

Nürnberg, Germany 14. - 17.2.2023

BIOFACH2023

into organic



BIOFACH: Column Hanni Rützer

For over 25 years, Austrian trend researcher, nutritionist and health psychologist Hanni Rützer has been analysing the transformation of food culture by examining food trends. Food trends include not only “short-term fads or seasonal hypes, not to mention product trends pushed by marketing departments and hyperbolised by the media”, but also longer-term changes and processes of transformation that are constantly producing solutions to current issues and desires. Food trends are a basic tool that guides stakeholders in the agricultural and food sectors during times of transition so they can position themselves for the future.

In her monthly column for BIOFACH, Hanni Rützer examines current food trends and explains their potential for the organic sector.

Local exotics – the resolution of a culinary paradox

The Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine have drawn attention to the importance of local food production. At the same time, however, travel restrictions and the temporary closure of many restaurants due to the pandemic have also awakened an appetite for foreign cuisine as well as a longing for new culinary experiences. At first glance, this longing and the desire on the part of many consumers for sustainable, regional and, ideally, organically produced foods appear to contradict one another.

The “local exotics” trend is one way to resolve this culinary paradox. More and more farmers, fish breeders and vegetable growers are daring to cultivate and breed plants and animals that only recently had to be transported over long distances – products like quinoa, turmeric, rice, peanuts, olives, wasabi, shrimp and sea bass.

Climate change is another major factor that’s causing organic farmers in particular to consider which types of fruit and vegetable will do best in their fields and which organically grown animal species will most easily adapt to changing conditions in

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the future. Today, the number of farms specializing in “exotic” foods is still negligible, but these pioneers are attracting more and more followers. In terms of flavour and organic certification, these local exotics score the most points with health-conscious diners and ambitious restaurant owners.

Ginger, wasabi, turmeric, lemon grass, coriander and other flavours have long been commonplace in the kitchens of German-speaking regions as well, thanks to the popularisation of Asian cuisine. In terms of flavour, for example, young, locally produced ginger is far superior to the ginger of its well-travelled competitors from China, Nigeria, and other countries. The fresher the root, the more balanced the ratio between aroma and spiciness.

In addition to its geographic and climatic connotations, the term “exotic” can also be applied to foods that were once common and frequently consumed. Take, for example, broad beans, which are now experiencing a comeback in German fields. Crops planted after them require less fertilizer and, thanks to their long blooming period, they’re extremely insect-friendly as well as being highly sought after by gourmets.

FOOD TREND MAP

Hanni Rützler’s Food Trend Map groups together the many trends in theme-based clusters as a way of better visualizing complex relationships, parallels and mutual dependencies. The map provides a clear overview and makes it easier for food producers, retailers and restaurants to decide which food trends they should embrace in the future, keeping in mind the particular focus of their company.