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iPOPY



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Is there any certification of public organic procurement in iPOPY countries (DK, FI, IT, NO and DE)?

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Key words: iPOPY, organic, certification, public, catering

Abstract

On 24 June 1991, the Council of the European Union adopted Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs. As well as defining the required method of production of crops and livestock they also regulate labelling, processing, marketing, import and inspection. The research project iPOPY compares and analyses procedures for certification of food-serving outlets within its participating countries (Norway, Denmark, Finland and Italy) using Germany as a reference. While Denmark chooses government agencies to carry out the inspection and certification, Italy, Finland, Norway and Germany choose a state-supervised private system. With the exception of Italy all have a national organic label. Currently only Germany has publicly adopted a standard organic certification programme for the out of home sector. Of the countries analysed, Norway has the most similar system, whereas Denmark and Finland offer operators defined categories of organic use. Though Italy leads in organic use in schools there appears to be no national or other verification system in operation.

Introduction

The Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming (CORE Organic) partnership seeks to consider innovative marketing strategies with the goal of identification of successful marketing methods and local markets. Within this topic the public procurement of food and specifically the provision of organic food to public institutions needs to be better understood. Best practices and constraints are the focal point.

iPOPY – innovative Public Organic food Procurement for Youth is one of two projects charged with this research. The aim of iPOPY is to study how increased consumption of organic food may be achieved by implementation of relevant strategies and instruments linked to food serving outlets for young people in some European countries. Supply chain management, procedures for certification of serving outlets, stakeholders' perceptions and participation as well as the potential of organic food in relation to health and obesity risks are being analysed. An interdisciplinary research team spanning five European countries: Norway (NO), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), Italy (IT) and Germany (DE) makes up the study group.

This paper focuses on a subsection of the third work package which looks at supply chain management and certification.

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Materials and methods

Within this work package procedures for certification of food serving outlets in DK, FI, IT and NO are reviewed and analysed. DE is used as a reference country as developments and the current situation in Germany can be considered as one established method of an approach to organic foodservice certification. All countries are set against the background of the situation in the EU.

In a first step appropriate information about the procedures for certification of out of home operations is gathered and analysed by means of available web content on the pages of the relevant authorities and available scientific or trade literature. Special attention was given to public procurement of organic food and to school meals or school nutrition programmes. Also, country representatives within the iPOPY team reviewed the data gathered.

Results

The legal framework for organic production of agricultural products in the EU is set down by Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 (CR2092/91) from June 24, 1991 and its amendments. This regulation is in force within the member states of the EU. As for Norway, the regulation was adopted when Norway signed the EEA (European Economic Area) agreement with the EU in 1994. The regulation provides the framework for organic inspection and certification of agricultural products and foods both from EU and non-EU countries. Member States decide whether they choose government agencies to carry out the inspection procedure or whether they choose a state-supervised private system. (BMELV 2008) Certification is usually conducted by private certification bodies which have national approval and/or national accreditation. The standards for accreditation are the EN 45011 and the equivalent ISO 65.

The EU regulations for organic production are currently revised, and a new council regulation (EC) No 834/2007 will be implemented from January 1, 2009. Though the new regulation is not significantly different from CR2092/91 and its amendments with respect to certification in general, it does differ greatly in that it specifically excludes "mass catering operations". Member States may apply national rules or, in the absence thereof, private standards, on labelling and control of products originating from mass catering operations, in so far as the said rules comply with Community Law.

