

Summary of Discussion on Workshop 23rd May 2019 and Experience based on Digital Dialog Connects Consumers and Food Producers –project

Importance of origin increases

The origin or provenance of food will have more significance in the near future than at present. Finnish/regional food will play an important role among the young people having strong values. As young people are used to digital tools and devices, e.g. smart phones, the digital information channels are of top priority.

Cooperation

Cooperation between producers, for example joint performance in events or retail shops, is of importance, because it enables more visibility. There is a need to have appealing events, like local food events, in Mikkeli. There is also a need to enhance producers' mutual collaboration and communication. The strengths of local food production and values of transparency, sincerity, integrity and objectivity has to be appreciated.

Tourists and second home (holiday home) owners are interested in buying local food products. Therefore, putting effort on food tourism is worthwhile.

Consumer involvement

There is a need to receive more consumer feedback; all kind of feedback is welcome. The unfortunate fact is; the consumer complaint is the main and often only feedback.

Discussion and/or feedback channel is useful and beneficial feature when using digital tools. If consumers are involved in creating, adjusting or recommending e.g. cooking recipes, it will increase visibility and sales in the future.

An existing customer community would be helpful. For example, Cardu (www.cardu.com) has a customer community plus chances to give offers or mobile coupons and to inform of upcoming events.

Marketing

Identifying potential target customer groups and their demands plus emotional and differentiated marketing is essential. Customers should have an emotional bond for producers or products. Customers are interested in authentic stories.

The marketing channels has to be selected carefully. Producers need help with marketing actions (e.g. checklists). If there is, an authenticity label (like D.O. Saimaa), it has to be equal to all participants and malpractices of the label, has to be ruled out.

Experience QR code pilot (via Ruokainfo.fi)

- QR codes are useful, but maybe still a bit of ahead. Customers/ some customer groups are not accustomed to scan QR -codes.
- Connection to tourism marketing is an important linkage.
- Information of local food needs to be offered in Russia, German and English language. Information received on visitors own language can improve customer experience, and in long run, sales.
- QR codes and information offered on digital channels should be targeted to tourists and or persons with minor knowledge on local food products/producers.
- Promoting QR codes and digital channels in local food events and enhancing collaboration among producers is needed.

Perceptions based on closing report of “Digital Dialog Connects Consumers and Food Producers -project

QR codes are regarded as one possible tool for marketing and increasing sales/profits. Producers consider the benefits and disadvantages carefully. They are not ready to jump into new right away, because their time is very valuable. Every change that a producer has to change in production process, e.g. in labelling, costs, requires effort and has to be considered carefully.

Producers need to be ensured that QR codes are what consumers and target groups are willing to use. Producers understand the role of accurate and emotionally appealing information of products and producers. It is no use to create it, but customers don't to find it.

There is a need to find the both forerunner producers and consumer groups to spread the word. It is important to understand which factors motivate consumers to scan QR codes.

An existing customer community is highly appreciated, how a new system can convince that there is going to be a lively one?

Transparency, provenance, integrity, sincerity are of importance and when informed properly bring added value to products and producers

Digital Dialog -project: participants

- Hyvätuuli Highland Oy (pedigree cattle: meat and processed producer)
- Kalakontti Saimaa Oy (fish: fresh meat and processed products)
- Hauhalan Hanhifarmi (goose meat and processed products)
- Hukkasen Lammastila (lamb: meat and processed products)
- Marjatila Teittinen (berries: juices and and processed products)
- Puula-Särvin Oy (fish: fresh and processed products)
- KaaKana Oy (eggs)
- Aten Marja Oy (berries: juices and processed products)
- Rapiion Tuote Oy (grain: processed products)
- Haapasen kotileipomo (bakery)