

Solutions menu: A Nordic Guide to sustainable food policy

Studytrip



OFFICIAL REPORT

4 - 7 June 2019

Stockholm, Sweden

Copenhagen, Denmark

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ABSTRACT

In June 2019 a Dutch (and international) delegation visited Sweden and Denmark. This study trip was inspired by ‘the Solutions Menu: [A Nordic Guide to sustainable Food Policy](#)’. This report contains 24 policy suggestions focussing on changing food consumption and to inspire new policy. Due to time limits the visit was focussed on Denmark and Sweden. In four days a delegation (Appendix 1) of policy makers, scientists in the field of nutrition (health and sustainability), non-profit organisations, higher management of umbrella organisations within the field of nutrition and representatives of several European nutrition centres visited ten organisations that work with the Nordic Food Policies. The group received a warm welcome at governmental bodies, universities, non-profit organisations, public private partnerships, international organisations and local initiatives.

During the visit several subjects stood out and formed a red thread throughout all organisations and discussions. Looking back at this inspirational trip we can list the following key insights and learning we take back with us:

- One aligned food policy throughout the Nordics: Although there are considerable differences looking at the Nordic countries, we have learned that one aligned food policy works very well for them. Cooperation and exchange improved the impact of the policy on national and international levels.
- Front of Pack Labelling: The Keyhole logo is the common Nordic front of pack nutrition logo. This logo was introduced by Sweden in the late 1980’s and later adapted by Denmark, Norway and Iceland. The Keyhole is there to help consumers identify the healthier option when buying food and is highly appreciated by consumers. In both Sweden and Denmark the authorities are very pleased with the logo, however data on effect and choice aren’t available yet.
- A coherent policy on reduction of food waste, cultural inheritance and introduction of sustainability messages in dietary guidelines has led to improvement of the national diets and food culture and reduction of food waste.
- Obesity: About 47% of the adults in the Nordic countries are overweight. When we compare the national numbers of Sweden and Denmark with those of the Netherlands they are nearly the same.
- Public meals: There is a huge focus on the quality and taste of public meals in both Sweden and Denmark. The Swedish lunches are traditionally more equal to those of many European countries, where hot lunches are the norm, whilst the Danish lunches are comparable to the Dutch lunch, where bread is the main lunch item. Despite the differences in traditional lunches the focus on healthy public meals is high. In for instance elderly homes and hospital there has been an increase of plant based and organic meals. Another inspiring example is the Madskolen initiative in Copenhagen, where not only they serve warm and nutritious meals in public schools, they also use these meals to educate the children about healthy nutrition and how to cook healthy meals. Students get the chance to cook for themselves as for their fellow students and parallel they learn about this in the regular lessons.

Conclusion

During our visits in Sweden and Denmark we have talked to so many people driven by enthusiasm who showed us inspiring projects and campaigns. Often our question on the scientific validity of interventions could not be answered: they base their work more on believe in that they do the right thing ('everyone needs to have access to good food'). It shows that taking action first to get the ball rolling and learn from it, can be a strategy as well. It was inspiring to see how in Copenhagen they had a very holistic approach to school meals and nutritional education. Using the school meals as actual teaching materials to inspire the students and to learn them how to cook and eat healthy.

They have inspired us with their vision on food and nutrition, where they shared that while the nutritional composition and sustainability is very important, the setting and the appeal of what you eat is just as important. "If it is not tasty, it is not a solution": is a beautiful quote the Nordic Council of Ministers shared with us.

After every meeting, two representatives of the delegation shared their thoughts and experiences on that meeting. These short (1 or 2 minutes) movies can be [viewed online](#).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Solutions menu

The Solutions Menu released by Nordic Food Policy Lab (2018) discusses the most innovative food policy solutions looking at food culture and identity, public food and meals, food waste and sustainable diets. The report contains 24 policy suggestions ranging from the local to the global, collectively presenting a comprehensive approach to the food policy of the future. The report aims to change food consumption and intends to inspire new and robust policy responses to the societal and environmental challenges caused by our current food systems. The report looks to the future of food policy as vital to dealing with current environmental degradation, with consumption shifting towards less meat and more plant-based diets. Other factors covered by the report include solutions to tackle food waste and sustainable meal structures through cultural activities.

Tackling major global challenges requires multiple tactics. The Solutions Menu is a selection of some of the most innovative food policies coming out of the Nordic countries. This is not about boasting but rather about sharing, inspiring and demonstrating how new policies can bring about change. The Nordic context is culturally close to the Dutch context, and food is a unique way to start conversations about complex issues – something that can really get the ball of progress rolling. Food touches on so many issues, including livelihoods, human and planetary health, identity and economic growth. By addressing issues surrounding food through policy, many double-wins can be achieved, such as job creation and healthier diets or environmentally or climate-friendly meals and improved educational models. The Solutions Menu explains the who, what, where, and why behind some of most innovative and timely policies that have been developed in the Nordic Region, in addition to explaining how these policies align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and other global strategies.

