

Follow-up of central government measures for small-scale food production



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– Summary of follow-up report 2009/10:RFR1

Foreword

In 2005, the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) Committee on Environment and Agriculture carried out an in-depth follow-up with regard to conditions for small-scale food production. The follow-up was undertaken by the Committee's follow-up and evaluation group and the results were published in a report in the autumn of 2005. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture subsequently considered this document in a report on small-scale food processing in February 2006, and in March 2006 the Riksdag approved the conclusions reached by the Committee.

On 2 April 2009, the Committee decided once more to follow up the results and consequences of central government initiatives for small-scale food production. This time the focus was on examining the measures taken since the Committee's previous follow-up, and studying the attitudes of the actors concerned to the measures taken, the consequences of these measures, and the results achieved.

The follow-up was carried out by the Committee's follow-up and evaluation group which comprised the following MPs: Irene Oskarsson (ChrDem), Jan-Olof Larsson (SocDem), Wiwi-Anne Johansson (Lft), Erik A. Eriksson (Cen), Tina Ehn (Grn), Rune Wikström (Mod) and Lars Tysklind (Lib). The group assigned the task of preparing briefing materials for the follow-up to the Evaluation and Research Function of the Riksdag Research Service in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Committee on Environment and Agriculture.

The report of the follow-up- and evaluation group has been published in the series Reports from the Riksdag (Report 2009/10:RFR1). The follow-up was reported to the Committee in November 2009, and the Committee's consideration was published in Report 2009/10:MJU2.

This brochure provides a summary of the follow-up's results and the assessments made by the follow-up and evaluation group.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture's follow-up

In 2005, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture carried out an in-depth follow-up of the conditions for small-scale food production. The Committee then organised a hearing on the matter, and since then it has taken note of the Government's annual statement of operations to the Riksdag with respect to the conditions for small-scale food production. In April 2009, in order to give the Committee more in-depth briefing materials prior to the preparation of the 2010 Budget Bill, the Committee decided to carry out a new follow-up with regard to central government initiatives in relation to small-scale food production. The follow-up focused on detailing the measures taken since the Committee's previous follow-up, and studying the attitudes of the actors concerned to the measures taken, the consequences of these measures, and the results achieved.

Previous consideration of the matter by the Riksdag

In March 2001, the Riksdag decided to make an announcement to the Government regarding the conditions for small-scale food production. In the view of the Riksdag, the Government should devote special attention to small-scale food production, and report proposed measures for simplifying the regulatory framework, for creating better conditions for local and small-scale food production, and for promoting the establishment of new companies in this sector. The Committee subsequently noted that for a number of years after this announcement the Government had not provided an account of proposed measures.

This led the Committee to carry out an in-depth follow-up in 2005. Shortly after the Committee had begun its follow-up, the Government drafted a written communication on small-scale food processing, which it submitted to the Riksdag in the autumn of 2005. In the spring of 2006, the Riksdag considered the Committee's follow-up and the Government's written communication. In the spring of 2007, the Committee held a hearing on small-scale food production to follow up ongoing developments. After this, the Committee has been following the Government's annual statement of operations to the Riksdag with regard to conditions for small-scale food production. Among other things, the Committee has noted that the Government reports a number of initiatives to promote small-scale food production, but that it does not report the actual results of the measures taken.

The regulatory framework in the food policy area

Changes since 2005

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture's 2005 follow-up noted that small-scale food production encountered various problems including a lack of clarity in the regulatory framework, and difficulties arising for small-scale producers from parts of the regulatory systems. At the same time it was noted that food legislation would be amended as of January 2006 and that several of the problems in the legislation which had attracted attention related to provisions which were to be abolished.

Since the Committee's previous follow-up, major changes have been implemented in the regulatory framework. Within the EU, new framework regulations and regulations as concerns food hygiene and control have been applied. Changes to the EC regulatory system have led to the review of the Swedish Food Act and Food Ordinance, as well as of several regulations issued by National Food Administration. In addition, various sets of guidelines have been established by the National Food Administration. The new regulatory frame-

work from 2006 emphasises the companies' responsibility for food safety through various measures including self-monitoring. The new regulatory framework is less detailed and aimed more at goals to be achieved which is to leave room for flexibility of application. Another change is that the regulatory framework now covers the entire food chain "from farm to fork". Yet another change is that central government is to encourage the establishment of national sector guidelines that are the various sectors' descriptions of what companies have to do in order to fulfil the requirements of EC law and Swedish legislation.

