



Flanders
State of the Art



THE ORGANIC, VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN MARKET

IN FINLAND

FLANDERS INVESTMENT & TRADE MARKET SURVEY



THE ORGANIC, VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN MARKET IN FINLAND

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1 Introduction to the organic and vegan market in Finland

Organic and local foods, veganism and vegetarianism have been increasing trends in Finland for many years. Sustainable food production, animal wellbeing, the environmental impact, taste and quality of food are among the reasons why consumers want to buy organic or vegan food products.

Of the 5.5 million Finns, 2.2 million buy organic products regularly, i.e., at least once a month. The key user groups for organics are families with children but also the shares of women and men in their 30s and 50s have increased. The main channel for buying organic and vegan products are the grocery stores. Cities, and especially the Metropolitan area (1.4 million inhabitants), is where the most active buyers of organic products live (Consumer barometer 2021).

The horeca sector is also an active user of organic products. 46% of professional kitchens use some organic products at least every week. Public sector industrial kitchens such as the ones in hospitals, daycare, and schools fall under to the national organic program organised by The Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The [Organic 2.0 program](#) sets a goal for public sector industrial kitchens to have 25% of their ingredients of an organic origin. In Finland, a free hot meal is served every day at schools, and in several municipalities at least one of those meals a week is vegetarian.

In a recent consumer survey ([Kantar 2023](#)), 57% of Finns felt that the ongoing inflation has a significant impact on how well they can consider responsible choices when doing grocery shopping. In addition, up to 67% of Finns say that price increases generally affect which type of foodstuffs they purchase. This consumer behaviour had an impact on the sales of organic products during 2022 and 2023, and the trend will most likely continue until inflation has come down and stabilized. In general, organic sales have more than doubled in the past decade, but the sales took a downturn by 8% in 2022 compared to 2021. However, organic sales are still higher than they were before the pandemic in 2019 ([Pro Luomu 2023](#)).

Organic and vegan products can be opportunities for Flemish companies. The main interest for the Finnish market lies currently within juices, frozen products, vegan organic products, and vegan chocolate. This is where Flemish companies could offer new and innovative products. Resellers are also looking for the next trend within the organic and vegan sector.

1.1 Terminology

Organic

Organic foods are cultivated without using artificial pesticides, fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation.

Vegan or veganism

Vegan products do not contain any animal extracts or animal by-products, even during the manufacturing process. It also means that the product hasn't been tested on animals. A vegan product isn't guaranteed to be natural or organic as they may still include artificial ingredients.



dropped. This means that the demand for vegan products is now normalizing to their near future level. Currently, the sale in meat substitutes is marginal, 1-1.3% in the category of fresh meat products. In milks, the percentage of plant-based milk is higher, between 9.3-10%. The interest in vegan products is not a boom, vegan products are here to stay, state the main Finnish retailers. As with organic products, with vegan products product development will play a significant role for the interest of consumers.

3 Mentality towards organic and vegan products

3.1 Consumers' mentality and purchasing decisions

The most frequently mentioned reasons for purchasing organic products are that they are perceived to be pure and free of pesticides and additives. Other reasons include their environmental impact, supporting small farmers and producers, as well as animal welfare, excellent quality, and taste. Biodiversity, lack antibiotics, a small carbon footprint, and environmentally friendly packaging were clearly more important aspects for Finns who actively buy organics than for the average population. Environmental impact, animal welfare, and healthiness are the main reasons for consumers to choose a vegan option.

Nearly one-fifth of the consumers choose an organic product regardless of the price, whenever possible. But price is still the biggest reason why organic products are not purchased. Other reasons why consumers leave an organic product on the shelf include that consumers do not know that producers get a better price for their products or what the benefits are of organic farming, as stated by Pro Luomu Association's CEO Aura Lamminparras.

Families with children are the key user group for organic food, but the proportion of women and men in their 30s and 50s has increased. Consumption differences between income categories and levels of education have continued to level off.

The number of active consumers of organics, i.e. buying organics at least once a week has grown, especially in the Metropolitan area. Most organic foods are sold in the largest cities where the selections are also best. Still, the most active users hope to see larger selections of organic products.

Based on Pro Luomu association's surveys, it can be assumed that the organic market's growth will continue. According to the latest survey, more than 60% of consumers who buy organics at least once a week have increased their use of organic products in the past year, and more than 80% also expect to increase it in the future. Price, as mentioned before, remains as the biggest barrier to an increase in the sales of organic. It remains to be seen how much higher inflation levels will affect the sales of organic products currently and in the coming years.