The Solutions menu focusses on five different themes: 1) Nutrition; 2) Food culture and identity; 3) Public food and meals; 4) Food waste; and 5) Sustainable diets.

Each theme contains multiple solutions, here is an overview of all the solutions per theme:

Nutrition (Better nutrition is a shared responsibility)

1. Solution #1: Nordic Nutrition Recommendations (NNR): Agreement on the facts
Explore how top-down and bottom-up initiatives define contemporary Nordic food culture and identity
2. Solution #2: Nordic Plan of Action and the Nordic Monitoring System: Setting long-term goals
Learn how to implement and monitor ambitious goals to improve health and nutrition
3. Solution #3: Keyhole Label: healthy choices made easy
Learn how the Keyhole Label has become a strong and trustworthy brand in the Nordic countries
4. Solution #4: Salt partnerships and salt labelling: Helping the food industry to cut salt
Learn how to establish effective partnerships that promote successful product reformulation

5. Solution #5: Whole Grain partnership: Expanding the market for whole grains
Learn how to increase whole grain consumption and motivate food industry partners
6. Solution #6: Meal initiatives: The next frontier of nutrition policy
Find out how a focus on meals can improve nutrition and the overall out-of-home dining experience
7. Solution #7: Nutrition commitments: Broadening the range of healthy food products
Discover how voluntary, multisectoral commitments can help set ambitious goals to reformulate food products and meals
8. Solution #8: Monitoring food marketing to children: Halting obesity and overweight
Learn how to draw up a protocol for monitoring the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children and young people

Conclusion

While there are differences among the countries in terms of how they address nutrition policy now and will do in the future, the common goal of improving the health of their people has made the case for strong collaboration and innovative cross-sectoral partnerships. Conclusion: Better nutrition is a shared responsibility. Overall, Nordic nutrition policies reflect a shared responsibility and coordinated effort in addressing pressing issues in public health and nutrition. These policies focus on meals over nutrients, acknowledging that the best way to improve nutrition is through meals and mealtimes and not through single nutrients. Activities and partnerships are integrated: the nutritional advice laid out in the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations (NNR) is furthered through the Keyhole Label and Heart Symbol, and the NNR is also addressed in the work of the salt partnerships. Many initiatives and policies work to establish equitable healthy eating patterns from a young age while also influencing the adoption of healthy eating habits for elderly people. Finally, standardised data-collection procedures and a common minimum set of valid, measurable and usable indicators are in place as essential tools in the implementation of national and Nordic strategies for healthy diets. Monitoring and benchmarking across the Nordic Region is also an integral part of policy implementation.

Food culture and identity (New Nordic is now the new normal)

1. Solution #9: New Nordic Food: Building a regional food identity
Explore how top-down and bottom-up initiatives can help define contemporary food culture and identity
2. Solution #10: National strategies: Capitalising on new Nordic food culture
Learn more about how to create comprehensive national food and gastronomy strategies
3. Solution #11: National gastronomic resource centres: Democratising good food
Find out how resource centres build future capacity and knowledge in the food sector
4. Solution #12: Local food culture strategies: Supporting the experience economy
Discover how urban, food-related experiences can boost quality of life, tourism and the economy

Conclusion

The Nordic experience shows that policies transforming, reinforcing and growing food culture can provide desirable outcomes in terms of tourism, local product development and innovation, the protection of intangible cultural and biological heritage, skills development and sustainable diets.

Joao Breda:,, WHO applauds this approach of working with nutrition policy as well as food culture and identity as a means of simultaneously tackling non-communicable diseases and creating a shift towards more sustainable food consumption."

Public Food and Meals (Putting meals front and centre)

1. Solution #13: Universal school meal programmes: Establishing nutritional equality
Learn more about two of the world's longest running school meal programmes
2. Solution #14: Local government procurement of organic food: Implementing the 'Copenhagen model'
Discover how Copenhagen became a world leader in serving organic food in public-sector canteens
3. Solution #15: Organic strategies for public-sector meals: Setting ambitious goals
Learn how national governments are increasing the amount of certified organic food served in public-sector canteens
4. Solution #16: Public meal models: Delivering on multiple societal goals
Find out how multisectoral partnerships can improve public meal experiences
5. Solution #17: The Danish meal Label: Making meals eaten outside the home nutritious and delicious
Learn how to develop guidelines to get more vegetables, fruits, whole grain, fish and less sugar and salt on the menu
6. Solution #18: Hospital meals: Improving the patient experience
Learn how to enhance meal experiences and change the physical/social environment where meals are eaten in hospitals

Conclusion

Public meals are meals served in the public sector, including in care homes, prisons, hospitals, schools, recreational centres, and local and national government offices. As vehicles for change, public food and meals have attracted increasing attention over recent years. Given that the Nordic countries have rather large public sectors, the potential impact of public meals programmes is significant. Investing to improve public meals, also referred to as public catering, is a part of the preventative public health puzzle that can nudge people from all backgrounds and in all ages towards better food behaviour, improved dietary choices, social interaction around food and healthy relationships with food, as can also help bring about nutritional equality.

