

Mini fairs – a way of creating effective meetings between purchasers and local food producers

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Background

There is a big and growing demand in Sweden for locally produced food. The consumers expect the grocery stores to have a broad supply of local products to choose from. A survey made by ICA and the farmers union shows that 72 percent of the respondents deliberately choose Swedish in the grocery store. This strong demand drives the grocery stores to adapt their purchase routines to make it easier to get local products into the supermarkets. They have also increased their efforts to market and give the local products in the stores extra attention by placing the products in prominent positions and clearly marking them as local.

The concept of "Mini-fairs"

Different activities have been made within the REFRAME project to help the local producers to better meet the demand from the grocery stores, and to make sustainable business. One activity appreciated by both producers and grocery stores is the arrangement of five "mini-fairs". Smaller local food suppliers are invited to present their products to specially invited purchasers from grocery stores, and at some occasions also restaurants.

The fairs have a professional set-up and gives the local food producer an opportunity to meet several purchasers at the same occasion. Before each fair the producers are given advice about how to present themselves, and what kind of material and offers they shall prepare to meet the needs and expectations from the purchasers.

Five different fairs have been arranged within the REFRAME project. Each fair has involved about 35-40 local producers and purchasers representing 20-25 grocery stores. Most participants have found it to be an effective and enjoyable meeting place.



Success factors

To succeed with this kind of event you need to:

- Conduct the fairs at a time when the stores make their purchases before a big holiday
- Put a lot of work into attracting representatives from the grocery stores with a mandate to make, or to strongly influence the purchasing decisions
- Ensure that the local food producers have made the right preparations so that they can respond to the buyers in a professional way
- Make a professional framing of the event with welcoming and fresh premises, as well as supportive activities such as small seminars or chef demonstration

Results

The main results from the Mini-fairs arranged is the establishment of contacts between local food producers and the grocery stores. After meeting each other, it is so much easier for the producer and the grocery store to get in contact with each other and make business.

Do you want to learn more?

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