3.2 Societal mentality, and organics in the foodservice sector

Issues such as climate change, responsibility, and sustainability are topical in Finland. Food production and consumption are part of this large topic which is actively present in the Finnish media and politics.

The Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry published in 2021 an updated national organic program called Organic 2.0 which sets various goals for increasing the use of organic products. One of the goals is for public sector kitchens to have 25% of their ingredients of an organic origin. The current percentage is estimated to be 12%. To achieve this goal, organic products suitable for the foodservice sector are needed, as well as appropriate packaging sizes and recipes. The challenges for using organics in the foodservice include the price level and availability. Availability can be a problem with vegetables, for example with bell peppers and aubergine.

Finnish restaurants and hotels, as well as public sector kitchens, nowadays offer vegan options on their menus. About 46% of professional kitchens use organic products at least every week. Cereal and dairy products, eggs, coffee, and pasta are the most used organic products in foodservice. The institutional kitchens are the most active users of organic foodstuffs. Finnish kindergartens and schools serve a free-of-charge hot meal every day, and in many municipalities this meal is vegetarian once a week. Well over half of Finns consider it at least quite important that organic products are used in professional kitchens, according to Pro Luomu association's survey.

Should you want to contact the Finnish foodservice wholesalers, please have a look at the [Horeca market study](#) on our website.

4 General information about the top sellers of organic and vegan products - the grocery retailers

The grocery retail market is being dominated by two large players: the S Group and the K Group. Both, and especially the S Group, have activities in various sectors within the society. The S Group has a market share of the grocery sector of 47.0% (2022), and the K-Group's share is 35.2%. After these two market giants comes Lidl Finland with a share of 9.8%. Seeing these figures, it is easy to understand that there aren't many other significant players to mention. Finnish low-cost stores, such as Tokmanni, do increasingly sell some foodstuffs but mainly focus on other products.



4.2 K-Group



K Group is a trading sector company listed on the Helsinki stock market. It manages retail store chains, and produces services for retail store chains' purchasing, logistics, network development, and data management.

Kesko's operations include food, home and specialty goods, building and home improvement, and car and machinery trades. Its divisions and chains act in close cooperation with retailer entrepreneurs and other partners. Kesko is the only one of the biggest chains in which all the shops are owned by the shopkeepers.

In 2022, the retail sales of Kesko were some 16 billion euros. Kesko and K-retailers combined employ approximately 39,000 people and K Group employs some 45,000 people in total.

General website: www.kesko.fi/en/
Information for suppliers: www.kesko.fi/en/company/suppliers/

4.3 Lidl



Lidl Suomi Ky is an independent subsidiary of Lidl, one of Europe's biggest grocery trade groups. Lidl has been present in Finland since 2002. The company started out in Finland with just 10 stores and 1,000 products, and Finns were initially sceptic about the new foreign chain. But Lidl has managed to win Finns over and has grown its store network to about 200 stores. The current selection of Lidl comprises about 2,500 products supplemented by changing seasonal products. Lidl has climbed to the third place within the players in Finland. Its turnover in 2021 was 1,863 million euros with a 4.4% growth compared to 2020, and it employs 5,600 people in Finland.

Lidl has the most private labels within the Finnish grocery retailers, and nowadays its selection consists of about half Finnish and half foreign products.

In contrast to S Group and K Group, Lidl does not publish the contacts details of its buyers, with just a general email address given.

Lidl Finland's website www.lidl.fi/



4.4 Organic and vegan selection in supermarkets

This part of the market study is based on FIT Helsinki's observation in different grocery stores in Helsinki.

