Seminar report:

Organic foods in Nordic catering – a multidisciplinary challenge

Copenhagen, 28-29 September 2001

Report prepared by
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Per H. Kristiansen

Managing Director, Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

Dear minister, ladies and gentlemen

As the managing director of the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration I am very pleased to welcome you all to this seminar on Organic Foods in catering. The seminar is organized together with our partners the Danish Technical University and the Nordic Industrial Fund.

The people in our Catering Center has been working with organic conversion of catering systems for a long time and I know that our minister is a strong supporter of the idea that public catering should go organic.

I am therefore very pleased to introduce to you the Danish Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Ms Ritt Bjerregård.

As most ministers Ritt has a very tight schedule. Therefore she would have to leave just after her welcome address, but I am sure she will be able to answer one or two questions

Ritt Bjerregaard
(Former) Minister of the Danish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to be able to welcome you to this seminar on organic foods in catering. This initiative taken by the Catering Center in the Food Administration along with its partners provide a good opportunity for experts and stakeholders to discuss how organic foods can find its way into catering – just as it finds its way to the shelves in the supermarket.

This year in May the European Conference "Organic Food and Farming - Towards Partnership and Action" in Denmark showed a big interest in organic food and farming in Europe.

The conference ended up with a declaration, which among other things highlighted that organic food and farming should be developed further in Europe.

To ensure this development we must get in touch with the consumers. And the catering sector gives us a very special possibility to reach a large group of consumers.

However the way for organic foods into catering is far from being simple. Many caterers have realized that there are considerable barriers against organic conversion.

There is a need for joint efforts to overcome those barriers. Therefore I find it very positive that the key stakeholders and experts in the Nordic countries have joined to create a network.

I have had the opportunity to be briefed about some of the results from the pilot project in the network - and I am very confident that the network can contribute significantly to an increased organic conversion of catering.

Together the Nordic countries can present a variety of initiatives that each can give an important contribution to the increased use of organic foods in catering.

In Finland there is already established an organic catering center. Sweden has many years of experience in the KRAV certification of catering kitchens as well as in running the "Ekoköket" network where innovators in organic conversion get together and discuss common problems.

In Iceland and in Norway it seems very promising to use organic food as a part of a "green and nature - like" image in restaurants and hotels. I find the perspective of marketing the Nordic meal with a strong organic touch as an integrated part of both leisure and business travel very interesting.

In Denmark we have created a fund for public conversion. Furthermore we will highlight information and consulting service to the kitchens. Recently I have reached an overall agreement with the Association of municipalities (KL) in Denmark to establish goals for an increased use of organic food in public catering.

I understand that the labeling of organic meals has been an issue at the national meetings that the network conducted this spring and summer. I find it very important that key actors and experts on a Nordic basis try to create a good way to communicate to the consumer that this is an organic meal. The pilot project has also shown that it is very difficult to compile good statistics on the use of organic foods in catering in the Nordic countries.

It is also difficult to measure the degree of conversion in a given catering unit. I hope that the Nordic network can develop a way in which catering kitchens can communicate how organic they are, in a reliable manner.

The pilot project clearly shows that conversion is not a task for experts alone. Concrete action has to be taken. It is interesting that the network in the plan for the coming two years focus on a close co-operation with practitioners of organic conversion including the growers, the manufacturers and the wholesalers as well as the caterers. I believe that the partnership between public and private operators is one of the ways in which organic conversion can be facilitated.

I am very happy that the plans for the network do not only consist of meetings but also involves attempts to set up a number of concrete projects that is going to be tested in real life.

The perspectives of a continued and closer Nordic co-operation are interesting. Will organic suppliers have easier access to a homogenous Nordic market of organic catering customers? This could be some of the perspectives that a continued Nordic network may help to meet.

I wish you some fruitful discussions in the days to come and all the luck in your future networking.

The Nordic Network for Organic Foods in Catering - background and status

Bent Egberg Mikkelsen, project manager, PhD
The Danish Catering Centre, Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

This presentation tries to answer to questions: Why is catering important as a sales channel for organic foods and what is the background and status of the Nordic network.

Catering is important because large-scale consumers in catering spend every third krone or mark spent on food. Danish KL association of municipalities has estimated that total conversions of public food procurement to organic foods alone will double the sale of organic foods.

In addition it is expected that catering due to increasing demand will take market share from retail. Some of the explanation is:

- More elderly people means more public catering
- More caring companies means more and different canteens
- More elderly people means more public catering

	Food service units	Meals Millions per year	Food cost Million Euro's per year
Public sector	26.420	1.006	1.486
Private sector	42.630	1.928	4.083
TOTAL	69.090	2.934	5.569

The Nordic networking in this field may be divided in 3 generations:

- Informal mail network
- Nordic interview / meeting network funded by Catering Centre / Food Admin and Technical University and NIF.
- Three years industry / R&D network funded by NIF, organizations and industry - <u>we hope.</u>

At present we are between second and third step. The empirical work of the pilot project has been carried out at meetings in the Nordic countries in this spring and summer according to this timetable:

25. April, Stockholm

11. June, Helsinki

27. June, Copenhagen

17. August, Reykjavik

24. September, Oslo

At the Nordic meetings we have been meeting with the key stakeholders from the organic and the catering sector in these countries.

The approach has been to answer four questions:

- Is there a potential in the catering sector for organic foods?
- Does the Nordic countries agree?
- If yes, is there then a need for a Nordic network?
- What should a network look like?

Also literature has been used in the study. Of course, there are limits to the extent of data and, of course, this is not a scientific study. On the other hand, the meetings have given us a good idea of the status in these countries, and also of the different agendas, which exist in the countries.

We have been very surprised and very happy with the support and the commitment from the participants in the different meetings and also of the large interest there has been in the issue Organic Foods in Catering.
The history of Nordic cooperation dates back to 1998. The Nordic network partners have been networking since the first steps were taken by a meeting at Tune Landbrugsskole in 1998. On the basis of this meeting, we submitted an application for the Council of Nordic ministers the ÄK Livs programme, but we were not successful. This forced us to fine tune our idea.

After more discussions, we turned to the Nordic Industrial Fund, which could see this issue from a marketing point of view. After some discussions with the Nordic Industrial Fund, we submitted an application in the beginning of this year, and soon we got a confirmation that the Nordic Industrial Fund was willing to sponsor a pilot project, which should create a state-of- the- art report on this issue.

The task force who has performed the task consisted of me and Niels Heine Kristensen and Thorkild Nielsen from the Tech. University who following a very tight schedule, carried out a tour including all the Nordic capitals.

Besides us being busy also our Nordic partners, Gunnar Gunnarson at Tun, Iceland, Irma Karkainnen at Loumokettiokeskus, Finland, Carin Enfors at Ekoköket in Sweden and Gunnar Vittersjø at SIFO, Norway has been very supporting and cooperative, and interested and has been under the same pressure as us. They have had the contact to the participants in the national meetings. It is very important to stress that these meetings could not have been held without the efforts of the partners in each country. We are very thankful to these partners.

The next steps will be to complete the report and tomorrow se will discuss the concrete application for the continued 3 year network which I hope will bring the Nordic cooperation further into the future.

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Organic Foods in a Catering Suppliers Product Range

Karim Allevret, Environmental manager
Swedish Catering Supplier Servera R&S AB

Today Servera is the largest catering wholesale company on the restaurant and large scale catering market in Sweden. Servera has 4 distribution centres in Sweden as well as 10 sales offices. The annual turnover is 4 billions SEK in year 2001.

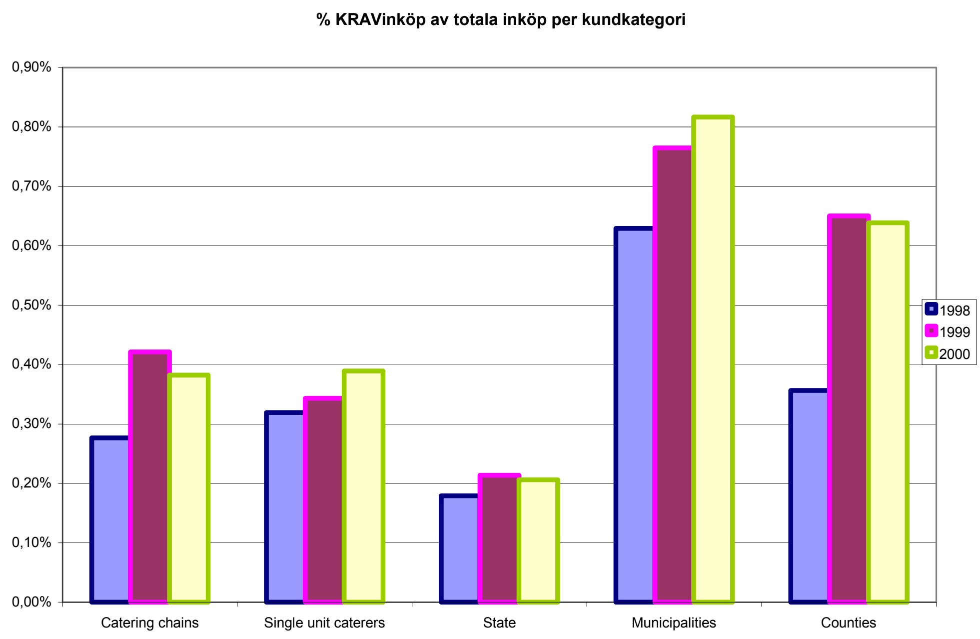
Environmental issues are very important in Serveras strategy and as a result the company is certified according to ISO 14001 since 1999.

