

# Innovation challenge

## Annex 1: Challenges across the value chain

Province of Fryslân



### 1. Execution of Population Control (Goose Culling)

Culling in Fryslân is carried out by voluntary hunters—independent individuals who act based on their own ethics and motivation. This brings strong local support but also makes the system unpredictable. The province has no formal authority over how, when, or where they operate.

A crucial factor is the relationship between hunters and farmers. These ties are often strong, built on mutual trust. Farmers allow access to their land and rely on hunters to prevent damage, while hunters feel responsible for ‘their’ farmers. This makes for a well-supported system—but also a fragile one, heavily reliant on personal networks rather than structured governance.

Attempts elsewhere to use professional hunters have often backfired—regular hunters felt bypassed and withdrew from culling efforts entirely, including other necessary tasks such as controlling invasive species.

Without a guaranteed market for the geese, the province has little leverage to control the population effectively. A vicious cycle emerges:

Low demand for goose meat → no market → hunters reluctant to shoot → goose population grows → damage increases → pressure on policy rises → but without a market, no extra hunting occurs.

### 2. Logistics

Without a destination for the geese, hunters lack motivation to shoot. When they do, they typically process the birds themselves or distribute them locally—but only if they’re confident the animal won’t go to waste.

Small-scale initiatives have found good local uses for geese, but scaling up to a province-wide solution is difficult due to practical challenges.

Logistics are particularly demanding: to preserve meat quality, geese must be cooled shortly after culling. Yet infrastructure for mobile cooling, rapid processing, or distribution is lacking. It's hard to set this up structurally, as it's never clear in advance where or when geese will be shot—or in what numbers. Practical barriers also arise: vehicle size, distance from field to vehicle, travel time to cooling facilities, and more.

### 3. Processing

Processing culled geese for human consumption at commercial scale brings significant regulatory complexity:

- NVWA inspections
- HACCP compliance
- Traceability and labeling
- Cold chain requirements

Large-scale processing demands major investment, which only becomes viable with sufficient, predictable supply and consistent market demand.

Small-scale projects—like those selling through game butchers, food trucks, or Christmas markets—have had success locally. But once a third-party buyer (like a supermarket or distributor) gets involved, regulations become far stricter. As a result, many choose to stay small and sell directly to consumers. This is effective—but not scalable.

Alternative uses for culled geese, such as protein extraction or animal feed, are seen as promising but remain underexplored.

### 4. Market and public demand

Consumer demand for goose meat is low—impacting the entire value chain. Many people are unfamiliar with the product, assume it's tough or gamey, or lack the knowledge to prepare it. Negative past experiences have shaped public perception. Goose is not featured in supermarkets, is rarely offered in restaurants (and usually only seasonally), and lacks visibility in media or food culture. There have been efforts to promote goose meat through media campaigns, but changing consumer attitudes takes time and sustained effort.

Without demand, there is no market. Without a market, there's no incentive for retailers, restaurants, or distributors to offer goose products. There are a few enthusiastic ambassadors—particularly in hospitality—who love goose meat and promote it actively in Fryslân. And there are many small, grassroots initiatives (food trucks, farm shops, cooking workshops) that do valuable work, but are neither scalable nor structural.

## 5. The Chicken-and-Egg Dilemma

All these challenges are interlinked—and block each other:

- No hunting without a market
- No market without processing
- No processing without investment
- No investment without supply
- No supply without hunter willingness
- No hunting without demand
- No demand without awareness and ease of use

These mutual dependencies make the system fragile. A workable solution must break through this cycle—creating space for flexibility, legal feasibility, and both economic and circular value creation.

