



Steps to Organic

Program for Professional Kitchens

Reach for the Organic Star – Join the Steps to Organic -program

By enrolling you will gain visibility for your organization, be able to dependably communicate with your customers about using organic products, and also be able to access the latest information about the organic markets and the field.

Steps to Organic –program is a voluntary program for all professional kitchens in Finland. The goal of the program is to coach especially the public sector industrial kitchens into a more sustainable development by gradually increasing the use of organic ingredients in their daily use.

The program helps to collect data about the development of the use of organic products in professional kitchens and reinforces the chain of organic food production and marketing. The organizations joining the program provide information on their needs and wishes, which in turn is relayed to the producers and manufacturers of organic foods and products.

Steps to Organic –program provides

- **Reliable model for increasing the use of organic ingredients in food services**
- **Visibility for the use of organic products in the kitchens**
- **Information about organic products and their use in professional kitchens**
- **Information on food procurement**
- **Information on how to apply sustainable development into kitchen functions**
- **Network of kitchens committed to using organic products**

Organic food is a significant step towards more sustainable food production

Organic production is supervised production that is protected by law. As well as fulfilling the criteria for organic foods, the products must also fulfill the same criteria as normal foodstuffs. The principles and rules of organic production aim for ecological sustainability.

The Finnish government has committed strongly to organic production and increasing the use of organic products. The aim of the government's organic field development program is that 20 % of cultivated land shall be used for organic production. In the revised state council decision on operation principles the goal is set to 10 % organic food being used by the year 2015 and 20 % by the year 2020. In public food services there were over 400 million meals served in 2011 (Source: Taloustutkimus Oy hospitality and catering -register 2011), meaning that the public sector procurement has a significant role in achieving the goals for the use of organic products.

Professional kitchens and organic products

The EU act on organic products does not apply to professional kitchens. Neither is the use of organic

products under national supervision under any acts, but the supervisory duties fall to municipal health inspectors. The key rule for the use of organic products in professional kitchens is that there can be no misleading of customers.

Steps to Organic –program provides a reliable model for using organic products in food services and informing the consumers about it.

Professional kitchens and the environment

The choices of professional kitchens affect the entire food chain from the basic production all the way to the plate being served. Steps to Organic –program recommends that the kitchens joining the program will, besides sustainable procurement, also apply other measures supporting sustainable development. The environmental issues of food services can be further examined on the program's web pages.

The goal is that 10% of the food served in public, industrial kitchens is organic by the year 2015 and 20 % by the year 2020.

”The goal is set to 10 % organic food being used by the year 2015 and 20 % by the year 2020.”

How to join the program?

Steps to Organic –program is accessible over the Internet. Joining the program and creating an organic plan is also carried out electronically.

START!

Make a strategic decision for your organization to start using organic products; incorporate and register it in your plan of action. Procurement guidelines also need to be included with the decision. It is recommended that a yearly plan of organic use is employed, facilitating a gradual addition of organic products.

DEFINE!

Define whether your entire organization shall join the program at the same time, or only a part of it, such as municipal services like day care centers or homes for the elderly. Within a single registration all the facilities need to use the same organic products and proceed with the program at the same pace. However, the different operation fields within the same organization can be registered as separate groups, allowing them to proceed at their own pace.

APPOINT!

The organization must appoint a person to act as the liaisons manager for the organization to work with the program supervisor. The liaisons manager shall provide information like program events and news leaflets within the entire organization.

CHOOSE!

Choose the organic products best suited for your own functions. It suffices to first select one significant product that is served or used daily or at least bi-weekly in the food production. Already a single product validates access to the first step of the program.

TEST!

Start joining the Steps to Organic –program by taking the Organic Test on the web site. The test is free to take for all the personnel of the organization. After completing the test, fill in the registration form.

KEEP the login information!

Keep the registration information and passwords safe so you will be able to update the Organic Plan as necessary. You will need to update your progress for instance in order to reach the next step of the program.

INFORM!

Remember to inform the entire personnel as well as the customers of the organization about the use of organic products. It pays to clarify the goals and aims of the organization for using organic products as well as explain why it is good to use them. To help with this, there are materials available and free to use in the extra-section of the site.

1

1st Step

The kitchen uses a minimum of one (1) organic ingredient at all times. In addition other organic products are used as opportunities arise.

2

2nd Step

The kitchen uses a minimum of two (2) organic ingredients at all times. In addition other organic products are used as opportunities arise.

3

3rd Step

The kitchen uses a minimum of four (4) organic ingredients at all times. In addition other organic products are used as opportunities arise.

