

EU CAP Network Focus Group

'Alternative solutions for livestock product differentiation'

Mini Paper 1

Quality and innovation in livestock to address evolving market demands

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Disclaimer

This Mini Paper has been developed within the frame of the EU CAP Network Focus Group 'Alternative solutions for livestock product differentiation' with the purpose of providing input to the Focus Group discussions and final report.

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Introduction - motivation

The market for animal products is facing both economic pressure and societal criticism, driven by a complex interplay of factors. On the economic side, there is a growing trend towards larger technology-driven production units (such as robotics, machinery and IT) and advancements in genetics to reduce costs and lower consumer prices. However, this drive for efficiency to improve competitiveness has significant consequences, including negative environmental, climatic and public health impacts. As a result, there is an urgent need for a shift toward more sustainable practices.

The economisation in the animal sector of the last 50 years lowered the unit costs and made especially meat an everyday food, due to affordable prices. This caused a notable increase in per capita consumption of animal products with negative effects on public health. Together with an over-consumption of sugar and fat this unbalanced diet produced overweight and linked non-communicable diseases. In its Cancer Beating Plan¹ of 2021 the Commission (DG Santé) under the headline “Improving health promotion through access to healthy diets and physical activity” is proposing to reduce the consumption of red and processed meat to lower cancer risk.

Sustainability in livestock production encompasses three key dimensions:

- > Economic sustainability, i.e. it is profitable throughout,
- > Social sustainability, i.e. it has broad-based benefits for society, and
- > Environmental sustainability, i.e. it has a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment.

This Mini Paper helps to better understand the animal products' market, showcases good practical examples and identifies issues for further research or promotion of new ideas for innovation and Operational Groups at national and European level.

¹ Europe's Beating Cancer Plan {SWD(2021) 13 final}



Consumption trends in the EU

Statistical reality and developments projected by the official EU outlook report of December 2024² are in line with changes of the past periods and show the following trends regarding the consumption of livestock products:

- About two thirds of human protein consumption is of animal origin.
- Overall meat consumption is gradually declining and is driven by on-going shifts in the composition of meat species: further distinct increase in poultry and decrease in pig meat and beef.
- The drivers behind are many-fold, but based on some clear reasons: better awareness on nutrition and its impact on animals' livelihood, environment and climate issues leading to vegetarianism and veganism, and shrinking per capita consumptions. Example of Austria: meat consumption has declined by 10 % in the past 10 years. The official European outlook predicts a slight decline of 0,3 kg per capita of overall meat consumption until 2035.
- Nevertheless, the share of vegetarians and vegans is still marginal and growing only slowly, while the group of "flexitarians" ("less, but better meat") is the fastest growing group.
- Example Germany: Following a consumer survey of Green Legend from 2020 to 2022 the share of flexitarians rose from 44 to 47 %. In 2024 2 % of consumers estimated themselves as vegan, 6 % as vegetarian.³
- Example Poland: In a market survey of Strategy& "Consumer preferences" published in 2024 8,4 % of population are vegetarian, 2 % are vegan.
- Example Austria: According the Statista website the share of flexitarians among the Austrian population in 2021 was 30 %, vegetarians 9 % and vegans 2 %.⁴
- The shifts between the species are also linked to consumer prices (poultry is cheaper than meat from ruminants), but the importance of the factors 'time' and 'knowledge' when cooking meat should not be underestimated. Poultry is easier and quicker to prepare than special cuts of beef.

² EC (2024), EU agricultural outlook, 2024-2035. European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Brussels. https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/data-and-analysis/markets/outlook/medium-term_en

³ <https://www.green-legend.com/news/green-legend-dritte-veggie-studie/>

⁴ <https://de.statista.com/themen/3804/vegetarismus-und-veganismus-in-oesterreich/>



- This is the reason why some dishes are primarily consumed out of home (outsourcing of preparation). Consumption at home concentrates on easy to prepare premium cuts and minced meat or pre-cooked and convenience or processed products.
- For dairy products, per capita consumption is projected to remain stable. Nevertheless, there are significant shifts towards innovative, functional and fortified products, and the more extended use of specific milk ingredients like whey for industrial food processing. A well-known example is lactose-free milk.
- Some more traditional dairy products (e.g. drinking milk) can lose their shares in EU diets due to changes in consumer preference (protein intake per capita from fresh dairy products is expected to decrease by 5.4% between now and 2035). In Austria the share of plant-based alternatives to drinking milk is actually 3 %. Soy-based plant drinks are losing market share to the benefit of oat-based products (often with regional origin).
- Protein intake from cheese will likely further increase (+4.9%) due to multiple potential applications and diversified distribution channels (retail, foodservice, processing), while the use of butter and milk powders in processed food is likely to remain stable.
- Regarding eggs consumption, it is still shifting from fresh shell eggs consumed at home to liquid egg products used in HORECA (hotels, restaurants, catering) and egg powder products processed in ready-to-eat food like biscuits, tarts or pastry.
- Rationale: The general tendency to convenience food and out-of-home consumption reduces the number of shell eggs used in households. Due to technological reasons and matters of hygiene and food safety in gastronomy liquid egg products are preferred and in processing industry often egg powder. The Austrian Poultry Association estimates that 40 % of eggs are sold as shell eggs in retail and directly to consumers, 30 % are used in gastronomy and 30 % in processing industry.

Consumer expectations and habits

Consumer expectations and habits are permanently (slightly) changing. Some key aspects:

- Due to modern ways of living which includes mobility, occupation of all societal groups, growing distances between where people are living, sleeping, working, going to school etc. induces a permanent shift from home-cooked food to out of home consumption with various formats (fast food, smoothies, snacking



everywhere and anytime etc.). Example: [Organic in public procurement in Denmark \(specifically in Copenhagen municipality\)](#)

- When preparing dishes the level of pre-preparation (“ready to cook”) is increasing, therefore the share of convenience products is growing.
- The main driver behind is saving time (not money) and a shrinking knowledge of how to prepare food.
- The diversity of consumer groups goes along with different consumption patterns and is still increasing. A special aspect which is underestimated and statistically not pictured is that many countries show a distinct share of population with migratory background. These people normally keep their consumption habits and traditional ways of preparing their food.
- Especially younger consumer groups are more sensitive about the impacts of the food system on climate and environment. Additionally, the interest in animal welfare is rising, boosted by a lack of knowledge of modern agriculture and scandalising media reports.
- As among specific societal groups awareness of nutrition is raising (young families, women, younger people) the interest in the importance of the composition of diets is rising. This distinctively affects animal products. Example: [Juchowo A2 milk \(Poland\)](#)
- Consumer preferences regarding animal products are increasingly related to extrinsic cues, the way animals are raised or the origin, while the intrinsic qualities like taste are a limiting factor of repurchase or related strongly to special offers.
- The obvious preference for domestic products which can be perceived throughout Europe only at first sight is an aspect of patriotism or the consumer’s wish to “help the farmers”. Psychologically, origin is a placeholder for assumed or expected attributes especially concerning a livestock product. It helps to reduce the complexity behind production and avoids fears and doubts about food safety.
- There is a gap between eating quality and perceived quality; as consumers often assume that their preferred external attributes result in superior intrinsic quality.

