



nynordiskmad

Workshop on SME's and Nordic Food Competence Centres

Ny Nordisk Mad II

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Abstract

In all Nordic countries there are competence centres that offer entrepreneurs and small scale producers services like consultation, processing facilities, courses, seminars, networks, work practice exchanges and more. They are five in Norway run by Nofima and supported by Innovation Norway. They are three in Iceland run by Matís in collaboration with local authorities and support agencies. In Finland the Food Development Competence Cluster is a part of the National Centre of Expertise Programme with five food centres around the country. There is as well a development work under the Food-Finland group for the very small SME's in all regions of Finland. In Sweden there are many centres like: Resource centre for small scale dairy production in Jämtland. In Östersund the Unesco city of gastronomy 2011 we have "Eldrimner", the Swedish National Centre for Small Scale Artisan Food Processing giving producers the best possible support. In Denmark there are many different centres with the same approach to support entrepreneurs and small scale producers like for example Grønt Centre, AgroTech and Culinary-Heritage Bornholm. In Faroe Islands "The Outer Islands association" (Útoyggjafelagið) has helped entrepreneurs.

The aim of the workshop was to bring the Nordic Competence Centres together to get to know and learn from each other; build a network and to discuss and come with proposals on how these activities can support and strengthen New Nordic Food.

This report describes the Food Competence Centres activities in the Nordic countries as well as in Scotland and Ireland followed by discussions and proposals for future collaboration.

Denmark

In Denmark there is no centralisation for Competence Centres. There are many different centres with the same approach to support entrepreneurs and small scale producers.

Grønt Centre (www.greencenter.dk)

Grønt Centre is an independent institution. The centre works within the agriculture and the food industry and is attached to Region Sjælland County district. Grønt Centre is part of “Knowledge Centre” Råhavegård, which also includes Erhvervsråd Lolland-Falster and Fonden Femern Bælt Forum. Grønt Centre main task is innovation within food- and agroindustry, plant production and management assistance in general. They work with product development, implementation and marketing of foods, have a certified/approved test kitchen and have a good network with the industry, small producers and farmers. They work with regional quality food products which are developed for joint marketing. Their experience shows that companies get stronger, when they work together – both within the same production area and in the value chain from soil to table.

Suggestions:

- ❖ We would like it to be easier to buy New Nordic Food products.
- ❖ This means we must grow, produce and sell New Nordic products grown in the country side.
- ❖ We will work for Zealand Region (and the producers) to become the New Nordic Garden of Copenhagen
- ❖ We believe that it is important to work together in groups “from soil to table” , researchers-consultants- farmers- industry- market- consumer etc. ---to be successful



Culinary-Heritage Bornholm (www.culinary-heritage.com)

Culinary-Heritage Bornholm is a part of a European Network with member regions all across Europe with the common goal to develop regions through the promotion of local and regional food. They promote renewal and development in food production with respect for traditions, culture and history. Encourage an increased production and the use of regional food as a way to develop small scale business life and tourism in all the member regions. Regional Culinary Heritage Bornholm follows the trail from plate to origin; it is food with identity first and foremost. They know where it comes from, and who has "had their hands on it".



Networking is an important factor in:

- ❖ Helping the entrepreneurs to get knowledge and inspiration from others.
- ❖ To create a distribution system to increase availability for local customers
- ❖ To exchange „Best Practise“
- ❖ Facilitate contact to RD consultants based on real problems and needs
- ❖ Facilitate appliance for financial support

Marketing activities

They have arranged common activities with other networks: study tour ("Grüne Woche" 2001 Berlin, „Food and Fun Festival" 2008 Reykjavik, Salone Del Gusto" 2010 Torino). They have also been involved in food competitions like "Sol over Gudhjem" which focuses on local raw materials in order to create new local products and give ideas to restaurants to increase the use of local food.

The main problems and obstacles:

- ❖ It is difficult to get knowledge from RD to producers as the SME's are very busy.
- ❖ Many of the companies are founded by nonprofessional's so the educational level is often low. That is why it is important for the RD to keep the information simple and clear.