Another part of the company´s environmental strategy is marketing of organic foods. The sale of organic certified KRAV products has been growing since 1998 when Servera started to market organic food. Today the sale of organic foods is 1% of the total turnover.

The segment of the costumers who buy organic foods is 5 different segments

- Private catering chains such as Amica, Sodexho and Scandic
- Private single unit caterers such as private restaurants
- Swedish state, mostly the defence catering units
- The municipalities, mostly schools, day-care centres as well as some smaller hospital kitchens
- Counties, the large catering kitchens

Figure 1. The distribution of the KRAV organic certified purchases in 5 different segments in the 3 years 1998 to year 2000.



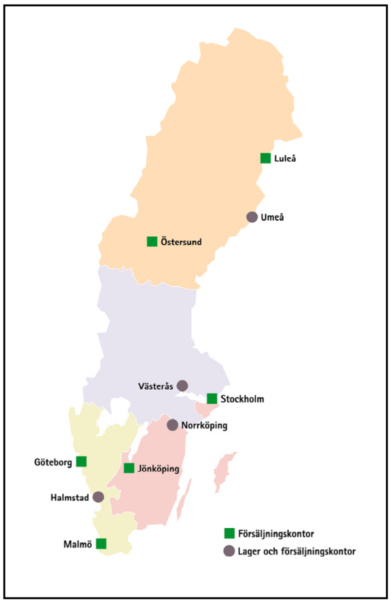
The proportion of organic purchases to total purchase in 5 different segments in the 3 years 1998 to year 2000 is shown in figure 1. The figure shows that municipalities and counties are the most serious organic customers.

The company has found an interesting difference between customers. That is possible because Servera maintain a very detailed statistic on the consumers behaviour. One part of the customers which organic purchase is less than 2 percent of their total purchase, do not buy organic foods by intention. The other part that buys for more than 2 percent of the total purchase buys organic as a part of an organic purchasing strategy. Today Servera has customers whose organic purchase is many times larger than their conventional purchase.

So why do Servera sell organic KRAV certified products? The reason is simple - because the customers demand it. In addition it is a fact that also ours customers want organic foods. And the reason for buying organically is much more than simple concern for the environment. It is also concern for the health of the individual. The BSE crises have been a significant factor that has motivated customers to change their behaviour and that has resulted in an increasing interest in organic foods. The interest is increasing when the production and purchasing of organic foods are explained to them. That the vegetables are not sprayed and the fact that the cows do not eat bone meal.

The aim of Servera is to increase the sale of organic food to 2 percent of the total turnover in year 2003. The challenge is to find more organic food products as well as make them into the demands of the catering customers. It is also Servera's strategy to have - if possible - developed own brands organic foods. It is a part of Servera's strategy to be a one stop food supplier all the ingredients which restaurants and large-scale caterers normally use.

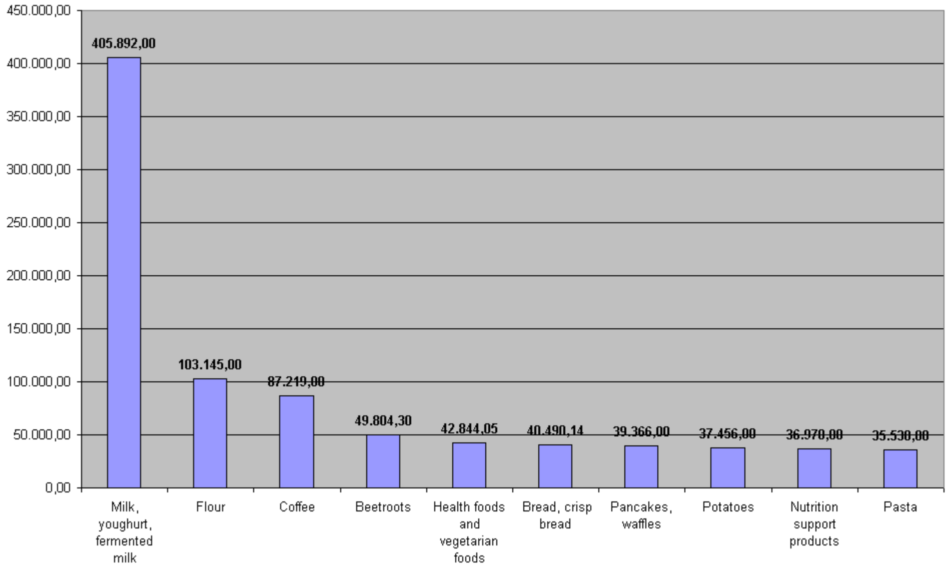
Figure 2. The map shows the 10 regional sales offices as well as the 4 regions with their own warehouse and distribution. Servera cover the whole of Sweden.



Serveras product range covers dry foods, frozen food as well as fresh food. The size of the purchases of the customers who buy organic vary very much. They range from 2 to over 400 percent of the total purchase of the customer.

The top score of organic products is held by milk and fermented milk products as shown in figure 3. The yearly (2001) sales volume is close to half a million SEK.

Figure 3. The yearly (2001) sales volumes of most sold organic products in Servera.



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Organic Foods in Nordic Catering - results from a NIF pilot project

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Introduction

This paper is a preparatory work and it summarizes the major findings from a pilot project carried out in the period from November 2000 to November 2001. The Nordic Industrial Fund, the Danish Food Administration and the Technical University of Denmark have financed the project. The main part of the fieldwork has been carried out in spring 2001.

The project team behind this initiative and this pilot project are Danish Catering Centre (StorKøkkenCentret) at the Danish Food Administration and the Eco-group at IPL / Innovation and Sustainability, the Technical University.

Objective of this study

The OBJECTIVE of the pilot project is to assess the ”state of the art” of organic food in Nordic catering, and along this the need for Nordic cooperation on ”Eco-catering” and the perspective in Nordic cooperation on ”Eco-catering”.

A supplementary objective is to identify network participants that are actively or potential involved in organic food in Nordic catering. These participants have in this connection predominantly been divided into Public R&D institutions, and other stakeholders (Organisations, Companies, etc)

Methodology of the pilot project

The above mentioned project team has carried out the main part of the work, together with the following partners in the Nordic countries: Ekoköket, Sweden, SIFO, Norway, Organic Catering Center, Finland and TÚN, Iceland.

The project team has organised a series of meetings in the Nordic countries together with these partners, and finally this 2 days workshop in Copenhagen.

The 'state of art' assessment of is based on • literature studies, • group interviews with actors in the Nordic countries, and national reports done by the Nordic partners in this pilot project. On the basis of this information collection it is expected that all major information on organic in the Nordic catering is identified - including national surveys and statistics. The findings has been presented and discussed amongst the participants at the workshop in Copenhagen. As this paper primarily intends to summarize the findings, the focus in this paper will be on the qualitative assessments. In the coming project the quantitative information will be validated and published.

Major national actors were invited to the national workshops. This resulted in having major sources of information on the sector represented and it served as a possibility to identify the interest in closer Nordic cooperation in this field.

The findings show that there are many similarities between the Nordic countries. The history of organic food production started in these countries in the end of the 70'ies and the beginning of the 80'ies. But the recent development has shown also many variations. In the following a brief overview of these similarities and variations will be presented.

Similarities amongst the Nordic countries

Market supply and distribution of organic food in general, in the Nordic countries, are still characterised by:

- Scarce product variations
- Varying quality
- Few suppliers
- ”niche-market” prices (especially for some products)

Market demand and experiences with organic food are in general concentrated on:

- Restaurants, and especially gourmet oriented restaurants
- Small institutions
- Some experiences in public kitchens

The political interest for the organic food production is established in all Nordic countries. Regulations and support has for member countries, since 1991, been dominated by an EU regulation. Even that Norway and Iceland is not members of the EU they have similar regulatory systems. So all though there are serious variations concerning public regulation the similarities can be identified as follows:

- General support programmes (Iceland’s support varies from the other)
- General certification systems (private and / or public)
- Rural development (connections are made between employment etc)
- Cultural capacity building (tourism and broader cultural activities linked)

Competence building in relation to organic food production and distribution are dealt with on different methods and levels. But in general there seem to be some research and development activity related to organic food in catering in all countries although it is very low. Characteristics are:

- Few R&D actors and projects
- Low activity / few resources allocated
- Sector related R&D skills existing

The public and private actors refer to very similar motives, behind the interest in exposing organic products to the catering sector. Based on this short-term field study the most mentioned motives seem to be:

- Sustainability
- Risc - trust (conventional - organic)
- Quality
- ”Back to basic skills”

Variations amongst the Nordic countries

Given the above-mentioned similarities it is obvious from the findings, that we in the more detailed analysis of variations will find big variations within the same categories.

The market for organic catering products - the supply and distribution - divides the countries in very different stages of market development:

- New (Iceland, Norway)
- Developing (Finland)
- Partly stabilizing (Sweden, Denmark)

Markets for organic catering products in catering - the demand and experiences - also show differences amongst the Nordic countries. The organic food is predominantly implemented in different segments of the catering market:

- Restaurants, Hotel chains, etc. (Finland, Norway, Iceland)
- Canteens, schools, etc (Sweden, Denmark)
- Public food services, major kitchens (Sweden, Denmark)

Public and private regulations and support is found in all Nordic countries. But more specific programmes and support systems for the catering sector is still not very developed.