The tendential over-supply in all food segments and saturated markets urges operators (farmers, manufacturers, retailers) to diversify their production and to address specific target groups with distinct demands. This also includes out-of-home consumption and distribution channels. From a competition aspect it’s all about being different and not comparable.



Consumers tend to place trust in well-established market labels and brands, if labelling and certification schemes are transparent and credible, particularly those related to ethical practices such as animal welfare. Example : [Trademark for meat and products of local breed Krškopolje pig \(Slovenia\)](#)

Albeit a growing share of diversified food products confusion and mistrust is also an unsolved issue which should be addressed both by industry and politics.

Approaches and considerations

Based on the market understanding, practical experience and insight into well-doing examples from the view of the members of the working group livestock differentiation should focus on some important aspects:

- Identifying and understanding specific target groups, distribution channels and uses and their respective needs is paramount. As the majority of food products are not purchased directly at the farm gate and division of labour often results in complex production structures, it is essential to consider all parts of the chain including intermediaries. Diversification of animal products should feed into the income of farmers i.e. has to start with primary production (and not with manufacturing). This demands innovation in husbandry. [Haymilk and haymeat TSG \("Traditional Specialty Guaranteed"\)](#)
- Should change in primary production result in a diversified quality of the product all actors of the value chain have to cooperate and support the new concept as well as fair distribution of the added value.
- The longer and more complex the food chains are, the greater is the importance for primary production of quality assurance, marketing, and managing quantities with multiple suppliers.
- The importance and role of clear definitions and criteria which can be understood and applied by all parties (including authorities which must administer food legislation) are often underestimated or ignored.
- Here is need for more specific legislation. A good example are the simple marketing standards for eggs which contain animal welfare for laying hens. Similar rules could be implemented especially in pig husbandry. Existing national laws cannot compensate binding European standards.
- Short food supply chains (SFSCs) on a local level and/or with direct contact between producer and consumer provide an excellent basis to meet the needs



and expectations of consumers or to explain the benefits of a specific form of a production system, may it be husbandry, breeds, product quality or just the story behind. Accessibility to target groups of consumers has risen dramatically by means of ICTs and social media. See the Austrian example “Nahgenuss” (a platform which offers animal products from small farms⁵) or the Finnish Reko initiative (a simple, flexible and locally organised farmers’ market concept with opening time of only 1 hour due to a Facebook-based pre-ordering system⁶). Small-sized concepts based on short chains benefit both farmers and consumers by offering specific answers to specific needs and saving costs of distribution. The inconvenience is the time effort needed to purchase food via SFSCs. Example: [Organic free range laying hens with mobile barns \(Austria\)](#)

- Diversification of food offer often leads to confusion or misleading as many definitions of special types of food are not clear. The legislator, typically the EU (with some room for national rules) provides binding legislation for some traditional criteria (like marketing standards or Geographical Indications PDO, PGI). Many increasingly important aspects (like animal welfare) are neither officially defined nor mandatory for labelling (exception is for example eggs).
- Combining legally defined criteria (like organic) with privately developed additional quality characteristics helps improving the credibility and reliability of quality programmes. This is a specific issue for animal welfare because the criteria, the assessment tools and the communication instruments vary a lot. Example: [Portuguese pig meat “Carne de Porco Alentejano PDO” \(“Protected Denomination of Origin”\)](#)
- Apart from individual local examples of livestock differentiation the dominating distribution channel for food is the supermarket as “one stop shop”. This is relevant for all activities and projects related to livestock differentiation. Large retailers with strong competition among each other, are normally open to and interested in quality or regional programmes to differentiate their assortment. This also includes “simple” categories like fresh meat or drinking milk. Example: [“Elbweiderind” – regional brand for beef from pastures alongside river Elbe \(Germany\)](#)

⁵ <https://www.nahgenuss.at/>

⁶ <https://growingformarket.com/articles/reko-ring-new-way-presell-online>



However, some preconditions exist:

- As these players normally run hundreds or thousands of outlets with identical or similar assortment and warehouse system, respectively, differentiated livestock products must be provided in sufficient quantities, a reliable quality assurance scheme and provide a certain degree of exclusiveness and distinction against the offer of competitors.
- Focusing on some cornerstones of differentiation on the primary level and adding additional criteria regarding packaging, labelling, marketing or simple product specificities helps meeting the needs from retail companies and at the same time avoiding exclusive dependencies from single buyers.
- Horizontal and vertical cooperation are needed to establish quality programmes with relevance on quantities and the number of involved farms .
- Horizontal cooperation is useful to achieve the necessary quantities. The traditional and typical horizontal cooperation is a cooperative but there exist also other forms of joint production and marketing activities. Livestock differentiation is related to innovation in farming practices. This requires a diligent procedure to tell, teach, motivate and monitor farmers when they should shift to something new. Peer-to-peer, innovative role models, public payments and structured advice are important instruments for change.
- Vertical cooperation means aligning and harmonising the ideas and interests of all involved parties. As differentiation normally means splitting up commodities in smaller lots this leads to higher unit costs and additional infrastructure (storing and processing facilities, additional manufacturing steps, specific marketing etc.). These additional costs must be covered by higher prices.
- When developing such programmes the willingness of the consumers to pay must be researched and tested. In practice well performing examples started with limited quantities in selected regions and outlets. By carefully watching and monitoring the market performance and where appropriate adaptation successful programmes established step by step. This normally takes several years.

What has been said for the retail sector similarly applies for HORECA but with some differences.

- By far the most important segment for HORECA sector is meat, followed by dairy and eggs.
- As the product which a consumer buys is a dish and not an ingredient, the possibility to differentiate is given but more difficult to demonstrate and explain



towards the buyer. Example: [“Veal Rosé” animal welfare combined with origin specifically for gastronomy \(Austria\)](#)

- HORECA offers lots of opportunities for SFSCs if there is a good relationship among the involved persons and the issue of sufficient quantity can be solved.

Strategic emphases and key elements

What should be considered for practical implementation: Starting new business activities and innovation in general bear risks. To minimise these risks, one should

- prepare and test a new quality programme as diligently as possible
- develop a realistic schedule for implementation
- integrate space for adaptation if necessary
- avoid (bigger) investments in hardware (→ fixed costs) at the beginning

Joining forces is key, therefore involving all affected parties and making them co-workers eases the start-up phase a lot. To convince farmers to participate is often a challenge. The role of peer-to-peer contacts to start/foster/boost innovation is explicitly recommended.

A political environment which is open for change and supporting innovation with resources (public payments, advisory service) is not indispensable, but desirable and helps a lot to start such activities.

To make innovation a success some additional pre-conditions must be fulfilled on the individual level: a general understanding for consumer needs and market mechanisms, openness and interest for differentiation and profitability with fair distribution of added value along the food chain.

If possible, attributes which cannot be ascertained in the product (like animal husbandry) should be combined with clear and distinct organoleptic aspects which underline the difference against a standard product. Examples: Natural fat content with milk, marbled meat, veal with darker colour, special taste with cheese etc.

Conclusions, food for thoughts, need for action

Market demands for livestock products are shifting in response to the evolving nature of society, which is characterized by a growing diversity of lifestyles and an increased awareness of how food is produced. The livestock sector must address societal challenges and consumer demands related to the expected quality of products, which calls



for innovation within the industry. Additionally, the position of the farmer must be considered, ensuring that his or her income concerns are addressed together with consumer demands and industry innovation. This demands a differentiation of livestock. But the dimension and the complexity of the problems vary a lot, depending on the sector, the region and structural backgrounds.

