



Final Report

For DARCOF II research projects financed by grants from
The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business
under the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

1. Research program

Research in organic farming 2000-2005 (DARCOF II)

2. Project title and number

The Role of the Distribution Channel in the Establishment and Maintenance of Consumer Trust in Organic Foods. A Qualitative Sociological Investigation

Project nr. III.8 (formerly: VII.13)

3. Head of project

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4. Participating institutes

The only institute participating in this project is:
Dept. of Human Nutrition & Centre of Advanced Food Studies
(Sociology of Food Research Group)
Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (KVL)

Slutrapporten sendes elektronisk til Forskningscenter for Økologisk Jordbrug
foejo@agrsci.dk senest 3 måneder efter projektets afslutning.

Slutrapporten vedlægges et dansk resumé.

5. Other project staff

Per Dissing Odgaard, Research Assistant (full-time for the period:01.01.03-31.01.03 and part-time for the period 01.02.03-30.04.03)

Lotte Sangstad, Research Assistant (full-time for the period 09.01.03-31.01.03)

Sara Malou Strandvad, Student (part-time technical and practical assistance with preparing, conducting and transcribing focus group interviews, 2003-2004)

Anders Hoff, Student (part-time technical assistance with transcriptions of focus group and personal interviews, 2004)

Dept. of Human Nutrition & Centre of Advanced Food Studies: KVL
(Sociology of Food Research Group)

6. Project period (month, year)

Start of project: October 2002

End of project: December 2004

7. Final report

Project summary

Note: Two scientific articles are currently in preparation (as noted under E, 2.1 and 2.2 below). Since the work is not yet completed and will not be publicly available until August 2005, a somewhat fuller summary and account of results than might be usual in a final report are included here.

Table A.1: Work package list (from application)

No.	Work package title	Participants*	Budget (1.000 DKK)	Start	End	Deliverable no(s):
1**	Consumer trust in organic foods	<u>K. O'Doherty Jensen</u>	1.550	10.02	12.04	1-3
		P. D. Odgaard				
		L. Sangstad				

* Responsible participant is underlined

** This research project comprises a single workpackage

This project was designed to follow up insights that emerged from a critical review of the available national and international social research concerning consumer motives for buying organic foods (O'Doherty Jensen *et al.*, Økologiske Fødevarer og menneskets sundhed. [Organic foods and human health] Foulum: FØJO-rapport nr. 14, 2001). Most of the available research is based on the premise that risk perception plays a significant role in motivating consumers, such that product advantages are seen as accruing to organic foods in so far as they do *not* incorporate such risks. A more general premise of marketing theory and market research, to the effect that consumers are only interested in product advantages, and not in production or distribution processes, also underlies these approaches. In contrast, the present project was designed to develop an alternative conceptual framework regarding these issues, originally inspired by Polanyi's economic theory. This approach is one that yields the possibility of conceiving buyer motives with regard to 'alternative' foods in positive terms, and it suggests that consumers' discernment of both the trustworthiness of products and of food risks are dependent upon their discernment of the trustworthiness of producers.

Since distribution channels comprise the interface between consumers and producers, this project was accordingly designed to compare differences between consumers who purchase organic foods through distinct channels, exploring a new set of hypotheses regarding the basis for consumer trust in and demand for organic foods.

Methods of data collection

Two channels of direct distribution were selected as a result of fieldwork (personal interviews, telephone interviews and observation studies) carried out among primary producers of organic food during the initial phase of the investigation. Farmer run box schemes and market stalls in urban areas were selected, mainly on the grounds that these were the two forms of direct sale which functioned in a satisfactory manner, as observed and as reported by farmers. At the same time, they each represented different kinds of shopping experience, as seen from a consumer perspective (Odgaard and O'Doherty Jensen, 2003).

The main phase of investigation comprised a consumer study based on the collection and analysis of qualitative data collected from 12 focus groups, which in turn comprised a stratified sample of 3 sub-groups. A screening questionnaire was developed and all participants were screened by telephone interview prior to recruitment. Among the inclusion criteria common to all participants were that they are responsible or co-responsible for day-to-day shopping in their own households and were between the ages of 25 and 60 years. The 3 sub-groups, from each of which 4 focus groups were recruited, were as follows:

- 1) *Supermarket shoppers*, of whom 2 groups comprised those identified as ‘occasional’ buyers of organic products, while 2 further groups were those identified as ‘frequent’ buyers.
- 2) Subscribers to one of two ‘box schemes’ run by one or more farmers and growers who weekly or fortnightly supply households with direct delivery of a box of organic products, two groups of subscribers being recruited from each such scheme.
- 3) Shoppers who regularly (once a month as a minimum) buy organic products at a *market stall* run by an organic farmer and located in one of two urban areas, two groups being recruited among the shoppers at each stall.

The geographical distribution was such that 4 focus groups were recruited among residents in the greater Copenhagen area, 4 focus groups were located in the Aarhus area, and 4 groups were resident on Fyn.

The total sample comprised 108 participants, of whom 15% were men and 85% women, this distribution being a common pattern in studies in which respondents are responsible for grocery shopping in their households. Although the frequency with which organic as compared to conventional foods are purchased was not an inclusion criterion in recruiting direct buyers, it transpired that most direct buyers are in fact ‘heavy users’ of organic foods. It should be noted that this study is based upon a purposive rather than representative method of sampling. Approximately three quarters of the total sample would be characterised by any of the criteria commonly employed in consumer studies in this field as being ‘frequent’ or ‘heavy’ users of organic food.

The methods of data collection, including criteria used in selecting box schemes and market stalls, the screening questionnaire used for recruitment, the operationalisation of frequency measures and the interview schedule used in all 12 focus groups, are described in more detail elsewhere (O’Doherty Jensen 2004).