Meals in public institutions differ from country to country; there is no one-size-fits-all solution. However, the goal is similar throughout the Nordic Region: provide healthy meals.

Conclusion: Putting meals front and centre.

Mealtimes have undergone significant change, adapting to the challenges of the present day as part of an increasingly integrated approach to public food. Meals present an opportunity to change the way we interact with our food. Ambitious policies can also change the way food is farmed and the way a population eats. The organic conversion of all public-sector kitchens in Copenhagen may sound impossible or undesirable in other parts of the world. However, the message is that by setting the bar high on a single issue it is possible to achieve a range of food related societal goals such as reduced food waste, increased meal quality and higher job satisfaction in public kitchens. These results in turn can inspire others later on. Policies that exert influence on the food served in public institutions have been successful because they aim for nutritional equality by providing nutritious food that is affordable and accessible. Kitchen staff is given opportunities to update their skills and knowledge to ensure that guidelines are respected and targets reached. Ambitious goals for healthier and more sustainable consumption have also helped new markets to develop, increasing the demand for new products and forms of production.

Food Waste (Seeing an opportunity in every challenge)

1. Solution #19: Nordic initiatives: Understanding the dynamics of food waste
Learn how to make a concerted effort to cut food waste throughout the value chain
2. Solution #20: National food waste strategies: Tackling unsustainable consumption patterns
Find out how to establish long-term national food waste reduction strategies and agreements
3. Solution #21: Nordic food waste networks: Encouraging collaboration throughout the supply chain
Discover how to identify the right stakeholders to establish effective partnerships

Conclusion

Food waste is high on the political agenda. By addressing food waste, governments can contribute to meeting ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals at national and regional levels. The socio-economic benefits of reducing food waste are also great: for example, Sweden estimates that a 20% reduction before 2020 compared to 2010 would amount to an average of €1.2 billion annually.

Food waste is a major global challenge. When food is thrown away, so are the inputs and resources that went into producing it. The environmental impact of this misuse of resources is immense: food that is produced and never eaten accounts for an estimated 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. To put this into perspective, if food loss and waste were a country it would be the third largest global emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the United States.¹¹⁸ The UN SDG target (12.3) of 50% global reduction in food waste at the retail and consumer levels and cutting food loss in production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses, by 2030 – has placed this issue on international and national agendas.

Sustainable diets (Looking into the future of food policy)

1. Solution #22: Dietary guidelines: Holistic approaches to healthy and environmentally sustainable diets
Find out how to develop guidelines that address human and planetary health
2. Solution #23: Climate smart models: Reducing the environmental impact of meals
Find out how to frame meals in the context of climate, environment and nutrition
3. Solution #24: Finnish Climate Programme
Linking sustainable production and consumption

Conclusion

With the global food system contributing to 20–30% of total greenhouse gas emissions, it will be essential to tackle demand for high-impact foods to reduce global warming. Since transforming dietary patterns can also help us tackle the problems of environmental sustainability and lifestyle-related diseases, this is an area where bold policy can lead to many win-wins.

Current trends in the Nordic countries indicate that consumption patterns are slowly moving towards more plant-based diets. Beef and pork consumption show tendencies of plateauing while consumption of chicken is on the rise. As shown above, this is largely a development spearheaded by younger generations, the Millennials' between the ages of 19 and 35. The market is not waiting for the government to step in either: the food industry is responding quickly to an increased demand for a larger variety of plant-based products.

Given the make or break significance of sustainable food systems for the health of a growing population on a small and increasingly warm planet, the shift towards sustainable healthy diets will be a defining issue for future food policy.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Tuesday 4 June	Wednesday 5 June	Thursday 6 June	Friday 7 June
<p>09:00-10:30 Welcome meeting and program briefing</p> <p>11:00-13:30 Meeting with Amanda Wood, senior researcher Stockholm Resilience Center</p> <p>14:30 -16:00 Meeting with Professor Robert Brummer, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, Food and Health Örebro University</p>	<p>09:00-11:00 Meeting with Ms. Annica Sohlström, Director General, Swedish Food Agency</p> <p>11:00-12:30 Meeting with Katarina Wahlgren, deputy director Ministry for Enterprise and Innovation</p>	<p>09:30-11:00 Meeting with Maja Overgard Lund, Academic Officer, Ministry Environment and Food</p> <p>11:30-14:00 Meeting with members of the Nordic Council</p> <p>14:30-16:00 Meeting with Maria Dyrby Nielsen, Project Manager, Food Nation</p> <p>16:30-18:00 João Breda, Head WHO European Office for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases</p>	<p>09:00-10:30 Meeting with John Kennedy, administration chef Children’s House of Food (Madhus)</p> <p>11:00-13:00 Visit to school (including lunch) Lisbet Funch, Madskolen</p>

ABSTRACTS OF ALL MEETINGS WITH ORGANISATIONS VISITED

Stockholm Resilience Centre (Sweden)

Amanda Wood, senior researcher

In the Nordic countries 47% of the adults is overweight and obesity has a social cost of 7 billion Euro's in Sweden alone. In Norway health related problems due to unhealthy diets costs the state 15 billion Euro's a year.