However, innovation in livestock differentiation is not an answer for all problems in a specific sector but is particularly relevant for remote and disadvantaged areas, small(er) structures and generally for all situations where enhancing quantities or reducing costs is no option. For such situations the concept of “quality over quantity” helps farmers to survive and makes them resilient against market disturbances. Quality policy is structural policy as it helps to maintain smaller structures or holdings in disadvantaged areas with natural constraints.

Regarding political instruments to support the shift to a more diversified supply of animal food based on livestock differentiation several schemes are given: first and foremost some interventions of the Rural Development . Additionally, Horizon Europe and EFRE provide opportunities to contribute to the innovation in differentiation.

Establishing voluntary quality programmes requires collaborative efforts through both horizontal and vertical cooperation. Moreover, to ensure the success of such projects, it is essential to have motivated stakeholders involved. To implement societally requested characteristics, legally binding definitions are required. Recent example: mandatory labelling rules for pig meat (which could be laid down by marketing standards similarly to eggs).

As livestock differentiation in practice is a complex issue, communication and dissemination is crucial. Working with the “KISS” principle (“Keep it Short and Simple”) helps a lot. Which easily measurable elements could transport a maximum of (correct and assumed) content, could be a matter of academic research.

There is need for change without any doubt. The solution is many-fold and requires openness in mind, economic diligence, political support and time.



1. Research needs

The list below is outcome of the Focus Group meeting on 9 and 10 April 2025 in Vienna:

- Improving confidence of consumers to recognize more value in product
Key words: psychological and marketing aspects to make consumers deal with food and food production
- Investigating the most encouraging factors for new generations to embark in the career of livestock farmer.
Key words: trust in and predictability of political framework for livestock, need for capital, attitude of society towards livestock and livestock farming
- Addressing the most promising production approaches regarding willingness to pay of consumers
Key words: gap between willingness and reality, factors which foster the willingness, determinants of food choice during the purchasing act
- Organising a smooth transition to animal welfare pig husbandry
Key words: prevention of tail biting, design of the barn areas (resting, feeding, defecating), temperature management, feasible solutions for conventional systems, reduction of investment risk in animal welfare friendly barns, defining types of animal welfare husbandry, monitoring of animal welfare for pigs, adding value for animal welfare pig meat in processed products and HORECA

2. Ideas for innovation and Operational Groups

The list below is outcome of the Focus Group meeting on 9 and 10 April 2025 in Vienna:

OG title: "Changing and valorising farming systems"

- Problem/opportunity: The pig sector is facing pressures to change so that animal welfare (and some other issues) are taken into account better
- Concept idea of the Project (proposed solution): To bring together pioneers and experts who have developed well-functioning systems and adopted system modifications successfully. This is different by country.

OG title: "New generation of farmers"



- Problem/opportunity: Farmers welfare, and everything connected to it: pressure by bigger farms, depopulation, need to get visibility and better price for products, need to full richness of life back, family issues
- Concept idea of the Project (proposed solution): Building of local network of New Farmers (and stakeholders). Creating a brand of paying attention also to farmers welfare. → local brand and short chain marketing

OG title: "Setting up a regional value-added chain"

- Problem/opportunity: Loss of local products due to prevailing mass products; problems in pig sector decline; putting value to the regional development
- Concept idea of the Project (proposed solution): Join together most relevant stakeholders for vertical integration, especially for trust team building and operationalization

3. Annex: Best practice examples

[Haymilk and haymeat TSG \("Traditional Specialty Guaranteed"\)](#)

[Juchowo A2 milk \(Poland\)](#)

["Veal Rosé" animal welfare combined with origin specifically for gastronomy \(Austria\)](#)

[Trademark for meat and products of local breed Krškopolje pig \(Slovenia\)](#)

[Portuguese pig meat "Carne de Porco Alentejano PDO" \("Protected Denomination of Origin"\)](#)

["Elbweiderind" – regional brand for beef from pastures alongside river Elbe \(Germany\)](#)

[Organic in public procurement in Denmark \(specifically in Copenhagen municipality\)](#)

[Organic free range laying hens with mobile barns \(Austria\)](#)



Best practice example “Traditional speciality guaranteed for haymilk and hay meat”

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

In 2016, Austria and Germany successfully protected the use of the term "hay-milk" for cow's milk under the Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG). Following this example, in 2018 Austria succeeded in securing TSG protection for "Sheep's Haymilk" and "Goat's Haymilk." Hay milk denomination is protected in 6 languages (English, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Slovenian), highlighting the geographical significance of this production system. In 2024, Slovenia successfully protected the use of the term "haymeat = seneno meso" in the Union register of traditional specialities guaranteed. The TSG quality label refers to guaranteeing that traditional manufacturing methods are used for the product.

Using hay as the primary feed for herbivorous animals is one of the oldest forms of farming, deeply rooted in traditional practices and increasingly threatened by the industrialisation of agriculture and international competition. It reflects the close connection between man and nature and preserves traditional agricultural practices that have been passed down for generations. Hay conservation is typical in regions with cold temperatures and snow, where the growing season for fresh forage is short, such as alpine areas. In mountain and hilly regions, silage production was not practical due to the small, steep terrain. Because of the cold and snowy winters, fodder needs to be conserved during the summer to feed animals in winter. For example, the wooden hayrack ("kozolec"), a typical Slovenian drying shed, or Austrian "Heumandl" highlight the importance of preserving the hay for livestock. On the request of Austria, haymilk farming in the Land of the Alps has been recognized in 2023 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as an "agricultural cultural heritage of global importance".

Feeding animals with hay in winter is a fundamental distinction between hay-based farming and other farming systems. The regulations include strict provisions on feeding, ensuring that animals are provided with fresh grasses, herbs, and hay appropriate for their species, while allowing for dietary supplements to balance their nutrition. The roughage portion of their annual diet must account for at least 75% of the dry matter. Fermented feeds, wet hay, and fermented hay are completely prohibited, as are by-products from breweries, distilleries, and other food industry residues. Animal-derived feed is also banned, except for milk and whey for young cattle. Additional roughage such as green rapeseed, green corn, green rye or fodder beets may be fed. Wheat, barley, oats, triticale, rye and corn in their marketable form are allowed, as well as field beans, forage peas, lupin, oilseeds, and extraction meal. All feed must come from Europe and be produced without the use of genetic engineering. In addition to feeding



regulations, other provisions regarding breed, fertilizers and animal welfare may also apply.

Currently, the sector is growing and gaining popularity in Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Slovenia. ARGE Heumilch operates in Austria, Switzerland and Germany. ARGE Heumilch Österreich community represents an association that brings together 6500 hay milk farmers and 60 hay milk processors (source: www.heumilch.com). In Germany 9 partners, mainly cheese producers are part of association (<https://www.heumilch.cc/mitglieder/>). Germany is the most important sales market for haymilk. Despite being a niche product, it accounts for 0,2% of the country's total milk and 3% of Europe's milk and is growing. ARGE Heumilch Österreich and Deutschland, which unite most haymilk farmers and processors in their countries applied for EC funding for promotion of haymilk (project ended in december 2024). In Italy, Alto Adige region, about 1500 farms are integrated in production of "latte fieno Alto Adige" (<https://www.altoadigelatte.com>). In Slovenia the sector is also growing, there are presently about 24 farms certified (source: <https://seneno.si/kmetije/>).

