Abstract

What do consumers really want?

Over the years, consumers’ demands and expectations when it comes to food have changed significantly. More and more consumers are demanding good quality food with i.e. clean and natural ingredients, an authentic, handmade touch, higher animal welfare standards or more sustainable production methods. It goes without saying that many food and beverage companies are keen to meet these consumer demands. However, they are often met with the challenge that the expectations from consumers are not equally matched with a willingness to pay (often significantly) more for the food and beverage products that actually meet these higher demands that consumers express to have. This fact can put the brakes on development efforts for higher quality in foods and beverages.

But not all consumers demand more than they are willing to pay for. The consumer segment called “Idealists” is in this context an extremely attractive target group, as they tend to ‘put their money where their mouth is’, so to say. This segment is about 20 pct. of the Danish population, often above 35 years old and have higher income than the average. They are not only interested in foods – they demand high quality and ethical standards – and they are both able and willing to pay for it. In fact, research shows that this segment spends up to 23 percent more on consumer goods compared to the average consumer, which includes more money on food and drink products. This makes them a very attractive target group. In addition, the ‘Idealists’ segment is often trendsetting when it comes to food and beverage consumption. Thus, following the attitudes and needs of this segment can point to the future of consumer demands.