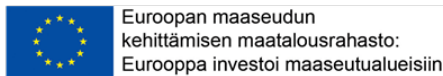


# Demand for organic potato in professional kitchens and new production potential in Northern Ostrobothnia, Finland

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# Preview of topics

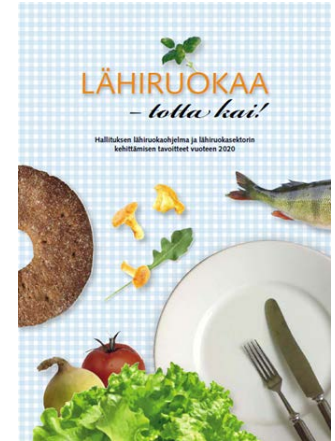
- Background of the study and the research area
- General information about the surveys
- Results
  - Results from the kitchen survey
  - Results from the farmer surveys
- Conclusions



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# Background of the study

- According to studies implemented in Northern Ostrobothnia in previous years there is evident demand for local food in professional kitchens.
- Currently local food seems to be more in demand but some kitchens clearly want to prefer organic products.
- Nearby produced potato is one of the most common local food products that professional kitchens use.
- In 2016 the share of organic potato was about 1,2 %
- Finnish Government Programmes on local (*Lähipuokaa totta kai!*) and organic (*Lisää luomua!*) food have been under execution since 2013.



# Research area - Northern Ostrobothnia

- One of the 19 provinces "maakunta" in Finland.
- Population: 411 226 (28.2.2017)
- Area: 44 088,42 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population density: 11,58 pop. Per km<sup>2</sup> (28.2.2017)
- Municipalities (since 2016): 30 municipalities
- The northernmost agricultural area in Europe with excellent natural conditions for potato production.
- Long history in production of seed and table potatoes, but produces only small amounts of organic potatoes.

# Surveys (implemented during 2016-2017)

- **Survey for professional kitchens**
  - 33 responses (13,7 % response rate)
  - Form of government
    - 7 municipalities
    - 7 Federation of Municipalities
    - 17 private
    - 2 other
  - The present situation concerning the use of locally and organically produced potatoes and potato products and interest and need for organic potatoes and potato products.
- **Survey for potato producers**
  - 61 responses
  - Residents from 22 different municipalities in Northern Ostrobothnia
  - Farm focusing on different potatoes
    - 37 table potato
    - 9 seed potato
    - 11 potatoes for food industry
    - 5 other
  - Factors preventing transition to organic potato farming and interest in it.
- **Survey for organic farmers**
  - 48 responses
  - Residents from 17 different municipalities in Northern Ostrobothnia
  - The most represented sectors were grain and milk production
  - Factors preventing organic potato farming and interest in it.

# Results from the kitchen survey 1(3)

- Over 2/3 of respondents use potatoes or potato products produced in Northern Ostrobothnia.
- Potatoes are mainly purchased from local wholesalers and deliveries are made several times a week.
- The most important factors for choosing products are quality, flavor and flexible delivery.