- Special certification and labelling system (Sweden, Norway, Iceland)
- Special support programmes -public procurement of organic food (Denmark)

Establishing a public knowledge base will be dependent on valid information. Many experiences have been build-up in private companies and in different projects. And many of these experiences have vanished with the closing of these activities. Competitive information can be of great interest to activities in this field, but also a general overview and knowledge will make a strong basis for more strategic decisions like public support, market development etc. The Nordic countries have a strong tradition for research and development in the agriculture and food sector. But even though the modernisation of the Nordic societies have been dramatic in this field within the recent decades, there is only scarce allocation of resources to research and development in this field. Even though the activities are small, the major activities seem to be the following:

- Organic catering center (Finland, Sweden)
- Public research (Denmark, Norway)
- Consultants (Denmark)

Public funding from different national sources finances these activities. In Sweden has succeeded in organising public support for this development activity (Ekoköket).

The motives in the Nordic countries are - as mentioned earlier - very similar, characterised by common cultural trends and by common political institutions and frameworks. Trying to distinguish within these countries would point at the following often formulated motives.

- Environment (Denmark)
- Tourism (Norway, Iceland)
- Employment (Denmark)
- Political (Denmark)

It must be stressed that this is mainly indicative - as these motives all will be reflected in all Nordic countries. The reason for distinguishing is probably an actual political condition that varies a little in these countries.

Perspectives in the network

On the basis of this assessment of the actual state of the art of organic food in the Nordic catering a few major perspectives and points should be mentioned. The perspectives are both of interest to the development of broader Nordic interactions and some are more specific addressed to participants in the network concerning organic food production. As this is the first formal public-private actor network on organic food production on a Nordic level this networks pioneer function is also an important reference for the perspectives. This field is an evolving area, with the challenges of overcoming a series of start-up barriers.

By establishing this Nordic network it will be possible to enhance important strategic areas for the development of organic production and organic food in Nordic catering.

The common Nordic knowledge base can be developed according to the:

- Exchange of experiences
- Broader dissemination of experiences
- Better knowledge - of barriers and potentials
- Identify common research needs

The common markets:

- Access to bigger near-markets
- Identification of critical market volumes
- Broader range of organic food service products
- Closer public-private cooperation

Possible regional, Nordic identity and regulation:

- Nordic model for labelling of ”eco-meals”
- Networking on other common interests.

Finally it must be mentioned that this pilot project has identified a very concrete interest for cooperation amongst the actors in this field. As Nordic societies and food habits have long lasting historical tradition this short term project seem to have identified potentials in cooperation on the theme of organic food in catering in all Nordic countries.

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The Icelandic Perspective on Organic Foods in Catering

Gunnar Á. Gunnarsson, TÚN Organic Certification Agency
Níels S. Olgeirsson, Food and Restaurant Federation of Iceland (MATVÍS)

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of working together in many fields. They have been eager to cooperate on a broad range of issues, because they have a lot in common, such as social and cultural background, which is strengthened by geographical proximity. To a large extent this has been based more on informal arrangements and voluntary participation, and less on legally or politically binding organization.

This seminar marks one more area where the Nordic nations are exploring common ground for cooperation. Already we have a lot of cooperation between the countries on organic agriculture, including the farm advisory services, primary research and development, standards and certification, and organic producer organizations. In some cases this cooperation has been extended to and enriched by the three Baltic countries, where agriculture and food production are now undergoing major reconstruction.

One of the aims of this meeting is to set out a “Nordic” perspective towards the development of organic foods in catering services. But to do so it is necessary to compare the situation in all the countries and examine not only how to use our similarities to move forward but also how different experiences can contribute to our common goals.

We the Nordic countries sometimes tend to think of us as five independent nations, but we should not forget that our countries are homes to several ethnic groups and that there are also three semi-independent nations belonging to the Nordic region, each with their distinctive culture and ecological conditions: I am of course talking about the Aaland Isles, the Faroe Isles and Greenland. And when we try to identify national perspectives to organic food in catering, each of those may have something interesting to contribute to our cooperation. We should not only look at this network as a multi-disciplinary challenge but also as a multi-national / multi-ethnic challenge where culture and local traditions are brought back into our food production.

Organic farming

The history of organic farming in Iceland has dates back to 1930 when the first organic farm was established at Sólheimar. In 1958 an organic unit was set up at a health clinic in Hveragerði. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a re-emergence of interest in these ways of producing food and since then we have seen a gradual but very slow increase.

The discussion on organic agenda is very much under influence of the fact that organic farming is regarded as being difficult under the climatic conditions in the country.

Iceland is one of the smallest countries in the Nordic area, together with the Faroes and Greenland in terms of the number of inhabitants and the number of farms. About 3500 farmers and growers produce for the market in Iceland, and the number is decreasing due to economic and social circumstances. Small farms are continuously dropping out of business, farms are getting bigger, and industrial or large-scale dairy, poultry and pork farms have been established over the last 10-15 years.

Currently 28 holdings are certified for organic production. Although there are technical problems to sort out, such as the use of legumes, these farms, which are spread almost all over the country, demonstrate that organic methods can be successfully employed in the climatic conditions of Iceland.

Table 1. Certified Units Producing Organically

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001e
Certified farms	14	19	22	21	27	28
Certified processing units	4	4	7	9	10	13
Certified units total	**18**	**23**	**29**	**30**	**37**	**41**

The Icelandic market for organic products has not been studied in any detail. It is a fact however that consumer awareness is increasing the same level of enthusiasm as in other neighboring countries is still to be seen. Most of the common types of Icelandic farm products are now available as certified organic.

Table 2. Certified Units by Type of Production 2001

Primary production:

Vegetables/Herbs	15
Potatoes	10
Fruit	2
Nurseries	5
Flowers	4
Grain	12
Milk	4
Sheep products	7
Egg	3

Processing:

Dairy processing	3
Slaughterhouses	3
Bakeries	2
Fruit/Veg. packaging	3
Seaweed	1
Cosmetics	1

The certified farms produce mainly vegetables/herbs, potatoes, grain and sheep. Less common products are milk, egg and fruit. The certified processing plants are 3 dairy processing plants, 3 slaughterhouses, 3 fruit and vegetable packaging plants and 2 bakeries. The certified plants include some of the largest processing companies.

The supply of domestic products is, with the exception of lamb and fresh milk, unsufficient to the growing demand. In addition it varies significantly over the seasons. Therefore several supermarkets and whole food stores regularly import a range of fresh and processed organic food. A large part of organic imports come from or via agents in Denmark, UK and Netherlands. This has resulted in stabilization and broadening of the organic market.

During the peak months of the domestic production a group of three growers operate a popular box scheme offering fresh vegetable direct from their farms. Two years ago, some of the organic lamb was exported to Denmark and UK, but did not continue apparently due to the lack of (a) sufficient supply and (b) acceptable premium. Now exports are mostly confined to organic seaweed meal used for fertilizers and feed products.

So far, the organic sector in Iceland has developed without major government support.

Organic catering

Most of the organic food products are sold through supermarkets and whole food shops and mainly for direct consumption while the catering sector has not yet made a significant impact.

Using the most common indicator, which is the percentage of agricultural land, farmed organically, Iceland rates very low in comparison with its Nordic neighbors and most other Western countries. Part of the reason is that Icelandic farmland includes large areas of common grazing land and this affects the statistics.

Two privately owned vegetarian restaurants, a canteen of an independent health clinic, and a countryside café located on an organic farm, use organic materials as far as possible for catering, although they must often resort to conventional materials due to limited supply. Waldorf schools and kindergarten based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner also use biodynamic or organic food as far as possible. A couple other restaurants are known to use some organic food, particularly featuring Icelandic organic lamb, but mainly on special occasions or during short periods.

Those who regularly use organic food for catering seem to agree that its quality is in most cases much higher than conventional produce, and that there is a demand for organically prepared food, although they have not quantified the demand.

TÚN, which is the certification body for organic production in Iceland, has recently published a revised set of standards, which include a section on catering. This means that restaurants and kitchens are now able to apply for certification, should they wish to label part or their entire menu’s organic.

The obstacles to using organic food in catering most frequently quoted by chefs and restaurateurs include:

- High input prices
- Insufficient supply
- Narrow range of products
- Lack of information
- Low demand
- No need to improve

These obstacles are of course subjective and must be measured and tackled against hard evidence. To some extent, they reflect misleading and inaccurate information floating around, but that does not diminish their significance. They demonstrate how urgent it is to improve the dialogue between interested parties, and to inform and educate the catering sector about the subject.

Table 3. Certified Farmland and Livestock

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Certified farmland (ha)	1078	1204	1735	2446	4837	5000
% increase from prev.year	50	12	44	41	98	3
% of agric. Land	0,07	0,08	0,12	0,16	0,32	0,33
Dairy cows	62	63	62	65	92	92
Sheep (ewes)	80	465	564	639	1320	1500

Insufficient financial incentives available to farmers who wish to convert; the present grant system does not stimulate growth; no support scheme has been set up specifically for organic conversion; the so-called “eco-friendly” labeling scheme is still promoted and many farmers perceive it as the easy and low-cost alternative to organic farming.

The organic market is undeveloped; consumer awareness is low and many don’t make a distinction between “organic” and “eco-friendly”; wholesalers and retailers are still doubtful about the merits and the future of the organic market; the need to educate the market is yet to be widely recognized; the catering sector is mostly an unplugged territory.

Discouraging self-image; Icelandic producers of agricultural products tend to portray these as exceptionally nutritious, pure and unpolluted; they assume that the purity of our environment and our “modest” use of conventional or industrial farming methods and chemicals make our conventional farming “virtually organic”; the consumer is led to believe that our produce is, in terms of intrinsic quality, way ahead of imported goods;

ironically, instead of encouraging conversion to organic standards (which should be a short step), this purity self-image has effectively discouraged change, and has even been used to justify calls for the lowering of organic standards.

