- as high as that. Well, my figure was 45 per cent. Would that be right? On to the lowest-priced items basket, Margarita. I think that one shows the most striking fluctuations in price. Would that be right?

Yeah,

- On the cheap side, we have stores moving into the cheap side of the price bracket and some others moving into the expensive side bracket, into the expensive side of the price bracket. On the cheap side we have, which ones?

Lidl, Alcampo and Carrefour.

- Exactly. Now on the expensive side.

Hipercor.

- What does that tell you about stores such as Lidl? You probably know that they are called discount stores. The fact that out of those commonly bought brands, sixteen, Lidl only stocks six, and is fully aware of it. What does that tell you?

I think it is a way to increase price reduction at the expense of quality and usually the range of choice is shorter and the quality of products lower. They usually stock fewer brands.

- When we compare these downmarket stores, the so-called downmarket stores, ... Hipercor stands out as something of a different nature. Probably you have read in the article in the newspaper that .. in these comparison tables, in the three of them, the lowest prices are highlighted in red. If you look at the colour that reflects Hipercor prices, Hipercor has no red prices, so its price range stays

well above others. What does that mean to you Cristina? The fact that Hipercor price range stays well above the rest of stores?

I think that Hipercor mainly offers best-known products. And those whose quality is good.

- In terms of quality.. So you would say that Hipercor targets quality-conscious consumers?

Well, it seems as if Hipercor caters for customers who just want to shop in a nice environment at the expense of higher prices.

- Yeah, I guess Ana that that typically describes what an upmarket stores is. ... I want ... the sizeable savings that the report describes. How much can a family save say in Carrefour by selecting the lowest-priced items?

They can save as much as sixty per cent.

- Well that is attractive. How about in Alcampo Pilar?

120 %

- So even higher, and more attractive therefore. Now we'll consider some other services that these stores offer to costumers to attract them to shop in these stores. One that is enthusiastically offered by probably all of them is home delivery. Do they all offer this service, Victoria?

No, this service is not offered by Dia, Spar...

-So which stores do offer this home delivery service?

Carrefour, Hipercor, Eroski and Alcampo. This is always provided provided that there is a minimum amount spent on the same purchase. For example, Carrefour offers this service when your purchase is worth 150 euro.

- Does delivery take place on the same date of purchase?

Yeah, provided that the shopping is finished by 5.30.

- I read that Eroski and Alcampo bring that spending, the amount to be spent, down to €60. would that be true Merche?

Yeah.

- There are some stores that have a delivery charge in place. Ana, is that true? I think that is in the region of what, 1.80?

Yeah, that's right. There is a €1.80 delivery charge.

- I think that that goes up substantially in Mercadona. How high is it?

€4.21

- That amounts to almost three times as much. Very good. Do all have cards for say members of some club, Iñigo?

Each store operates a different card but with roughly the same conditions.

- What difference does it make for card-holders to have this or that card?

The amount of your purchase can be direct debited from your bank account.

- Margarita, anything else in relation to that?

And you have your payment delayed which is very convenient for some costumers.

- OK.

There is a particular case. Dia card entitles you to discounts.

- Yeah, it entitles you to further discounts, ... on some items I guess. Speaking of convenience, every parent in Spain dreams of being able to shop at their convenience by having their kids being minded by someone that is reliable. Do we have that service in some stores?

As you have said, child-minding facilities are helpful for parents but unfortunately only Alcampo offers these facilities and for an hour.

- Oh, it's only for an hour, is it? Is it free?

Yes.

- I heard about, actually I read about some seminars or in-store workshops that Mercadona has arranged. What exactly is that all about Pilar?

They are on consumer habits.

- And those are given by I presume experts hired by Mercadona as staff, is it? And finally Eroski has shows particular concern about what?

It is particularly concerned about showing its products in perfect condition so it removes all items seven days before their sell-by date.

- Probably to win its customers' confidence.