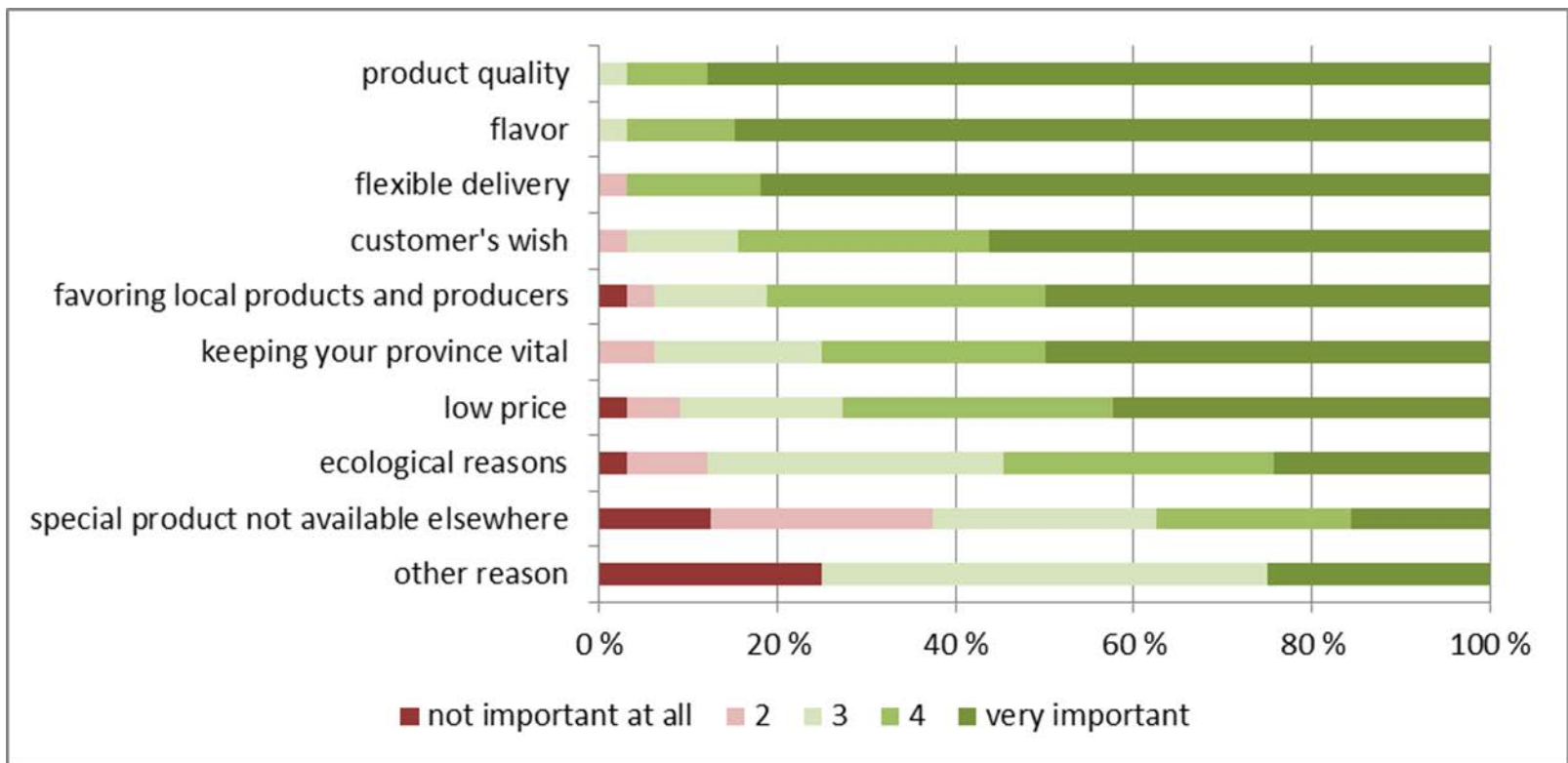


Fig 1. The importance of factors affecting the choice of potato products in institutional kitchens (N=33, other reason N=4).

# Results from the kitchen survey 2(3)

- Over half of the respondents also use organic potato products - most commonly boiling potatoes with or without skin. However, the most of them estimated that the use of organic potato products would be in between 1-25 %
- Kitchens have interest to use different organic potato products, particularly boiling potatoes with and without skin as well as fresh potato cubes and slices
- Interest was justified mainly on ecological grounds and many kitchens thought that organic products fit into their business concept.



# Results from the kitchen survey 3(3)

- Currently, the poor availability at the sales venue restricts the use of organic potato products considerably. In addition variations in availability and price were also quite preventing factors.
- Kitchens aren't usually willing to pay more than 1–5 % extra for organically produced potatoes compared to conventionally produced potatoes.
- Importance of the production of organic potatoes was valued as 4,00 (scale *1=not important at all – 5= very important*) in Northern Ostrobothnia and as 3,88 anywhere in Finland.