Theoretical framework

The consumption theory, which informed methods of data collection and analysis, was drawn from two main sources. The framework employed in the analysis of product conceptions distinguishes ‘categories’ and attributes of food, which refer to differences in *kind*, and ‘gradient’ characteristics, which refer to differences of *degree* (*cf.* section E: O’Doherty Jensen 2002, 2003, 2003a, 2003b). These aspects were explored in focus groups by a number of tasks which called upon participants to group or rank a range of conventional and organic food products that included fresh produce and processed products, followed by questions regarding why particular foods belonged together or were ranked in the order agreed upon. The normative criteria used by these consumers in their assessments of products, production methods and producers, were analysed using the theoretical framework regarding ‘orders of worth’ (sometimes referred to as ‘conventions theory’) developed by Thevenot and Boltanski (*cf.* O’Doherty Jensen 2004). The orders of moral worth applied in the analysis undertaken to date distinguishes: ‘market’, ‘industrial’, ‘civic’, ‘aesthetic’, ‘domestic’ and ‘environmental’ orders. These aspects were explored by the use of several methods, which were designed to elicit explicit and implicit criteria of assessment. A fruitful method of eliciting implicit conceptions of primary producers was a task that called upon participants to draw pictures of conventional and organic farms respectively, and then to explain what the drawing depicted.

Methods of analysis and hypotheses tested

The main objective of analysis was to compare differences among and between sub-samples in regard to their purchasing practices, assessments of shopping experiences, conceptions and assessments of organic foods, producers and production methods. The analysis was based on complete transcripts of all audio-recorded data collected in the course of interview sessions, supplemented by video-recordings of sessions, digital photographs of solutions to group tasks and scanned images of 216 drawings made by participants. The analysis was facilitated by the use of *Atlas.ti* software.

The hypotheses tested were: (1) that product conceptions differ between sub-groups, (2) that product conceptions are systematically related to conceptions and assessments of producers and production methods, and differ between sub-groups, (3) that consumer assessments of both products and producers are viewed in moral as well as market terms, and differ between sub-groups.

Results, conclusions and practical implications are outlined under **C1** below.

Objectives and expected achievements

The main objectives were:

- To contribute to sociological theory of consumption by developing a more adequate conceptual framework for understanding and explaining consumer demand for organic foods
- On the basis of data obtained from 3 sub-groups of Danish consumers, to identify differences and similarities with regard to factors motivating preferences for organic foods among supermarket customers as compared to customers of direct sales outlets.
- To assess the practical implications of this empirical analysis for producers, processors and consumers of organic foods with specific regard to the principle of 'proximity' (*narhedsprincippet*), as this principle impinges on strategic selections of distribution/shopping outlets.

Expected achievements expected were:

- That *theoretical development* would account for (a) the influence of tacitly conceived gradient characteristics of food products (e.g. as being more or less 'natural', 'environmentally friendly', 'fair', 'trustworthy', 'healthy', 'harmful' or 'authentic', etc.) on product preferences, and (b) relationships between 'product' and 'process' characteristics of food, as conceived by consumers.
- That *empirical results* would regard an issue that is virtually unexplored at present: relationships between consumer conceptions of supply chains (producers, processors, distributors and production/marketing processes) and conceptions of/preference for organic products.
- That popular presentation of the *practical implications* of results would contribute to debate in two circles. (a) Organic farmers, growers and processors and their organizations, regarding the relative importance of local food links and/or short supply chains in marketing strategy; advantages and disadvantages of direct distribution, as seen from a consumer viewpoint; and the need to explicitly incorporate a wider range of social and ethical issues in future discussions of organic policy and principles. (b) Consumers, regarding some differences between local and global supply chains; reasons why some farmers and small processors opt for direct distribution of products; some consequences of supporting local/short chain suppliers; and some advantages that might accrue to organized consumer involvement in shopping for organic foods, e.g. bulk buying by tenants' associations.

C. Progress and results

C.1 Description (summary) of main results and conclusions

Some main findings regarding similarities and differences between sub-groups:

Consumer characteristics:

- Direct buyers and 'frequent' buyers in supermarkets differ from 'occasional' buyers in having relatively higher levels of education and in that relatively many are employed in the public sector in the areas of education, social services and health, or in fields related to the arts.
- Except among those in their fifties or older, *time* is an important constraint for the members of all sub-groups with respect to their shopping. Members of box-schemes perceive their deliveries of food as timesaving.
- Some participants in all sub-groups experience *money* as a constraint when shopping. Buyers in supermarkets tend to regard the premium price on organic products as a barrier to more frequent purchases, especially on products for which price differences between organic and conventional variants are relatively high. Direct buyers are more inclined to make their purchases affordable by buying fresh as compared to processed foods, by eating less meat, by producing some foods themselves or by cutting down on non-food consumption.

Shopping patterns:

- With few exceptions, participants in all sub-groups do some shopping in supermarkets, but the feature that distinguishes 'occasional' buyers is that they more rarely shop elsewhere than in supermarkets. Relatively many direct buyers do much of their grocery shopping in small speciality stores that carry the organic products they seek. Some also purchase organic foods through more than one direct channel. These shopping patterns are also found among some members of the subgroup comprising 'frequent' buyers in supermarkets.