4

4th Step

The kitchen uses a minimum of eight (8) organic ingredients at all times. In addition other organic products are used as opportunities arise.

5

5th Step

The kitchen uses a minimum of twenty (20) organic ingredients at all times. In addition other organic products are used as opportunities arise.



Star Step

The kitchen uses large amounts of organic products in every ingredient group. Regular products are only used if organic products are not available.

The Criteria for a Step Product Steps to Organic –diploma

A significant organic product = a single product or product group that is used for meal preparation or served, in the minimum twice a week. Examples of significant ingredients would be for instance: potato, egg, cereals, milk, milk products, vegetables, meat. Products used in less volume, such as spices, however, are not considered significant products.

A Step Product = a significant organic product chosen for the step. It is best to choose a product that is available at any time and easily. The product can be used for food preparation and baking, or it may be a part of the meal served, such as sour milk, bread, coffee or tea.

The Steps to Organic –diploma allows the kitchens to provide their customers with a reliable message that they are committed to using organic products.

You will find more information on joining the Steps to Organic –programs at: www.portaatluomuun.fi

There are six Steps to Organic >>

Case ① Juva food services

Organic food is an important factor in the image of food services.

Juva invests in its own municipal food production. By using especially locally produced organic foods they can be sure of the safety and cleanliness of the ingredients. Simultaneously they support local production and work to promote the interest of organic food production among the local producers as well as how to refine the products to be suitable for use in industrial kitchens.

The Juva Municipal Council made a decision on the 7th November 2011 on rising the percentage of local and organic foods into 40 % of foodstuff procurement during 2013 and 2014 as well as advancing to step 4 in the Steps to Organic –program.

The municipality hopes that this decision would encourage other municipalities of the county. By making the decision the Juva council challenged the producers of the area to provide the municipality with products that are suited to industrial kitchen use both in their quality and delivery requirements.

Supporting food production has been made an integral part of the municipal strategy. The Juva municipality challenges other South-Savo municipalities to join the effort for promoting organic- and local foods use.

At the moment the suppliers can provide local, organic products in quantities sufficient to reach the first step of the program. The first goal is to gain an increase of 35 % more local and organic products than currently. In order to raise the percentage to 40 % more pre-peeled, chopped and mashed as well as pre-cooked ingredients are needed.

Juva has set clear goals to promote their use of organic food. The goal is to double the use of local and organic food in public food services by the end of 2014.

Juva is a part of Savonlinna area procurement ring, which carries out the tendering of milk- and dairy products, meat, fish and wholesales products. It is possible to acquire fresh produce, like berries and juices from local producers.

The kitchens of Juva School Center and the city home for the elderly are at the second step of Steps to Organic –program. Their organic product use consists of fat-free milk, sour milk, crisp bread, cereals in part, dried peas and cubed carrots (frozen).

The Steps to Organic –program enables the Juva food services to be informed of organic products and get tips for using organic products in food preparation.

Juva food services in brief

- Location: Southern Savo, Juva, approximately 7 000 inhabitants
- Unit: Juva municipality food services
- Unit position: food services function under Rantasalmi municipal government

The food services are responsible for providing nutrition to elderly care, assisted living services, health center, day care centers, schools, home services and personnel. The Juva school center kitchen prepares food for 700 students a day. The kitchen for the home for the elderly prepares 650 meals in total.

Case ② Palmia

Organic food – part of the food culture

Increasing the organic offering within the City of Helsinki food services is based on the city's food culture strategy, an example of a municipal, strategic decision to set goals and decide upon increasing the use of organic food. The strategy for instance mentions a goal of raising the amount of organic products used to 50 per cent in Helsinki city day care centers by the year 2015.

The benefits of using organic products include assuring the purity of the food, with no chemical fertilizers used in farming and production. It enables us to offer our clients clean and safe food.

Being a significant operator we are simultaneously promoting the growth of the organic field in Finland. By using organic ingredients and products we are also fulfilling our own Responsible Meal –program as well as the global responsibility strategy of the City of Helsinki.

The menu is under continuous development with the goal to annually increase the amount of organic food, within the limits set by availability, quality and price. The goals and principles behind the plan include that the respect for food

will increase, and a child's entire, comprehensive food experience is lifted into focus by integrating day care centers into the Helsinki food culture entity.

