

A SMART approach to public food in Malmö (Sweden)

School meals in Sweden are provided free of charge to all children. This leads to very high levels of uptake, with almost 90% of pupils in Malmö eating in school canteens. Menus are planned centrally for all schools. The food is procured and cooked in 25 government-owned kitchens before being distributed around the city.



In total, 40,000 school meals are served in Malmö each day and €15 million is spent on food from the wholesale provider each year. Levels of spend are high enough, and competition on the market strong enough to drive the market towards offering better value, sustainable products.

A policy for sustainability

The City of Malmö's [Policy for Sustainable Development and Food](#) has been in place since October 2010 and forms part of a broader drive to achieve 100% sustainable purchasing by 2020. One of the key goals outlined in this document is a 40% reduction of food-related greenhouse gases by 2020, compared to 2002 levels. It also states that by 2020 all food served by the City of Malmö shall be 100% organic.

Adhesion to the food policy is reinforced by awards given internally to purchasers who are proactively using the procurement mechanisms available to select sustainable food for their organisation.

The SMART way forward

Eat S.M.A.R.T. is a model developed by the Institute for Public Health in Stockholm. It includes five main recommendations: reducing meat consumption; minimising empty calories; increasing the amount of organic produce; carefully choosing the right sort of meat and vegetables from an environmental and health perspective; and increasing transport efficiency. Malmö has adopted this approach in its food policy and is working on implementing it in the city's procurement activities.

Emissions reduction

One of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions is meat production, especially red meat. Malmö has taken a holistic approach to school menus, not just by introducing vegetarian options but also by reducing the amount of meat used in meals and swapping out meats with a high carbon footprint (such as beef) for less polluting alternatives (such as chicken).



Vegetarian-only menus have also been introduced each week, which not only broadens the types of foods more traditional meat-eaters get to try but also raises awareness of the link between pollution and their plate.

Malmö has managed to achieve a 5% reduction in emissions so far and is actively looking into the carbon footprint of other aspects of the food supply chain. This is carried out using a tool developed by the Swedish Institute of Biotechnology for internal monitoring of CO₂ emissions. There is also guidance in the web based purchasing system, which marks environmentally friendly products with a green dot to indicate to devolved buyers which are the greenest options. Statistical analysis is then used to see what percentage of these products have been purchased from the city's food contract.

Put your money where your mouth is

By selecting organic varieties in place of conventional food products, Malmö has been successful in using its purchasing power to drive down the price of organic food. This has been particularly successful when it comes to purchasing organic milk. In 2014, 44 % of food purchased by the city was organic and this proportion continues to rise.