Criteria of food selection:

- Members of all sub-groups express preferences for products that taste good, are good (in the sense of healthy and nutritious), and are fresh (i.e. are fresh produce that are actually fresh or are processed products with a sell-by date that appears to be reasonable, as compared to unreasonably soon or unreasonably prolonged). Among other criteria mentioned particularly by 'occasional' buyers are 'quality', 'convenience' and 'price'. Direct buyers by contrast place very many high demands on the eating and process qualities of their food, mentioning among other criteria: organic production method, origin, seasonality, locality, character of the supplier, size of the enterprise, maturity of the product at harvesting/slaughtering time, level of animal welfare, level of processing, ingredients and packaging. The mere fact that products carry the 'organic' label provides no guarantee of their acceptability to direct buyers.
- With regard to their willingness to substitute organic foods with conventional variants, each of these sub-groups could be ranged on a scale in which 'occasional' buyers in supermarkets are at one end, followed by 'frequent' buyers in supermarkets, then members of box schemes, while market stall customers are at the far end of this scale. Relatively many of the latter tend to revise their shopping lists or menu plans if the foods they want are only available as conventional variants, choosing instead among organic or biodynamic foods that are available.

Shopping experiences:

- In recounting “good” and “bad” experiences related to shopping for food, stories told by consumers in all sub-groups focus more on interpersonal experiences than on experiences with products. “Bad” experiences for the most part regard indifference or ignorance shown by the supplier/sales person, while “good” experiences regard the pride taken by the supplier/sales person in the products on sale, the ability to supply product information and/or the care taken to meet the particular needs of the consumer.
- Most direct buyers express great loyalty towards and satisfaction with their selected (direct) supplier. This pattern does not occur among supermarket shoppers.

Conceptions of organic and conventional products:

- All sub-groups readily categorise a wide variety of organic and conventional food products in similar ways according to familiar food-groups (fruit and vegetables, bread and pasta, animal products or dairy and meat, etc.).
- All sub-groups tend to rank food products within the same food group (fresh, sun-dried and tinned tomatoes, tomato puree, ketchup and soup) according to the degree of processing involved. The fresh variant constitutes the prototype of all ‘tomato’ products, for example, while tomato products are ranked according to how little (of the prototypical) tomato is left by the processing techniques used and what other ingredients are added. It would appear that ‘additives’ is often used as a blanket term to describe all non-tomato ingredients added during the processing of tomato products, and that much distrust of processors is related distrust of the reasons why these other ingredients are added to the products at issue.
- Among direct and ‘frequent’ buyers, ‘organic’ constitutes a basic category that appears to be operative in the context of shopping – quite disregarding the food groups at issue. Among occasional users on the other hand, ‘organic’ refers to a subordinate category constituted by a gradient difference between conventional and organic variants of the same food product. (The evidence for this regards the ways in which food products are grouped and ranked. When given a large variety of conventional and organic food products and asked to group them, direct and ‘frequent’ buyers tended to divide the entire assembly of products into two groups: organic or biodynamic on the one hand (“things we would buy”) and conventional on the other. They then proceeded to consider further sub-divisions within these two groupings, such as which food groups they belonged to and which organic products should be relegated to the category of “things we would *not* buy”. The ‘occasional’ buyers in contrast divided the assembly into familiar food groups. One of the sub-divisions subsequently made within each food group was a distinction between ‘organic’ and ‘conventional’. When asked to rank *conventional* tomato products, all sub-groups proceeded in the manner outlined above. But when asked to rank *organic* variants of the same products in relation to this arrangement, direct and ‘frequent’ buyers tended to accord a higher ranking to *all* organic products, such that *all* conventional products were ranked lower. ‘Occasional’ buyers, on the other hand, ranked most of the organic variants as being one step higher or “better” than their conventional counterparts.)

Conceptions of the relationship between products, production methods and producers:

- Asked why ‘organic’ products constitute a distinct category or why they are ranked more highly, reference is sometimes made to the organic label (by ‘occasional’ buyers), but most often reference is made to differences between organic and conventional production methods and to the motives underlying food production.
- In accounting for differences between organic and conventional production, some reference to the principles, rules or practices that distinguish organic production was

made by half of the ‘occasional’ buyers, by two-thirds of the ‘frequent’ buyers and members of box schemes, but by almost all of the market stall buyers. Among ‘occasional’ buyers of organic foods in supermarkets conceptions of such differences tend to be somewhat vague, ranging from those who are unsure of what the differences are to those who emphasise that pesticides are not used in organic production or that organic farmers are more concerned about animal welfare.

Assessments of organic as compared to conventional production methods

- Conventional production tends to be assessed by all sub-groups as a form of production based on the premises and values of ‘industry’ (efficiency, quantity, large scale, mechanisation and standardisation) and of the ‘market’ (profits, subsidisation, and supplier of commodities to the food industry).
- ‘Civic’ (health, well-being, welfare, animal and consumer rights) and ‘environmental’ (biodiversity and pollution) orders of moral worth are among the standpoints from which the combined benefits of organic production are assessed. Direct buyers tend to see these aspects as interrelated.
- The ‘domestic’ order of moral worth (focussing on care, trust, esteem, family and community relationships) constitutes a central standpoint from which differences between conventional and organic production are assessed. ‘Occasional’ buyers tend to express the hope that organic farms are happier or nicer places to be and to work, and somewhat romantic or nostalgic images are characteristic of the ways in which they depict traditional family-farms as organic farms. A specific focus on the values of being in touch with and caring for and about the needs of soil, plants and animals, as well as the real need of people who will consume their food, occurs among some buyers in supermarkets and members of box schemes (1 in 8, in each case), but by half of all customers at market stalls.

Assessments of products:

- A tendency to assess food products, not just production methods, in moral terms is made evident by the terms used to describe organic food among direct and ‘frequent’ buyers of these products. Among these are: “decent”, “defensible” and “proper” food, and “...the nearest we have been able to get so far to ‘goodness’ in food”.