The Icelandic government is committed to European and IFOAM standards on organic production. There is an increasing recognition that Iceland must comply with international organic standards. Second, plans for a state funded conversion grant scheme are being drawn up, possibly for implementation as early as 2002. Third, key institutions in the farming sector, such as the National Farmers´ Union, the Hvanneyri University and the other two agricultural colleges, have to various degrees set up services targeted at the organic sector. Forth, public and private financial support for promotion and consumer education on the subject has increased. Finally, the debate on food security and quality is gaining foothold, as problems with intensive Icelandic farming and imported conventional food become more obvious. Recent outbreaks of salmonella and camphylobacter have raised consumer concerns about the problems of intensive farming.

The position of catering and the catering groups in Iceland is strong. The work carried out by chefs is highly rated among the public. There is a strong demand for jobs in these professions. At the same time, consumers keep increasing their spending on prepared food provided at work, in cafés and restaurants, and schools are increasingly re-introducing meals for their students. Over the last 10-15 years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of restaurants, cafés and bars in Reykjavik and other towns in Iceland.

Organic foods in catering have also been discussed in MATVÍS, the Food and Restaurant Federation of Iceland, which support the use of organic foods. The policy of MATVÍS is that all its members, who include waiters, caterers, chefs, bakers, meat processors, as well as students of those fields, should be familiar with the basic principles of organic catering. In addition MATVÍS intends to include the subject in its education and re-training programs

The catering sector needs to adopt a pro-active stance if organic food is to become a major part of its services. There are several avenues available.

- Following up on the new commitment among catering groups, including education and training programs.
- Reviving the debate about quality: Environment, product, lifestyle.
- Promoting organic food as a part of environmentally sustainable purchasing policy.
- Exploring opportunities associated with Local Agenda 21.
- Studying the long-term financial implications for using organic food.
- Involving a broader range of public institutions: Education and Health authorities at local and national levels should be mobilized.
- Continuing to cooperate with certifying bodies on standards for preparing and labeling of food.

- Build / participate in building a coalition of interested parties to improve communication between the various segments of the movement and supporting parties.

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The Finnish Perspective on Organic Foods in Catering

Irma Kärkkäinen, Luomukeittiokeskus - Finnish Organic Catering Centre
Sampsa Heinonen, Plant Production Inspection Centre

Organic Farming

Pioneer Phase Before the 1990s

The first still existing organic farms were converted in the 1960s, but the number of organic farms was only a couple of dozens until the 1980s.

During the 1980s, specialized marketing channels started to function. In 1989, the year before the state conversion aid programme was launched, there were 373 certified organic farms.

Subsidy Driven 1990s

The EU-membership from the beginning of 1995 brought a new wave of farms converting to organic farming. The number of organic farms rose to 2,793 in 1995 and to 4,452 in 1996. In the year 2000, the number of organic farms was 5,225.

Organically Managed Area

In 2001, the organically managed area is expected to be 148,000 hectares, of which 121,000 hectares are certified organic. The average farm size has grown constantly. In 2001, it is expected to be 30 hectares. The average size of organic farm is thus slightly bigger than the average of all farms in Finland.

Table 1: Development of hectares under organic and conventional management and number of organic farms in Finland from 1989 to 2000 (situation at 31st of December each year) and estimate for the year 2001.

	1989	1990	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	E2001
Certified organic	1,500	2,291	19,351	3,139	27,218	42,748	83,836	100,084	117,235	121,700
In conversion	800	4,435	6,471	1,556	57,338	59,594	42,340	36,581	30,188	27,400
Total (organic)	2,300	6,726	25,822	44,695	84,556	102,342	126,176	136,665	147,423	148,100
% of total agricultural area	0.1	0.3	1.1	2.1	4.0	4.9	5.8	6.3	6.7	6,7
Number of organic farms	373	671	1,818	2,793	4,452	4,381	4,975	5,197	5,225	5,000
% of all active farms	0.3	0.5	1.6	2.8	4.6	4.8	5.9	6.1	6.5	6.4
Organically grown area per farm (hectares)	6.2	10.1	14.2	16.0	19.0	23.4	25.4	26.3	28.2	29,7
Total agricultural area (1000 hectares)	2,229	2,271	2,302	2,145	2,144	2,150	2,192	2,201	2,210	e2,210
Total number of active farms (1000 farms)	128.0	129.1	114.5	100.0	94.1	90.2	87.5	83.0	79.8	e77.4

Source: Plant Production Inspection Centre (KTTK) (years 1994-) and Union for Organic Farming (Luomuliitto r.y.) (years 1989 -93). Calculations on land utilization in the whole country supplied by Information Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Yearbooks of Farm Statistics 1988 -2000).

Food processing

In December 2000 there were about 596 registered food processors covered by the certification systems. In 1999, 41 percent of the certified processors were bakeries, 27 percent farms processing mainly own organic produce, 9 percent processors of animal products, 8 percent mills and 15 percent other processors, packers and importers.

Authorities Responsible for Inspection

The state authority in charge of the implementation of the inspection system laid down in Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 is the Plant Production Inspection Centre (KTTK) and the National Food Agency (under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.)

The EU-inspection bodies are the Rural Departments of the Employment and Economic Development Centres (FI-A), the National Food Agency (FI-B), the National Product Control Agency (Tuotevalvontakeskus) (FI-C) and the Provincial Government of Åland (Ålands landskapsstyrelse) (FI-D). There are also two private certification bodies: Luomuliitto ry and the Finnish Biodynamic Association.

The control in respect of marketing of organic food is carried out as an integral part of the overall Finnish food control and it is co-ordinated by the National Food Agency. The control of processing and marketing of organic alcoholic beverages is the task of the National Product Control Agency.

Due to the unique autonomy of the Åland Islands, it is the Provincial Government of the Åland Islands, which organizes the control board and the register of organic farming.

Certification Labels

The state label Luomu – Valvottua tuotantoa /Kontrollerad ekoproduktion (Certified Organic Production) is granted by the Plant Production Inspection Centre to operators whose products were inspected by a Finnish inspection.

By February 2001, the Luomu seal had been issued to 527 operators (farmers and processors) – mostly food processors, using the label on 2400 product. The Ladybird logo is owned and administrated by Luomuliitto. It is granted to farmers, food processors and farm input manufacturers producing organic products according to the standards of Luomuliitto. The standards require that at least 75 percent of the ingredients of the labeled products be of Finnish origin. In 2000, there were about 2,700 organic farmers and 60 food processors that had signed contracts to use the Ladybird certification logo. The logo is mainly used on vegetables.

The Finnish Biodynamic Association administrates the use of the international Demeter label for biodynamic products. The Association has its own standards for Finnish biodynamic production based on the international standards for biodynamic agriculture. In 1999, there were about 60 farmers and three processors and wholesale traders with contracts to use the logo.

State Support, Policy Initiatives and Implementation of Agenda 2000

Conversion aid for organic farming

During the first years of EU membership of Finland, the producer price index fell by 26 percent, which caused serious problems especially in conventional grain production. Many farmers began to look for alternatives. Organic farming was one of the most important ones.

Special payments to organic farming in the form of conversion aid and organic production aid are part of the Finnish Agri-Environmental Program (FAEP) and its Supplementary Protection Scheme (SPS), implemented in 1995. Conversion aid is paid for five years. The farmer receives 147 per hectare per year. The aid for already converted areas (production aid) is 103 per hectare per year. The production aid contracts are also made on a five-year basis.

Financing of the conversion aid for the new farmers has been secured for the years 2002 - 2003 and therefore the number of organic farms is expected to increase rapidly.

Marketing

During the 1980s, farm gate sales and local marketplaces used to be the main marketing channel for potatoes and vegetables. Cereals were marketed through wholesale traders specializing in organic products, local mills and small bakeries. Production of organic animal products was almost non-existent before the 1990s and the pioneers usually started marketing the products by direct selling. The attempts to establish stores specializing in organic food have not been successful in Finland, and even today only the biggest cities have one or two organic food stores, although even smaller towns have outlets especially at market halls.

It was only the raise in organic agriculture during the 1990s that started the development of a proper market. According to a study made in 1998, about half of the produce were marketed through supermarkets, 20 percent through farmer markets or market halls, 18 percent through farm outlets and seven percent through special shops.

The market share of certain organic products at supermarkets has been calculated since August 1999. Assuming that the total market share of organic production was one percent, the value of Finnish organic production would be around 100 million.

The Union for Organic Farming established co-ordination between 15 regional producer-owned marketing organizations in order to create functioning marketing channels for organic produce. A state-funded promotion organization (Finfood - Luomu) (www.finfood.fi/luomu) for organic products was set up in 1998.

Since 1997, there have been remarkable exports of cereals and peas to France, Italy, Great Britain and Denmark. In 2000 the volume of exports of cereals (mainly oats) was about 25 million kg. The export of processed products is still marginal, although the range of products is considerable, including e.g. dried rye and wheat bread, liquorice, wild berries, herbs, coffee, etc.

Consumer Attitudes Towards Organic Products

A study made in April 2001 showed that 24 percent of consumers buy organic food regularly and 54 percent occasionally. 76 percent of the consumers have at least once bought organic products. Regular buyers intend to buy more organic food in the future.

The most common reasons for the consumption of organic products were: good taste, absence of residues and other health related reasons, animal welfare and environmental reasons.

Training

The Finnish Organic Catering Centre, specializing in Horeca organic training, research and advisory services, was founded in Suonenjoki in 1999. This national unit also acts as an instigator of co-operation and interaction between organic farmers, food processors, marketing companies, wholesalers and catering establishments.