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

- For hay-based production, high-quality hay is essential.
- Haymilk/meat farmers often comply also with organic regulations (e.g. 38% of haymilk is produced organically in Austria and organic haymilk is the highest quality type of milk on the Austrian market, rewarded with the highest producer milk price).
- Quality of hay milk is enhanced, especially important for cheese making. Higher biodiversity of herb species on meadows enables more aromatic profile and development of more complex taste. Hay milk has been shown to possess healthier fatty acids composition (ω -3/ ω -6 ratio). Because of its better microbiological status esp. low clostridia content, haymilk is better suited for cheese making and develops less bitter and off-flavours.
- Additional provisions, like outdoor exercise on pasture, enhance animal welfare
- Positive image due to traditional way of production and its societal value (ecosystem services)

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Traditional way of production has good image by consumers
- Small, family-run farms play an important role in preserving rural territories
- Agrobiodiversity of meadows and pastures along with their capacity for carbon sequestration
- Landscape preservation



- Use of traditional old breeds of cattle whose milk yield would be too low for intensive agriculture
- Preserving specific knowledge of farmers how to make high-quality hay
- Hay making keeps the areas that are unprofitable for other farming methods

TARGET GROUPS

- Health-focused consumers, environmentally conscious consumers, premium product consumers, gourmet food enthusiasts
- HoReCa Sector: Restaurants, hotels, and caterers offering premium, locally-sourced ingredients.
- Farmers interested in sustainable, traditional farming and where agroclimatic conditions are specific and not allowing intensive production.

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

- conventional market chains (supermarkets) and special distribution channels (local markets & direct sales, online platforms for direct-to-consumer sales)
- hotels, restaurants, and food distributors focused on premium products
- culinary tourism: on farm sale, food festivals, farm tours, and gastronomic events.

4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION

- higher prices, better income for farmers
- maintaining family farming (as main or supplementary activity)
- applying more animal-friendly farming
- preserving specific know-how and tradition
- use of traditional old breeds of cattle unfit for intensive agriculture
- using the meadows and pastures and preventing forestation

IMPACT ON THE REGION

- preserving agricultural activity in less favored areas for farming
- preserves tradition and heritage, strengthens regional identity, attracting tourism
- generational renewal and employment in farming, processing
- preserving landscape

IMPACT ON SUSTAINABILITY

- more sustainable farming
- more environmentally friendly – good carbon sequestration
- preserving biodiversity
- better animal welfare



5. REFERENCES, PHOTOS, LINKS, CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Haymilk and haymeat production offers a premium, natural, sustainable, and healthier alternative to conventional products. It preserves traditional farming practices while offering a sustainable solution that strengthens rural economies. Hay farming promotes agrobiodiversity, supports high animal welfare by providing livestock with a natural diet and helps preserve the landscape. It also sustains local knowledge and traditions, contributing to a rich cultural and social heritage. Additionally, it provides products with enhanced nutritional value and looked-for suitability for processing (e.g. cheese). The products are becoming increasingly popular with consumers, as they offer exactly what they are looking for i.e. sustainable, regional products that meet high animal welfare standards and taste excellent.



Fig. 1 – The typical hayrack “kozolec” in Slovenia (source: Mihael Grmek)

LINKS:

FAO, globally important agricultural heritage – Hay milk farming in Austria
<https://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/austria-traditional-hay-milk-farming-system/sustainable-agrifood-systems-giahs-approach/en>



Promotion of Hay Milk TSG and Cheese made from Hay Milk TSG in Germany
<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43298664/101046120/AGRIP2027>)

www.heumilch.com

<https://www.heumilch.com/heumilch/arge-heumilch/>

<https://seneno.si/kmetije/>

Best practice example “Juchowo A2 Milk”

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

- A2 milk is a high-quality dairy product distinguished by its unique protein composition, containing only A2 beta-casein protein, which is easier for many people to digest compared to regular milk, which also contains A1 beta-casein.
- Juchowo Agricultural Company: a biodynamic and organic farm in Poland specializing in sustainable and innovative dairy production, including A2 milk.
- Prambleko A2: a brand focused on A2 milk, promoting its health benefits and sustainability. It was created by a new milk buyer from Juchowo to promote this unique product.
- Growth in demand for A2 milk is driven by consumer preference for healthier and easier-to-digest dairy options (sales at the local Juchowo manufactory dairy have also started to increase since the introduction of A2 milk).

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

- Selective breeding;
- Health benefits: A2 milk is marketed as being gentler on the digestive system, reducing discomfort like bloating and inflammation for individuals sensitive to regular milk.
- Sustainable practices: Juchowo implement biodynamic and regenerative farming techniques to maintain soil health, biodiversity, and animal welfare.
- Transparent production: transparency in production, showcasing traceability from farm to consumer.

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS



Strategic elements: focus on premium and health-conscious markets, promotion of the product's digestibility and nutritional value through education and marketing, sustainability as a key differentiator in a competitive dairy market.

Target groups: health-conscious consumers with sensitivities to regular milk, parents seeking better dairy options for children, individuals interested in organic, sustainable, and locally sourced products.

Distribution channels: local organic shops and markets, online sales through specialized e-commerce platforms, partnerships with health-focused grocery chains.

4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

Primary production: encourages selective breeding programs and advanced genetic testing.

Regional impact: enhances local agricultural economies by creating value-added dairy products, increases farm income through innovative farming and premium product offerings, promotes the region as a hub for sustainable and forward-thinking agriculture.

Sustainability: regenerative farming practices improve soil quality and reduce carbon footprints, supports biodiversity and ecosystems within and around the farms, enhances farm profitability, reduces food waste through direct-to-consumer sales models.

5. REFERENCES, PHOTOS, LINKS, CONCLUSIONS

- <https://pramlekoa2.pl/>
- <https://www.juchowo.org/pl/mleko-a2.html>
- <https://www.juchowomilk.pl/>





Fig.2 - Cows on the pasture in Juchowo (Source: Monika Liberacka, expert from EU CAP Network FG 55)

Conclusions: Juchowo A2 milk represents an innovative approach to dairy production, responding to consumer health concerns while promoting sustainability and regional development. The practices of Juchowo Farm serve as exemplary models for combining quality, innovation and environmental responsibility in modern agriculture.

Best practice example “Veal rosé”

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

- The Austrian self-sufficiency of veal is approximately only one third, whereas the respective figure for beef is 148 %.
- Austrian per capita consumption of veal is stable, but domestic slaughtering is declining.
- The annual export of 40 to 50.000 live calves is heavily criticised by public and media. On the other side veal of 80 to 90.000 calves is imported every year.
- The situation of the Austrian calves' market is difficult: high animal welfare standards combined with small structures make the sector not very competitive.



- Because of political and public pressure and the need to find an economic viable solution for the use of calves as unavoidable by-product of milk production the quality programme “Veal Rosé” was developed.