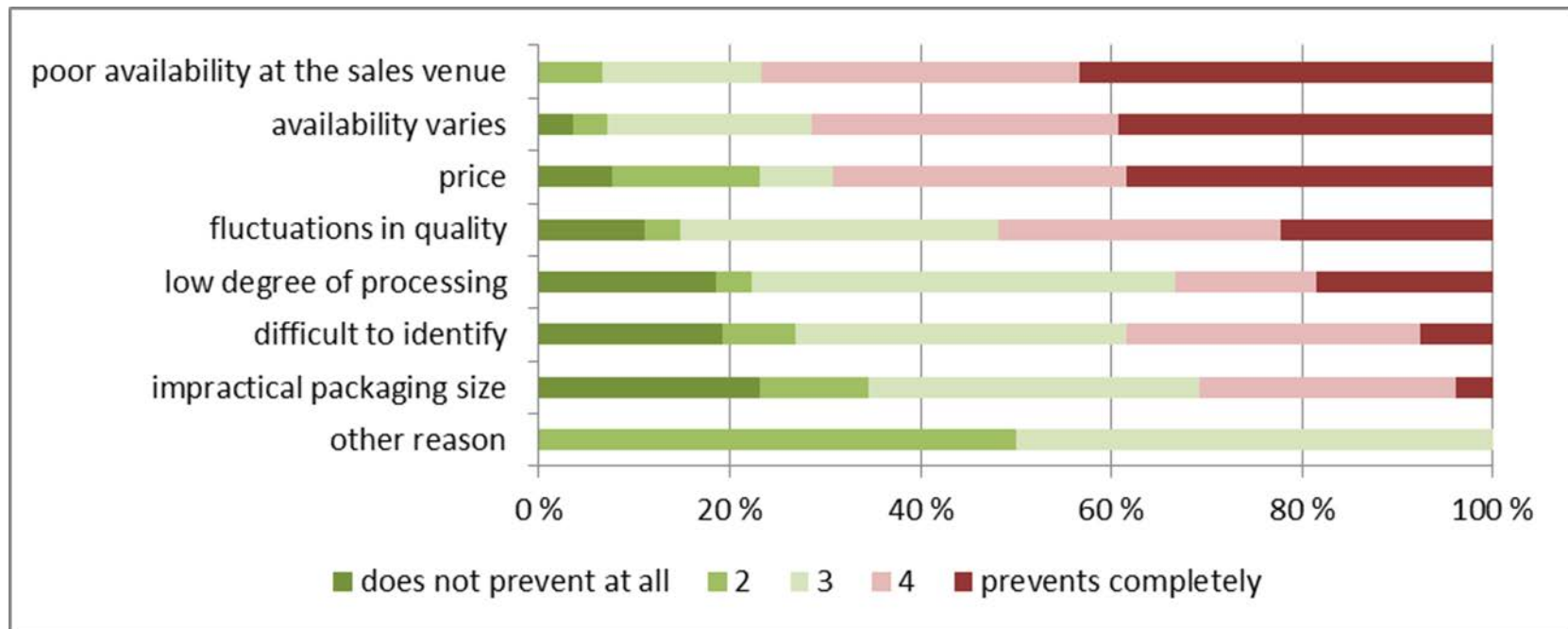


Fig 2. Factors that prevent the use of organic potatoes and potato products in professional kitchens (N=30, other reason N=2).

# Results from the farmer surveys 1(3)

- Only about 6 % of conventional potato producers (n=48) and 11 % of organic non-potato farmers (n=44) have clear interest towards organic potato production. A little greater amount are interested to some extent, especially if the conditions are improved.
- The farmers are especially concerned about plant protection, amount of yield and quality as well as pricing.
  - There are some differences between potato growers and organic farmers.