Since the 2005 follow-up, various activities have been undertaken within the food area with the aim of simplifying regulations. The Government's goal is that administrative costs for companies are to be reduced by 25 % by 2010 as compared to those at the beginning of its term of office.

Observations in the follow-up

The follow-up shows that the amendments to the regulatory framework in 2006 have brought changes for both companies and government agencies in Sweden. Companies' responsibility for food safety has been clearly stated. Several actors have pointed out that the new rules are more flexible and that sector guidelines and self-monitoring have been brought more into the foreground. Some actors stated that the work of small-scale food producers has consequently been made easier.

At the same time, the majority of actors have noted that the volume of regulations is still extremely large and that the regulatory framework is just as difficult to comprehend and get an overview of as was previously the case. The number of national legal regulations has decreased and within EC law certain legal instruments have been merged. In that legal regulation has now been included in the EC regulations, these have become directly valid in Sweden. Consequently while companies certainly have fewer regulations to adhere to, they instead have to be able to understand the content of EC law. In the

follow-up, many actors mentioned the difficulties of reading and understanding EC texts.

The new regulatory framework will, in principle, make it possible to select different methods of fulfilling goals. At the same time this decrease in detail regulation brings greater insecurity as concerns the best way to fulfil legislative requirements. Law texts can be difficult to interpret for both companies and government agencies, and especially for municipal inspectors who may find it difficult to interpret various situations as concerns assessing the requirements of EC regulations.

The follow-up shows that national sector guidelines have been established only for certain parts of the small-scale food production field, for example for artisan manufacturing of cheese and other dairy products and for small-scale production of wine and spirits. The National Food Administration has stated that the system of sector guidelines has different levels of success in different sectors and it is problematic that the sectors that need them most have none, probably due to the fact that the smaller sector organisations do not possess sufficient resources for this task. It has also been indicated that the difference between legal requirements and sector guideline requirements is often difficult to determine.

One area where there are various problems with the requirements imposed on companies is small-scale slaughterhouses. The previously detailed legislation, to a fairly extensive degree, remains and in addition there are a number of other regulations that affect the slaughter of animals in various ways. One problem mentioned by several actors is the high cost levels for dealing with waste from these businesses. In the follow-up it was observed that there is no longer anything to prevent the use of mobile slaughterhouses but that it is extremely difficult to achieve profitability for such businesses.

For small-scale food producers it is primarily hygiene and risk management regulations that lead to administrative costs for companies. According to a survey by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, the administrative burden decreased by 36% within the food area between 2006 and 2008. In spite of the fact

that the government goal that administrative costs are to decrease by 25% has consequently been fulfilled within the food area, many actors have indicated that complicated regulations and a heavy administrative burden have continued for small-scale producers. The follow-up does show, however, that efforts to simplify regulations are continuing as concerns, for example, the minimum requirements for risk analysis and critical control points.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

The group notes that different activities have been implemented by both the previous and the current government as concerns the regulatory framework with the aim of facilitating small-scale food production. The group also notes that the National Food Administration, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and several county administrative boards in various ways within their operations have worked to improve preconditions for small-scale food production. Parallel with these activities, the new EC regulatory framework has been introduced in Sweden.

Based on the results of the follow-up, it is difficult to assess very clearly how large a problem the regulatory framework really is for businesses. The group, however, notes that the regulatory framework within the food area is still perceived as unnecessarily complicated, extensive and difficult to comprehend. It demands considerable resources from small-scale companies to review and understand the consequences of the different parts of the regulatory framework. There are many different kinds of regulations, guidelines and recommendations pouring in from government agencies, sector organisations and the commercial field, which means that the individual company finds it difficult to get an overview of the situation. This also means that the individual business operator is showered with demands from different directions. Difficulties in comprehending the entire field form a major problem for small food companies. The follow-up shows that there is wide awareness of this problem among both central government and municipal authorities. The National

Food Administration attempts to disseminate information on the regulatory framework via its website. The group feels that it is vital to continue both the work of simplifying the regulatory framework and improving information to companies as concerns relevant regulations. At the same time it is important to continue to pay attention to the small producers and their special conditions in future development activities as concerns the regulatory framework, both within EU cooperation and at national level.