A basic course in organic catering ranges from a two-hour lecture to a two-week course, and the duration of the most advanced course is 16 study weeks.

Research Situation

In Finland, research for organic agriculture covers practically all aspects of organic production, although emphasis is clearly put on plant production.

The Organic Catering Centre's study on the use of food in day nurseries in 2001-02
The aim is to study children's' use of food in an organic day nursery (n=80) and a control day nursery (n=60) in two six-week periods. The following questions are to examined:

1. Children's' food consumption in an organic day nursery and a regular day nursery
2. Nutrient intake of children eating organic or regular food (amount of energy, energy nutrients as well as fat quality and fibre, C, A and D vitamins, calcium, iron, sodium, selenium and zinc)
3. Intake of additives (nitrites, benzoic acid, aspartaami)
4. Food price in an organic day nursery and a regular day nursery
5. Families' use of organic food and attitudes towards organic food

With the aid of the study, scientifically sound information is acquired for municipal decision makers on the effect of organic food on children's' intake of nutrients and additives as well as information on the effect of organic food on the price of food. The families' attitudes towards organic food and its availability in day nurseries have significance in municipal decision-making.

Organic foods in catering

Organic food preparation is not directly subsidized in Finland

With the development of supply, demand and pricing of organic products, catering establishments are interested in Luomu in Finland. Catering establishments do not receive direct economic subsidy for producing organic food.

With the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as well as ESR and EMOTR organic projects, the food processing businesses have developed organic products for catering in national and provincial projects. Also organic training, consultation and research for catering establishments has been supported to some degree since the mid-1990s

Why do catering establishments serve organic food?

The public sector has started to use organic products in the catering services of about 50 municipalities either through political decision-making or through the establishment's own interest. Selection criteria for organic food in schools are lack of additives, safety, locality and Finish ness. Helsinki Catering Oy is the only institutional caterer whose meals production is under organic control. They produce altogether 80,000 meals per day but serve organic food only on theme days or by special order.

The catering services of polytechnics and universities produce organic meals regularly to the wishes of environment conscious customers and to those favoring ethical alternatives.

Staff restaurants, which offer organic meals, wish to create an image of supporting environment friendly and local food production. The customers who select an organic alternative pay 10-15% more than normal for their meals.

Restaurant chains and private restaurants perceive organic food as being trendy and see in it an opportunity to stand apart from their competitors. Hotels start to offer organic breakfasts. Also, the customers' special orders make chefs aware of organic products. Finland has no gourmet restaurant serving only organic food. Restaurant kitchens select organic materials because they are tastier, have better structural qualities and their origin can be traced from the field to the table. The organic training of chefs for the chef of the year competition has been presented in the leaflet Ekoköket.

Those taking meals in prisons and in the armed forces were served organic food for the first time in autumn 2001 according to their wishes.

Catering attitudes towards organic products

The Finnish Organic Catering Centre was the first to carry out a study on consumer habits of Horeca organic products, which took place in spring 2000 with a follow-up study in February 2001.

In February 2000, the Finnish Organic Catering Centre carried out research on the use of organic products in Finnish catering. In the study, 200 heads of catering establishments from the regions of Eastern and Southern Finland were interviewed. The sample was selected from A. C. Nielsen's catering register. The interviewed establishments included day nurseries, schools, old people's homes, hospitals, staff restaurants, restaurants and cafés.

The interviews showed that the most frequently stated reason to serve organic products in catering establishments was the healthiness of organic products. 41 percent of those interviewed stated healthiness to be the reason for serving organic foods. The next most commonly stated reasons were the safety of organic products (19%), taste (12,5%), locality / Finnish (12%) and the customers' wishes (12%). The local production and Finnish ness were the third most frequently stated reason in Eastern Finland (16,8% of interviews) to serve organic food whereas in Southern Finland, locality was only the sixth reason. Environmental factors as a reason to serve organic food was seldom mentioned: in Southern Finland slightly more frequently (6,1%) than in Eastern Finland (2%).

Source: Tuikkanen Riitta, Kärkkäinen Irma. 2000. Organic Food in Catering. Survey of heads of catering establishments in Eastern and Southern Finland. Research study 1/2000. Finnish Organic Catering Centre. Suonenjoki.

Activation of professional kitchens: The National Organic Food Weeks
For the second time, National Organic Food Weeks will be organized in Finland for two weeks in October. The Finnish Organic Catering Centre together with FinnFood Luomu activates the catering establishments. To promote the organic food weeks, new organic recipes, serviettes and other items have been designed to decorate dining rooms, restaurants etc. The diners' knowledge of organic foods will be increased by the distribution of promotional material at the tables as well as by organic food exhibits and info-shots. A free material package has been distributed to the 2,200 catering establishments, which will hold an organic theme day or serve organic food during the two-week period.

Why should professional kitchens in the Nordic countries develop organic co-operation?

Staff working in professional kitchens continuously needs new trends and ideas for their work so that they are able to respond to the consumers' needs, i.e. changing food habits. The clientele is dividing into smaller and smaller segments and the demand for organic food increases in line with ethical and ecological crises in agricultural production. By becoming acquainted with practical work and by listening to more experienced organic colleagues we learn new ways and we learn to understand more widely the ecological catering concept. The marketing of organic food services requires new ways of communication and new research knowledge on which to ground one's arguments. The present EU-directives for the preparation of organic products and for their marketing are not suited to use by professional kitchens. The need for control increases continuously so that the official pressure to update the matter requires our joint deliberation.

Who would benefit from professional kitchen co-operation in the Nordic countries?

The increase in organic meal preparation benefits the whole organic chain from worms to compost microbes. Through our interaction organic farmers and food processors gain professional knowledge of practical experience and research results from other Nordic countries where farming and production conditions are similar. New marketing channels open for the organic industry. Swedish speaking kitchen professionals benefit from recipes and marketing ideas, which are available in printed material and Internet web pages. Trainers and teachers in the field extend catering training co-operation and exchange to other Nordic countries. Customers have pleasant experiences when feeding at Nordic organic tables. Food editors gain a new angle when reporting on Nordic food culture.

How would we benefit from our leading position as providers of organic food services?

Customers who have been scared by food crises select an organic meal more and more frequently. Product development units of organic food processing companies from other European countries are lured towards Nordic countries. Our organic food services are presented and our experts perform in central and southern European training units. Through Euro toques, Slow Food and Rotisseur, chefs recommend to their colleagues organic products that they have used, which opens new export channels.

What additional value would Finland bring to the joint Nordic project?
The preparation of organic food in our professional kitchens has started through cooks' and chefs' own interest and through customers' demands. Finnish persistence brings organic meals even to menus in prisons and the armed forces. We have successfully organized interactive organic meetings with representatives from the whole organic chain. Among others, the following have promised co-operation: Fazer Oy (bakery industry) www.fazer.fi, Pakkasmarja Oy (wild and cultivated berries and products) www.pakkasmarja.fi, Amica Oy (catering company) www.amica.fi, Mykora Oy (cultivated mushrooms) www.champ.fi and the Finnish Organic Catering Centre.

Magazines
Luomulehti (magazine of the Union of Organic Farming), founded in 1981
Demeter (magazine of the Finnish Biodynamic Association), founded in 1964
Ekokeittiö –bulletin (catering bulletin 4 times / year), founded 2000
http://www.finfood.fi/luomu, organic food guide, Swedish Internet version.

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The Status for the Organic Production in Sweden

Carin Enfors, Ekoköket/Ekocentrum, Sweden

Goals

Government

The Government has defined as a goal that 20% of all arable land should be organically farmed by the year 2005 and that organic animal production should increase. The Government has further stated that 10% of all dairy cows as well as cattle and lamb for slaughter should come from organic farming by the year 2005. According to the opinion of the Government it is consumer demand that will determine whether or not these goals will be reached.

The Swedish Board of Agriculture has made a Plan of Action to fulfill the goal. In line with that the Government proposes 33 mills SEK to develop the organic production in 2002. In contrast to the former Plan of Action a part of the money (15 mill SEK) will be used to support the market and to consumer information.

Ecological Farmers Association

The Ecological Farmers Association also has a goal: “302010”. That means 30% ecologic in the year 2010.

Governmental goal 2005

20 % of arable land

10 % of dairy cows, cattle and lamb

Plan of Action

The Ecological Farmers Association´s goal:

“30 20 10” = 30 % ecologic in the year 2010

Federation of Swedish Farmers is since some years concerned with organic production and has deepening the collaboration with The Ecological Farmers Association.

Consumers

46-67% of the consumers are positive to organic products and think it is important to buy them (variation among type of product). Especially young well-educated women with good economy said so in a Swedish investigation this year. But still just 4-10% answered that they should buy ecological the next time they went shopping. Around 50% do not buy because of the prize. (Attityder till ekologiskt bland svenska konsumenter, Maria K Magnusson, SLU)

Another Swedish investigation shows that 13% of the consumers are regular buyers of ecological products and buy much. (Rapport 2001:1, prisbildning och efterfrågan på ekologiska livsmedel, Christian Jörgensen, SLI)

Consumer

46-67 % are positive
4-10 % buy next time

50 % not buy because of the prize

13 % regular buyers 84 % has organic products

Medias are in general positive to organic production but they do not write about it so often now as in the middle of last decade

Arable land

The Swedish Government's former goal: "10% of the arable land ecological grown in the year 2000" has been reached. Around 12% of the arable land fulfills the EU-standards for ecological farming. But only 5,2% of the land is controlled by the Swedish control-organization KRAV. Only products from the KRAV-controlled production can reach the market as ecological products. The demand is higher than the Swedish production and the import of organic products is increasing.