Some of the rationale behind organic inspection and certification includes consumer protection from fraud and deception, equal market opportunities and transparency from farm to fork and beyond. These underlying principles contributed to the development of a standard organic certification programme for foodservice enterprises in Germany (Strassner et al 2003, 2004) with guidelines for operators (Strassner 2005). In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection is the authority with the responsibility for the CR2092/91. The ministry supervises the independent Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food which is empowered to conduct business on its behalf, such as registration of certification bodies. Due to Germany's federal structure, 16 supervisory authorities within the "Länder" (federal states) are responsible for 23 approved inspection bodies currently operating in the market. The private inspection bodies control and monitor compliance with the CR2092/91. On a national level, all agricultural products and foodstuffs from organic farming may be labelled with the German eco-label known as the "Bio-Siegel" including, under certain conditions, menu items. The company inspection number is

necessary for registration of this otherwise cost-free label. There are also private labels in use in the German market such as those of the Organic Agriculture Associations (Demeter, Bioland, Naturland, Biokreis, Ecovin, Gäa, Ecoland, Biopark).

In Italy the authorities of the State carrying the responsibility for the CR2092/91 are the Ministry of Agriculture (Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali – MiPAAF) and its regional administrations. There is also the Office for Organic Agriculture and for Sustainable Agricultural Activities (Ufficio Agricoltura Biologica e attività agricole ecocompatibili) within the Administrative Office for the Agri-food Development, Quality and Consumer Safety (Direzione generale sviluppo agroalimentare, qualità e tutela del consumatore) which is authorised to undertake certain business with respect to organic certification. In Italy there are currently sixteen officially recognised inspection agencies and in German-speaking South Tyrol there are four German bodies. There is no national (State) label for organic agricultural products and foodstuffs. However, there are a number of private labels from the Certification Bodies of Organic Agriculture and from the large-scale retail trade (based on Pinton et al 2004). The verification of organic quality in public catering does not appear to be in current focus. The recent national and regional laws about catering systems, promotion, quality and organic foods are more of a patchwork of general rules and principles, generally without a sanction system (Bocchi et al 2008).

As a member of the EU since 1995 Finland implements the CR2092/91, whereby the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is vested with this authority. There are two control bodies for the compliance of activities CR2092/91. The 15 Employment and economic development centres host regional inspection bodies for primary producers and for processors, packers and third country importers as well as wholesalers the inspection body is Finnish Food Safety Authority, called Evira. The labels awarded by these officials to be used to refer to organic products are the 'Rising sun' label, owned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the common EU label, referred to in Finland as the 'Ear' label. The 'Rising sun' label carries the text 'Luomu' (in English 'Organic') and bilingual text Valvottua tuotantoa (in Finnish) / Kontrollerad ekoproduktion (in Swedish) for certified organic production. Additionally, there is the 'Ladybird' label awarded by Luomuliitto ry (the Finnish Association for Organic Farming) based on compliance with CR2092/91 and amended with specific requirements of the Association for Organic Farming. Finally, Finnish biodynamic products have their own 'Demeter' label, awarded by Biodynaaminen yhdistys (the Finnish Association for Biodynamic Farming). The professional kitchens serving organic meals or portions or claiming that meal ingredients are organic, are obliged to register with Evira. However, if the kitchen informs about the use of organic ingredients, and does not present literal claims about organic meals, it is not obliged to be included in Evira's register for organic businesses (Hakkarainen. 2007). This 'information gap' is filled by the semi-official introductory scheme for organic food called 'Steps to Organic', organised by EkoCentria, a promotional body funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry through Finfood, Finnish Food Information Service, which is partly funded by the Ministry and partly by the member enterprises.

Denmark is exceptional in having an official set of regulations and a single unique symbol for organic products. It is further exceptional in that the State undertakes inspections itself. The Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries is the highest authority in Denmark responsible for the CR2092/91. Only authorities under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries carry out inspection under the government rules for organic production. The Danish Plant Directorate inspects the primary production, while the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration inspects processing.