THE SOUTHSIDE RETAIL FOOD MARKET

And old crumbling building was demolished and a new one, brand-new, has been erected, almost completed in record time. They claim they will meet the deadline which is June, I believe. Burgos City Council and Southside Retail Food Market Traders' Association have joined forces and have invested vast amounts of money into a building which, we are told, will have such an impact on the area. I have asked some young Burgaleses what they know about this market and this is what I found out.

- In terms of space, Cristina, how many floors above and below ground will there be?

It will 4 altogether, 2 floors above and two below.

- Right, two and two and as you said 4 altogether. I do believe that is ... you know again in terms of space each floor each level will have as much as what? 720 square metres per floor so plenty of room for whatever purposes. As to those below-ground storeys, will they be functioning as parking facilities exclusively??

The first level below ...

-The first level below ground will be housing what?

Waste collection facilities

- Right because obviously a market such as this will generate vast amounts of waste coming from what?

For example food has gone off, plastic packages

- Plastic packaging all right that is so harmful to the environment because it does not degrade. I heard that we have as many as three waste disposal facilities together with what else Margarita?

cold rooms.

- Right cold rooms for cold storage and how many parking spaces altogether Merche?

as many as 105 parking spaces will be available. Curiously enough, there will be five space for handicapped people.

- So it will meet accessibility standards. Our listeners should know that that is included or part of a clause of the contract. As to the above-ground levels, which use will they be put to, Arancha?

The first floor will house up to 36 retail shops. As to the second storey, retailers want to set up a big supermarket.

- Is this, do we have a name for this large food chain-store?

No, They seem to have approached some supermarket chain but there is no name yet.

- And whatever name is chosen, will they have to meet some requirements?

To work cooperatively with ...

- as to the cooperation required, they want to avert any aggressive tactics, you know, for them to work as a competitor. The Local Trade and Consumers' Affairs Councillor, her name is ..., refresh us David, what's her name?

Emiliana Molero.

- Emiliana Molero, that's her name. She has placed some emphasis on the economic and social impact that the food market will have in the area and has described it as a showcase for Southside Burgos. Can we have some specific comments that she may have made?

She has said that this new building will upgrade the south east, the south part of the city.

-Right, there is also mention of economic regeneration of the area and she specifically said that it will create a friendly, accessible and pleasing space. Will the Trade Councillor ensure consistent standards of quality and availability across all the markets in Burgos, because I'm sure that once the building is completed, they will grow green with envy. Cristina, have you heard about this?

Yes, the new market will be model for all markets in Burgos.

- I guess that that means that the same standards will be met for any renovation work in other markets, is it? Will there be any redevelopment in the area? You know, will this big infrastructure project bring with them some redeveloping of the areas in which they take place, Margarita?

There will a pedestrianized street.

- One of the streets will be pedestrianized. Can we have the name of it?

Calatrava Street will be pedestrianized.

- and I think there will be plenty of space opposite the entrance to the market and there there will be what, Cristina? ... just outside the main entrance to the Market.

An open area.

- They leave it open, an open paved space with gardens and amenities.

In terms of the positive attitude the market will foster towards the physical environment of Burgos South, which other buildings will contribute to upgrade the area?

There is the Local Museum. Then everybody in Burgos keeps awaiting the completion of a much more ambitious project: the Human Evolution Complex.

All local residents will potentially benefit from the activities of the market but they have to put up with so much hassle. How did they weather the storm?

Their attitude has been most positive and have put a brave face on it despite obvious inconvenience, particularly at the initial stages when so much digging went on.

The Southside Food Market has been described by Israel Díez, the on-site chief engineer, as cutting-edge, sustainable and accessible. Which features would you single out?

- *the front side will have ceramic tiles fitted on that will allow for proper ventilation.*

- *it is a functional building: designed for all required functions and uses: parking, garbage storage, etc..*
- *air-conditioned.*
- *enhanced security: surveillance cameras tracking movement around the whole building; cutting-edge fire protection systems*
- *it complies with the most recent building regulations.*