

# Stimulation of Organic Catering 'Government setting the example'



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## 'Government setting the example'

Fact sheet from the portfolio of the Department of Trade and Industry version January 2007

### Status

A monitoring system allows organic catering shares to be compared at the purchasing level. A working party is established to formulate the criteria for sustainable catering. Decisionmaking: end of 2006. In this working party all governmental organizations are represented and market parties and NGOs are member.

### Facts and figures

- There are approximately 4500 organic products on the market.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) plans to have 100% organic catering at its headquarters in 2007. (At the moment its catering is 60% organic.)
- In 2006 three ministries will put out to tender their catering. One ministry wants 40% of the catering organic, the others even 80%.
- 5% can be achieved by introducing organic milk.  
Organic dairy products, bread, fruit, vegetables and potatoes are only slightly (up to 15%) more expensive.

### Period

2005-2006

### Parties involved

Trade and Industry and the Task Force on the Development of the Organic Agriculture Market (MBL). Officials responsible in other ministries are also involved.

### More information

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agriculture, nature  
and food quality

*The Stimulation of Organic Catering project was prompted by the policy document *Biologische Landbouw 2005-2007 (Organic Agriculture 2005-2007)*. The government is keen to promote organic agriculture and is aware of the need to create an extensive market for organic produce. With approximately 1.5 million users per day, corporate catering is a prime candidate. The introduction of organic products in company restaurants raises awareness of the variety and quality of organic produce, and improves the image of organic produce across the board.*

### Context

Consumers have all kinds of ideas about organic products – they are expensive, they look less appealing and they are not readily available. Producers, suppliers and caterers are bound by logistics, availability and volumes of products. The Stimulation of Organic Catering project seeks to engage various actors and to support the implementation of objectives relating to organic catering. Implementing the Koopmans/De Krom amendment on sustainable purchasing and contracting by the State in 2010 increases the exemplary role and represents an impulse for sustainable catering. Organic is a significant part of this. On the one hand the project is working to increase demand, by providing relevant information (pointing out that organic dairy products and bread are only slightly more expensive, and emphasising the superior quality, flavour and huge variety of organic products). On the other hand the project is developing a toolkit that organisations can use to implement their objectives.

### Effects

Six ministries have signed a declaration of intent to make catering more organic in 2007. This was a first breakthrough. There are between 1000 and 1500 staff per ministry at government headquarters, which makes for a large volume of sales. Recently the policy letter '100% duurzaam inkopen in 2010' (100% durable purchasing in 2010) was sent to parliament. Catering is one of the topics. Initiatives in lower governments, in the health care sector and among NGOs are developed.

### Particular aspects

The signing of the declaration of intent was widely reported. The general public and parties within the market are interested – the government is taking the lead. Some caterers have either introduced organic milk in all of the buildings they work in or run campaign weeks. A chain manager stimulates organic catering from the point of view of the market.

### Challenges

All regular products are also produced organically: the challenge is to match up demand and supply. In 2006 the criteria for the purchasing packet durable catering has to be set. The criteria are liable to all parts of the government.

### Compatibility with Ministry policy

The Department of Trade and Industry stimulates and facilitates the process, putting out feelers and informing market parties. This is consistent with the department's general approach and also ties in with the policy theme of sustainable enterprise.

### Benefits

Corporate social and environmental responsibility is increasingly important in the business sector. Being part of the chain of organic catering enhances a company's image and its own sense of integrity while also catering for increasing consumer demand.