The “Ø”-label is the national inspection label of the State and its regulations are based on EU legislation. Private bodies include the Danish Association of Organic Agriculture, the Biodynamic and Demeter Associations (Norfelt 2005). Until now, Danish restaurants and caterers have been subject to CR2092/91, and have been considered as processor. However, the Danes have found that the food processing rules do not work very well for restaurants, especially regarding the documentary requirements. The new EU Regulation allows caterers to be treated differently. The Danish Food Authority has recently developed a proposal to allow restaurants and caterers to market themselves as bronze, silver or gold organic, where each level signals a certain proportion of the purchased raw materials to be organic. For bronze 20-40 % of the raw materials should be organic, for silver 50-95 %, and gold for when more than 95 % of the raw materials are organic. (Anon 2008)

In Norway, the CR2092/91 was adopted as a part of the EEA agreement in 1994, and Norway participates as an observer in the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF). The State authority charged with the responsibility for the CR2092/91 is the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority, called Mattilsynet is responsible for the certification of production, processing and distribution of organic food. It has delegated this task to the private organisation Debio, which manages inspection and certification of organic production (farms, processors and sales-points). Operators wishing to market organic ingredients and/or processed foods need to be certified by Debio. This applies to all operations within the food service industry, including institutions, schools, hotels, restaurants, cafés and cafeterias, catering services, fast-food joints etc. It also administers the Norwegian “Ø”-label, which is the property of Debio and as such a private label, but so far in practice the official and only organic label in Norway (Johnsen and Mohr 2000). Debio also carries out inspection of bio-dynamic production and administrates the Demeter-label in Norway.

Discussion

The analyses to date show that there is mandatory certification of commercial catering in DE so that where public organic procurement is from a private company claiming organic status, this must be verified by an inspection body according to the system in operation. Similarly NO has mandatory certification of foodservice operators, albeit with a slightly different system. DK and FI offer their operators defined categories of organic use whereas IT shows no mandatory national or public system for organic certification of foodservice operators.

Conclusions

This first analysis has highlighted the organisational and in part cultural variance amongst DK, NO, IT, FI and DE with respect to their management of organic certification and its application to foodservice operations. In a second step interviews with certification bodies, ministries and stakeholders involved in the administration and implementation of the Council Regulation will be necessary to deepen the analysis. In the third step interviews with relevant stakeholders from the project's national user groups will be required to reveal attitudes and strategies towards certification. In this way, common elements relevant for the certification of public procurement kitchens/catering units serving organic food may be identified on a European level.

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Is there any certification of Public Organic Procurement in iPOPY countries (IT, FI, DK,DE)?

Modena, 19.06.2008, Carola Strassner, University of Applied Sciences Muenster, Germany



Legal Framework



- European Union
- Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 &...
- Certification usually conducted by private certification bodies
- Usually national approval and/or national accreditation of certification bodies (EN 45011 / ISO 65)



Rationale



- Consumer protection
- Equal market opportunities
- Transparency



Germany



State:

Federal Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer Protection

Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food

16 supervisory authorities in the Länder

23 accredited inspection bodies

State label: "Biosiegel"



Private labels:





Italy



State: Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF)

Ministry of Agriculture (Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali – MiPAAF) & regional administrations

Organic Agriculture Office (Ufficio Agricoltura Biologica) within the Administrative Office for the Quality of Agricultural Products and Consumer Safety

16 officially recognised inspection agencies & in German-speaking South Tyrol 4 German bodies

State label: -

Private label:



Finland



State:

Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Finnish Food Safety Authority 

State label 

Private:

Luomuliitto ry (Fi. Assoc. for Organic Farming) 

Finnish Biodynamic Association 



Denmark



State:
 Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

Danish Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro-Business	Danish Plant Directorate	Danish Veterinary and Food Administration
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State label: 

Private label:
 Biodynamic & Demeter Associations  



Norway



Not a member of the EU ☹️ But EEA member 😊

State:
 The Ministry of Agriculture
 The Norwegian Food Safety Authority
 The Norwegian Agricultural Inspection Service

Inspection & certification: Debio  

State label: “private/state”

Private label: -



Certification of Out Of Home



Easy Steps To Organic Certification

A manual for canteens, restaurants
and foodservice operators

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Public Organic Procurement



DE: yes, but ...

NO, IT, FI, DK: no, but ...