

Healthy and sustainable food in institutional kitchens

Purchasing products from smaller and more local producers is still a challenge for institutional kitchens. However, hospital AZ Zeno and hotel school Ter Groene Poorte prove that it is possible. VIVES, Inagro, EROV and PCG organized an inspirational afternoon to inspire other organizations.

Institutional kitchens experience a lot of issues when they want to incorporate local producers as suppliers. During an inspirational afternoon VIVES, Inagro, EROV and PCG wanted to tackle existing prejudgments with motivating examples. The afternoon was designed to facilitate interaction and knowledge transfer between the participants, and also offered a farm visit and presentations.



Locally grown vegetables at hospital AZ Zeno

AZ Zeno, a hospital at the coast of Belgium, believes healthy food benefits the recovery of their patients. That is why they focus on local products, such as locally grown vegetables. They work together with CSA Polderveld, a local farmer. The collaboration follows the principles of a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm, but the hospital doesn't harvest itself.



At the beginning of the season AZ Zeno and CSA Polderveld discuss what and when they will cultivate. The processing and price on the market are taken into account to avoid high food costs. Because of this, the farmer does not grow potatoes. The vegetables cultivated are, among other things, different types of lettuce, zucchini, pumpkins and beets and are mostly served warm or are used for soup.

The hospital changed their way of working so that they could use locally grown products:

- the menu is flexible and can change according to the amount of vegetables
- the chefs need to be more creative
- they process the vegetables to preserve them for later
- they work with an extra supplier when needed (70% in summer, 90% in winter)

The biggest challenges for AZ Zeno and CSA Polderveld are on the one hand to incorporate the short food supply chain in the entire kitchen of the hospital, and on the other hand to align supply and demand.

Good food at school

The institutional kitchen of the renowned hotel school Ter Groene Poorte wants to focus on sustainable food. Together with the organization GoodFood@School they made a plan. Based on a charter from GoodFood@School they set different goals, such as to reduce their meat consumption with ten percent. The school also organized activities, such as a theme day on sustainability with a special menu.

The school is trying very hard and is doing a good job, but it is not always easy. The most important lesson for Ter Groene Poorte is that to obtain a sustainable menu over time is a tricky process. Habits aren't changed over one night, but step by step. Support from all stakeholders is one critical factor for success. Another one is to solve the logistics.

Contact for more information

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