Conclusions

This study confirms the pattern whereby considerations of taste, health and freshness appear to play a central role in all selections of food by consumers, as identified by many sociological studies of food choice. Particular organic food products may be assessed as being tastier, healthier or fresher than their conventional counterparts, selected for one or more of these reasons, and accounted for by reference to these same criteria. It is therefore not possible on the basis of these criteria alone to advance our understanding of the reasons why some consumers exhibit a preference for many different foods in the ‘organic’ category.

This study indicates that direct and ‘frequent’ buyers conceive organic food products as being intrinsically different from conventional products by reason of the production methods used, which in turn are seen as reflecting the concern of producers to satisfy consumer needs in acceptable ways. The over-arching reason why many different foods in the ‘organic’ category are preferred can thus be understood as an expression of a moral concern with the purpose, methods and consequences of producing food. This concern tends to be seen by direct buyers as one they share with their selected food supplier.

The results of this study indicate that two of the premises upon which market research in this field have been based, are mistaken. The first is a general assumption to the effect that consumers are only interested in product ‘advantages’ and have little or no concern with the production methods or the people that lie behind them. The second refers to the assumption that

it is fruitful to identify ‘health’, ‘environment’ or ‘animal welfare’ as distinct motives for choosing organic products, to measure the extent to which consumers concur with statements/questions on these issues, and to identify market ‘segments’ on this basis. It is found that these premises do not generally hold among consumers of organic foods who buy directly from food producers, least of all among those who have direct contact with the producer at point of sale. On the contrary, it is found that these issues are interrelated aspects of an over-arching desire to be able to trust other stakeholders to contribute to the task of food provisioning in ways that are acceptable. Given the scope of this qualitative study, it is not possible to conclude to what extent consumers who ‘occasionally’ buy organic food products in supermarkets share this moral concern. The limited data available suggest that they do so, as evidenced by the general concern with care and indifference, respectively, in stories about good and bad shopping experiences.

Practical implications

This study illuminates some differences between the ‘niche’ and ‘mainstream’ markets for organic food as seen from a consumer viewpoint. The implications that might be drawn by primary producers would probably depend upon the extent to which they tend to view the ‘niche’ market as a factor that should be largely disregarded in the Danish context, how they view the character of and basis for consumer demand, and upon the extent to which they wish to continue to rely upon the findings and premises of market research in this field. Clearly this study provides some ammunition for those organic producers who have pursued what is sometimes called the ‘purist’ line of policy. With the possible exception of consumers, this researcher would prefer to discuss practical implications with stakeholders than to declare them – at least at the present time. This has also been done in several venues (*cf.* section E.2 below). Among the topics calling for debate are:

- How the retail sector can best satisfy the information needs of consumers, given the assumption that the need to trust products and the people behind them is the greater need?
- Can organic policy be developed beyond the confines of an agricultural policy to become a food policy? Can such a food policy be developed in ways that reflect the social and ethical concerns of ‘heavy users’ of organic foods?
- Can conflicting views on policy be addressed by the development of differentiated codes of practice?
- Which conflicts of interest can be identified between stakeholders in organic food provisioning, and which need to be addressed in public debate?
- Which organizational initiatives on the supply and demand side could support the future establishment of local food links?

Need for further research

There are four areas in which the results of this study need to be developed further.

1. The cognitive theory employed in the analysis of product conceptions has thus far only been applied in qualitative studies (O’Doherty Jensen 2002, 2003, 2003a, 2003b; Korzen-Bohr & O’Doherty Jensen 2005). There is a need to test the usefulness of this theory by applying it to a wider range of (quantitative) data. This task is being undertaken by KOJ in the current year in a study of meal patterns, funded by the Danish Research Council: *Betydningsdannelser bag forbrugsmonstre* [Meaning constructs underlying consumption patterns].

2. The study yields a new account of factors that currently motivate some consumers to purchase and consume organic foods with a relatively high frequency, but it does not elucidate the sequence in which these interrelated aspects develop in the course of personal/household histories of consumption patterns. This aspect will be explored in a study, of which KOJ is workpackage leader, to be undertaken among Danish, British and Italian consumers in 2006-07 as part of the

EU-funded IP project: *Quality Low Input Food* (QLIF).

3. The study yields a relatively clear and coherent account of the interrelationship between conceptions of products and producers among direct buyers and other heavy users of organic foods, but it remains unclear to what extent this account holds among the numerically greater group of consumers who buy organic food with less frequency. This is among the central questions addressed in a research proposal for which funding has been sought under the DARCOF III programme: *The Viability and Stability of Demand: The Future Outlook for the Organic Market in Denmark* (acronym: CONCEPTS).

4. There is a need to explore the extent to which different stakeholders in organic food provisioning systems have similar or dissimilar conceptions of their respective tasks and methods as well as their products. This study suggests that consumers perceive a conflict of interest between their needs and the projects pursued by multinationals and other major players in the food industry, by food processors in general, and by supermarket chains (as well as by conventional farmers and growers). Two EU-funded studies in which this researcher is involved have taken the delineation of consumer concerns as the basis upon which the management and marketing of products can be planned, leaving the important issue of possible conflict between and among stakeholders unexplored. This researcher has not yet sought funding to pursue this issue.

C.2 Fulfilment of deliverables and milestones

(To be completed for each work package)

WP 1: Consumer trust in organic foods	Time schedule according to application	Deviations, if any*	Full filled
Deliverables			
1. Report: data on direct distribution channels (working paper)	03.03		07.03
2. Report: practical implications of results (popular article)	09.04	Delayed in part*	
3. Report (scientific articles submitted)	12.04	Delayed* (in preparation)	
Milestones			
1. Producer data on distribution channels collected	03.03		07.03
2. Consumer data collected	07.03		03.04*
3. Data analysis completed	05.04		11.04*

* *Deviations are to be further discussed in D*

The above list of deliverables and milestones is that presented at the midterm evaluation of this project. The list was changed from that which appeared in the original application by agreement with the leader of DARCOF, such that all deliverables refer to publicly accessible products only and milestones to main stages in the research process, details regarding internal phases of the work process being omitted. Delivery dates, which were revised at mid-term no longer appear, however, in this version of the table.