The new regulatory framework means that companies in Sweden must be able to read and understand EC regulations. The Swedish Parliament has previously observed that EU documents may often be perceived as difficult to comprehend and that it is of decisive importance that written translations of EU documents maintain a high level of quality. It was observed that translations are often better if the basic texts are expressed as clearly as possible; consequently it is essential that the Government continues to work in various ways to improve the language used in the EU. The group wishes to strongly emphasise the importance of EC regulations, and other documents, being written in simple, easy-to-understand Swedish.

In the group's previous follow-up in 2005 it was stated that many people felt that the problems with the regulatory framework lay in its application, not that the regulations themselves were a problem. The Group notes that this view has surfaced once again in this follow-up. In addition, the move towards a more goal-oriented and less detailed regulatory framework has meant that more demands are placed on the competence of the government agencies and officials as concerns their control and inspection activities. In the opinion of the group, several of the problems are based on the fact that the inspectors experience uncertainty as concerns the interpretation of the rules, at the same time it must also be emphasised that there are many municipalities where food control competence is very high. For the individual food company, the changes in the regulatory framework have meant a decrease in detailed regulation, but at the same time also increased demand on business operators to be able to interpret and understand the content of the often imprecise regula-

tory framework. Consequently the group feels that it is important to continue working with competence-development activities at the supervisory authorities and to improve information to companies as concerns small-scale food production.

In recent years, the National Food Administration and others have implemented several activities aimed at simplifying the regulatory framework and application of regulations within the food area. At the same time the group notes that there are differences of opinion concerning how much progress has been made in this work. The group notes that the Government and authorities are continuing to take measures to simplify regulations and that this had given positive effects in the form of decreased administrative burden within the food area. The follow-up shows, however, that especially small-scale food producers experience the regulatory framework and forms as difficult and complicated. Consequently, the group assumes that continued measures will be taken with the aim of improving the preconditions for the development of small-scale food producers.

The group also observes that the work with national sector guidelines has taken a certain amount of time and that these guidelines have not yet been established for all sectors. In the assessment of the group, there may be a need for special inputs on the part of the state in order to encourage the development of these guidelines.

The Committee has, on various occasions, stated that it regards the fact that measures are being taken to facilitate opportunities for small-scale animal slaughter as positive. However, the follow-up shows that there are still a number of problems concerning this activity, for example regulations concerning waste products, inspection of live animals and meat controls. In the assessment of the group, it is important that these issues are dealt with by the relevant ministries and authorities in their future development activities, especially as concerns the issue of expensive disposal of slaughterhouse waste. The group wishes to emphasise here that these waste products should not be regarded as merely an expensive problem; they are also an asset and a nourishing resource which can be used for compost or for biogas manufacture. It is vital to identify safe

methods of managing this waste and at the same time enable the continued development of small-scale slaughterhouse operations. In the group's opinion, this issue must be solved in a satisfactory manner.

Approval and registration of food-processing facilities

Changes since 2005

Since the Committee's follow-up in 2005, the regulatory framework concerning the approval and registration of food-processing facilities has been changed. In connection with amendments to EC law in 2006, Sweden chose to introduce national requirements for the approval of food-processing facilities that generated larger-scale hygiene risks. During the course of the follow-up, the National Food Administration decided that, from December 2009, this approval was to be replaced with registration in all cases where the EC regulations do not absolutely require approval.

Observations in the follow-up

All food-producing companies must be registered with, or approved by, the supervisory authority. The follow-up shows that experiences of the changes to the regulatory framework in 2006 as concerns approval and registration are limited in scope.