The Taste of Denmark

The aim of "The Taste of Denmark" is to increase political pressure if SME's have some common needs and problems. They organize courses focussing on local materials, taste, structure, presentation, handicraft methods, storytelling and salesmanship. They also arrange food competitions and markets like "Smaklust", study trips to other countries, regions, festivals, research-centres in order to inspire members to create new products.

AgroTech (www.agrotech.dk)

AgroTech are one of Denmark's 9 GTS institutes (approved technological institute) and perform applied research of agritechology and food innovation. Their fields of expertise cover agriculture and food, and their knowledge of biology and technology allows them to perform complex tasks within the entire value chain from primary production to final consumption. They support business development through knowledge and innovation and have several projects with SME's.

AgroTech is financed through public funding and they participate in research, development and innovation consortia together with universities, other knowledge institutions and the industry.

Problems/obstacles:

- ❖ To document the potential business in new ideas
- ❖ Primary producers are not food producers – missing competencies
- ❖ To help to overcome barriers on the way to be food producers
- ❖ To introduce new products on the market
- ❖ To teach the Danish to eat more Food &Vegetables, more Danish, more NNM....
- ❖ To translate the research into new products



Faroe Islands

The outer islands association (Útoyggjafelagið, www.utoyggj.fo) was established 2002 and has 250 members. The goal of the association is to improve condition for those living on the outer islands of Faroe Islands as the younger people with children tend to move away. This upsets the natural population balance. It hampers both industrial progress and community life in the islands.

Útoyggjafelagið became a member of Slow Food Movement 2009 and through that membership they have worked on strengthening local food and food education. The people on the outer islands have had a lot of inspiration through this cooperation. Today there are around 10 producers (farmers and other) ready for start-up.

The tools are cooperation and mobilization

- between the people in the local area and other areas
- between the local and the political system
- by organising activities, projects, and social events
- **by helping to create jobs**, education and opportunities for young people

The heart behind the local food is: tradition so the Útoyggjafelagið started with several workshops and tried to develop products from a whole range of possibilities. Seminar and courses are held.

The main challenges:

- ❖ Organising the production (coordinating)
- ❖ Ensure that all food legislation is met
- ❖ Ensures that production is sustainable
- ❖ Organizes sales and marketing

Marketing activities

Last year Útoyggjafelagið held a Food festival in Thorshavn where people from the islands cooked food and showed the possibility of food production on the islands. This was a great success and Útoyggjafelagið wants to support activities like this in the future.



Finland

In Finland there are two organizations which assist entrepreneurs and small scale producers, the Food Development Competence Cluster and the Food-Finland working group.



Food Development Competence Cluster

(www.fooddevelopment.fi)

The Food Development Cluster is a part of the National Centre of Expertise Programme (OSKE), administrated by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy of Finland, with five food centres around the country. The clusters are funded by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and regional authorities (50/50). The Centre of Expertise Programme is implemented by 13 national competence clusters, each of which comprises four to seven regional centres of expertise. A competence cluster forms a network and cooperation forum for its centres of expertise, which is managed with a view to fulfil shared objectives. To each cluster there is appointed a programme director to coordinate the cluster's national and international operations. The cluster programme's key emphasis is on:

- ❖ Development of products, technologies and services to enhance customers' wellbeing
- ❖ Food safety and sustainability in food chain
- ❖ New concepts, new business activities and cooperation between other OSKE clusters

Development efforts are built on solid research competence contributed by universities and research institutions. The focus is on observing the consumer perspective when developing new products, raw materials, packages and processes. The Food Development Cluster Programme is working to foster the Finnish food industry on the consumers' terms.

Finland's Food Development Cluster has shown that a nationally based cluster is the best way to handle development activities for a branch of industry. This is particularly important in a small country and even more important when the activities are for international business. This way we can collect all the know-how in research and development for the benefit of the companies.

Marketing activities

The Finnish Food Development Cluster Programme publishes the annual publication Makustele every year. Makustele tells stories about their work, collaboration partners and about interesting phenomena in the food sector.

Food Safety Management Finland (FSMF) was established in 2010. The aim of FSMF is to help small companies in their international activities and to provide large scale offering to countries and companies interested in Finnish food safety know-how. The cooperation between researchers, authorities and companies is a key element.

Future opportunities

The vision of the Food Development Cluster is that in 2013 Finland will be the leading producer of wholesome, health-promoting and safe food in Europe. The cluster's operations are based on the specialisation of, and seamless cooperation between centres of expertise. Thanks to its network, the cluster can improve the competitiveness of Finland's food industry, both nationally and internationally.

Food Finland

In Finland there are in total about 2900 food companies, 2400 of them have less than 10 employees. Food Finland is one of the Rural Policy Committee's working groups. Members representing all relevant interest groups connected with small scale food processing: ministries, rural producers, information and advisory services, food agencies but also 16 members connected with regional development work of local food. There is a different focus between regions but the basic work is the same.



Marketing activities

- ❖ The true flavours website (www.aitojamakuja.fi). The aim of the service is to help people producing food and people shopping for food and also to find each other. The website also helps enterprises in this sector find suitable partners either in their own region or elsewhere in Finland.
- ❖ The first "Delikatessernas Finland" was 25.-26.8.2011
- ❖ Productcard is tool listing the key questions a company asks when they meet with the retailer.

Future opportunities

- ❖ The interest of consumers and other buyers
- ❖ The Rural Policy Program for 2009–2013 and the coming one
- ❖ The Rural Development Program for Mainland Finland for 2007 – 2013 and the coming one and also other EU-programs
- ❖ The program for local food is under preparation as a part of the program of our government (2011-2014)
- ❖ Food-Finland was appointed as a "referensgrupp för Ny Nordisk Mat" in November 2011
- ❖ Short Supply Chains -working group on European level (EN RD); <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>
- ❖ Slaughter without transportation (NMDD)
 - Effect of transportation on sensory (taste) meat quality
 - Risk assessment of animal welfare at small scale abattoirs on farm and mobile slaughter plants

Links and synergies with New Nordic Food

- ❖ Finnish SME's are part of Nordic Food
- ❖ SME's have an important status in employing, rural vitality and also in maintaining and developing food culture
- ❖ It is interesting and useful to hear and learn about the activities in other countries
- ❖ Concerning the food legislation (hygienic etc.) SME's meet big challenges to fulfil the directions given by authorities. It would be useful to learn how actors in other countries can cope with this and other kind of similar problems
- ❖ We see possibilities in bringing up SME's more in the tourism sector
- ❖ Perhaps there is a possibility to do something together on a wider cooperation basis

Iceland

In Iceland there are three competence centres run by Matís (www.matis.is) in collaboration with local authorities and support agencies. Matís is an independent research institute which strives toward innovation in the food industry, biotechnology and food security.

Entrepreneurs and SME's can get financial support through competitive funds. The centres are a one stop shop for entrepreneurs and SME's, meaning that they are able to get access to:

- ❖ Processing facilities
- ❖ Technical assistance
- ❖ Expertise in production and development of food products
- ❖ Marketing
- ❖ Aid in applying for financial support

Problems and obstacles:

For producers:

- ❖ Facilities
- ❖ Cost
- ❖ Skills
- ❖ Finance
- ❖ Training
- ❖ Time
- ❖ Red tape
- ❖ Market

For food workshops:

- ❖ Patience
- ❖ Financing
- ❖ Red tape
- ❖ Staff/experience
- ❖ Market



Photo: Vigfús Birgisson

Marketing activities:

Special stores in Reykjavik – Frú Lauga (www.frulauga.is) sells locally produced food from farmers and SME's.

In Höfn which is in the east of Iceland they have established a local food store where entrepreneurs can sell their products.

Beint frá býli – Directly from farm (www.beintfrabyli.is) is an association of farmers engaged in the sale of products directly from the farms.

Future opportunities

Consumers awareness/needs, tourism, New Nordic Food, export?, food security, economic situation



Photo: Vigfús Birgisson

Norway

In Norway there are five competence centres run by Nofima and financed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food through Innovation Norway. Nofima is a national food research institute and its target markets are the food industry, aquaculture and fisheries industry.

(www.nofima.no/en/program/2274433402007946286)

Nofima organises courses/seminars/networks for the SME's as well as informal meetings with small companies helping them to define their knowledge needs and guiding them to different specialists. Also they have a Visit Scheme where professional help is provided to the SME's free of charge.

The main problems and obstacles:

- ❖ Few people - many skills (demand of skills is huge):
 - Business
 - Sales
 - Marketing
 - Production
 - Regulations
- ❖ Market knowledge
- ❖ Difficult distribution and market access
- ❖ Ability of delivering (volume)
- ❖ How to grow from small to medium enterprise
- ❖ Economy – how to stay in business



Marketing activities

- ❖ Bondens marked (Farmers Market) with 21 market places in Norway, www.bondensmarked.no
- ❖ Matstreif is a small scale food festival in Oslo, www.innovasjon Norge.no/matstreif
- ❖ Matmerk is a Norwegian agricultural quality system and food branding foundation, working on developing quality and competitiveness in Norwegian food production. The aim aims is to create a preference for Norwegian-produced food, www.matmerk.no
- ❖ Grüne woche (International Green Week Berlin) is the biggest fair for food, agriculture and horticulture. Norwegians have been profiling food and tourism at this fair.
- ❖ Food along the national tourist roads is a 3 years project from 2010, local food and tourism, www.matlangsnasjonaleturistveger.no

Future opportunities

Norway: Coordination between different programs and funding's directed towards same target group: Small scale food producers

Nordic:

- ❖ Value creation through network programs (Product Development Networks or Nisjenetworks)
- ❖ Local food and Scandinavian cooking is a coming trend. Use knowledge and experience from New Nordic Food
- ❖ Stronger combining local food and tourism

Sweden

In Sweden there are many centres like: Resource Centre for Small Scale Dairy Production in Jämtland. In Östersund the Unesco City of Gastronomy 2011 we have “Eldrimner”(www.eldrimner.com), the Swedish National Centre for Small Scale Artisan Food Processing giving producers the best possible support.



Eldrimner helps entrepreneurs through advisory services, courses & seminars, study-visits, development work and the exchange of ideas and experience. Eldrimner aims to develop rural areas by contributing to the establishment of new enterprises in the small-scale artisan food processing sector, supporting and assisting artisan food companies to develop and, if they wish to, to expand. Also by developing and maintaining artisan food processing. Eldrimner has 5 different branches; bakery, meat processing, dairy, processing fruit, berries and vegetables and fish processing. Eldrimner organizes courses and meetings in different parts of Sweden together with other projects and organisations. A wide range of exciting products are created by the individual artisan food producer! For example: black currant raisin, rowanberry caprice, lingonberry-ketchup, Sorselian pesto, Hussini, herb & spice crisp bread, bark crisp bread, dried whey-cheese and different raw sausages.

The main problems and obstacles:

- ❖ High fees for the food control and because of lack of competence there are different assessments and treatments
- ❖ Logistics
- ❖ Large-scale wholesalers with high demands results in high costs for the small producers and difficulties to enter the stores
- ❖ Financing – lack of risk capital
- ❖ Need for more applied education in artisan food processing

How is the support for small scale producer in Sweden organised?

The support for small scale producers in Sweden is organised through the national centre Eldrimner, through regional authorities, organisations and projects, mainly EU subsidies handled by the Administrative County Boards.

Marketing activities

To stimulate development and promote the artisan food there has been a yearly event since 1997 to hold a Swedish Mastership in Artisan Food which has been arranged at Særimner, Smaklust (www.smaklust.se) or other exhibitions.

Future opportunities

Many of the very small companies are now starting to grow. They are employing, expanding their processing facilities, adding a farm based restaurant, exporting their products etc. All artisan businesses will not become very large. But through cooperation and creation of many more businesses, the artisan entrepreneurs create growth. Vision: from 1 000 to 10 000 artisan food companies in 10 years.

Links and synergies with New Nordic Food

Eldrimner has participated as the leader of the project “Slaughtering at farm in Nordic Countries” financed by NICE, May 2007 – December 2009.

Two speakers from Ireland and Scotland were invited to the workshop to speak about emerging markets for local, small scale food products and services in their countries.

Scotland - Paul Mayfield a member of the SAC (Scottish Agricultural College) Food and Drink Consultancy team (www.sac.ac.uk)

Emerging Markets

Local Food has become “sexy”. There is an increased public awareness and TV chefs/programmes have focused on local foods. There is an environmental/provenance concerns. There is a return to home cooking and cultivation of food. In Scotland there are 200 Farm Shops and 75 Farmers Markets.

The biggest issues are:

- ❖ Population distribution
- ❖ Consumer engagement
- ❖ Geography
- ❖ Weather
- ❖ No co-ordination
- ❖ Skills
- ❖ Motivation & Entrepreneurship

Opportunities:

- ❖ Recession has changed consumers habits
- ❖ Changing attitudes to food
- ❖ Trust is key
- ❖ Increasing influence of on-line shopping
- ❖ Influence of Social Media
- ❖ Eating In is the new Eating Out
- ❖ Consumers looking for “An Experience”

Threats:

- ❖ Major retailers
- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Inconvenience
- ❖ Lack of knowledge
- ❖ Lack of trust

Ireland - Edward O’Neill, Artisan Food Specialist from Teagasc (The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority, www.teagasc.ie). The main objective of Teagasc to support innovation and competitiveness in the food processing sector through knowledge and technology transfer. Special focus is on high potential Small and Medium Sized, artisan and start-up businesses.

Artisan food represents a significant opportunity for diversification. It has a competitive advantage in terms of superior price differentiation compared to commodity food products. Small food companies represent a realistic alternative to low cost commodity production.

Here are some comments and concerns from Teagasc clients related to producing local food:

Positives

- ❖ Local
- ❖ Food Miles
- ❖ Healthy
- ❖ Traceability
- ❖ Lifestyle
- ❖ Organic
- ❖ www
- ❖ Skills

Negatives

- ❖ Red Tape
- ❖ Finance
- ❖ Time
- ❖ Skills



Discussions and proposals for future collaboration

There are many similarities between the competence centres in the Nordic countries. The challenges are often the same such as lack of competence in some areas, strict regulations, logistics and marketing. Many of the very small companies are now starting to grow. They are employing, expanding their processing facilities, adding farm based restaurants, exporting their products etc. All artisan businesses will not become very large. But through cooperation and creation of many more businesses, the artisan entrepreneurs create growth.

There is a growing demand for alternative to mass produced food. This can be attributed to globalisation and the need for sustainable economic growth in rural areas. Food security could also be a factor.

There is also a great interest in maintaining local traditions and products that were developed prior to industrialisation.

New Nordic Food promotes the use and diversity of Nordic regional ingredients, development of new Nordic cuisine and creates a common Nordic food culture that reflects the qualities of our region - purity, simplicity, security and ethics. This is the corner stone of local food productions in the Nordic countries. Taste is culture, and when everything tastes the same, we have lost a basic value of life.

Work groups session

During the work group sessions the following question were discussed:

The links between NNF and Food Competence Centres.

- ❖ Is the ideology of terroir, New Nordic Food and even Slow Food influencing activities and the products developed in connection with food competence centres, clusters and networks?
- ❖ Is there a market for them outside the fancy restaurants?
- ❖ Do the clients of the centres, clusters and network know about NNF and are they using it in their business concepts?
- ❖ Can agricultural/food researches support the development of NNF?
- ❖ Propose how we strengthen New Nordic Food.

Collaboration between SMEs and Food Competence Centres on Nordic or European Level.

Possible collaboration and funding through Nordic funding agencies like the Nordic Innovation Center, Nordisk Kontaktorgan for Jordbruk and NORA as well as European funding through regional programs like Nordic Periphery Program and the FP7 program were discussed.

Highlights from the working group's discussions:

The local food producers in the Nordic countries need to be informed about NNF so they can consciously apply it to their products and also spread that knowledge to their consumers. This could possibly help SME's to market their products. Here NNF and the Food Competence Centres need to collaborate.

Even though it is important to keep individuality of each country it is also important for food producers to meet and visit each other in order to seek inspiration, share experience and knowledge from other Nordic countries.

NNF should place more emphasis on the retailers, producers and consumers, not only the high-end restaurants.