Amanda Woods has worked on the EAT-Lancet report, with 36 other scientists.

The goal of the EAT-Lancet commission was to set two targets:

1. Healthy diet targets

The EAT-Lancet diet gives a range within specific food groups instead of focussing on exact quantities. The media in the Nordics has labelled the EAT-Lancet to be very prescriptive, whilst it actually gives a wide range of quantities that fit within the framework.

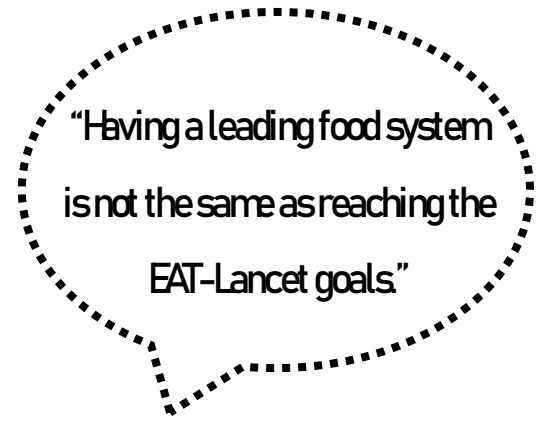
2. Sustainable Food Production

Which focusses on the environmental considerations.

SRC translated this document to the Nordic situation (Nordic food systems for improved health and sustainability; Baseline assessment to inform transformation). Baseline analyses: Are food systems in the Nordics contributing to global sustainable development goals? Can the EAT-Lancet targets be used to guide actions to improve the health and sustainability of Nordic Food systems? In comparison to other countries, Nordic countries are doing reasonably well. However they to aren't meeting the EAT-Lancet targets. The EAT-Lancet commission emphasised being a leader in food system transformations isn't the same as reaching the SDG's. The Nordic food system isn't the best and healthiest in the world and also here there is work that needs to be done.



The most significant challenge in the Nordics is moving from animal based to plant based diets, as the consumption of red meat seems to be the biggest issue in this region. Also the overconsumption of added sugars is an issue in Nordic countries and the underconsumption of vegetables, legumes and nuts.



To meet the EAT-Lancet targets the Nordic diets should contain at least one additional portion of vegetables, there should be a shift from refined grains to whole grains and an increase of the consumption of legumes. In the past few years the plant-based foods have grown a lot. The initiatives from the Solutions Menu are real good examples of how the Nordics are working on this issues.

Climate impact

The climate impact of the Nordic food consumption seems to be much higher than the average high income country and even farther from the norm set by the EAT-Lancet. This impact on the climate is mostly caused by the high consumption of meat and fish. Also, about 40% of the Nordic diet is imported, which causes the Nordics to have a large footprint. The impact of the Nordic diets is felt in specific low income countries where the produce comes from.

Örebro University (Sweden)

Professor Robert-Jan Brummer, Pro-Vice Chancellor Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, Food and Health

Professor Robert Jan Brummer was in charge of setting up the medical faculty at Örebro University. Örebro is a rather small university with a flat structure, where most people know each other. Incorporated in the University is a school of culinary art, chefs and sommeliers are educated at Örebro. While at other medical universities nutrition is not a part of the curriculum yet.

The Örebro Food and Health Programme is divided in to three parts:

1. Infrastructural initiatives
 - a. Multi-sensory research
 - b. Starting a core facility in lifestyle intervention studies
2. Interdisciplinary projects
3. Örebro Food and Health Cohort

They started with five interdisciplinary two year projects in 2018-2019

1. Improved sensory experience in the elderly
2. The marketing of healthy food: an international perspective
3. Food and health in educational contexts
4. Exploring the potential of block chain technology to manage the food value chain with a special focus on sustainability in transport and distribution
5. Diet, inflammation, health and wellbeing

Orebro Food and Health Cohort

- Unique interdisciplinary cohort project – diet and nutrition early in life being the main focus. Births in Orebro over the 5 years ->17.000 births in 5 year. 25% of these births is of mothers from a non-Swedish background. This cohort will give insight into the differences between children born here in comparison to their siblings born in for instance Afghanistan, Syria etc.
- Life course perspective -> easy access to data since in Sweden almost everything is registered centrally (Medical files are open for registered epidemiologists).
- In traditional cohort studies people only look at what people eat. In this study they looked at, how they eat, where they eat, with whom they eat, what ingredients are used etc.