Several actors have indicated that there is uncertainty as concerns the requirements that authorities must impose on different types of facilities and there are examples of how different municipalities interpret the regulatory framework in different ways. For inspectors it is often very time-consuming to determine which requirements are applicable and they are not always able to give companies clear decisions. It has also become more difficult for companies to determine which requirements they should fulfil. Some actors feel that the reduced degree of detail in the regulatory framework has actu-

ally made it more difficult to make similar assessments in connection with approval procedures, and that unnecessary demands are sometimes imposed on companies.

As concerns the changes recently determined by the National Food Administration regarding the removal of the approval requirement, views have varied among the relevant actors. Some felt that this would be a simplification while others expressed anxiety that the removal of the approval requirement would mean that new companies would postpone dealing with any problems when they started up operations in facilities that had not been approved by the authorities.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

The group notes that there is still a certain amount of uncertainty at the relevant authorities as concerns the requirements applicable to different types of small-scale food-processing facilities. At the same time the group notes that changes will be made as concerns approval/registration of food-processing facilities. In the assessment of the group, this is positive. At the same time this does not mean that the problem ceases to exist – rather it is postponed until the first round of inspections. Consequently it remains important that the supervisory authority maintains good cooperation with food-processing companies so that unnecessary costs do not occur for companies, e.g. because the facility is designed in such a fashion that is not approved at the inspection. One method of avoiding this is some form of opportunity for advance examination of facilities.

Food control

Changes since 2005

Responsibility for food control is shared by the National Food Administration, county councils and municipalities. The changes to

the regulatory framework in 2006 mean that public control of various types of food is now undertaken primarily via EC regulations applicable directly here in Sweden. Among other routines, food control is now based on the risks inherent in operations. In addition, in 2005 a number of changes were introduced into controls as a result of a parliamentary decision of April 2005, as concerns the National Food Administration's responsibility for leading and coordinating control and the municipalities' opportunities to collaborate in food control. In addition, in January 2007, a new system of charges was introduced which means that the supervisory authority is to levy full cost cover for its inspections. Each supervisory authority determines its own level of charges.

Observations in the follow-up

Food control is aimed at ensuring that food available for sale on the market does not have a negative impact on health. The goal is efficient, standardised and independent food control throughout the country. Previous studies have shown that the quality, scope and preconditions for municipal food control vary widely across the country. In the follow-up, several actors have stated that public supervision requires higher levels of competence in order to be able to assess which requirements are to be imposed on small-scale food companies. It was also pointed out that the municipal food inspectors were often working under extreme pressure due to lack of resources and time and that their administrative tasks had increased. In 2008 there were just over 70,000 food-processing facilities and around 650 inspectors (full-time annual positions). A full-time inspector in 2008 was responsible for supervising an average of 123 facilities. It was also pointed out that the inspectors tended to work in the same manner as previously and that they sometimes based their assessments on larger-scale companies when imposing requirements on smaller companies. The follow-up has shown that there are differing opinions on whether the food control system should give special consideration to conditions for the smaller pro-

ducers. Some feel that they already do, while others feel that there should be no difference between small and larger-scale producers.

In municipalities with only a few facilities in each business area it can be practically difficult for food inspectors to build up and maintain competence within all the areas necessary. In order to deal with this problem, legislation has been changed so that municipalities may collaborate as concerns food control. The follow-up shows, however, that this opportunity is seldom utilised.

It has also been stated in the follow-up that there are differences between municipalities as concerns the interpretation of the hygiene and supervision/regulatory framework and certain actors have consequently requested a more centralised organisation for food inspection. In the follow-up it is also noted that the construction of the charge system means that inspection fees vary between municipalities. Several actors have stated that companies perceive the total level of charges as far too high. It was also stated that companies feel that they do not receive the inspection time that they pay for. As concerns the small-scale slaughterhouses, the National Food Administration has introduced new measures including the allocation of funding for 2008–2010 to use for reducing inspection charges for small-scale producers.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture has stated that standardised inspection and controls in all municipalities is vital from a competition aspect. The group notes that the majority of food controls are carried out by municipalities. The group reacts with concern to the criticism presented in the follow-up regarding the supervisory authorities in the country. The group wishes to emphasise the importance of standardised controls all over the country. Consumers and the retail trade must be able to rest secure in the knowledge that society exercises this supervision. Each company should be assessed based on its own preconditions; however it is vital that food safety is always given first priority. At the same time the