Organic land

12 %
of the arable land fulfills the EU-standards for ecological farming

5,2 % is controlled by KRAV

Retail is increasing

The value of purchase:
2000 950 million SEK
1997 650 million SEK

Gröna Konsum and Hemköp
increased 30-40 % 2000

Retail

All chains have raised their sell of organic products. The value of purchase of organic products in 1997 was 650 million SEK, in 2000 it was 950 million SEK. Gröna Konsum and Hemköp have increased 30-40% during the year 2000.

Gröna Konsum (Kooperativa Förbundet) has 430 shops and at least 650 organic products. Their goal is that 10% of products are organic. They have not reached the goal.

Gröna Konsum (KF)

430 shops
> 650 organic products
Goal: 10 % of products

Hemköp (Axfood)

100 shops >330
Goal: 10 % of the
8 % organic

Hemköp (Axfood) has about 100 shops and at least 330 organic products. Their goal is that 10% of the value from their sell comes from organic products. They had about 8% organic products last year.

Ica has 2.300 shops and 340 organic products. Ica´s goal has been 10% of the value should come from organic products when there is an organic alternative. They have reached the goal for some products.

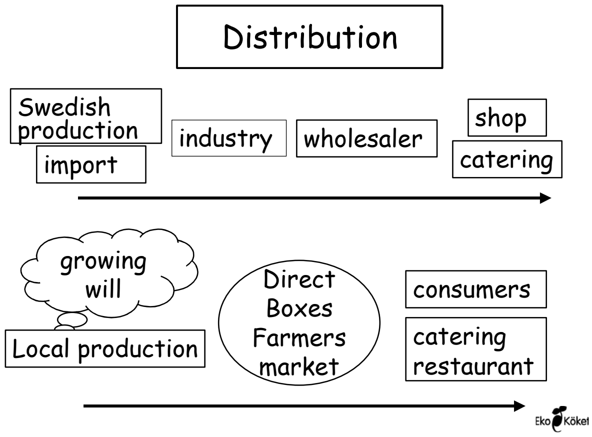
The shop chains have not reached their goals for the year 2000 about selling organic products because of lack of products. They are now working with new goals for the future.

Distribution

The major distribution channels are mainstream supermarkets and shops and public catering. Retails are bigger in organic than catering.

The food-industry is increasing with a rising assortment of ready-made dishes both for the shops and for catering.

There is a growing interest in alternative distribution-ways, e.g. direct delivery from a local farmer, farmers who refine / work up their products and sell them to shops, caterings and restaurants.



Public catering

In the summer of 2001 Ekocentrum carried out an investigation about the use of organic food in public catering. You are the first ones to be informed about the results. (Nr 1:01Investigation concerning the use of organic food in public catering, Ekocentrum)

- 317 communities / local authorities / districts of the city of Stockholm / county councils got a questionnaire.
- 150 questionnaires were answered. That is a participation of 47% of the survey.
- A similar investigation was carried out in 1999 with a participation of 63%.
- The decrease in 2001 Is probably because the questionnaire was send out in holiday-time.

How common is organic food in public catering?

94% communities or 63% communities serve some organic food in their public catering - at least some of their public caterers serve, from time to time. It is interesting to note, that most communities that answered negative or those who did not answer at all, mentioned to have organic products in their purchase contract. Those communities probably use organic products too, but one can assume that it exists a lack of information to the person responsible for the purchase. On this assumption there are altogether 94% who serve organic food from time to time (1999: 71%).

How many kitchens in the communities?

40 of the answering communities have more than 75% public caterer, which from time to

Organic food in public catering

	Number	%	*1999 (%)*
Yes	94	63	*71*
No answer	19 1)	12 1)	*6*
No	28 1)	19 1)	
Σ Yes	*141*	*94*	*22*
No	9 2)	6 2)	
Σ	150	100	

1) but organic products in their purchase contract

2) and no organic products in their purchase contract

EKOCENTRUM

time or regularly serve organic food, while 45 communities serve less than 1% organic food in public catering.

Why do they serve organic?

45% serve organic food because of a political decision by the local government.
That is an important development from 1999 (28%). Therefore the number of communities which provide organic food in their public catering, as well as those who have organic products in their purchase contract, increased.

84% of the communities have organic products in their purchase contract. It could also be seen, that the communities in 2001 bought organic products in larger amounts than in 1999.

Political decisions but no money

EKOCENTRUM

Purchase contracts

84 % has organic
in the purchase

most common
11-30 products (43 %)
1-10 products (27 %)

The financial support by the government to compensate the additional costs for organic products is very low. Only 13 kitchens, 8,5% gets a support. The amount was not sufficient to compensate the additional costs.

Almost all communities commented, that the high price of organic products is an obstacle of great importance in order to serve more organic food.

Political decision
45 % 2001
28 % 1999

Extra money
8 % 2001
5 % 1999

EKOCENTRUM

What do they serve?

The most common products are organic dairy products and vegetables. (83% of the communities bought organic dairy products.) Milk is the most important organic product, especially in schools, where it often is 100% (79% bought organic vegetables.) The most important vegetable for organic use is potato. Organic meat shows the largest increase. This is probably because a decrease in trust in the safety of conventional meat as a result of BSE and to an improved availability of organic meat in the market.

Organic food is most common in nursery schools. Schools are the second best. Homes for elderly people and office canteens also serve organic food in some amount.

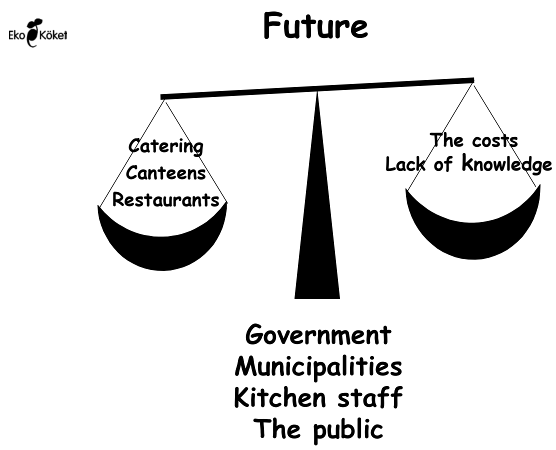
The future

The use of organic food in catering has a great potential and will increase in the future. For example, the first hotel chain recently has decided to serve organic breakfast and a restaurant chain serve lunch at least one day a week. Lots of authorities and companies are certified for their environmental work. But so far very few have taken in account what food the staffs are served in the canteens.

A main obstruction, beside the higher costs, is the lack of knowledge by the purchaser, the persons in charge of the fares and by the cook. Information and education is a task for the Nordic cooperation. Lack of coordination in the distribution chain is also an obstruction.

I think that research would benefit by Nordic cooperation.

Closer cooperation about assortment can develop both the production and the food-industry.



Closing remark

If the Nordic countries are going to work closer together in the future - what can Sweden offer?

From my point of view I can see that we have knowledge and we have experience. And I am sure that others at this seminar will give more points of view.

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The Norwegian Perspective on Organic Foods in Catering

Erik Evenrud, the representative from the Norwegian reference group

Dear friends! This is a multidisciplinary challenge to me, because it is a long time since I used my English vocabulary. I really need your friendly listening and your organic understanding and if it doesn't help – so ask – and we will understand by supporting each other.

Dear friends here in Denmark, thanks for the invitation and the initiative which make this meeting possible, and who else could do it than the locomotive of organic farming in Scandinavia? Denmark.

So – just a few words about Norwegian agriculture politics. The Norwegian ”no to the European Union” – was in many ways – ”a yes to a Norwegian regional policy”, with small farms as one important element.

We are maybe the Nordic country, which is least self-contained with food, and historically there is still a high level of consciousness in referent to the importance of food in a crises situation.

But - the one of the greatest crises for us today is that we have enough money to allow ourselves shopping trips to Sweden and Denmark to take advantage of their ”dirt cheap food”.

For many years this has been the main thing to discuss, both for the media and the politic area. What has prevented a growth in our organic food production is the lack of interest from this actors and the strong organization of the conventional farmers.

We have a great trust among the consumers in food produced in Norway, but even though we travel to our neighbor country to buy ”cheap food”.

A couple of reasons why we trust the conventional production: There has been no great environmental problems or great scandals related to the production of food. And the problems of the European agriculture systems are used as a reason to go on with a small farm production. One of the arguments – not going further on developing organic farming is that to days products is - ”almost organic”.

But things are ”gonna` change. In 1999 the Norwegian Parlament decided that 10% of the area should be converted within 2010. Argument: If the consumers want to buy the products, we must be self - contained.

Also the European scenario for the economic view of the income possibilities is a good adviser. In the year of 2000 Denmark sold for 2 billion kroner organic foods. So things are changing!

In 2001 the government doubled up the funding of organic farming from about NKR 50 000 000 till NOK 125 000 000.

The minister of the agriculture department is very positive, and will in this days visit Ritt Bjerregaard for a sightseeing to look at different activities of organic farming here in Denmark.

In Norway, as in the other Nordic country's the situation is this: The ecologic movement – moves on to be a part of the food production system.

We make haste – but slowly, so we do not lose the trust from the consumers. It is a multidisciplinary challenge in ecologic handling - and the solution of today is not the solutions of tomorrow.

The situation in Norway
We produce too much to sell directly from farm to customer, but - not enough to manage a flow of products through the greater established distribution system.

Few densely populated areas and a centralized food producing industry make problems for a rational and economic way to sell some of our organic products – as organic. A lot of the milk and the meat go into the conventional flow.