Sustainability is such a large part of the Swedish DNA, that for them it is common sense to invest in sustainability. Both at the consumer and company side. Interest in food related projects (e.g. school lunches) is high, and has been able to attract teachers even to remote areas. In that way the Swedish culture differs a lot from the Dutch culture. Nature (fresh air, outdoor recreation, food collection) is highly valued in Sweden and that is one of the reasons why sustainability is so high on the agenda in Sweden.

“It’s just part of our DNA.”

Swedish Food Agency (Livsmedelsverket)

Annica Sohlstrom, Director General

Anna Karin Lindoos, Risk Benefit Assessor

Anna Karin Quetel, Projectleader

Veronica Ohrvik, Projectmanager

Karin Fritz, Advisor

The Swedish Food Agency focusses on three areas: 1) risk and benefits assessments (chemical, microbiological, nutritional and toxicological), 2) risk and benefit management (control, legislation, guidelines and recommendations) and 3) risk and benefit communication.

They have around 23.000 visitors on their website every day, they estimate that about 60% consumers finds their way to their site. The Swedish Food Agency has become more active on social media in the past year and they get about 1000 media questions every year.

They contribute to the goals of three policy documents:

- Swedish Food Policy – main aim is to create jobs within food production
- National environmental quality objective
- Public health goals – 11 target areas

The national dietary survey in Sweden was done for the fifth time in 2016-2017. This survey focussed on adolescents and was conducted amongst 3000 participants from school grades 5, 8 and 11, this because there wasn't a lot of data available for this age group. Data from the survey showed that around 18% of 5th graders is overweight. Also there is a total of 22-23%

obesity/overweight within this age group all over Sweden. This is higher than in the Netherlands. The survey has also shown that the adolescents in general eat healthier during the week then they do in the weekends. They see that about half of the vegetable intake is consumed during weekdays and this mainly comes from the meals they get in school. Like in the Netherlands, there is discussion on quality of nutrition data bases, they try to keep it up to date but this is difficult.

Sustainable dietary guidelines (Anna Karin Quetel)

Their overall goal for the environmental aspects is that the problems need to be tackled now and shouldn't be left to be solved by next generations.

They developed the guidelines by looking at the scientific literature and the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations (from 2012). They also looked at the dietary habits, risk perspective (things that are in their food but unhealthy) and the consumer perspective. Together this formed the basis for the guidelines created in 2015.

The environmental perspective is taken in to their guidelines as an addition to the health perspective. Such as; more plant based food and less meat, environmentally smart option, so locally grown, seasonal and products that can be stored (onions, root vegetables etc.). Also they communicate to consume less meat and if consumed to choose smart, so grass fed, local, taking biodiversity in consideration.

The keyhole label and the plate model are used to communicate their dietary guidelines. About one out of ten consumers eats according to the dietary guidelines.

Public meals (Anna Karin Lindroos)

They have universal school meals for students from age six/seven years old until 16. Costs of school meals in Sweden are considerable, about 6% of the total school budget.

Pre-schools aren't compulsory, but if children go to pre-schools, meals are included in the program.

There are some contradictions looking at school meals, the school meals in Sweden are of very high quality but they are not used as an education opportunity, which is a lost, because they could be used to teach skills to the students.

The meals at school are cooked meals: lunch and dinner are actually quite similar. The environment outside the schools is not very supportive of a healthy diet, mainly unhealthy foods are sold.

The Nordic keyhole (Veronica Ohrvik)

The keyhole was developed in Sweden in 1989. Today packed foods qualified to carry the Keyhole symbol must fulfil certain conditions specified by the authorities in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland.

Finland has their own logo, which is a heart shaped logo, run by the heart foundation, but the guidelines behind it are similar to those of the Keyhole.



When Norway joined the keyhole working group they did a study of existing labels, but finally joined the keyhole because this label is easy to understand and requires minimal knowledge.

The Keyhole consists of the nutrition triangle and the nutrition plate. The scientific basis is the Nordic nutrition recommendations. Choosing the Keyhole will stimulate the intake of wholegrain, fibre and the decrease of saturated fatty acids. It is not on sustainability. The Keyhole stimulates reformulation within companies. An example in Norway shows how the Keyhole had an impact on product development and reformulation. In 2009 Norway started with almost 500 products with the label on it, in 2014 as much as 2000 products carried the Keyhole label. In 2016 the number dropped quite radically to 1419 products. This was due to stricter regulation. Then in 2017 the number raised again to 2230 products with the Keyhole label.

There is a lot of acceptance of the Keyhole label. Around 50% of the consumers in Sweden say the Keyhole helps them choose healthier products. There are no data available on impact on choice or behaviour.