group wishes to emphasise that food safety can be achieved in different ways, which naturally imposes extra demands on the inspectors and their flexibility. Consequently it is vital that the competence level of these officials is high, but it is also important that they are provided with working conditions that enable public food safety supervision to be implemented in a satisfactory manner. The group feels that it is vital that the competence of the inspectors and their working conditions are considered during continued development activities including central government supervision of municipal inspection activities.

In the opinion of the group, it is unreasonable to expect an inspector to master all existing sectors within the food area. The group would consequently like to highlight the opportunities enjoyed by municipalities to collaborate to a greater degree in their inspection activities. It is essential that municipalities do cooperate as concerns food control, not least in order to be able to utilise individual inspectors' competence within different sectors. Otherwise it may be difficult, especially for the smaller municipalities, to maintain the competence levels of their inspectors within all the different operations that occur within small-scale food production. The group notes that the Government has announced that a review of responsibility for, and implementation of, food controls for small-scale food production is planned. It would be valuable if this review included an examination of the constraints on increased cooperation between municipalities, for example as concerns financial and organisational aspects.

One problem area illustrated in the follow-up concerns the current financing of food control. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture stated, when it considered this issue in the spring of 2006, that it saw no reason to depart from the principle that public supervision, as far as possible, should be financed via charges as long as the authorities carried out a service that is to the benefit of those paying the charges. The Committee further stated that the Government would monitor to ensure that the consequences of the proposed regulations would not be detrimental to the competitive situation of Swedish

companies. The Committee's follow-up shows that inspection charges vary among the municipalities in the country. In the assessment of the group, major differences in charge levels are not satisfactory; consequently it is important that current municipal charge levels are surveyed. In this context the group would also like to mention that several actors have expressed dissatisfaction with the construction of the charge system, including the fact that individual companies are obliged to pay for an inspection even if it does not occur during the year in question. In the assessment of the group, the continued development of food control financing and its consequences for e.g. companies, must be carefully monitored.

Financial support for small-scale food production

Changes since 2005

Since the Committee's previous follow-up, financial support for investments in small-scale food production has been increased. For 2005, the appropriation "Competitive Food Sector" was increased from SEK 5 to 15 million for support to national and regional resource centres for small-scale food production. In 2007, the Government presented a three-year investment in a national food strategy, and in 2008 a long-term vision for Sweden as the new European culinary nation was presented. As from 2008, SEK 16.6 million per year have been earmarked for the food strategy, and from 2009 and further SEK 12.5 million have been earmarked for marketing and participation in exhibitions etc. One of the Government's goals is that the number of food companies should rise by 20% by the year 2020, and that conditions are created for 10,000 new jobs.

As part of the appropriation to the National Food Administration, various measures have been taken, primarily to promote small-scale slaughter, for example, in order to lower companies' costs for control and approval. Furthermore, information material has been published and advice provided for a period up to 2008. Until 2010,

the National Food Administration will receive SEK 9 million per year to improve the conditions of smaller slaughterhouses.

In 2007, Sweden's new Rural Development Programme for 2007–2013 was approved. The programme comprises approximately SEK 5 billion per year. Within the new Rural Development Programme it is possible, as before, to grant support for small-scale food production. So far, 220 companies have been granted SEK 61 million to support food processing activities. A total of SEK 63 million has been granted to 90 different projects.

Observations in the follow-up

The follow-up shows that central government earmarks funding for measures to promote small-scale food production and that the funding has increased in recent years. There are also a number of initiatives currently taking place in the food production area. As part of the Rural Development Programme, support has been given to a number of companies focusing on small-scale food production. The evaluation of the previous Rural Development Programme shows that it is doubtful whether support to food processing gave the intended results.