D. Description of deviations and subsequent adjustments of plans

The main reasons why reports (D2) and (D3) have been delayed are due to delays regarding the collection of consumer data (M2). According to the mid-term estimate, this milestone should have been reached by the end of 2003. This could not be achieved due to the time-consuming and difficult process of recruiting members of box schemes and customers at market stalls in a manner that would fulfil the quality demands of sampling procedure. The recruitment staff at Gads Research and Reflections, a company that specialises in the recruitment of respondents to qualitative studies, provided excellent help in this process.

It transpired that the recruitment of supermarket customers yielded no unusual difficulties. The selection of box schemes, however, was limited to schemes that were sufficiently large as to have 40- 50 customers resident within a limited geographical area, from which two focus groups each comprising 10 participants could be recruited to meet at a given date and time. Furthermore, in order to avoid selection bias, the manager of each scheme should be willing to supply a full list of all members within a given area. The practical difficulties of recruiting customers at market stalls were less surmountable. Having identified two stalls at which farmers and growers sold their own produce, this was achieved by brief questionnaire-based interviews with the customers at each stall requesting information about how often they shopped at this stall and whether we might note their telephone number. Given the limited "opening" time at each stall, this process took five weeks (one day per week at each venue) to complete. One stall had closed for the winter season before a sub-population of sufficient size to initiate screening and recruitment had been completed. In order to avoid the bias that might be introduced by interviewing two sub-samples in different seasons (and the risk of extending data collection into the Christmas period), it was decided to postpone all data collection to start mid-January, 2004. This led to a corresponding delay in the completion of data analysis (M3). The tasks of completing scientific articles and further dissemination of results and considerations with regard to practical implications are being undertaken in the current year concurrently with other work. It is estimated that both articles in preparation will be completed by August 2005 and further dissemination of results will take place during the autumn 2005 (*cf.* E, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6, below).

E. Project publications and other products

1. Products from Organic Eprints archive

Peer-reviewed and accepted

English

O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine (2002) [Gradient Blends: The Art of Discerning and Doing the Appropriate Thing](#), in Hougaard, Anders and Nordahl Lund, Steffen, Eds. *The Way We Think, Vol I*, page pp. 245-265. Odense Working Papers in Language and Communication 23. University of Southern Denmark.**

Torjusen, Hanne; Sangstad, Lotte; O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine and Kjærnes, Unni (2004) [European consumers' conceptions of organic food: A review of available research](#) Professional Report no. 4-2004. Oslo: National Institute for Consumer Research.

Danish

O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine (2003) [Hvad er "rigtig mad"?](#) [What is "Proper" Food?], in Holm, Lotte, Eds. *Mad, mennesker og måltider - samfundsvidenskabelige perspektiver*, chapter 4, page pp. 51-64. Munksgaard.**

Not peer-reviewed**English**

Jacobsen, Eivind; Torjusen, Hanne; O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine and Kjærnes, Unni (2005) [European consumers' conceptions of the safety and quality of organic food](#). Working Paper, National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO), Norway, & Dept. of Human Nutrition, KVL, Denmark.**

O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine (2004) [Moral Concerns about Food Products and Production Methods among Consumers of Organic Foods: A Report of Some Preliminary Results from an On-Going Qualitative Study](#). Paper presented at Bi-annual Meeting of the Consumer Network of the European Sociological Association, Copenhagen, August 26-28th, 2004, page pp. 1-18.

Torjusen, Hanne; Kjærnes, Unni and O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine (2005) [Social and Ethical Aspects \[of Organic Food Provisioning\]](#). Working Paper, National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO), Norway, & Dept. of Human Nutrition, KVL, Denmark.**

Danish

Dissing Odgaard, Per and O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine (2003) [Det direkte salg af økologiske fødevarer i Danmark: Arbejdsrapport vedrørende første fase af en kvalitativ undersøgelse](#) [Direct Sales Channels for Organic Foods in Denmark: A Working Paper regarding Phase I of a Qualitative Study]. Working Paper, Department of Human Nutrition and Centre for Advanced Food Studies: KVL.

O'Doherty Jensen, Katherine (2003) [SPØRREGUIDE TIL FOKUSGRUPPER: PROJEKT 'DISTRUSTING' \(FØJO II\)](#) [THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PROJECT 'DISTRUSTING'(DARCOF II)]. Dept. of Human Nutrition, KVL.

2. Other products (oral presentations, public meetings, field days, etc.)**Products from this project under preparation:**

2.1) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (in preparation 2005): 'How Occasional and Heavy Users of Organic Foods Conceive and Categorise Differences between Organic and Conventional Products'. (Working title of article currently under preparation for submission to: *Journal of Agriculture and Human Values*.)

2.2) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (in preparation 2005): 'Food, Farmers and Firms as Seen by Supermarket Shoppers and Direct Buyers of Organic Foods'. (Working title of article currently

under preparation for submission to: *Food Policy*.)

Product under preparation incorporating perspectives from this project, but primarily regarding a related project:

2.3) ** Weir M, Andersen L M, Millock K, **O'Doherty Jensen K** & Rosenkvist L (in preparation 2005): 'Perceptions and consumption of organic foods – trust, concerns, values and behaviour'. (Working title of article currently under revision prior to submission.)