Food Waste (Karin Fritz)

Households in Sweden waste an average of 45 kg per person every year, restaurants about 2 kg per year, retail and canteens 1 kg per year.

In 2017 an action plan of 42 measures to reduce food waste was launched. From this action plan came four focus areas:

- National goal & development of monitoring methods
- Active collaboration between industry players in the food supply chain
- Changes in consumer behaviour
- Investigation, research and innovation

The Swedish Food Agency is working closely with the industry to change the 'best before' claim to 'best before, often good after'. Which has been applied by the leading dairy producer in Sweden.



Ministry for Enterprise and Innovation (Sweden)

Katharina Wahlgren, Deputy Director

The Swedish National Food Strategy was definite in 2017. Before this strategy came out, the government had never worked with the industry on a strategical level.

Why did they need a national food strategy?

- Loss of market shares in agriculture and horticulture
- Increase global competitiveness
- Relatively low environmental impact, climate efficient and high standards in animal welfare

The overall objective is a competitive food chain where the total food production increases.

Divided over six key specific goals:

- Achieving relevant national environmental objectives
- Generate growth and employment
- Contribute to sustainable development
- Meet consumer demands
- Contribute to a higher level of self sufficiency
- Reduce vulnerability in the food chain

To fulfil the overall objectives, they have three strategic areas:

1. Rules and regulations (reduce administrative costs, facilitate to do right from the beginning, appropriate controls)
2. Consumers and markets (meet consumer needs and demands, make informed choices, increase export, organic production and consumption)
3. Knowledge and innovation (increase coordination within the food sector, develop and formulate need for research and innovation, advise and skills development, education and training, attractiveness: working in the food sector is currently not found attractive enough so action is needed to ensure growth in the sector)

Sweden has Sustainable Procurement Criteria for schools and public places, where health is not yet incorporated in. This strategy isn't mandatory for municipalities to use. The school meals aren't really used for education, if done so it could really contribute to the knowledge of nutrition.

There are no limits of how much of the food in schools pupils eat. Children take the food themselves, the buffet starts with the salad buffet. There are always supervisors around to stimulate that they try different things.

Ministry of Environment and Food (Denmark)

Maja Overgaard Lund, Academic Officer Healthy Diet and Communication Division

Trine Enevold Gronlund, Special Advisor Healthy Diet and Communication Division

This is the Danish counterpart of the Netherlands Nutrition Centre. Our hosts are members of the European Public Health Nutrition Alliance (EPHNA).

The Danish official dietary guidelines were set in 2013. On behalf of the Nordic council, scientists from all Nordic countries created general Nordic nutrition recommendation. The Danish guidelines are extracted from these Nordic recommendations but took the Danish culture in account. The previous guidelines were less detailed then they are now, but since the 70's the dietary guidelines haven't changed very much, since food culture hasn't changed a lot and science behind it hasn't changed much either. Sustainability isn't part of the guidelines in Denmark, but there is willingness to incorporate it in the next version. The Nordics start in 2020 to update the NNR, including sustainability from the start.

For the age group 65+ additional guidelines were created focussing on: preserving the muscle mass (physical activity and protein), keeping the bones strong (vitamin d) and keep the weight in control.

The times that Danes that eat breakfast and dinner together are at least 5 days a week and this number has been quite stable since 1995. The percentage of children that meet the recommendations for fruit and vegetables intake is higher than amongst adults. In general men are more overweight then women.

Keyhole

The Keyhole label was adopted by Denmark in 2009 and is based on the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations. If a product carries the Keyhole label it is a healthier choice within a specific food group and it complies with one or more of the requirements:

- Less and healthier fat
- Less sugar
- Less salt
- More fibre and wholegrain

Denmark works with a lot of different partners to promote the keyhole symbol and they have performed a lot of campaigns. There are more than 4000 pre-packaged products with the logo.

Recent data shows that 94% of the consumers recognize the logo, 65% knows it is the healthier choice and 46% says they look for products with the logo when choosing products.

Public-Private Partnerships



The ministry has many public-private partnerships. One of the most successful partnership is on wholegrain. In 2009 a whole grain partnership was established, with a separate logo, but also meeting the requirements of the keyhole. Most of the Danish bread has the whole grain logo at this point. Since 2007 the intake of whole grain has nearly doubled due to this partnership.

They applied for funding to support other countries in creating wholegrain partnerships, this could bring new knowledge and strengthen our partnership. This will provide opportunity for interested countries to participate in conferences, summer schools and webinars.

Meals in public places

Recommendations for healthy meals in canteens and public places are based on the official dietary recommendations and modified to public settings. Three years ago a campaign on public meals was started. Using a special label that was created and that can be used in canteens at preschool, elementary school, universities and work places.