The follow-up has shown that measures have been taken to simplify the regulations and forms connected with the Rural Development Programme. It is reportedly perceived as more complicated to receive the actual funding than to apply for funding. Measures are being taken to address long processing times, etc.

The follow-up shows that the measures taken to promote small-scale slaughter in the period 2005–2007 – primarily advice and preparation of information material – have helped to facilitate procedures, primarily for existing companies. The current initiative for the period 2008–2010 has for example, included a reduction in fees for approval and control. According to the National Food Administration and others, these reductions may have led to the rise in the number of small-scale slaughterhouses in the last two years.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

The group notes that the Government is currently taking various measures to promote small-scale food production with a new national food strategy and an initiative to make Sweden the new culinary nation. The group has not studied in closer detail what results and consequences the current measures could have. The group therefore looks forward to forthcoming presentations to the Riksdag of the outcome of these measures.

The group wishes to highlight how important it is that the Rural Development Programme is used to support development of small-scale food production. In this work it is important to make use of the lessons learned from the evaluation of the previous period's Rural Development Programme. The group also wishes to underline that the rules and forms connected with the Rural Development Programme must be simplified, but can also note that there is an awareness of this among the relevant authorities.

The group further wishes to draw attention to the positive results of special measures taken by the current and previous governments for small-scale slaughterhouses. The group notes that the current reduction of fees is a time-limited measure, but assumes that the relevant authorities are considering a longer-term solution to this issue.

Advice, training and skills development

Changes since 2005

The 2005 follow-up noted that the issue of what central government can do to meet small companies' need for skills development, support and advice is important. In 2005, the Government at that time decided to develop Eldrimner at Jämtland County Administrative Board into a national resource centre for small-scale and artisan food production in the period 2005–2007. At the same time, extra funding was allocated partly to the project Regional Food in Uppsala and partly to Livstek in Gotland. For the years 2008–2010, Eldrimner

has been granted funding from the Ministry of Agriculture, among others. Until 2008, the National Food Administration received special funding for advice to small-scale slaughterhouses.

Observations in the follow-up

The follow-up shows that advice, support and information is provided, to varying degrees by municipalities, county councils and central government agencies. A number of measures are being taken under the Rural Development Programme. Eldrimner has continued, through various forms of advice, seminars and study trips etc. to support and initiate the development of small-scale food production. As before, there are a number of other actors that support small-scale food producers in various ways, with advice and skills development. The follow-up shows that information from central government agencies has improved. The National Food Administration now provides information for companies on its website, but the follow-up notes that considerable improvements could be made to this information. Some support is also given to enable small companies to participate in public procurement. Despite the measures that have been taken to improve advice etc., the follow-up shows that companies' need for knowledge continues to be great. Skills development needs differ and may involve product development, business development questions and self-monitoring measures.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

The group considers that there is still a need for advice, training and skills development as regards small-scale food production. The follow-up has shown that there are actors that play an important role here. In this context, the group has noted that Eldrimner's role can be perceived as unclear. In the opinion of the group, it is important that Eldrimner's role and tasks as a national resource centre are clarified. The group also notes that the question of long-term funding of Eldrimner's activities is felt to be unclear. In the opinion of the group, the issue of long-term support should be resolved.

The group also wishes to emphasise that it is important that the authorities take further measures to improve their information to enterprises. The group notes that the National Food Administration is currently working to further develop its website and therefore assumes that information to companies will come to be developed and improved in the near future.

Contact with and coordination between public agencies

Changes since 2005

The Government has initiated a dialogue with the sector to discuss the specific investments and measures that food producers need. In February 2009, an inquiry chair presented proposals for a new agency structure within the Swedish food production chain. The proposal has been processed by the Government Offices.

Observations in the follow-up

The follow-up shows that small-scale food production is an area that affects a number of central and local government agencies at local, regional and central level. In the follow-up it has emerged that the need for greater coordination between the agencies concerned continues to be great.

The follow-up shows that the problems connected with food production statistics that were presented in the Committee's 2005 follow-up remain. There has, for example, not been any more formal survey or review of what statistics on the extent and development of small-scale food production various actors need. Statistics relating to food are included in the statistics produced by the Swedish Board of Agriculture, while statistics on business activities are produced by Statistics Sweden (SCB).

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

According to the group's assessment, the need for greater coordination between the agencies concerned is just as great now as it was when the Committee carried out its previous follow-up in 2005. This applies to the local, regional and central levels. In the previous follow-up the group made the assessment that it could be worth examining the issue of whether some form of working group with representatives of different agencies could be appointed. The group considers that coordination and cooperation between agencies is important and it considers that the need for greater coordination between agencies is an issue that should be highlighted in continued development measures in the field of food production.

The group further wishes to emphasise how important it is that companies have good opportunities for contact and dialogue with the relevant central and local government authorities/agencies.

The group notes that it is still difficult, on the basis of existing statistics, to obtain a clear picture of the situation and development of small-scale food production. The group therefore repeats its assessment from the previous follow-up, that is, that the responsibilities of the relevant agencies/authorities needs to be clarified and a review undertaken of what statistics various actors are in need of.

The term "small-scale food production" has not been clearly defined. In order to be able to monitor continued developments in the field, it would be valuable, in the opinion of the group, to formulate a clearer definition, especially with a view to being able to produce statistics and indicators of results in reports to the Riksdag.

The importance and future of small-scale food production

Observations in the follow-up

The follow-up shows that most actors agree that there is great potential in small-scale food production. Within the traditional food industry a structural rationalisation is taking place, at the same time as consumer interest in quality food and environmental issues is increasing.

The follow-up also clarifies that small-scale food production is partly a way of increasing profitability in agriculture and reindeer husbandry, and partly a way of making a region more attractive and thus promoting the tourism industry. Several actors state that small-scale food production contributes to new enterprise and jobs in rural areas.

The follow-up shows that consumer demand for food produced on a small-scale basis is increasing. Alongside greater consumer interest, retailer interest in small-scale food production has also increased. In the follow-up it has emerged that the various chain stores work to provide various solutions with the aim of being able to offer customers food that is produced on a small-scale basis.

In the follow-up, two problems concerning the retail sector's demands on small-scale producers have been identified. The first is about the retail sector's demand that producers should be connected to electronic systems for receiving orders and invoicing, which involves various difficulties for small-scale companies, including high threshold costs. The other problem is about the retail sector's demand for certification of food produced on a small-scale basis, which is said to be due to the sector's mistrust of public food control. The demand for certification means that producers have to undergo double controls and higher costs. The follow-up notes that the retail sector has helped to draw up new standards for the certification of small-scale food-producing companies.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

The group considers that small-scale, local and artisan food production has good potential for further development. In the light of this, it is important that the Government and the relevant authorities continue their work to facilitate conditions for small-scale food production. According to the group's assessment, experience, for example from Jämtland, shows that there is capacity for more small-scale food companies.

The group also wishes to highlight the importance of refinement for the further development of agriculture, reindeer husbandry and rural tourism. The group assumes that this will continue to receive attention in various measures taken in these policy areas.

The group notes that the retail sector's interest in food produced on a small-scale basis has increased, which is very positive, but at the same time the sector has great demands on small-scale companies, for example, as regards certification. The group considers this to be a problem. The demands of the retail sector may lead to producers seeking other ways to sell their products instead. As in the previous follow-up, the group wishes to emphasise how important it is that food produced on a small-scale basis is available in ordinary food stores. As regards the retail sector's demands for certification, the group once again wishes to stress the importance of well-functioning food controls. In the long term, this should then lead to less of a need for certification from the retail sector. In the opinion of the group, the retail sector's interest in food produced on a small-scale basis will continue to grow as consumer interest grows.

Follow-up, reporting back and presentation of results

Changes since 2005

After the Committee's previous follow-up in 2005, the Government decided to introduce a new requirement that the National Food Administration and the Swedish Board of Agriculture should report

back to the Government as regards their measures to facilitate conditions for small-scale food production. Both authorities have, in their most recent annual reports, provided a brief account of measures taken.

Observations in the follow-up

In recent years no overall evaluation of central government measures for small-scale food production has been carried out. However, various follow-up measures that affect small-scale food production in various ways have been implemented, for example, as part of evaluations of the Rural Development Programme.