Other products from this project published elsewhere:

2.4) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2004): 'Salgskanalens betydning for forbrugerne' [Implications of the sales channel seen from a consumer viewpoint']. Abstract of presentation to the workshop on 'Consumer Contact' at: Økologi-kongres, November 16th-17th, Odense, Denmark. [Biannual national conference on Organic Agriculture and Food]. In: *Vision og Virkelighed: Kongresbilag* [Vision and Reality: Book of Abstracts], Økologi-kongres 2004, p. 118-119.

2.5) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2004): 'Storforbrugere ønsker anstændige fødevarer' ['Decent' Foods is What Heavy Users Want], *FØJOenyt*, Nr. 5, Nyhedsbrev fra Forskningscenter for Økologisk Jordbrug [An electronic newsletter from DARCOF]. October 2004, (Available from: <http://www-foejo.dk/enyt2/enyt/okt04/>).

2.6) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2004): 'Distributionsformens betydning for troværdigheden af økologiske fødevarer' [Implications of the distribution channel for trust placed in organic food products]. A leaflet describing preliminary findings of Project VII.8. FØJO [DARCOF]: Foulum, Denmark.

Unpublished presentations of the results of this project:

2.7) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2004): 'Consumer perspectives on the Direct Distribution of Organic Foods. Preliminary Results of an On-Going Study'. Power Point presentation to the international conference '*From Agriculture to Culture: The Social Transformation of Food*', organized jointly by: *Association for the Study of Food and Society and Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society*, June 10th-13th, 2004, Hyde Park, New York, USA.

2.8) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2004): 'Moral Concerns about Food Products and Production Methods among Consumers of Organic Food: Preliminary Results'. Power Point presentation of data and results to the bi-annual meeting of the Consumer Network of ESA (European Sociological Association, August 26th-28th, Copenhagen, Denmark.

2.9) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2004): 'Consumer Perspectives on Organic Foods and Farming'. A guest lecture and discussion presented at the international Summer School for Ph.D. students under the auspices of SOAR (Research School for Organic Agriculture and Food, KVL), September 20th-24th, Middlefart, Denmark.

2.10) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2004): 'Salgskanalens betydning for forbrugerne' [Implications of the sales channel seen from a consumer viewpoint']. Presentation to the workshop on

'Consumer Contact' at: Økologi-kongres [national conference on Organic Agriculture and Food], November 16th-17th, Odense, Denmark..

2.11) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2005): 'Økologi: Mad med og uden Ansvar' [Organic Food: Responsible and Irresponsible Food Production]. Presentation given at '*Oprør fra Maven*' [*The Belly Rebellion*], an event to mark *Women's International Day* and the founding of a new national organization, March 8th, Copenhagen, Denmark.

2.12) **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2005): 'Consumer Perspectives on Organic Foods and Farming'. A workshop for international students of agriculture participating in the bachelor course on 'Ecological Agriculture', Socrates European Common Curriculum, held on March 30th at KVL, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Unpublished presentations incorporating theoretical perspectives from this project, but primarily regarding related projects:

2.13) ** Torjusen H, Sangstad L, **O'Doherty Jensen K**, & Kjærnes, U (2004): 'European Consumers' Conceptions of Organic Foods. Paper presented to: (1) Workshop on Assurance of Quality and Safety in Organic Production Chains' Basel, Jan. 2004, and to (2) 6th European Symposium of the International Farming Systems Organization, Vila Real, Portugal, April 2004.

2.14) ** Torjusen H, Kjærnes U, & **O'Doherty Jensen K**, (2005): 'Understanding Consumer Quality Assurance Demands'. Presentation made at the Organic HACCP Workshop, held in association with the International Congress on *Organic Farming, Food Quality and Health*, January 6th- 9th, 2005, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom.

Other products referred to in this report (not financed by DARCOF):

O'Doherty Jensen K, Halkjær J & Haraldsdóttir (2003a): 'Food Categorization: A Key to Understanding Cognitive Difficulties in Responding to Food Frequency Questions'. In: K O'Doherty Jensen: *The Contribution of Cognitive Semantics to the Development of Sociological Theory of Food Culture and Food Practices*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur Grafik, pp. 92-120.

O'Doherty Jensen K (2003b): 'Accounting for the Implicit Meaning of a Cultural Convention: The 'Proper Dinner' Revisited from the Vantage Point of Blending Theory'. In: K O'Doherty Jensen: *The Contribution of Cognitive Semantics to the Development of Sociological Theory of Food Culture and Food Practices*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur Grafik, pp. 139-182.

Korzen-Bohr S. & **O'Doherty Jensen K** (2005): 'Heart Disease among Post-Menopausal Women: Acceptability of Functional Foods as a Preventive Measure'. (Manuscript shortly to be submitted to *Appetite*.)

* 25-75% financed by DARCOF

** 5-25% financed by DARCOF

F. Scientific education

This project made small, but not insignificant, contributions to the scientific education of its personnel. A newly qualified anthropologist, Per Dissing Odgaard, was provided with work experience relevant for his future career for a limited period (*cf.* section 5) regarding bibliographical search, interviewing and observation methods. Lotte Sangstad, a newly qualified sociologist, also gained relevant experience regarding specialised bibliographical search for a brief period. Both students employed on this project were engaged in undertaking transcripts of interviews and had prior experience of this task. Sara Strandvad also obtained new experience and skills by providing valuable technical and practical assistance in conducting focus group interviews. She has since been employed in this capacity by colleagues at the Dept. of Human Nutrition, Sociology of Food Research Group. Finally, the project also made a small contribution (2 person months) to the completion of a Ph.D. thesis, submitted to KVL Nov. 30th 2002 and conferred on Katherine O'Doherty Jensen on May 7th, 2003.