School meals are handled differently in every municipality. Historically it wasn't normal to serve meals in schools, but this is changing and municipalities make their own choices if or if not to serve (hot) meals in schools. Only preschools are obliged to work with the recommendations, in other places it is voluntary.

They also include recommendations for meal settings: structural settings, physical settings, social settings and education settings. They support the implementation of the recommendations to help the municipalities incorporate this in their schools.

The Danish ministry is not working on reduction of food waste, because there are grassroots campaigns as Stop Spild Af Mad. Food waste is included in recommendations for school meals.

Nordic Council of Ministers (Denmark)

Mads Frederik Fischer-Moller, Senior Adviser Food

Marie Persson, Project Officer

The Nordic cooperation consists of eight Nordic countries. The Nordic Co-operation could be compared to the Benelux. It is one of the oldest and most comprehensive regional collaborations in the world, founded after World War II. It started with the Nordic Council in 1952, inter-parliamentary forum. In 1971 a Nordic Council of Ministers was founded, similar to the EU parliament.

Throughout the eight Nordic countries they have several collaborations, such as on New Nordic Food and the Keyhole label. Finland and Sweden are usually the fastest to adopt new food trends worldwide and definitely one of the fastest in Europe. In 2016 the Nordic prime ministers prioritised food as one of the key areas to work on.

There are many differences in the different countries, but they do agree on how Nordic countries tackle sustainability issues. Their goal is to collect the best solutions from each country, and this is reflected in the Solutions menu. They actively take part in global dialogs, FAO, WHO e.g. and try to take Nordic ideas to the global arena and bring global ideas back to the Nordics.

Nordic policy interventions

- Sustainable diets
- Wholegrain & keyhole
- Food waste reduction strategies
- Food culture change

Sustainability

Sustainability hasn't been incorporated in the Danish guidelines yet, the presenters indicate this was related to the strong partnership with dairy and meat industry, but this is definitely changing rapidly at the moment. Since the green left side just won elections in Denmark this process will definitely go faster now. The FAO did research to see what dietary guidelines

incorporate sustainability and the Swedish guidelines are one of the oldest guidelines that incorporated this.

Sustainable gastronomy is a big thing in Copenhagen. 15 years ago a vegetarian meal in Copenhagen wasn't available nowadays most of the restaurants are partially or fully vegetarian and have a high culinary standard based on fresh, regional and often organic products.

The expert group for the new Nordic Nutrition Recommendations is put together now and they will start working on new recommendations. These recommendations lie at the basis of all public private partnerships of the Nordic Council. There is discussion with the group on how these PPPs are perceived: there are some critical comments but trust in government is still very high.

Food Waste Reduction

There is no legislation on food waste, but the government does partner with several stakeholders and do monitoring and agenda setting on this subject.

A very successful partnership has been with one of the largest dairy producers in the Nordics who has changed their food label from 'best before', to 'best before, but probably still good after'.

New Nordic Food

A philosophy founded by Claus Meijer (former chef of Noma), who is now working with Ikea to work to improve their foods and menu's.

It consists of policies to change a food culture as they were facing two main challenges: 1) No sense of a common food identity. 2) Deteriorating eating habits. The solution for this was recognising the power of a common vision and placing trust in chefs to do so, with government funding (1 mio. Euro/year). The result of this has been a radical food innovation.

Broad and powerful movement that gained public support and political buy-in. About 70% of the good restaurants are inspired by this vision.

The ministry doesn't work directly with them, just trusts in the vision of the chefs and finances small innovative food initiatives.

***“If it is not
tasty it's
not a
solution.”***

The nutritional community sees the value that chefs are increasingly working to promote healthy food and they focus on the steps that have been made in the past 10 to 15 years. The Nordic Council had a clear strategy to use the top chefs to disseminate sustainable food habits to more common restaurants, schools and public procurement while improving the whole food environment.

There is a discussion on the Swedish meal model, which looks good but Affordability is missing. Interestingly, while it is an important determinant in most countries, this does not seem too important in the Nordics. As an example: vegetables, even organic, are not too expensive, and less expensive than unhealthy food.

The Nordic council also refers to the extremely effective public health intervention of the Whole Grain logo: In 2007 the fibre intake amongst adults was 36 grams per day, in 2014 this amount has grown to 63 grams per day. The recommendation lies at 75 grams per day, so much closer to the recommendations that a couple of years ago. It seems that PPPs with a narrow focus are most effective.

Food Nation (Denmark)

Maria Dyrby Nielsen, Project Manager

Food Nation is a branding consortium that promotes the entire Danish food cluster. Food Nation is a Public Private partnership and a go-to portal for international private and public decision-makers. It is a gateway to get information on Danish Food Industry and Food cluster. Denmark has been a leading food nation since the end of the 16th century. Worldwide 1 billion people consume Danish ingredients every single day.

