

Press Release

Luebeck, 27.11.2009

Menu 2030: A current study shows development of food habits in the Baltic Sea region

One possibility to support the health of citizen in relation to their food habits is to raise an “Anti-Fat-Tax” on supposed unhealthy food, as recently planned in Denmark. A current study about trends of the food industry in the Baltic Sea region does not only identify the direction of the culinary trip regarding food and health, the study shows much more.

The prosperous Baltic Sea region with its ten neighboring states and 80 million habitants does not rank behind the Mediterranean Area. Particularly the food industry with an annual turnover of 200 billion euro and 500.000 employees is responsible for the growth of this region. This status quo forms the basis for a project called “baltfood” funded by the European Union, with the aim to investigate future trends in the Baltic food industry. Project partners of the University of Lund and Turku as well as the Finnish food network “Agropolis Oy” analyzed the consumer trends regarding potential impacts on food industry companies in the Baltic Sea region by considering the following aspects: Food and Health, Food and Sustainability, Food as an Expression of Self. As a result they discovered that there is no possibility to win more customers / target groups in the future without implementing clear and reliable communication of product information.

Against the background of a rapid aging and with prevalence fighting society the relation between nutrition and health receives particular importance. In fact, the increase of food intolerance is an excellent indicator: tailor-made food with additional value is showing the future direction. The already well-known gluten-free and lactose-free products are representing the beginning of this direction.

A very genuine future scenario shows a picture of a consumer selecting his necessary functional food components for his individual meal, in accordance with his genetic personal needs: e.g. crab shell extract against aging-induced joint pains, fermented protein powder to reduce blood pressure and fish cell powder as moodlifter.

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The respondents jointly agreed on the point that there will be more attention paid to sustainability aspects in the future. Thus, looking at a global comparison inhabitants of the Baltic Sea region prefer local and regional products, e.g. Herring instead of Pangasius (shark catfish). According to the study this development is a result of the increasing consumer fear regarding food safety and ethical requirements in view of agriculture, animal husbandry and work conditions. The respondents believe that food with a local / regional background and at best with a “history” will have an increasing demand.

A further remarkable study result in relation with the sustainability aspect shows that according to the opinion of the respondents eco-labeling will have growing importance in the Baltic Sea countries compared to the rest of the world. Regarding this point, it was criticized that consumers are confronted with various countless eco-labels. The corresponding request towards the industry is to come to an end with this eco-label jungle by implementing a general valid label harmonization.

The identified trends in this study lead to the challenge that consumer prefer to be informed in a comprehensible and reliable manner about product qualities. Considering this fact eating is not only any more a matter of satisfying hunger. Furthermore, motives like food as an expression of self, food as an expression of social status and food in view of searching wellbeing and health will become more important. The trend that consumer associate certain images to certain foods and also expect certain characteristics from food products will highly increase.

Having a look at the reality, often a gap is recognized between the image of a product and its identity.

The complete study, further information and pictures can be downloaded on the web-site www.baltfood.org

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Baltic Sea Region
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baltfood is an international project with the principal goal to enhance the competitiveness of the food industry in the Baltic Sea region. Under the general management of the Luebeck Business Development Corporation thirteen partners from six Baltic Sea countries have founded the project.

Within the first three years the project is supported by the European Union through its Interreg IV B programme with an amount of 1,8 million euro.

The thirteen partners of the baltfood project

Denmark / Sweden

- Øresund Food Network

Germany

- Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg
- Luebeck University of Applied Sciences
- University of Rostock
- Luebeck Business Development Corporation

Finland

- Agropolis Oy
- Turku School of Economics, Finland Futures Centre
- University of Turku, Food Finland Theme Group

Lithuania

- Lithuanian Cluster of Food Sector

Poland

- Lubelskie Voivodship, Regional Clustermanagement Food
- University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

Sweden

- Skåne Food Innovation Network
- University of Lund, Lund International Food Studies

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