



Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre



– serving the senses

Work on the Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre began in early spring 2012, when a number of food industry companies contacted SIK with a vision for a taste and flavour centre. They saw a major need to increase the general level of knowledge surrounding sensory perception and to create a common meeting point for the various organisations. Work has been ongoing since then. A management group has been appointed and a project manager has been employed to run the work and achieve the vision and the mission that were set.

The Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre is seeking to increase the degree of focus and level of knowledge about flavour in regional and Nordic organisations that work with food. Greater awareness and greater knowledge would promote and benefit all organisations throughout the entire chain as well as end-consumers.

Flavour is one of the most important aspects when it comes to the identification, differentiation and commercial success of any food. Understanding flavour and its impact requires cooperation between several areas of expertise, which in turn requires a show of strength in order to retain, create and develop competence in this key area.

The challenges currently facing Nordic food companies are greater than ever before. A Europe with increasingly open borders not only generates opportunities for new business but also greater competitive pressure. This is where knowledge about flavour and taste come in as an effective weapon in the fight for survival. By increasing the level of knowledge about flavour, the Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre will contribute to enhancing the attractiveness and profitability of food companies.

Many food companies have developed their production by making their products safe, easy to produce and easy to prepare and at the same time ensuring they are competitively priced. Flavour, perhaps the most important element in food, has not been given the necessary attention for a food company to develop, to defend its domestic market and to succeed in a very tough export market.

The flavour of the food has not been assigned the requisite level of significance. Wisely, we have established regulations for areas such as the nutritional content of school dinners. Unfortunately we have not established any regulations to ensure they taste good. Why not? Probably because it is difficult to communicate flavour and a lot of people do not know how to create tasty food. Unfortunately, it makes no difference how nutritional a school dinner is if it doesn't taste good. If the food doesn't get eaten, nutrition is irrelevant!

Vision

To create a natural meeting point at international level for research, knowledge building and education within the area of flavour.



Mission

To secure competence and knowledge building within the area of flavour.

The same applies to food for the elderly. Our taste buds dull as we get older and this requires adaptation of flavours and spices for the elderly for them to appreciate and eat the food they are served. Unfortunately, a lot of people do not have sufficient nutrient intake despite having nutritionally balanced meals. The food simply doesn't taste of anything.

The Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre aims to link academia with the commercial sector and make available new knowledge and research findings from the world of sensory perception. The Centre will maintain close and active relations with 'flavour artists' – chefs – and their organisations, and it will work to ensure that the exchange between chefs, researchers and industry constantly leads to new routes and new forms. In this way the Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre will function as a dynamic network and contribute to a creative innovation environment.

Organisation

Most of the activities within the Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre are run at SP Food and Bioscience in Gothenburg and are designed in such a way that they meet our members' needs and wishes from a sensory perspective. Certain activities are carried on in other Nordic countries in order to make the Centre more accessible to members and stakeholders.

The Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre arranges a number of seminars each year on topics and themes that are not only of current interest but which are also varied in content. These are of a relatively comprehensive nature and should appeal to participants with different backgrounds and experience. We have, among other things, arranged seminars on the fifth taste 'umami' as well as Nordic tastes and public meals.

The Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre also offers training programmes and courses related to taste, flavour and the senses. These are specialised and provide a level of understanding and expertise that is not achievable through current, more broad-based training programmes in these subject areas. The courses offered are designed to suit different levels of knowledge and are run in collaboration with various educational institutions. The focal points are the link to the needs of industry and the ambition to reinforce the innovative power of the food sector. A course in taste matching and taste masking is just one example of the training courses that have been arranged. In autumn 2015, a basic course in flavour and sensory science will be organised in partnership with Gothenburg University.

Another prioritised and highly topical issue that we intend to pursue is the introduction of flavour as a selection criterion in public contracts. To make this possible, a solid regulatory framework must be drawn up explaining how tenders for various food contracts should be prepared from a pure sensory perspective.

Different sector-specific projects and research projects are also being run within the framework of the Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre. Robustness was a project in which a study was conducted on how fragrances and smells are perceived in different countries.

Membership

Becoming a member of the Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre means that companies and private individuals can be involved in and influence the running of the association and its direction. If desired, a company can have several representatives and these are interchangeable. The membership fee is SEK 5,000 per year for a company or private individual. Attendance fees for seminars and training courses will be subsidised for members.

For further information, please contact:

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As a member of the Nordic Taste & Flavour Centre, which is a non-profit association, you can be involved in and influence its direction and activities.

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