Palmia Day Care Center Organic Plan:

- cereal products
- 2012 dairy products
- 2013 vegetables
- 2014–2015 possibly some meat products

The procurement center carries out competitive tendering for the City of Helsinki in co-operation with Palmia. The procurement center has carried out wide-range charting of organic product availability and selection. In addition the producers and manufacturers have been informed about views on organic food. Based on the charting and studies it can be noted that at the moment organic production in Finland is not sufficient. The suppliers want to produce organic production, but such production requires comprehensive planning, which in turn is strongly affected by what the orders will entail in long term. >>

”By offering organic food we contribute to building a more sustainable and clean life for our clients.”

– Tiina Ahola, planner

Finnish organic products always have priority of use in Palmia. On the six-week menu of day care centers there are for instance the following organic products: porridges and gruels made with organic cereals at breakfast and organic bread almost daily. There is organic pasta as side dish and in the food 2-3 times a week, pea soup out of organic peas and some organic yoghurt at snack time or breakfast. The list also includes a quartet of organic desserts, with organic sour milk, yoghurt or cereals. The percentage portion of organic food in all the meals a child in day care consumes is 14.3 %. This entails the amount of organic food present in the finished meal portion.

The higher prices of organic ingredients and their availability variance in different seasons still remain a challenge for using organic foods. To this date, only a handful of organic products are sold to catering field in suitable packages. Organic producers need to make their products available in wholesales in order for Palmia to have access to using them.



Image: Tiina Ahola/ Palmia catering

The day care centers are on step three and a part of lunch restaurants on step one. By taking part in Steps to Organic –program Palmia assures their clients that the use of organic ingredients and –products is developed and increased over a long span. Partaking also helps the Palmia personnel to make an effort to promote organic food. Furthermore, it provides a network and forum for discussing organic food matters with other operators in the field.

Palmia catering services in short

- Location: Uusimaa, Helsinki, approximately 604 000 inhabitants
- Unit: Palmia catering services
- Unit position: a part of Palmia, a business owned by the City of Helsinki

Palmia catering services provide food services for the City of Helsinki and serve approximately 100, 000 food settings a day. There are four branches of operation: care services food supply, school- and day care food services, restaurant services and Catering Pakkala, our industrial kitchen.

In the care services meals are provided for instance hospitals, homes for the elderly, supported housing and care centers. The school and day care services serve approximately 80,000 meals a day. The restaurant services offer personnel catering for 25 lunch restaurants and 10 University of Applied Sciences –restaurants.

Further information: Tiina Ahola, planner, catering services

Case 3 Servica

Organic procurement has not yet been mentioned in the City of Kuopio or Eastern Finland Supply Services (Servica) strategies. Servica nevertheless wishes to promote sustainable development in Eastern Finland through its actions. Efforts are made to carry out such actions in procurement, functions and providing the personnel with information.

Servica carries out competitive tendering in co-operation with IS procurement. The procurement is centralized by tendering with other partner communities of IS-procurement. Challenges for procurement include the various wishes and goals of the communities and organizations taking part and on the other hand the requirements for large volumes of products, which in turn however yields cost-effectiveness in procurement.

In Kuopio, like in other public kitchens, organic cereals, buttermilk and bread are used. The availability of these products is also stable.

Organic products, increasing local food, cutting down on bio-waste and using energy-efficient kitchen appliances create a system towards which the entire Servica food services aspire.

The Eastern Finland supply services joint municipal authority (Servica) joined the Steps to Organic –program in the fall of 2012, with a total of 84 operations joining the program.

Servica has in February 2013 moved to step two in day care centers, schools and personnel restaurants.

The program proceeds by client groups. A move to step three is planned for some customer groups, where possible, already in 2014. This will be affected by the availability of suitable products, financial resources as well as customer wishes.

The program has allowed Servica to get guidance for using organic products and their availability. The Steps to Organic –program in part brings more visibility for striving towards more sustainable choices in food services production.

Servica in short

- Location: Northern Savo, Kuopio, approximately 105 000 inhabitants
- Unit: Eastern Finland supply services joint municipal authority, Servica
- Unit standing: one of the three Servica areas of operation: food services, departmental- and instrument maintenance services, real estate- and logistics services
- Food services department; personnel 372, turnover approx. 23.5 M€/year, lunches approximately 20,000 on working days.

“We want to promote sustainable development and be a responsible producer of support- and maintenance services.”

– Sari Karttunen, acting Branch Manager



“ Development is sustainable, if it satisfies the needs of the present without denying the future generations the possibility to satisfy their needs. ”

*Yhteinen tulevaisuutemme.
(Our common future, 1987.)
A World Commission report on
environment and development.*

Further information: Steps to Organic, EkoCentria, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira, Pro Luomu ry, Luomuliitto, Luomu.fi

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www.portaatluomuun.fi



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EkoCentria / Portaat luomuun

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