Level of organic production for the year 2000

Product group	Organic production (1000 kg)	Total Production (1000 kg)	Organic as a % of total production
Cereals	864	1 303 400	0,07
Milk	13417	1 789 000	0,75
Beef (incl. veal)	220	96 352	0,23
Sheep meat	240	23 525	1,02
Pork	24,5	108 612	0,02
Eggs	300	48 887	0,61

The implications are: Special problems with the different basic products:

Cereals: We have two-grain recipients for the whole country, one for the human food and one for animal feed, and we produce about 50% of the daily consumption.

Milk: We have four products distributed through some supermarkets: Milk, curdled milk, one cheese, cream and sour cream. A few farmers have started up with dairy farming and sell their products directly to the customer.

Beef: The production is too small for the big slaughterhouses, and it will be very difficult to find meat for a dinner in the ordinary markets. The organic meat disappears in the conventional flow. The big task today is to try to establish small firms for finishing processing of local products, and alternative distribution system.

Sheep, pork and eggs are nearly the same problem.

For the vegetables the situation is easier. Nearly thirty percent goes directly to the consumers, and the rest goes trough three greater distribution channels to the supermarkets.

We don't produce enough to serve our own market.

Product group	**Direct sales to consumer**	**Organic food shops**	**Bakers and butchers**	**Supermarkets**	**Total**
Cereals		10	10	80	100
Potatoes	20	5		75	100
Vegetables	20	10		70	100
Fruit (incl. nuts)	20	20		60	100
Milk products	2	3		95	100
Pork	7	3		90	100
Eggs	10	10		80	100

Key figures for the year 2000: Activities certified by Debio:

Total organic area	20 523 hectares *)
Companies for processing, import and trade	38
Products for sale	1 492
Organic aquaculture production	8

*) About 2% of the total agriculture area.

It means that large scale catering kitchens, hotels, restaurants, institutional kitchens who need regular delivery of high quality products have great problems. They will not give high prices for short time delivery and use a lot of time and money to find the products.

In our area we try to build up a network of farmers where we can handle the problem locally, and the products goes directly from the farm to the market, to the farm shops, to the consumers, to the catering kitchen and so on.

Therefore: The organic farmers looks for new possibilities for handling their basic products and new producers sit on the fence and wait for more reliable possibilities for distribution before they take the decision to convert.

Therefore: Just two percent of the agriculture area is converted today. And here is our greatest potential: A potential acreage of the remaining 98%. Great possibilities!

There is a history about two guys who went to Africa to sell shoes. After 14 days they wrote letters at home. The first one said: This is impossible, nobody here use shoes. I will soon come home.

But the other one wrote: Send me all the shoes you can produce, - no – one here has got any shoes! It leads me to look at a summary of our national goals and the value of a Nordic network, when we look at the developments of the market in general and the large scale catering in particular.

The Norwegian Parliament expects 10% of the land to be converted at the next nine years and they work hard to find a plan – reaching the goals. The situation in the other Nordic countries leads in the same direction, but we are in very different levels. I use to say that we are 8 years after Denmark.

For all of us – Knowledge is a premise for the choice!

For the farmers, the consumers, the catering kitchens and so on…………..

A network could be a base for increased knowledge and for the exchange of experience at any level between the countries.

Norway could gain experience and understanding of it’s own barriers, gain confidence in regards to any new possibilities and work for a quick national development.

The network could make a strategy for ” Short journey food”.

In Norway it will be negative for the development of organic farming, if the organic movement take the lead in the work for import- increase of organic food.

Both politically and geographic it will be wish able with a strategy for a” short journey food”, where the export and import will be a supply to make a stable delivery, as a way of increasing the consume.

Norway need support of many products, especially if we talk about the develop of large scale catering. As of today I know none such activities in Norway. The government has sent an information booklet to some canteens.

But two projects are in progress: One is ***Mat 1:*** Is a company established by the student union of the Hedmark college, and worked out by Henrik Leiren who are here today.

Another one is Ritt which is a joint agreement to collaborate when the plans for a new region hospital in Tronheim is formed. The partners are Tronheim Regional Hospital, Norwegian Center for Organic Farming, And OIKOS – Midtnorge.

Closing remarks

What can my country offer? If we shall build up a large scale catering we will need products. May be it is not a bad offer?

But we will need time for co-ordinate our views and take part in the work for the next few month. Hopefully it will lead us to a decision.

We had not enough time to discuss our possibilities to take part in a Nordic network before we came here..

There are also representatives from Norsøk, Debio and Mat1 here today. Together we can create a report from this meeting and present it for OIKOS - the new national organization for the ecologic movement, and to the Agriculture Department.

I hope we can give you a positive and representative answer at the next meeting, at the next station. So I hope the locomotive will go on. Thank you.

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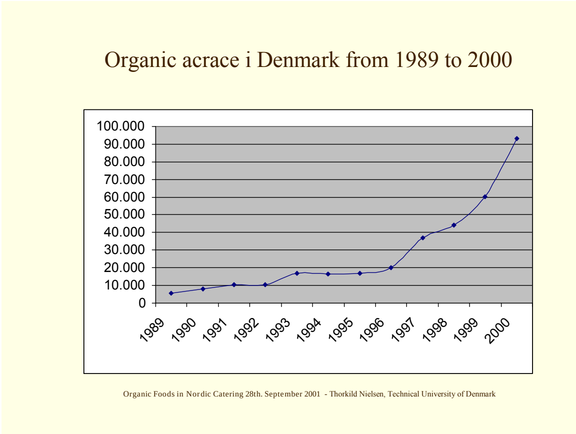
Organic Foods in Danish catering

Thorkild Nielsen, assistant professor
Technical University of Denmark, Institute of Management & Manufacturing

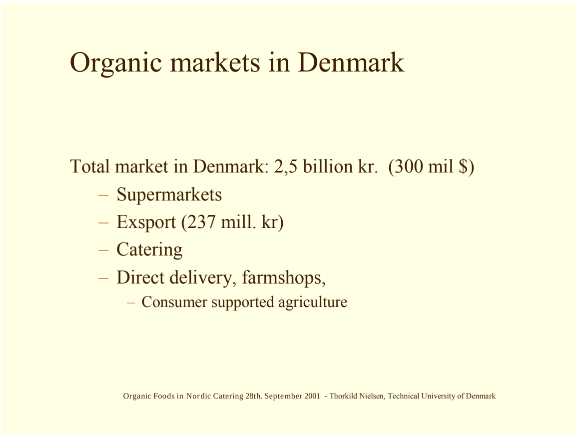
In my presentation I will focus on three things. First, I will give a status of the organic production in Denmark. Then I will talk about the organic food in the catering sector, and finally I will give you some closing remarks about the Nordic perspectives.

Two labels have influenced the development of the organic production in Denmark, or you could call them institutions. First there is the Ministry of Agriculture, which has guaranteed that the organic products are organic. The red ”Ø-mærke”, as it is called in Denmark, has a very big trust from the consumers. The whole sector is controlled by a public certification system, and this has had a great influence on the success of the organic production in Denmark. On the other side, a supermarket chain called FDB coop has had a great influence on the development of the organic sector in Denmark. This triangle, 1) the organic farmers, 2) the State which controls the whole product range, and 3) the supermarket chain which makes it possible for the consumers to buy the products.

This triangle is one of the main factors in understanding the success of organic food production in Denmark. Of course, there are other factors which has influenced the development such as the consumers’ skepticism towards the conventional foods, for instance with regard to pesticides in the ground water, with regard to animal welfare and such issues.

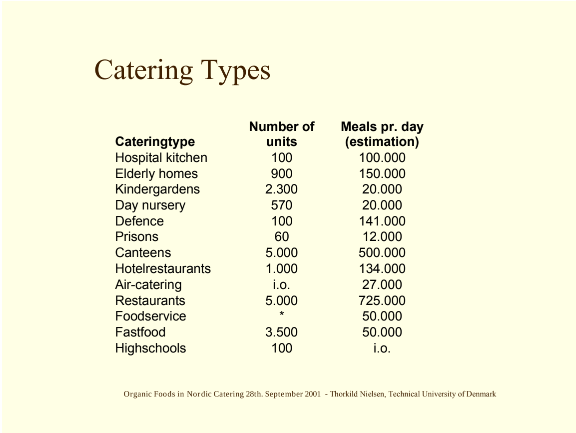


On this slide you can see the development of the organic acres from 1989-2000. As you will see, organic acres in Denmark last year were close to 100.000 hectares. You will also see that especially from 1996 the development has raised very rapidly, and this year it has been discussed whether the curve is going to slope a little, and the new figures seem to show this tendency.



On this slide you can see the organic market sectors in Denmark. The total market in Denmark is about 2.5 billion DKK, i.e. approximately 300 million dollars. This market has been divided between the supermarkets, the export, the catering, and finally direct delivery from farm shops and that kind of initiatives. The main part of the products is sold to the supermarket, but also export has been growing in the recent years. Today, it is estimated that the export is about 237 million DKK.

In the recent years there has been much focus on the catering sector, and even though the sector does not contribute very much to the products sold, there has been very much interest in the new market.