G. National and international cooperation

Work on this project led directly to the establishment of new co-operative links with research and education networks regarding organic agriculture and organic food, both in Denmark and elsewhere.

Networks based in Denmark are:

- a. Members of a newly established network, mainly comprising social scientific researchers based at Food and Resource Economics Institute (FOI), Dept. of Human Nutrition (IHE) and Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment (CEBRA) at KVL, Institute of Local Government Studies (AKF), National Environmental Research Institute (DMU), and Danish Institute for Food and Veterinary Research, have cooperated in the development of an interdisciplinary research proposal designed to advance the social scientific consumer research financed under the DARCOF II programme. The results of the present project regarding the conceptualisation and categorisation of organic food products have been central to the formulation of problems to be investigated in the proposed research. Application for funding (entitled: 'The Viability and Stability of Demand: The Future Outlook for the Organic Market in Denmark' (acronym: CONCEPTS)) has been made under the DARCOF III programme.
- b. SOAR: The presentation of results of this project at courses of study under the auspices of the Research School for Organic Agriculture and Food, KVL (*cf.* section E: 2.9 and 2.12) led to an invitation to participate in the planning of further educational initiatives and to some cooperation regarding research. Data collected in the present study (drawings made by participants in focus groups, depicting differences between conventional and organic farms/ farmers, subsequently scanned, and incorporated into a power point presentation), have since been incorporated into a Ph.D. project that includes focus group interviews with agricultural advisors. This has enabled both researchers to obtain insight into the extent to which different stakeholders in organic production chains (advisors and consumers) have dissimilar conceptions of production methods and producers.
- c. The cognitive theory employed in the analysis of data in the present study regarding conceptualisation and categorisation of organic foods was developed (since 1998) in association with specialists in the theory of 'conceptual blending' in Denmark and USA (members of the NTSMB-network based at Dept. of Phi-

losophy, University of Southern Denmark, members of the Dept. of Semiotics, University of Århus, as well as members of cognitive science departments at University of San Diego and University of Maryland). This network does not include any other researchers in the field of sociology of food. However, validation of this theoretical approach as applied to consumer conceptions of food products is the topic of a minor research project funded by the Danish Research Council, to be undertaken by KOJ in the current year. It is also planned to exploit the results of this study in the project noted under (1) above, in the event that project is funded.

Networks based elsewhere are:

- d. The network of researchers engaged in the EU-funded CA project 'Recommendations for improved procedures for securing consumer oriented food safety and quality of certified organic foods from plough to plate', 2003-2005, (acronym: Organic HACCP), which includes: Agro Eco Consultancy, Netherlands; Dept. of Human Nutrition: KVL, Denmark, Institute of Food Science and Technology (ISA), Avellino, Italy; Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, Vienna, Austria; National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO), Oslo, Norway; School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Frick, Switzerland, and Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Vila Real, Portugal. The tasks undertaken by social scientific researchers in the HACCP project (delineating the concerns of consumers of organic food and assessing the risks incurred by producers in failing to address consumer concerns with respect to social and ethical aspects of organic production) are very closely linked to the problems investigated in the present study. Results from each study have been incorporated in several publications and presentations to date (*cf.* section E, 1 and 2.14).
- e. Social scientific researchers specialised in the study of organic agriculture and food at SIFO (Statens Institut for Forbruksforskning /National Institute for Consumer Research). This institution is widely regarded as the leading centre of consumer research in the Nordic region. Cooperation with Hanne Torjusen, working under the supervision of Senior Researcher Unni Kjærnes, on the *Organic HACCP* project, has led to the establishment of further cooperative links with members of the team at SIFO (L. Terragni and E. Jacobsen). Kjærnes, coordinator of a recently completed EU-funded project regarding consumer trust in food, has consented to become a member of the reference group established in connection with the research proposal noted under (1) above.
- f. The network of social scientific researchers engaged in the EU-funded IP project 'Improving quality and safety and reduction of cost in the European organic and "low input" food supply chains' (acronym: QLIF/QualityLowInputFood). This network includes social scientific researchers based at: Dept. of Agricultural and Food Marketing, University of Kassel, Germany; Dept. of Biotechnology and Agriculture, University of Ancona, Italy; Dept. of Human Nutrition: KVL, Denmark; Institute National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), Le Mans, France; School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom; Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Frick, Switzerland and School of Management and Business, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, United Kingdom. This project includes a workpackage to be led by KOJ in cooperation with partners in Italy and United Kingdom concerning the development of motivations to purchase organic food products.
- g. A presentation of preliminary results of the present study (*cf.* section E, 2.7) to

members of the Association for the Study of Food in Society (ASFS) and the Agriculture and Human Values Society (AHVS) led to invitations to undertake peer reviews of papers in this research field for 2 international journals. This work has since proved fruitful with regarding to keeping ahead of relevant research in the USA and elsewhere, particularly regarding local food-links.

- h. A presentation of preliminary results made to members of the Consumer Research network under the European Sociological Association yielded contact to Ph.D. students who are undertaking social scientific research in this field in the United Kingdom and Ireland, leading to the exchange of draft papers for critical comment.
- i. Contact has been established to a network established by social scientific researchers at the Dept. of Health Management and Food Policy, City University, London, United Kingdom, which may yield a joint research project (currently in the planning stage) regarding conflicts of interest between retailer and consumer stakeholders in mainstream chains of food distribution and the provision of relevant information to consumers in supermarkets.