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

- The Austrian cattle stock exchange cooperative is programme holder.
- The programme criteria request:
 - a maximum slaughtering age: 8 months (this is in between calves and baby beef definition), but by keeping the meat quality like veal
 - vital dairy calves with a starting weight for fattening of 65 to 80 kg
 - a higher fattening end weight of 280 to 320 kg live weight (which corresponds with 160 to 170 kg deadweight)
 - a reduction of milk replacer to reduce costs and only at the beginning of the fattening phase
 - a feed ration composed of top corn silage, straw and concentrated feed (no grass silage)
 - airy barns with a high air exchange rate to foster the health status of the calves.
- The Veal Rosé concept is an intensive form of fattening, which demands high husbandry skills from farmers.

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

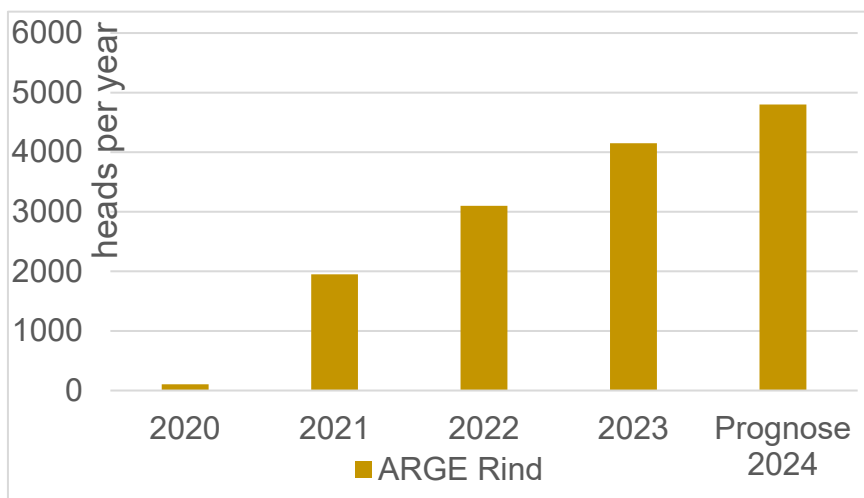
- The “normal” schnitzel at a restaurant, inn or self-made at home is from pig meat but the original “Viennese Schnitzel” is made from veal.
- To make the programme a success it is based on close cooperation with slaughterhouses and one dominating cutting plant. HORECA whole-sale, as important distribution channel, was on board from the beginning because gastronomy is the most important target group
- A special brand together with marketing measures like tastings, cooking shows etc. was developed to introduce the product to the HORECA sector.
- The biggest challenge is the unusual colour for chefs because they are used to pale (= “white”) veal. As the cooking quality is the same, a distinct self-explanatory denomination was created “veal rosé” communicating that it is veal, but rose coloured.

4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

- There are two objectives:



- Firstly being a profitable alternative to standard beef production and open a new market segment for domestic cattle farms and
 - secondly providing an economically viable alternative to live calve exports to avoid animal transport and the arrival at unsecure destinations.
- > Actually 80 producers are participating. The effect on income depends on the quality of the carcass. In practice it varies from 530 to 850 € per carcass.
 - > In 2024 from 100 to 150 calves per week were delivered. The ambition for 2025 is 200 calves per week.



Source: Arge Rind

5. REFERENCES, PHOTOS, LINKS, CONCLUSIONS

- > <https://www.kalbrose-austria.at/>
- > <https://www.astrokalb.at/language/en/kalb-rose-en/>
- > <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xM7czP2k1gk>



Fig. 3 – “normal” veal – veal rosé – beef (source: Arge Rind)





Fig. 4 – resting calves of the Veal rosé programme (source: Arge Rind)

Conclusions:

- Veal rosé is an economically viable alternative for cattle breeders or former dairy farmers.
- It demands management skills which are advised by the Chamber of Agriculture and the staff of the Austrian Cattle Stock Exchange cooperative.
- It compensates unwished and criticised long-haul transports of live calves to foreign destinations (with unsecure husbandry conditions in Non-EU destinations).
- It provides a similar cooking quality to chefs.
- It is therefore an attractive alternative for HORECA by improving animal welfare and avoiding transports of live calves.



Best practice example “Trademark for meat and products of local breed Krškopolje pig”

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

- The Krškopolje pig is the only autochthonous pig breed preserved in Slovenia. It can be recognized by its black coat and distinctive white belt across the shoulders and forelegs. The breed faced near extinction due to economic and political factors but has seen a revival in interest over the past thirty years, driven by the growing focus on biodiversity preservation. Although an in-situ gene bank was established in the 1990s to protect the breed, it remained at risk for some time. Thanks to the efforts of the Krškopolje pig breeders' association and extensive promotion, the population has begun to grow. The national registration of its trademark has also helped increase its recognition and support. Today, approximately 600 breeding sows and 70 breeding males are raised on around 110 farms. Despite all the efforts, the breed's population remains limited. With growing demand for Krškopolje pig products by HoReCa sector and continued anti-fraud measures, scaling up production is crucial to meet the demand while offering more income to farmers. However, the breed's development has already provided valuable alternative or supplementary economic opportunities for many farmers.

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

- Research indicates that consumers increasingly prefer meat and meat products of local origin, often favoring them over those from intensive systems, which tend to carry a negative public image. Local pig breeds are not only tied to specific regions but are also associated with superior quality, making them highly valued by consumers. These breeds are better adapted to local agro-climatic conditions, which enhances their resilience. Furthermore, both intrinsic qualities and extrinsic cues contribute to the appeal of products from local breeds. The meat from these breeds is often recognized for its exceptional taste, which is highly appreciated by consumers. These products are particularly sought after in gastronomic offerings and tourism, as they symbolize authentic local food experiences that attract tourists.

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Breed Preservation & Biodiversity: ensure long-term sustainability through breeding programs
- Branding & Quality Assurance: Establish a strong, recognizable brand, ensuring product authenticity and high quality.
- Market Expansion: Increase market reach, particularly in the HoReCa sector, and raise consumer awareness.



- Sustainability Focus: Promote the breed's environmental and health benefits, emphasizing superior taste and sustainable practices. Highlight the breed's adaptability to local conditions and its role in organic farming.
- Product Innovation: Encourage development of value-added products like cured meats and sausages.

TARGET GROUPS

- People seeking high-quality, locally produced meat, focused on sustainability and heritage. Those prioritizing sustainable and free-range meat options. Culinary tourists looking for authentic Slovenian food experiences.
- HoReCa Sector: Restaurants, hotels, and caterers offering premium, locally-sourced ingredients.
- Farmers interested in sustainable, heritage breed farming.

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

- Local Markets & Direct Sales: Farmers' markets and online platforms for direct-to-consumer sales.
- HoReCa Partnerships: hotels, restaurants, and food distributors focused on premium ingredients.
- Specialty Retailers: Distribute through organic food stores and premium supermarkets.
- Culinary Tourism: Promote through food festivals, farm tours, and gastronomic events.

4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION

- Promotes small to medium farms, offering alternative and/or supplementary income and increasing farm profitability.
- More sustainable practices due to low-input farming systems and use of low opportunity cost feeds to decrease feed-food competition
- Focus on high-quality meat production and promotes animal welfare

IMPACT ON THE REGION

- Boosts local economies through farm expansion, niche markets.
- Preserves local heritage and strengthens regional identity, attracting tourism.
- Generates employment and skill development in farming, meat processing, and tourism.

