

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION OF HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND CATERING IN GERMANY

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Introduction

Innovative Public Organic food Procurement for Youth (iPOPY) is a CORE Organic research project studying how an increased consumption of organic food can be achieved by means of suitable strategies and instruments linked to food-serving outlets for children, teenagers and/or youth. One part of the system given special focus is that of organic certification, using Germany as a reference case and comparing it with the iPOPY countries Denmark, Finland, Italy and Norway.

Objectives

In order to explore how iPOPY countries deal with hotel, restaurant and catering operations claiming organic status, inspection bodies are interviewed as to their practical dealings with such operations. Organic food served in a public setting for youth falls into this category, as this may be managed by a caterer or by an in-house solution. Since Germany has clearly regulated this area, this initial study analyses the current status quo amongst all German organic certification bodies.

Methods

A questionnaire was devised to ascertain the size and scope of certified organic foodservice in Germany as well as labelling use. All 23 certification bodies were contacted and telephone interviews arranged, after an explanatory email with the interview guidelines enclosed had been received by the management. Telephone interviews took 20 minutes on average. Fieldwork was undertaken in January to March 2009. Participation was voluntary and non-compensated.

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Results

Of all 23 state-approved private inspection bodies, 8 did not participate, either on the grounds that they had no foodservice clients (n=4) or that they did not wish to divulge any data (n=4).

The dominant segments of the foodservice market being certified with some manner of organic claim in Germany can be ranked in the order (1) restaurants, (2) institutional catering operations and (3) hotels. Chains, franchises and objects such as bistros in retailing outlets do not figure significantly.

The most common labelling used are an organic line / meal, organic components, organic raw ingredients and combinations of these (multiple answers were permitted). Least common was labelling an entire operation organic, such as an organic restaurant. According to the estimations of the interviewees, more than half of the certified operations use less than 25 % organic produce (by purchasing volume).

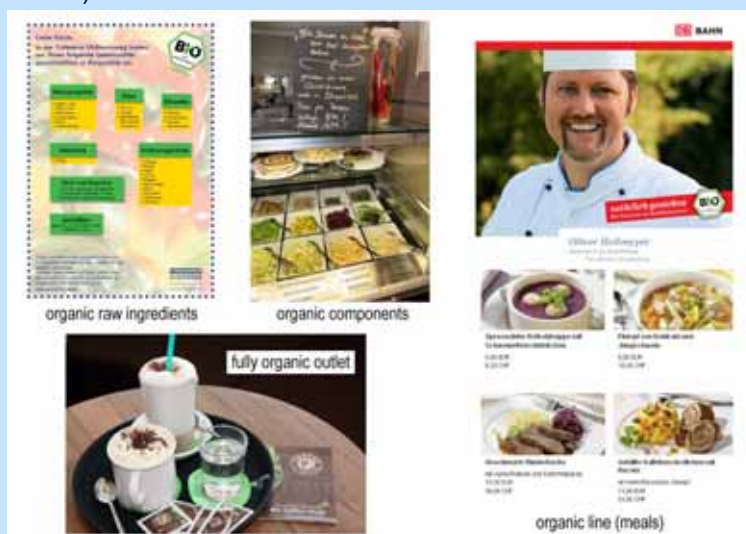


Fig. 1: Examples of German labelling options

Conclusions

Multiple labelling options afford an important opportunity for foodservice operators to use at least some organic produce, without having to become an organic operation in one step. In the forthcoming months this survey will be conducted in Denmark, Finland, Italy and Norway. Since these countries diverge slightly in their approach to certification, the status quo will be instructive as one of the factors relevant to strategies for increasing consumption of organic fare in food-serving outlets for youth.

References

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