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Circular gastronomy. A new concept in connecting food, eating and sustainability?

Background

Striving for sustainable production and consumption of food and meals is important. However, a terminology including specific concepts within the combined area of food, meals and sustainability is lacking.

Aim

To investigate how food, meals and sustainability can be conceptualized together, the aim is to explore the compound concept of *circular gastronomy* and its potential opportunities and challenges. Further, to provide a definition of circular gastronomy.

Material and Methods

The data collection was conducted in two phases of an explorative sequential mixed-method study comprising qualitative focus groups with professionals working with food and meals in the private and public food sectors and within higher education, followed by a web-based survey among university students in Sweden

Figure 1. Word cloud illustrating associations made with circular gastronomy.

Results

The results revealed the complexity in the compound concept of circular gastronomy, both in what might be included and in how it could be understood and applied. Circular gastronomy was considered to be useful, interesting and trendy; however, understanding circularity and gastronomy as a compound concept was also found to be challenging. As a result of the study, and previous understandings of the concepts *circular* and *gastronomy*, the following definition of circular gastronomy is provided:

“The knowledge and skills of food and meal designs, focusing on re-creation and re-design, in order to stimulate gastronomic development for a sustainable future”.

Conclusions and implications

Developing an understanding of circular gastronomy is an attempt to contribute to the conceptual development of the combined area of food, meals and sustainability.

Circular gastronomy has the potential to impact gastronomy by bringing meal experiences, health benefits and environmental aspects together across the entire value chain, from farmers to consumers. By focusing on re-creation and re-design the concept could serve as the missing link that brings together and closes this chain, making it circular rather than linear.

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