Culinary arts and food sciences: A fresh education at Kristianstad University

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Background – why a new gastronomy education in Sweden?

In 2004, a new educational programme, Culinary Arts and Food Sciences, was launched at Kristianstad University. The expectations were elevated: a higher education in gastronomy in southern Sweden had been sought after for a long time. Seven years later, in spring 2011, five cohorts of students, approximately 100 people, have graduated as Bachelors of Social Science with the main subject being Food and Meal Science, also entitled Gastronomists.

Development of the programme 2004-2011

The aim of the Culinary Arts and Food Sciences study programme is to meet future needs for innovations and product development within the food and meal sectors, including the food industry, restaurant and catering, grocer’s shops, the event industry and the package industry. The catchwords of the programme are: “Food for many” and “Everyday gastronomy” implying knowledge and skills in the service of society.

Today, the study programme includes the main subject Food and Meal Science, and supplementary courses, which give an introduction to or deeper studies in relation to the main subject. Food and Meal Science includes, for example, consumer oriented sensory and product development, craftsmanship, culinary and balanced meals and meal aesthetics. From the fifth semester there is a possibility for individual specialisation within Culture and Communication of Food and Meals (the most popular focus among students), Food Science or Nutritional Science. Two periods of working life practice give our students a unique understanding of the conditions of food and meal related businesses.

Currently there are efforts being made to develop a Master’s degree programme within the area of nutrition and health at Kristianstad University, opening up new opportunities and challenges within higher education for students, teachers and researchers alike.

Evaluation of the educational effort and conclusions

The general perception is that the gastronomy students are content with their education and further careers. An alumni inquiry conducted during spring 2011
will hopefully confirm this notion, giving us updated data to present during the conference. As the Swedish Government sees it, Sweden has every chance of becoming Europe’s leading culinary nation (Ministry of Agriculture, 2008)\(^1\). However, the Swedish food and meal sector is characterized by a relatively low level of education and an uneven size structure. So what would be the role of Gastronomist in the new food nation? We need to further pinpoint and identify the specific qualifications that are required in the Gastronomist of the future. Our hope is that new contacts and inputs from international education within culinary arts and gastronomic sciences will help us in this quest!

**Reference**