IMPACT ON SUSTAINABILITY

- Preservation of the Krškopolje pig breed supports agricultural biodiversity and resilience.
- Local adaptation minimizes resource needs and supports organic farming.
- Production systems with better animal welfare



5. REFERENCES, PHOTOS, LINKS, CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The high-quality, locally valued products derived from the Krškopolje pig are gaining recognition in the gastronomic world and becoming a key element of Slovenia's food identity. The Krškopolje pig plays a crucial role in biodiversity conservation, animal welfare, and sustainable farming practices, providing an alternative or supplementary income for farmers and supports regional development. It serves as a model for successfully integrating biodiversity, sustainability, and economic growth, offering long-term benefits to both producers and the broader community. Ongoing actions are needed to expand production and meet the growing market demand.

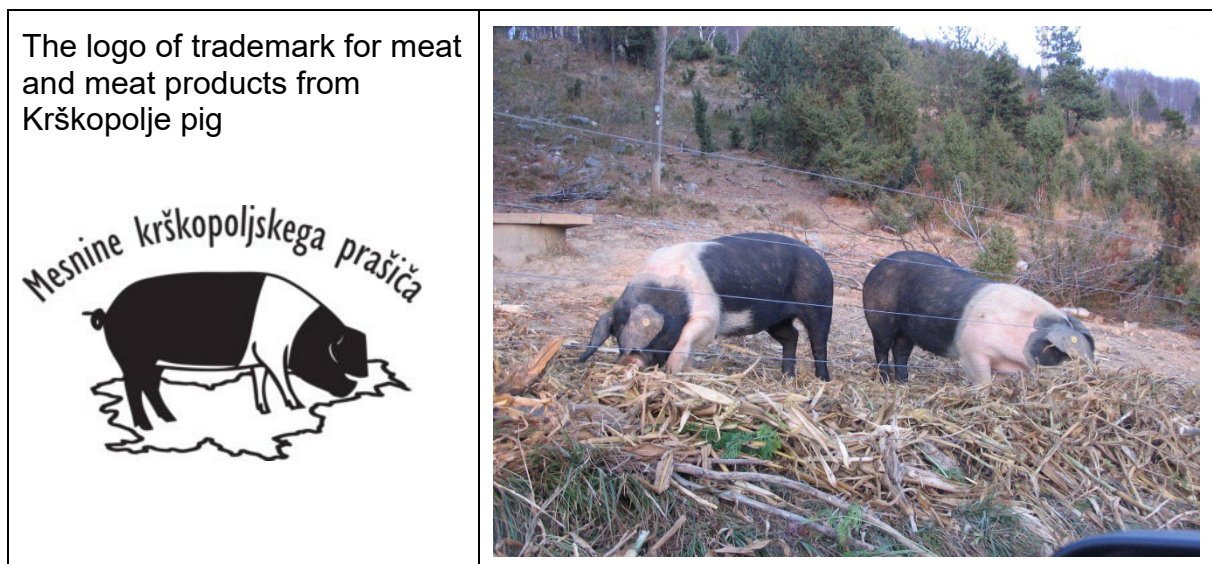


Fig. 5 – The logo of trademark for meat and meat products (source: Andrej Kastelic)

Links:

[Association of breeders of Krškopolje pig](https://www.krskopoljski-prasic.si/) <https://www.krskopoljski-prasic.si/>
<https://youtu.be/7hDWchQe6RA> (film on You Tube in Slovenian)

References:

KASTELIC A , ČANDEK-POTOKAR M (2013). Application of quality labels in support of conservation of local breeds – a challenge for Slovenian Krškopolje pig. In: 8th International Symposium on the Mediterranean Pig, Slovenia, Ljubljana, October 10th–12th, 2013. Acta argiculturae Slovenica, Supplement 4, 205–209, Ljubljana 2013. <http://aas.bf.uni-lj.si/zootehnika/supl/4-2013/PDF/4-2013-205-209.pdf>



BATOREK LUKAČ N, TOMAŽIN U, ŠKRLEP M, KASTELIC A, POKLUKAR K, & ČANDEK-POTOKAR M. (2019). Krškopoljski prašič (Krškopolje Pig). IntechOpen. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.83767

Best practice example “Carne de Porco Alentejano PDO”

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

The Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP is a traditional Portuguese product renowned for its superior quality and distinct flavour. Originating from the Alentejo region, it is produced from pigs of the authentic Alentejana breed, raised in an extensive system in cork oak and holm oak groves, primarily fed on acorns. This type of breeding, which respects animal welfare, is a traditional practice in the region and ensures unique characteristics in taste, texture, and marbling of the meat.

The production of this meat is regulated by strict standards to ensure traceability and quality. The Alentejana pigs are raised in Alentejo region, adhering to local environmental and feeding conditions that guarantee their distinctiveness. The process of outdoor fattening, with a diet based on acorns and grazing, results in meat with high nutritional and organoleptic value. The final product is known for its unmistakable flavour and succulent texture, characteristics that make it one of the most sought-after meats in specialized markets, particularly for the production of cured meats and traditional Portuguese dishes.

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

The quality of Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP is determined by a series of specific factors related to the breeding environment, feeding, and farming practices. The meat is highly prized for its intense flavour, marbled texture, and juiciness, characteristics resulting from the diet based on acorns and grazing, which provides marbled fat that makes it more tender and flavourful. The natural and extensive feeding, free from artificial additives, ensures meat with lower levels of saturated fat and rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, making Alentejana pork a healthier option. The strict traceability, associated with the PDO label, guarantees that the product meets the highest standards of quality and authenticity.

The innovation associated with Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP extends beyond its traditional production process and adapts to the current challenges of



the market. The growing appreciation for sustainable practices and responsible production has led to the implementation of new technologies to improve efficiency in production without compromising quality. The introduction of modern animal health monitoring techniques and quality control, combined with the preservation of traditional practices, ensures that Alentejana pork remains an excellent and innovative product in the agri-food sector.

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

The strategic elements of Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP focus on promoting differentiation through its origin and superior quality. The PDO label is a key differentiator, certifying the authenticity of the product and ensuring that it is produced in accordance with specific practices from the Alentejo region. The product targets an audience that values tradition, sustainability, and quality, including both domestic and international consumers. Target groups include gourmet consumers, professionals in the foodservice industry, tourists, and niche markets seeking authentic, high-value products.

The distribution channels for Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP are diverse, ranging from local and regional markets to exports in international markets. Domestically, the product is sold in butcher shops, specialised supermarkets, and through restaurants and gastronomic events promoting Alentejo cuisine. Internationally, the meat is exported to countries that appreciate traditional, high-quality products, especially within Europe, where demand for PDO products has been growing. The use of direct sales channels and partnerships with gourmet product distributors is also a key strategy to increase market penetration and consolidate the presence of Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP in new territories.

4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

The Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP has a significant impact on primary production, particularly by boosting the profitability of small and medium-sized producers in the Alentejo region. The PDO label ensures higher prices for producers, encouraging them to adopt sustainable and traditional practices such as extensive breeding and the use of native breeds. This type of production contributes to strengthening the rural economy of Alentejo, creating jobs and promoting the inclusion of small farms in the agri-food value chain. The production also benefits from synergies with other local industries, such as cork and wine, through integrated agricultural practices.

Sustainability is a core pillar of Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP, not only due to the use of ecological and sustainable production systems but also because of the positive environmental impact associated with the preservation of cork oak and holm oak groves. These ecosystems, vital for the pigs' diet, help



maintain biodiversity and protect the soil, promoting carbon capture and preventing erosion. As such, Alentejana pork contributes to a more balanced food production system, one that respects natural cycles while also generating economic value for the region, aligning with the principles of a circular economy and long-term sustainability.

5. REFERENCES, PHOTOS, LINKS, CONCLUSIONS

The Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP represents an exemplary model of how food production can be sustained through both traditional and innovative practices, while significantly contributing to the local economy and environmental preservation. The PDO certification guarantees the superior quality of the product, distinguishing it in the market and ensuring a robust value chain that involves the local community at every stage, from production to marketing. The commitment to sustainability, through the use of local resources and ecological practices, is reflected in the final product's quality, which has been gaining recognition in increasingly demanding markets.

Strategically, Carne de Porco Alentejano DOP not only strengthens the identity and economy of the Alentejo region but also contributes to differentiation in the global food market. The growing demand for authentic and sustainable food products, combined with the strong gastronomic appeal of the meat, ensures a promising future for this excellent product. Its sustainability, traceability, and guaranteed quality make it a success story in the agri-food sector, with the potential to continue growing and expanding into new markets.

<https://www.agroportal.pt/porco-alentejano-esteve-quase-extinto-e-foi-salvo-por-ourique/>

<http://www.agronegocios.eu/noticias/producao-de-carne-de-porco-alentejano/>

<https://www.qualigeo.eu/en/product/carne-de-porco-alentejano-pdo//>

<https://tradicional.dgadr.gov.pt/en/categories/meat/pig-meat/366-carne-de-porco-alentejano-dop-en>

<https://www.vidarural.pt/sem-categoria/conheca-negocio-do-porco-preto/galeria/5>





Fig.6 – Porco Alentejano (source: Rodrigo Cabrita, Vida Rural Magazine)



Fig.7 – Porco Alentejano (source: Rodrigo Cabrita, Vida Rural Magazine)



Fig.8 – Porco Alentejano (source: Rodrigo Cabrita, Vida Rural Magazine)

Best practice example “Elbweiderind”

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

- The agricultural business and marketing company was founded in 2017. Originally, the agricultural area covered around 50 hectares, but has since grown to 85 hectares, with the focus on extensively farmed grassland. The suckler cows are reared with purebred Hereford cattle.
- Every year, around 250-300 large cattle are sold via local direct marketing (current turnover with Elbweiderind is around 1.2 million euros), primarily on the farm and in the city of Leipzig, around 60 kilometres away. Around 40% of sales are made via the B2B business to food retailers (LEH) and the catering trade.
- In addition to our own breeding programme, the cattle come from three long-standing partner farms that also keep Hereford cattle. These farms benefit from around 10-15% higher remuneration for their slaughter animals compared to the conventional market price. In return, they guarantee a predictable and continuous supply of animals.
- The Gartenmahlzeit brand also offers a growing range of regional, plant-based foods. The proportion of regionally produced raw materials is being continuously increased, with the short-term goal of achieving a regionality rate of 90% or more.

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

- Elbweiderind stands for sustainable, regional food production with a clear focus on species-appropriate animal husbandry and regional value creation. The farm specialises in extensive suckler cow husbandry with Hereford cattle and markets meat products under the Elbweiderind brand.
- The farm relies on a unique grazing concept and the corresponding biodiversity and structure of the grassland, some of which is over 300 years old.
- The close connection to the regional economy, landscape and society is an essential part of the branding.
- Transparent production: transparency in production, showcasing traceability from farm to consumer. Open doors and public contributions.
- Main focus on the city of Leipzig, generation of orders via an extensive e-mail system with currently over 6,000 families as subscribers. This not only enables distribution, but also ongoing information on sustainable nutrition, animal welfare, health, nature conservation and social justice.
- Structured system for accepting orders for end customers and B2B partners. Deliveries in Leipzig are made sustainably using cargo bikes and small delivery vehicles.



- Regular walks to the pastures, exclusive events and joint work assignments on the farm strengthen customer loyalty to the company and create an awareness of sustainable agriculture.
- Cooperation with regional abattoirs and processing plants minimises transport routes and guarantees maximum freshness and quality.
- The products are processed using traditional methods and modern standards to ensure authentic flavour and high quality.

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Target groups:

- Environmentally conscious consumers, quality-orientated gastronomy, regional retailers

Distribution channels:

- Own delivery service
- Marketplace (Leipzig market)
- Own sales outlets & online shop
- Retail (Konsum Leipzig, regional partners)

Marketing strategy:

- Strong branding through storytelling
- Use of social media for customer acquisition
- Tastings & events to address customers directly

4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

- Strengthening regional agriculture: Close cooperation with farmers and processing companies promotes the economic stability of the region.
- Increased transparency: Consumers can seamlessly trace the origin of their food and actively inform themselves about the production conditions.
- Climate protection & soil conservation: Extensive grazing contributes to sustainable land use, increases soil fertility and promotes the preservation of natural ecosystems.
- Reduction of food waste: The holistic processing of animals and innovative product developments in Gartenmahlzeit's plant-based range mean that resources are utilised efficiently.

5. REFERENCES, PHOTOS, LINKS, CONCLUSIONS



- Website & shop: www.elbweiderind.de | www.gartenmahlzeit.de
- Social media: Instagram & Facebook @elbweiderind @gartenmahlzeit
- High Quality Pictures in the galleries of the websites



Fig. 9 – Rollicking cattle on spring meadow“ (source : Matthias Schneider/Elbweiderind)

- **Conclusions:**
Elbweiderind and Gartenmahlzeit stand for modern, sustainable food production that strengthens animal welfare, environmental awareness and the regional economy. By combining traditional craftsmanship, innovative sales concepts and high-quality products, the company plays a pioneering role in the field of sustainable food supply.



Organic matters - Public procurement in Denmark, specifically in the City of Copenhagen

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

Most of the canteens in the City of Copenhagen, especially those in public administration, including schools, hospitals, ministries, governmental organisations, as well as large enterprises, serve organic food, including meat products.

In 2019, 84% of the food served in public administration in Copenhagen was estimated to be organic.

Copenhagen has now reached 90% organic food procurement in public canteens.

The most recent public tender in Copenhagen required 100% organic procurement.¹

The issue is still the target to be 100% climate neutral. Meat, eggs and dairy products were only approximately one third of the total public food purchases whereas carbon costs were two thirds of the total carbon emissions of food purchased in Copenhagen. The authorities tried to introduce two vegan days in public canteens, but this was prevented by the labour unions.

The policy is to purchase only free-range and high-quality meat products, eggs and fish, serve less and pay higher prices.

The City of Copenhagen has achieved the high quality and standards in their public canteens and the sustainability of the whole value chain in food procurement through their clear and ambitious long-term goals, investment in educating and training for their procurement staff and for all stakeholders in the communities concerned, such as students, teachers, chefs, parents, national support, innovative procurement, promoting organic products as well as collaboration with stakeholders. Recognition and motivation are other powerful tools to achieve the aims. The Danish Organic Cuisine labels (gold, silver, and bronze) provide documentation and motivation for high-performing kitchens

Other large cities in Denmark follow the sustainable practices to serve exclusively organic future by 2025.²

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

Serve less at higher quality is the strategy of public procurement in Copenhagen to promote a healthier and more sustainable food system. Copenhagen would be ready to drop animal-based food completely, since the small amounts of animal products served, including dairy products, eggs, poultry,



pork, beef, lamb, considerably increase the carbon footprint of public procurement and of the canteens in the City.

Most of the food supply for public canteens are outsourced to professional canteen suppliers. There are four major players, Dinnerdeluxe, Fazer Food, Compass Group Danmark and Meyers Canteens.

Meyers have created a very well-known brand due to his long-term commitment to tasty and healthy food. He has been famous as a TV-Chef, as an owner of the Michelin restaurant NOMA, as a founder of the New Nordic Cuisine: He has always had very innovative and crazy ideas to promote high-quality and tasty organic food in Denmark and across the world.³

Meyers supplies about 30000 meals every day to Copenhagen canteens. Major quality criteria they advertise on their website for (public) procurement are:

The creation of unique food concepts: They train the Chefs and cooks in canteen to develop their own unique concepts

Their legacy in promoting healthy, creative and climate-friendly food for more than 30 years.

Their ambitious climate targets and solutions to deliver climate neutral food, environmentally sustainable fostering biodiversity and healthy people.⁴

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Meyers collaborate with all stakeholders in the food procurement value chain, including responsible procurement staff for canteens in public administrations, private companies, museums, chefs, consumers. They also serve the general public, offering special creative food for the Danish festivities, such as Easter, Christmas and New Year.

Strategic elements to achieve the huge popularity are highlighting the roots in the Nordic cuisine, promoting curiosity in experimenting with creative cooking, creating tasty experiences everyday at lunchtime with high quality food, which is healthy, taste well, is nourishing, surprises and inspires.

Another strategic element is that MEYERS offer a service to run canteens efficiently with their own staff, furnishing and equipment for public and private canteens.

MEYERS have their own suppliers of highest quality organic food, plant based and from animals. All processes are traceable and documented. The website for canteen demonstrates the variety, quality and creativity of food and shows happy employees in canteens enjoying their creative food and happy animals.



4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

There is a significant positive impact on sustainable and organic food production, since the Copenhagen food scene extremely focuses on locally produced food and the caterers prioritise organic and seasonal ingredients sourced from local farms and producers. Many small-scale and large-scale farms have emerged around Copenhagen, supplying fresh produce to the suppliers of canteens, but also to the nearby markets and supermarkets. Many new urban farming and farm-to-table initiatives to grow sustainable and climate-neutral food emerge in and around Copenhagen.

For meat production the big caterers usually collaborate with one farm or have certified suppliers.

MEYERS catering purchases animal products only from 100% free-range farms. They support farmers to make the transition to become fully organic, sustainable and climate-neutral. The aim is to promote more local producers to supply 100% organic food with high ambitions for quality, taste, sustainability and climate-friendliness.

5. REFERENCES, PHOTOS, LINKS, CONCLUSIONS

1. Lassen, A. D., Thorsen, A. V., & Trolle, E. (2023). Current Practices and Opportunities for More Sustainable Public Food Procurement: A Qualitative Study among Danish Municipalities and Regions. *Foods*, 12(10), Article 1975. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods12101975>
2. Madsen, Betina Bergmann. 2024. The power of public food procurement in the City of Copenhagen. Copenhagen Municipality. <https://www.eatingcity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/MADSEN-B-Copenhagen-Eating-City-Summer-Campus-2024.pdf>
3. See more: <https://meyers.dk/om-meyers/om-claus-meyer/claus-meyers-cv/>
4. See: <https://meyers.dk/erhverv/kantine/>

Organic labelling competition in Denmark's

There is a competition of canteens in getting labels for the percentage of organic food served. All canteens in public administration and large enterprises strive to be 100% organic.

<https://okonu.dk/mennesker-og-meninger/redningen-af-spisemaerket-er-aarets-bedste-julegave>





Fig. 10 – The Danish label to indicate the percentage of organic ingredients in canteens” (source: Jesper Rais)

What about the rural areas?

More and more young people move again to rural areas, buy farms or take over farms from their families. The young farmers are very ambitious to promote local organic food and highest animal welfare standards. However, they need more creative business and marketing concepts to attract consumers. To sell meat products to retailers, supermarkets or the HORECA sector is nearly impossible for small-scale farmers. They usually sell directly from their farms or create networks to create outlets to sell a wider variety of high-quality organic produce, including products from animals which enjoy a very high welfare standard. Promotion via social media has been a change-maker, but it requires continuous story-telling, creativity and sharing of ideas to create food experiences with local healthy food. Tourism organisations and the municipal/regional business authorities promote these small-scale producers and their innovative marketing practices with up-skilling/training, competitions and regular events devoted to food.

Some examples:

<https://www.local-food.dk>

<https://www.facebook.com/Toftegaardoekologi>

There is also a local butcher specialised on slaughtering organic animals. They also developed their own farm with sheep, geese, cows, hens and sell produce in their farm shop. They have a local shop but drive once a week to famous hotels and restaurants in Copenhagen to deliver high quality organic meat products from happy animals from the West Coast. Their marketing assets are quality and animal welfare, as well as their brand – Varde Ådal Lam. <https://www.vardeaadallam.dk/grdensdyr>



Best practice example “Organic free range laying hens with mobile barns”

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION, FACTS & FIGURES

- Family run organic farm Poyer, in close proximity to Vienna
- 30 ha arable land, 15 ha grassland; 1 person fully employed on the farm
- focus on arable crops in direct sales: at the farm gate, on 2 farmers' markets, delivery to 4 food coops in Vienna
- grassland: since one year several setting horses run by an external person and thus exploiting the grassland for grazing and making hay.
- 2 mobile barns with 400 laying hens (Lohmann breed with simultaneous rearing of roosters through a partner farm)

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

- The Poyer family owns parcels alongside a main road where many Viennese people pass by. In the first village after the Viennese border there is a farm-shop with a vending machine for eggs.
- The eggs as only animal produce are part of their assortment of vegetable oils, flours, hemp seed and semolina.
- A distinct marketing concept to address consumers via short food supply chains (SFSCs) developed and enhanced over the past ten years.

3. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, TARGET GROUPS, DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

- Organic farming by legislation requires free range husbandry for laying hens.
- Normally organic laying hens are kept in massive barns with associated land (8 m² per animal) but through over-use of the area around the barn the sod is damaged and the land without vegetation.
- Mobile barns avoid over-use of land because the area given to the laying hens is changed every few months.
- The disadvantage of this specific husbandry with mobile barns and mobile fences is higher costs of the barn and the management (water and feed supply, collecting the eggs etc.).
- In the case of the Poyer farm the land used for keeping laying hens is arable land covered with alfalfa which is used for two years. It is integrated in the crop rotation.



- For SFSCs mobile barns can be used as marketing instrument: When the changing areas are placed alongside roads or pathways where consumers are passing by the potential customers can get a real impression how “happy” these hens are.
- It took some years to develop a diversified range of customers, from direct buyers in the farm shop, farmers’ markets and food coops in Vienna.

4. IMPACT ON PRIMARY PRODUCTION / REGION / SUSTAINABILITY

- Running a farm with limited acreage as full time holding by increasing added value through direct marketing.
- Providing a kind of urban self-sufficiency in a niche in the wider surrounding of Vienna.

