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## Discussion: Foodservice operations and sustainable diets

[Carola Strassner](#)

17 Jun at 18:19

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Here's another question to ponder:

We made a distinction between institutional catering and hospitality services. On the basis of this distinction it is easy to argue that institutional catering has a special role in public health nutrition and in the responsibility for healthy, sustainable diets. Furthermore, on the basis of the distinction it may be possible to argue that hospitality does not carry this same responsibility because eating in restaurants or hotels is leisure time and one's own choice (and maybe responsibility) - so one may even argue that these operations do not need to contribute to sustainable diets.

What do you think? I'm very interested to hear your thoughts, ideas and opinions on this matter.

Best wishes, Carola

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Maybe the teachers would like to voice a statement too?

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[Clarisse Emeline Oceane Loaec](#)

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20 Jun 2017

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Hello,

In my opinion food specialists institutions - both institutional catering and hospitality services (and factories, by extension) - have, first : to be aware of issues conveyed by sustainable diet challenge and then, have to act to enhance the foodservice by offering alternatives (or looking for ones better for all pillars of the sustainable concept).

Indeed, they have knowledge and may have greater funds, means and impacts to implement new way of *supply* (partnership with local farms, fair trade and other point already mentioned in previous discussions ...), *transform food* (well-cooked to sublimate products but also to preserve and improve health benefits, way to promote non-usual local products or reduce waste and energy use per meal produce because of volume and tools developed for these structures to reduce cost production...) and *eating habits*

(but currently, I think than this last one is more specific for institutional catering because I don't think that hospitality services have to impose an 100% healthy diet for occasional moments or even an 100% local food product (but still fair trade - or other similar certification - because export is still a huge commercial outlet and provide food which can't grow in our latitude -or political situation-). (I am wondering about the consumer's acceptability of not having animal protein choice for diner in the menu which, even though it is not recommended in the French guideline ?)).

So, to conclude, institutional catering and hospitality services are "responsible" for their offer - even more than they are involved in the food chain as "specialist". Taking into account indirect impacts I am not sure than leisure time may be an argument to justify to choose less sustainable diet between two similar products (from environmental and external social and economic impact point of view), however from a personal economical and nutritional point of view an exception\* not seems as long term challenging than others impacts which feed-through to a very much larger scale than the consumer itself.

\*exception because, bringing a nutritional point of view, it may cost a lot for the society - for example : obesity, taking into account incidental and direct costs.

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21 Jun 2017

I agree with Clarisse that also the hospitality businesses should tackle sustainability issues with responsibility. Concerning policies, we might think of specific regulations banning some non-sustainable or unhealthy products, so that the society would bear lower healthcare and environmental costs; for example Mexico has introduced a 10% tax on sugary drinks in 2014 in order to reduce healthcare costs for diabetes and obesity; nonetheless, to date, consumers' freedom of choice is generally deemed so important to justify the costs bore by the society as a whole.

In this scenario sustainability in the hospitality services is mainly left to each business sensitivity to these themes, as they can choose to offer organic and local or just conventional food for instance; consumers' preferences, which might include a growing attention towards sustainability themes, might also drive the hospitality services to adapt their offers in order to remain competitive in a changing market.

To conclude hospitality businesses should be held accountable for their choices, but where regulations are unable to impose restrictions or requirements, raising awareness among a critical mass of consumers could be a winning strategy in order to drive the market. In my opinion the biggest challenge is to engage a substantial mass of consumers, and to overcome mistrust and ignorance (towards organic food e.g.) which (I believe) is still very present among some population segments in EU.

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1 Jul 2017

Thank you, Clarisse and Leonardo, for your replies and thoughts. I like the distinction that you both make between addressing sustainability issues over all horeca but not necessarily extending this to the actual meals offered daily in ho-re.

You raise an interesting point, Leonardo, about the concept of "unhealthy products". That would be a worthwhile discussion at some other point.

And a further interesting point raised - worthy of more discussion - is the question of regulations.

Both of these points take us into the sphere of (food) policies.

Kind regards, Carola

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[Carola Strassner](#)



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1 Jul 2017

Hello all, how about a little more discussion here? Thanks, Carola

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