

Institutionen för kost- och idrottsvetenskap

# Nordic stakeholders and sustainable catering

av

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## ABSTRACT

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Sustainability deficits in modern food systems are widely reported and changes in food habits towards more sustainable eating patterns, including eating seasonal and locally produced food, have been suggested to minimise the environmental impact of food consumption and production. By means of national programmes and recommendations, the Nordic countries have taken the initiative for public catering to use local, organic and seasonal food in an attempt to create a healthier and more sustainable catering sector. But the problem is obvious, that sustainability action is not prioritised or sufficiently implemented everywhere and although the 'eating out phenomenon' is increasing every year, very little research has focused on sustainability action in the catering sector. The overall aim of this thesis is to analyse and discuss crucial factors for progress in sustainable catering as well as to establish a systems approach in research on food systems. Based on system thinking analysis of a Swedish survey and telephone interviews with stakeholders in the Nordic countries, crucial factors for sustainable catering can be linked to insufficient communication, ideological dilemmas due to conflicting messages but also to language deficiencies between stakeholders and other actors in the food system. System thinking would make it easier to make visible different stakeholders' views concerning sustainable catering but also to better understand the whole picture. Stakeholders such as professional food purchasers and procurers are important in the process but do not have the tools to handle the conflicting message between economical and environmental directives. Knowledge of how the concept of sustainable development is constructed will facilitate work on achieving sustainable catering.