The follow-up shows that the Government, as from its 2009 appropriation directives, has removed special requirements for reporting back as regards small-scale food production, which were introduced about a year earlier for the National Food Administration and the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

In recent years, the Government has presented a number of measures for small-scale food production in its annual statement of operations to the Riksdag. However, the actual result of measures taken has not been presented.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture has noted that the Government, in its statement of operations to the Riksdag, gives an account of a number of measures relating to small-scale food production, but that it does not present the actual results of measures taken. First, the group wishes to emphasise how important it is that the results of measures taken by central government are followed up and evaluated and that the results of these follow-ups and evaluations are assessed by the Government and presented to the Riksdag. The group notes that authorities and the Government have hitherto not presented the actual results of measures taken and that there are shortcomings in the statistics, which makes it difficult to follow developments, e.g. the number of new companies. The group wishes

to strongly emphasise how important it is that the Government presents to the Riksdag in the Budget Bill the results of the decisions the Riksdag has taken as regards small-scale food production. In the opinion of the group, it would be valuable if the Government were to prepare indicators of results in order to be able to present developments in small-scale food production in the future. Such indicators should reflect both production and consumption.

Further, the group considers that it is important to continue to observe the various issues that have been highlighted in this follow-up and that the results of the measures taken as a result of the follow-up continue to be presented to the Riksdag in the Government's annual statement of operations in the Budget Bill.

Finally, the group notes that the Government has removed the more specific requirements that authorities should report back regarding small-scale food production. The group assumes that the Government will continue to produce the necessary information about results so that it can present to the Riksdag the results achieved through central government measures.

Follow-ups (in Swedish) by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture (MJU)

- Förutsättningar för småskalig livsmedelsproduktion – En uppföljning [Conditions for small-scale food production – a follow-up] (Report 2005/06:RFR3, Committee Report 2005/06:MJU8)
- Uppföljning och analys av resultatredovisningen för politikområdet Livsmedelspolitik [Follow-up and analysis of the statement of operations for the food policy area] (Committee Report 2005/06:MJU2)
- Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för fiskeområdet [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's statements of operations for the fisheries area] (Committee Report 2006/07:MJU2)
- Uppföljning av de fiskepolitiska insatsernas resultat och konsekvenser för företag inom fiskeområdet [Follow-up of the results and consequences of fisheries policy measures for companies in the fisheries area] (Report 2007/08:RFR3, Committee Report 2007/08:MJU2)
- Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för fiskeområdet och livsmedelsområdet [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's statement of operations for the fisheries and food areas] (Committee Report 2007/08:MJU2)
- Uppföljning och analys av resultatredovisningen för havsmiljöområdet [Follow-up and analysis of the statement of operations for the marine environment area] (Committee Report 2007/08:MJU1)
- Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för livsmedelsområdet [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's statement of operations for the food area] (Committee Report 2008/09:MJU2)

- Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för havsmiljö och klimat [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's statement of operations for the marine environment and climate] (Committee Report 2008/09:MJU1)
- Uppföljning av statens insatser inom havsmiljöområdet [Follow-up of government measures for the marine environment] (Report 2008/09:RFR3, Committee Report 2008/09:MJU1). A summary in English is available on the Riksdag website.
- Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för jordbruks-, fiske- och livsmedelsområdena [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's statement of operations for the agriculture, fisheries and food areas] (Committee Report 2009/10:MJU2)
- Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för havsmiljö och klimat [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's statement of operations for the marine environment and climate] (Committee Report 2009/10:MJU1)
- Uppföljning av statens insatser för småskalig livsmedelsproduktion [Follow-up of central government measures for small-scale food production] (Report 2009/10:RFR1, Committee Report 2009/10:MJU2).

The follow-up reports are available in Swedish on the Riksdag website (www.riksdagen.se) and can also be ordered from the Riksdag Printing Office (address: SE-100 12 Stockholm, tel. +46-8-786 58 10, fax. +46-8-786 61 76 or e-mail ordermottagningen@riksdagen.se).

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