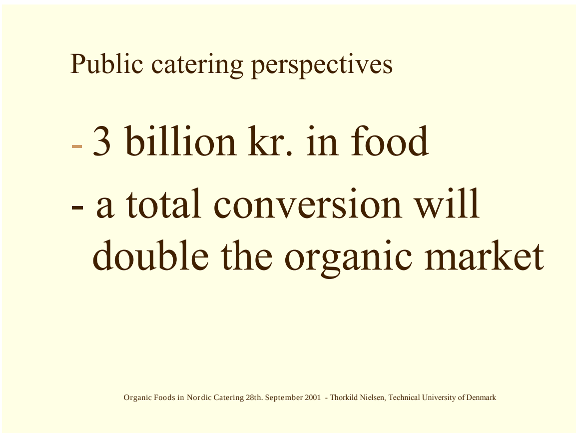
Catering Types

Cateringtype	Number of units	Meals pr. day (estimation)
Hospital kitchen	100	100.000
Elderly homes	900	150.000
Kindergardens	2.300	20.000
Day nursery	570	20.000
Defence	100	141.000
Prisons	60	12.000
Canteens	5.000	500.000
Hotelrestaurants	1.000	134.000
Air-catering	i.o.	27.000
Restaurants	5.000	725.000
Foodservice	*	50.000
Fastfood	3.500	50.000
Highschools	100	i.o.

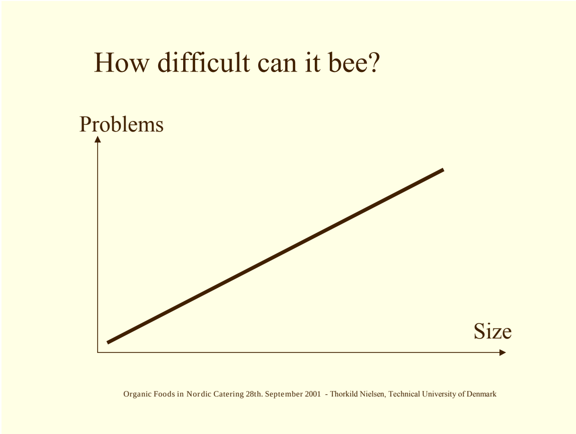
Organic Foods in Nordic Catering 28th. September 2001 - Thorkild Nielsen, Technical University of Denmark

On this slide you can see the different catering types, and you will see the number of units and the meals per day estimated. In Denmark you could say that especially the public sector has been the target for initiatives in this field, and in this figure you can the public institutions, hospital kitchens, elderly homes, kindergartens, day nursery, defense, prisons, and finally public canteens. If you look at the use of organic products in the kitchen, especially the kindergartens have been in focus in Denmark. The reason for this development in recent years is that a lot of municipals have started to convert these institutions to organic productions.

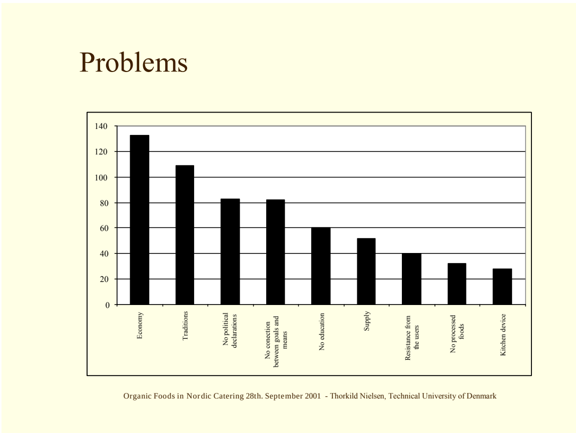
In the private sector, hotel restaurants, air catering, restaurants and food service and fast food, there have only been a few initiatives with regard to organic foods.



When we look at the perspectives, we know that the public catering sector use for more than 3 billion DKK in food. This means that a total conversion wills double the organic market as it is today.

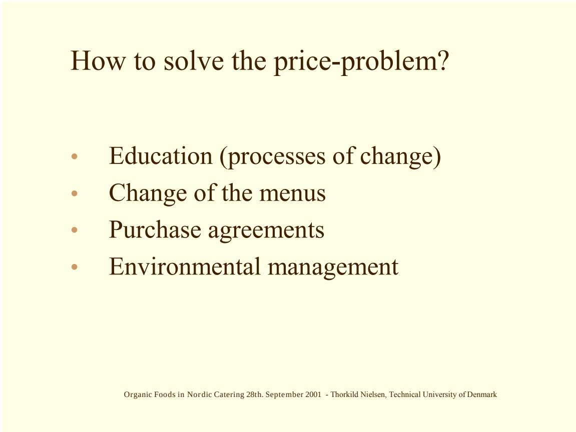


When we look at the experiences in the catering sector using organic products today, we can see that there is a clear relation between the amount of the problems and the size of the kitchens, that is the bigger kitchens the bigger problems in converting to organic products.



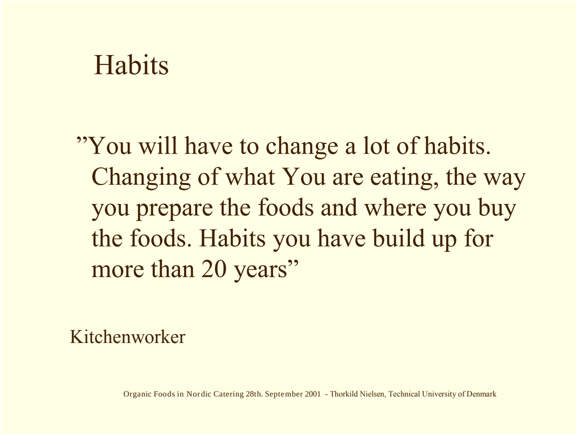
On the next slides we can see what kind of problems we have recognized in the kitchens we have observed. First of all, there are problems with the economy. Here, we are of course referring to the fact that organic products are more expensive. Especially for the larger kitchens, this is a problem because they are less flexible and their budgets are tighter. The typical way to overcome this problem has been to change the whole menu. By this way, you can reduce some of the more expensive products groups, for example meat and some diet products.

The next problem or barrier I will mention is traditions. For this we mean that introduction of organic foods means that you are going to change some of your habits. Especially if you are going to change the whole menu, the changes could be rather radical. It is important to notice that the resistance is not only coming from the kitchen staff, but also from the owners of the kitchen, the politician, and you will say the whole chain. In Denmark, most of the experiences in this field have come from political initiated projects. For instance, when a municipality wants to change the food served in its institutions, it is often a political decision. The two next barriers are referring to this. That is the reason why no connection between goals and means is regarded as s problem. You would say that politicians want to serve organic meals in the institutions, but they don’t want to pay for it. The next barrier, which is mentioned, is no education. It is recommended to give the kitchen workers in those kitchens, which are converting to organic products, some education. The focus of this education would be on how to overcome exactly these barriers and problems, for instance how to change the menu, where to find the organic food, and why to use organic foods not at least? The next barrier mentioned is the supply. Especially, the larger kitchens mention this, because they need pre-prepared foods.

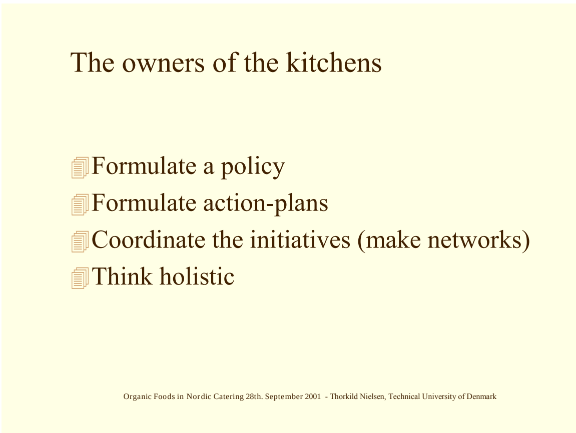


On the next slide are mentioned how to solve the price problems. From experiences so far in Denmark, we can see that some of the most successful project has started with education, especially education of the kitchen staff. It is important to give them some tools on how to solve some of the problems. Some of the most successful projects in Denmark have been in the kindergartens and small institutions. The reason for this success is mainly that they have changed the menus and in this way have solved the problem of the economy. Another way to overcome the economy problem is to make some purchase agreements. The local authorities typically make these agreements and it is a way to obtain cheaper products.

The last thing I will mention is environmental management. By this I mean that from the kitchen point of view it could be an idea to connect it’s this organic conversion to environmental management. For instance you could reduce the amount of water used or the electricity. Some of the Danish kitchens have used these cuts in expenses to pay a surplus of the organic products.



The next slide illustrates what I meant by habits, you will have to change a lots of habits, changing what you are eating, the way you prefer the foods and where to buy the foods, habits you have built up for more than 20 years. It is said by kitchens workers on the hospital kitchen you saw this morning and you can see the several things you have to change when you start to use organic foods.



Finally I will give you some recommendations. The first recommendation is to the owners of the kitchen, for instance the municipalities or the counties or the State. First you should start by formulating a policy, then you should formulate an action plan, a detailed project how to start and where to start and how to educate the kitchen staff and so on. The next recommendation is that you coordinate initiatives, which may make a network. And finally you should think logistic when you start on projects of this kind. By this I mean you could take other aspects into the projects, for instance environmental aspects but also that you should look across the whole chain from the farmer to the final user of the product. The reason why you should do this is that some of the problems you might find for the backwards in the food chain.

On the last slide, I will present some of the Nordic perspectives, I see in this project. By the networking, I mean that there should be an exchange of experiences across the borders, experiences on methods for conversion, and also experiences in new ways of organizing this kind of projects. Labeling is also an important issue in these Nordic perspectives. Another result from this network, I think, could be a bigger pool of problems. For this I mean that the pool would be bigger than the sum of the individual countries, and finally that the political pressure could be substantial. When you look at the overall Nordic perspectives, it is, of course, how could we turn food production towards a more sustainable production?

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