Critical reflection on the project

I have gained some advantages and suffered some disadvantages from being involved in several concurrent research projects during the period 2002-2004. Apart from the projects already mentioned in section G above, Organic HACCP and QLIF, I have also been leader of the consumer research (by survey and qualitative methods) undertaken in conjunction with an EU-funded RD-project (acronym: ISOHEART), and an associated Concerted Action (acronym: PHYTOHEALTH). The advantages mainly derived from complementarity and even overlap between the problems for investigation in Organic HACCP and QLIF and the inspiration gained from having a collegial network of researchers with whom problems, methods and perspectives were discussed. The problem for investigation in ISOHEART regarded the acceptability of a planned functional food product to consumers. This task did not contribute to the present project, but nevertheless provided an interesting point of contrast insofar as it emerged that 'functional foods', unlike 'organic foods' do not constitute an integral food category in the minds of consumers that is operative in the context of shopping. The main disadvantages of these other commitments arose from the difficulties of planning and adjusting work plans and supervising the work of research assistants, all of which were new experiences for me. Changes made in the delivery dates for work on the ISOHEART project and numerous delays on deliverables within the Organic HACCP project meant that some decisions regarding the planning and completion of the present study within the time available were made for reasons extrinsic to the study itself, which I regret.

Practical difficulties that were intrinsic to the study mainly regarded the time-consuming process of identifying and recruiting direct buyers (outlined earlier under D above). However, I am satisfied that this task was eventually completed in a manner that fulfils all quality demands that might be expected in regard to the methodology of a qualitative study of this kind. I would like to have supplemented the data collection undertaken in 2004 with personal interviews with all producers involved in the four schemes investigated, with participant observation of the two box schemes selected, as well as additional interviews with some participants in focus groups, and had planned to do so. This additional work was eventually abandoned due to the length of time devoted to the collection of data by focus groups and the demands of analysing the relatively great quantity of qualitative data that had been collected.

The aspects of the work with which I am more satisfied regard the quality of the collected data, the theoretical perspectives that will be presented in scientific publications and the potential

practical implications of this work with regard to the future viability of the market for organic foods. The theoretical perspectives at issue regard the task of accounting for 'motives' with respect to the consumption of organic foods and with respect to the support of mainstream as compared to 'alternative' supply chains. This task, as expected and as indicated in this report, entails a critique of the inadequate assumptions and short-term focus of market research in this field.

I have been mistaken in my assumption that the principle of 'proximity' would be the pivotal point to be addressed in regard to the practical implications of this project. It now seems to me that the need to address a wider range of policy issues is implicated. These include the challenge of developing and incorporating into organic policy a number of ethical and food policy issues (among these, the issue of 'proximity'). They also include consideration of the dangers with respect to the future viability of the organic market of pursuing a policy of primary production, processing and distribution focussed on the marketing of mainstream commodities. I am postponing further consideration of these issues until the formulation of scientific articles has been completed.

8. Budget

A. Account for any change in budgets

B. Budget for the whole project (1.000 DKK)

Year:	Original budget	Consumption before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Man-months					
Scientific personnel	24	03	11,5	9,5	24
Technical personnel	03	00	01	02	03

Year:	Original budget	Consumption before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Salaries					
Scientific personnel	958.251,	118.574,	445.296,	385.078,	948.948,
Technical personnel	45.416,	0,	10.879,	54.780,	65.659,
Other operational costs	288.000,	24.651,	45,436,	203.882,	273.969,
Equipment					
Others (please specify)					
Direct costs	1.291.667,	143.225,	501.611,	643.740,	1.288.576,
Indirect costs (20% of direct costs)	258.333	28.645,	100.322,	128.748,	257.715,
Total	1.550.000	171.870,	601.933,	772.488,	1.546.291,

Comments:

Please note that the budget for the whole project and the budget for Research Dept. of Human Nutrition & Centre for Advanced Food Studies: KVL (Appendix 1, A) are one and the same.

9. Signatures and stamps

Name	Institute	Date	Signature
Head of project Katherine O'Doherty Jensen	Dept. of Human Nutrition & Centre of Advanced Food Studies	31.03.2005	

Appendix I. Detailed budget

A. Budget for each participating institute (1.000 DKr)

Name of Institute:

Research Dept. of Human Nutrition & Centre for Advanced Food Studies – The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University.

Year:	Original budget	Consumption before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Man-months					
Scientific personnel	24	03	11,5	9,5	24
Technical personnel	03	00	01	02	03

Year:	Original budget	Consumption Before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Salaries					
Scientific personnel	958.251,-	118.574,-	445.296,-	385.078,-	948.948,-
Technical personnel	45,416,-	0,-	10.879,-	54.780,-	65.659,-
Other operational costs	288.000,-	24.651,-	45.436,-	203.882,-	273.969,-
Equipment					
Others (please specify)					
Direct costs	1.291.667,-	143.225,-	501.611,-	643.740,-	1.288.576,-
Indirect costs (20% of direct costs)	258.333	28.645,-	100.322,-	128.748,-	257.715,-
Total	1.550.000,-	171.870,-	601.933,-	772.488,-	1.546.291,-

Comments:

B. Budget for each participating department (1.000 DKK)

Name of Institute and department:

Year:	Original budget	Consumption before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Man-months					
Scientific personnel					
Technical personnel					

Year:	Original budget	Consumption before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Salaries					
Scientific personnel					
Technical personnel					
Other operational costs					
Equipment					
Others (please specify)					
Direct costs					
Indirect costs (20% of direct costs)					
Total					

Comments:

C. Budget for co-financing from each participating institute (1.000 DKK)

Name of Institute:

Year:	Original budget	Consumption before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Man-months					
Scientific personnel					
Technical personnel					

Year:	Original budget	Consumption before 2003	Consumption 2003	Consumption 2004	Total
Salaries					
Scientific personnel					
Technical personnel					
Other operational costs					
Equipment					
Others (please specify)					
Direct costs					
Indirect costs (20% of direct costs)					
Total					

Comments: