

Monitoring progress in Public Organic
Procurement Policy (POPP's)
implementation
- an important tool in organic food &
farming policies?

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*“Not everything that can be counted
counts and not
everything that counts can be counted”
Albert Einstein*

ABSTRACT: Public procurement has become an important target for European policy makers contribute to more sustainable European food system. The value of food bought by the public for public sector institutions in settings such as hospitals, care homes, schools, universities, prisons, armed forces, and canteens is considerable and public sector food represent a significant part of the food economy in European countries. Many governments have adopted policies that promote organic food and farming and as a result agencies and institutions of the state can be expected to set a good example when it comes to the ways food for the public plate is purchased, prepared and served food as part of public service provision. However for procurement to become an active component in the overall implementation of organic food & farming policies, monitoring of sales volumes has been argued for to be important. This paper examines the first results from implementation of the recent Danish monitoring system for Public Organic Procurement Policy (POPP's). It details the implementation and maintenance of the monitoring program and discusses the role of metrics in relation to other policy tools as well as the contribution that monitoring can make in organic food & farming policy implementation. It finally gives recommendation for use of monitoring in Organic Procurement Policy implementation.

KEYWORDS: Monitoring progress, Public food service, Organic foods, Public Procurement, POPP's, policy implementation

INTRODUCTION

Public procurement has become an important target for European policy makers contribute to more sustainable European food system. The value of food bought by the public for public sector institutions in settings such as hospitals, care homes, schools, universities, prisons, armed forces, and canteens is considerable and public sector food represent a significant part of the food economy in European countries. Many governments have adopted policies that promote organic food and farming and as a result agencies and institutions of the state can be expected to set a good example when it comes to the ways food for the public plate is purchased, prepared and served food as part of public service provision. However for policy implementation to be effective monitoring of progress is important. This paper examines the first results from implementation of the recent Danish monitoring system for Public Organic Procurement Policy (POPP's).

METHODS AND SOURCES

Data was collected by Statistics Denmark in a questionnaire based survey. Data collection for two reference years 2013 and 2014 have been completed so far and the 3rd data collection takes place spring 2016. The survey is a census of all food wholesalers with at least 20 million DKK in turnover (in some cases less). These enterprises are believed to cover 90-95% of the total sales to foodservice. This model was chosen, since requesting this information from the purchasers directly would be costly due to the large number of professional kitchens served. The population was identified in Statistic Denmark's business register by industry code (NACE) and turnover. Enterprises with an irrelevant industry code was still included if they were known to operate in the foodservice sector. The scope of the survey was the sale of food and beverages – organic or conventional – to professional kitchens in restaurants, cafeterias, cafés, public institutions etc. Thus the study focus on settings where food and beverages is served as part of a meal service as opposed to e.g. sale of ready meals in retail sale.

THEORETICAL FRAME AND ORGANISING CONCEPTS

The conceptual foundation of the study is the framework of policy implementation. It assumes that public policy is implemented under certain conditions and in different steps. It further assumes that policy makers use different tools to implement policy and to reach policy goals and that evaluation of policy is an important part of public policy.

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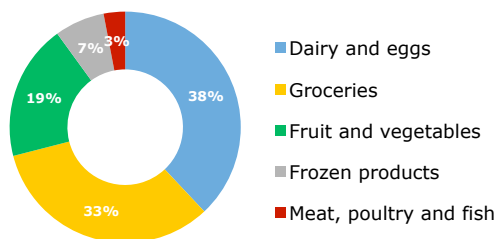
BACKGROUND

Public procurement has become an important target for European policy makers contribute to more sustainable European food system. The value of food bought by the public for public sector institutions in settings such as hospitals, care homes, schools, universities, prisons, armed forces, and canteens is considerable and public sector food represent a significant part of the food economy in European countries. Many governments have adopted policies that promote organic food and farming and as a result agencies and institutions of the state can be expected to set a good example when it comes to the ways food for the public plate is purchased, prepared and served food as part of public service provision. Public Procurement has received increasing interest due to its potential for creating desired social and economical outcomes (McCrudden 2004; Stefani et al., 2015) and this has led to what has been referred to as a politicization (La Tour) – a situation where public organic food become the object of policy making. Organic food is believed to contribute to sustainable diets that have been defined as those diets “with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources” FAO, Rome 2010. Public procurement of organic foods is not a new thing – it has been spreading over the past decade in many European countries. (Lehtinen, 2012; Sonnino, 2009, Smith et al 2015). As a result the interest in measuring the progress in terms of volumes sold in the different sectors of public catering has grown. New metrics has been developed and new routines for collecting data has been introduced. However traditionally the foodservice sector has not been the subject of much attention from policymakers side and as a result very little data is available about sizes, sectors and amount of foods in the sector.

RESULTS

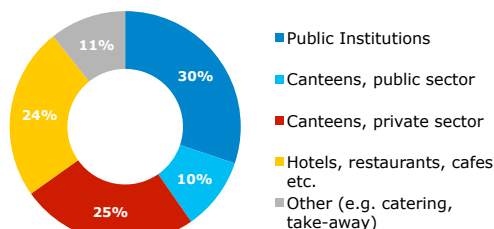
Total sales of organic food and beverages for the food service accounted to 1.304 million DKK in 2014 (175 mill. EUR)⁴. This is a marked increase of 33% compared to 2013. Dairy products and eggs accounted for as much as 38% of the total sales of organic products. The sale by product groups is somewhat similar to retail sale of organic goods, with a high representation of dairy products and fruit/vegetables.

Graph 1: Sale of organic goods to foodservice – by product groups. 2014



Organic products accounted for 6.5% of the total sales of food products to the foodservice of 19.5 billion DKK in 2014 compared to 5% in 2013. In the retail sector the corresponding market share of organic goods in the sales was 7.6%, i.e. still higher than in sales to food service⁵. Unless the retail trade experiences the same growth, the foodservice sector will overtake concerning organic share of total sales. The increase in sales of organic products to the food service is partly due to an increasing number of eating-places serving organic food. E.g. the number of kitchens with the organic food label “Det økologiske spisemærke”⁶ increased by more than 50 % from 2014 to 2015. Another factor is intensified purchase by eateries that already use ecology. Finally, there is a general increase in total sales to food service (7.6% from 2013-2014) which contributed to the sale of both organic and conventional products. Foodservice vendors with organic products in their range of goods represent more than 90 % of total sales to food service, as the largest wholesalers almost without exception sell organic products. Public institutions accounted for 30% of the sales of organic products to the food service and canteens in government jobs accounted for another 10%. Altogether public sector kitchens⁷ share of the total market is around 40%. In 2013, the general government sector's share was 41%, i.e. approximately the same proportions as in 2014. The growth in organic food service in the private sector is therefore in line with the public sector.

Graph 2: Sale of organic goods to foodservice – by customer groups. 2014



⁴ Wholesale to professional kitchens

⁵ Statistics Denmark (2015 b)

⁶ 30-60% organic foods of total purchase qualifies for ”bronze”, 60-90% for ”silver” and 90%+ for ”gold”.

⁷ A kitchen is considered public sector if the food is served in a public sector institution even if the daily operation is outsourced to a private company.

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CONCLUSIONS

Organic food in the public sector has increased considerably over the past year as a result of targeted public policies in the sector. The supplier sourced data collection of sales volumes has proven to be a convenient way of documenting public organic procurement policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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