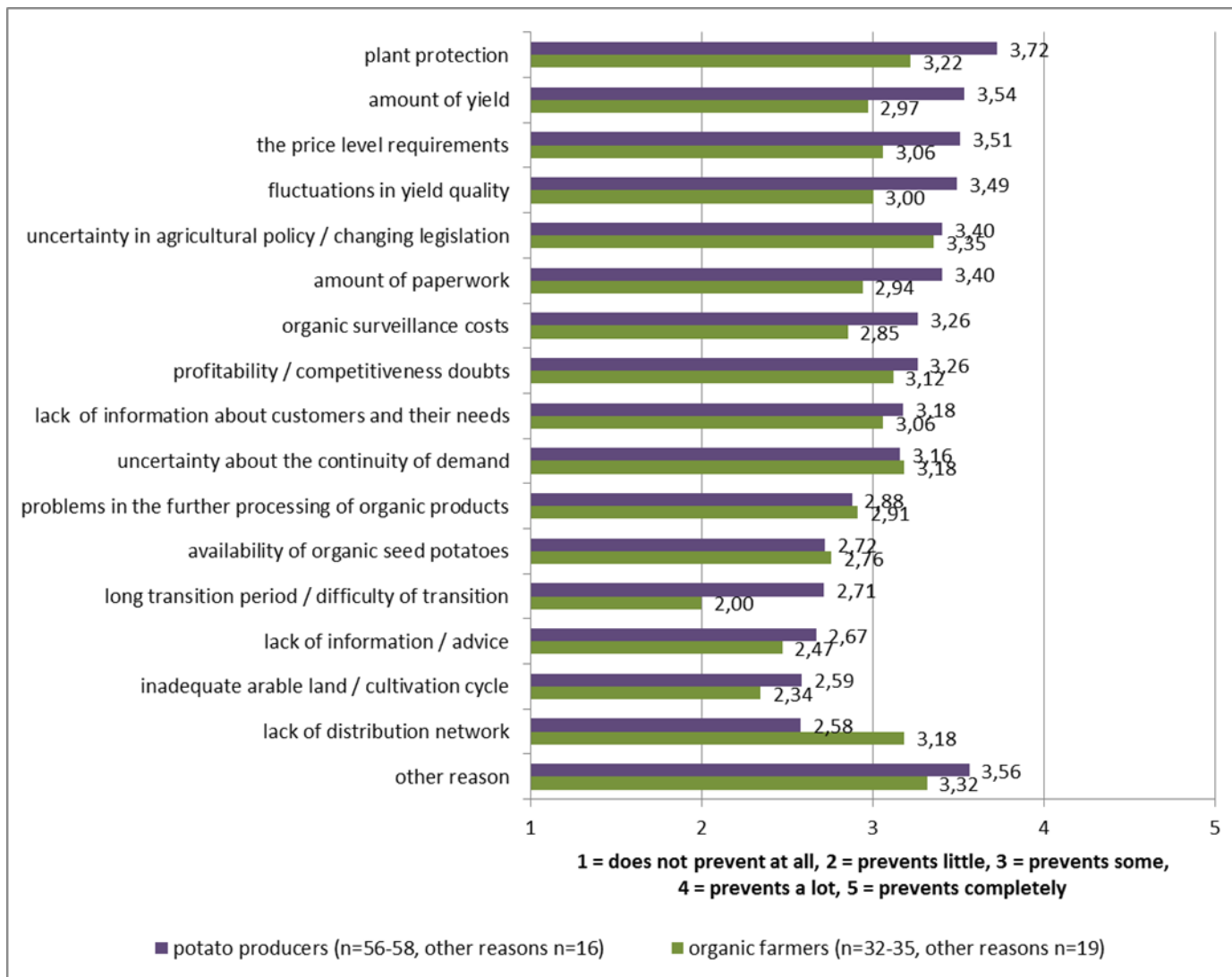


Figure 3. Factors that prevent farmers converting to organic potato production.

# Results from the farmer surveys 2(3)

- About a third of potato growers have potato packing and processing (mainly boiling potatoes with skin) but only 5 announced to process boiling potatoes without skin and fresh potato cubes and slices which are popular among institutional kitchens.
- 7 potato growers (n=51) already deliver potatoes and potato products to professional kitchens but only 8 more are clearly interested to deliver.

## Results from the farmer surveys 3(3)

- The most common delivery channels among potato producers seemed to be local processing companies and wholesalers. In addition to these over third (n=47) announced to sell products directly to consumers.
- Importance of the producing of organic potatoes in Northern Ostrobothnia was valued as 3,89 by organic farmers and as 3,18 by potato growers (scale 1=not important at all – 5= very important). Corresponding numbers for the importance of organic potato production anywhere in Finland were 3,79 (organic farmers) and 3,22 (potato growers).

# Conclusions

- Improving the availability of organic potato requires actions within the whole food supply chain and spreading the knowledge about organic farming overall.
- Understanding of different price requirements that producers and professional kitchens have, regarding to organic potato, must be improved.
- Potato growers don't see organic potato production as important as organic farmers and professional kitchens.
- Special measures are needed to make organic potato production more attractive.
  - The availability of organic seed potatoes and new and more profitable cultivation methods must be improved.

# What next?

- Field day for farmers interested in organic potato production in August at the field test area
  - Information about fertilizers and potato varieties
- 2 "workshops" or small seminars for professional kitchens
  - Tasting of different potato varieties
  - Information about organic food and organic potatoes



Thank you!



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