The food industry mainly focusses on 3 SDGs: zero hunger, Responsible consumption and production and climate action.

WHO Europe (Denmark)

*Joao Breda, Head of prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases
Including his team*

Joao Breda gives a brief introduction of the department for diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCD's). In 2000 they set targets for health for all. Not all targets have been met yet, they are still used as inspiration for today's work. One of the main pillars is that everybody has access to basic health services.

Nowadays they work with the Sustainable Development Goals and with Health 2020 on the public health policy. Nutrition is related to all the SDG's formulated. WHO has nine global targets for noncommunicable diseases for 2025. From the 53 countries none of the countries has achieved the goals yet on alcohol, smoking, physical activity, healthy nutrition etc. In many countries in Europe there is finally a decrease seen in alcohol consumption and smoking. Diet is the most important risk factor for NCDs. Health literacy (lack of) is an issue.

A key area is childhood obesity. Obesity in general is a problem, but childhood obesity is the biggest problem. In eastern Europe the obesity rates are lower amongst adolescents than in for instance northern and southern Europe but the obesity rate is growing there four times more rapid than in the North and the South. In the central European countries a massive nutrition transition from healthy traditional food, to unhealthy food is happening now.

It is important to address the issue with a whole package of interventions, can't be solved with one measure. Important to work evidence based.

Governments are struggling to show effect of their actions, e.g. reductions in salt and sugar. Food data bases often not up to date.

WHO Europe will continue to work on monitoring and restricting digital marketing to children on unhealthy products. Between 2015 and 2016 digital marketing has grown rapidly in many European countries. There is no legislation on this at the moment, since it goes beyond a single country legislation in one specific country is not enough. Kremlin Wickamasinghe introduces WHO latest tool called 'CLICK'. Kremlin works on sustainable healthy diets and the development of sustainable health and FBDG, using linear programming techniques. CLICK is a tool to monitor children's exposure to marketing of unhealthy products online.

Children's House of Food (Madhus) and fieldtrip to one of Copenhagen's Food Schools (Denmark)

John Kennedy, Administrations Chef & Christian Hans

Madhus was set up by the former mayor of Copenhagen, Ritt Bjerregaard. Her vision was that everybody has the right to get a good and nutritious meal. To make an inventory of what people need and what a good meal is, research has been done in all sorts of public places: preschools, schools, homes for elderly etc.

Madhus has worked together with public kitchens for the past ten years. Most of the meals in schools nowadays are fully plant based. The biggest challenge for Madhus is to make the government and politicians understand that their philosophy is important for the future of Copenhagen, the future of Denmark and even the world. Also it is of great importance that people are educated and understand the food chain.

Food waste and sustainability

They have been working to cut down food waste with 40 to 80% before it became a hot topic. They cooked smaller portions so less food was wasted. The saved money was invested in better products: more fresh vegetables, 90% organic ingredients and regional sourcing. This vision is only executed in Copenhagen, in the rest of Denmark there is still a way to go.

They are now starting to talk to retail, because you need to involve them as well to have a big impact, and discuss how they can contribute. They choose for local, organic and seasonal, and teach the future generation that seasonal and local is important for climate change and tastes better. They take children on field trips to farmers, but they also have the Copenhagen school gardens where children learn to garden themselves.



In the food schools, the children cook and eat together, so all kids have equal education and nutrition. They developed a taste compass and a seasonal vegetable calendar as the basis for the menu planning.

They did not quantify any effect (e.g. can't prove that the wholegrain and vegetable/fruit intake has increased) as this wasn't their goal in the beginning, but they would like to investigate this.

The Kitchen lift

The 'Kitchen lift' is a manual for good meals. With a high culinary benchmark, it is the foundation for the development of the food and of the staff.

The Kitchen lift is:

- A quest from the politician in Copenhagen
- Developed with and tested by the institutions and professionals
- A process over 2 years
- High goals with something to aim for
- Recognition of the hard work in kitchens/and around the meals – celebrated through a yearly event; the Oscars of CPH Kitchen employees, and the host

This school we visit is a Food School, meaning they actively teach the children about food, by providing healthy meals, have the children prepare their own meals and teach the children about plant based food, in order of sustainability and health in the future. They want the meals to be healthy and nutritious but that the pupils also learn something about the food. They learn about food both in class but also through what they serve in their canteen. From grade 4 – 6 the pupils have one week a year that they work in the kitchen with the chefs preparing the lunch for all the pupils in the school.

Outcome for the children:

- Cooking skills
- The ability to live healthy
- Food awareness
- To understand and participate in "meal communities" and food culture

Sustainable dietary patterns

- Learning by eating
- 80-20 (plant based-animal based, local-global, organic-non-organic)
- Sustainable burger (make a sustainable burger themselves)
- Consumption and identity (learn that you can make delicious food healthier than fast food)

We checked whether all pupils participate. This is not the case.

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