

Innovation Project

Food and Agriculture Cluster



eks: Integration of a New Line of Regional and Organically Raised Food Products for the Catering Trade

The Protestant Hospital Service GmbH (eks) was founded in 1997. The catering service of the KS includes not only the delivery to hospitals, rehabilitation centers and senior citizens facilities, but also catering services for factory canteens, kindergartens and schools. The EKS has a total of 250 staff and prepares approximately 3500 meals per day in the cook-and-chill procedure. This permits it to de-link food preparation and food distribution, both spatially and chronologically. As a result of climate change, the availability and unquestioned quality of raw materials is ever more difficult to ensure. For these reasons, the KS is supplemented the existing concept of out-of-home catering with a new line of organically and regionally produced products.

The Need for Climate Adaptation

The delivery reliability in the quality of food may in the future be more strongly affected by quantity and quality fluctuations caused by climate change. These delivery bottlenecks may also cause price fluctuations. Moreover, as a result of climate change, the consumption habits and hence the demand for certain types of food may change. Moreover, the transportation and storage of food may be affected by rising temperatures and more frequent heat waves caused by the effects of climate change, which will in turn cause an increasing requirement for energy in order to cool the product. And the effects of extreme weather events on the caterers and logistics are also possible.

Implemented Measures

In the context of the project, the following climate adaptation measures were implemented in out-of-home catering:

- The implementation of a survey on vulnerability of out-of-home catering in the context of changes resulting from climate change
- The establishment of a regional reference network for quality control, guarantee of origin and an early warning system
- The development of a common regional marketing strategy (e.g., partners advertise with partners)



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Method and State of Implementation

With the establishment of a line of organic/regional food products, the issues of sustainability, climate protection and climate adaptation was integrated into the concept of out-of-home catering. In that way, an orientation toward quality competition was communicated. For example, some product lines now have an organic food certification.

A network has been initiated, together with regional producers and suppliers, in order to establish:

- common quality goals and quality standards
- common marketing strategies
- to build a joint cooperative effort in communicating with customers
- maintain long-term structures and knowledge in the region.

Results and Transferability

The implementation of a new catering line has the following implications in practice:

- ensuring quantity and quality is a key challenge
- communication between producers and consumers is an important condition for success (building trust, transparency)
- cooperation and networking at the regional level serves as an early warning system, and secures competitive advantages
- the key to success is building regional marketing structures, including procurement structures.



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