Participants, including Scotland and Ireland, agreed on the need to establish an annual meeting of Food Competence Centres from all the Nordic countries, possibly in conjunction with the food festival "Appetite for change" (Aarhus 6-9 September 2012) which is for all the public, chefs, producers, developers, hunters, gatherers and farmers who improve and develop the Nordic cuisine.

There is a lot of results from research on sensory properties and health benefits of Nordic food raw materials linked to terroir that must and need to be put into use when developing local food products and services in order to connect them to NNF. This could be a new NNF project.

NNF could help SME's in local food processing to compete with the multinational supermarket chains by promoting them on the market.

The need for mobile slaughterhouses was discussed and the former NNF project on the matter should be revived because of great interest to collaborate.

The ideology of NNF should be taught and tasted at all levels in schools to get the message to the people. Be active in introduction, be there, tell the story and give people the chance to taste it.

There was an interest to establish an open source central knowledge-base where the Competence Centres share their knowledge and the public can get access to. Similar ideologies like for example Wikipedia.



Future collaboration:

The participants of the workshop voted on these 6 proposals on future collaboration and below is the result.

1. A Nordic platform for food producers to meet and visit each other in order to seek inspiration, share experience and knowledge.
2. A “brain drain” project on how to put scientific results on “Nordic Food Uniqueness” into practice by one demonstration project in each country by developing a food product/service/marketing approach.
3. Collaboration on the role and establishment of mobile slaughterhouses in strengthening local food production/processing and marketing and on its links to New Nordic Food ideology.
4. Annual Nordic event with display and competition of products from SMEs focussing on local/terroir/New Nordic ideology in conjunction with food festivals like “Appetite for change” (Aarhus 6-9 September 2012).
5. Nordic project on how the ideology of NNF should be taught and tasted at all levels in schools to get the message to the people.
6. Establishment of an open source central knowledge-base where the Food Competence Centres can share their knowledge with the public. Similar ideologies like for example Wikipedia.



Workshop on SME's and Nordic Food Competence Centres - Participants

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Programme

Wednesday 21th of March

Chairman: Gudjon Thorkelsson, Matís
 Language: English
 Location: Matís, Vínlandsleið 12, 113 Reykjavík (www.matis.is)

8.30-8.45 Arrangement of poster and other marketing materials
 8.45-12.30 Welcome and introduction. Gudjon Thorkelsson, Matís.

-New Nordic Food Mads Holm, New Nordic Food

“Artisan Food Centres” in the Nordic Countries

Presentation from each country and discussions:

- Bodil Cornell & Birgitta Sundin from Eldrimner, Sweden
- Therese Hagtvedt & Stine Alm Hersleth from Nofima, Norway
- Jukka Lähteenkorva from Food Development Cluster Programme, Finland
- Heidi Valtari from the University of Turku, Finland
- Birgit Hartvig Larsen from Grønt Center, Denmark
- Thorkil Boisen chairman of Culinary-Heritage Bornholm and The Taste of Denmark
- Dorthe Lynnerup from AgroTech, Denmark
- Olga Biskopstø from Útoyggjafelagið, Faroe Islands
- Gudjon Thorkelsson from Matís, Iceland

Coffee break around 10.30

12.30-13.30 Lunch break

13.30-14.30 Continuation of the presentations

14.30-15.30 Emerging markets for local, small scale food products and services
 - Paul Mayfield a member of the SAC Food and Drink Consultancy team
 - Edward O’Neill, Artisan Food Specialist from Teagasc

15.30-16.30 Food Unique, Slow Food and New Nordic Food in relation to artisan food centres
 - Food Unique Emilía Martinsdóttir, Matís
 - Slow Food Dominique Plédel Jónsson, Slow Food Iceland

16.30 Back to the hotel

18:00 Cocktail at Spark Design Space, Klapparstígur 33

19.00 Dinner at Kolabrautin

Thursday 22nd of March

08.00- 11.00 Work group sessions, discussions and conclusions on:
 - New Nordic Food and food centres
 - Networking and collaboration (Nordic, European)

Each topic from raw material through product development and production to marketing, sales and distribution will be discussed carefully. Ending with proposals on how to strengthen small scale food production and marketing in Europe and how NNF fits or should fit into the picture.

11.00 - 18.00 Excursion in South Iceland