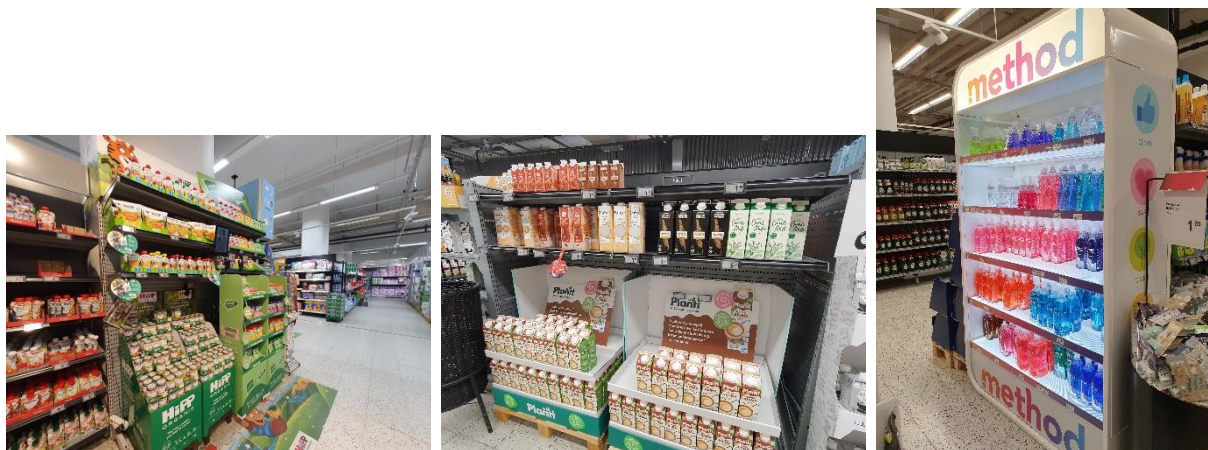
The Finnish grocery stores have a good selection of organic products which is not surprising as over 80% of the organic products are sold via grocery retail channels. The hypermarket chains Prisma (S Group) and K-Citymarket (K Group) have the largest selections of any type of groceries, including organic and vegan, compared with the retailers' smaller sized stores.

Many organic and especially vegan products are indicated by signs in the grocery stores; as seen in the pictures below. In Lidl, the official organic label of the European Union can be found on price tags.



Most of the organic products, however, are scattered in the stores and can be found next to the conventional products.

Some products or brands have their own stands or shelves which are more personalized. K Group uses brand stands more than S Group.



Visited shops:

- S-Market Vallila: Aleksis Kiven katu 11, 00510 Helsinki
- Prisma Herttoniemi: Linnanrakentajantie 2, 00880 Helsinki
- Alepa Wallininkuja: Wallininkuja 7, 00530 Helsinki
- K-CityMarket Ruoholahti: Itämerenkatu 21, 00180 Helsinki
- K-SuperMarket Postitalo: Elielinaukio 2F, 00100 Helsinki
- Lidl Kallio: Neljäs linja 3, 00530 Helsinki

The selections of the two main Finnish retailers (S Group and K Group) can be browsed online per shop, see:

S Group www.s-kaupat.fi/sivu/tervetuloa-skauppoihin (in Finnish)

K Group www.k-ruoka.fi/kauppa (in Finnish or Swedish)

Lidl Finland does not have an online shop.

5 Examples of companies active in the Finnish market

5.1 Finnish companies

The increase in demand of vegan and vegetarian options has led the large food industry companies to develop their own products to meet this demand. Some have also acquired smaller companies which manufacture vegetarian products.

Below are a few companies listed as examples of Finnish companies producing vegan and vegetarian foodstuffs.

Karl Fazer

www.fazer.com/

A large company active in confectionaries, bakery, foodservice and foodstuffs. It offers vegan options in confectionaries and cakes, but also oat yogurts and oat drinks.

Raisio

www.raisio.com/en/brands/

Raisio is best known for its grain products but also offers products containing plant stanols, plant-based foods, branded oat products for consumers, and oat as raw material for the food industry.

Meeat Food Tech

<https://meeat.co/tuotteet/>

A company founded by a Finnish meat house Pouttu. It produces meat substitutes.

Valio Group

www.valio.com/

Valio is a large dairy company which also makes vegan and vegetarian meat substitutes, as well as oat-based drinks and yogurts.



Apetit

<https://apetit.fi/en/well-being-from-vegetables/>

A company producing frozen vegetables and frozen vegan patties, etc.

Friendly Vikings (Juustoportti)

www.friendlyvikings.com/fi/

A family business in dairy which also offers a selection of vegan oat-based products.

Mö Foods

www.mokaurameijeri.fi/

A Finnish SME producing plant-based yogurts and cheeses made from oats.

Vegem

<https://vegem.fi/>

An SME producing vegan meat substitutes for retail and the catering sector.

Vöner

<https://voner.fi/>

An SME producing vegan meat substitutes for retail and the catering sector.

Soya (Jalofoods)

<https://jalotofu.fi/>

The company's product *Jalotofu* is the first Europe Soya certified organic tofu in the world. This SME also manufactures tempeh.

Kavli (Planti)

<https://planti.fi/>

A Finnish manufacturer of plant-based products. Planti belongs to the Kavli Group.

Dammenberg

www.dammenberg.fi/en

A Finnish chocolate manufacturer which offers a wide selection of chocolates for people with allergies and special diets. Also, an SME.

5.2 International brands

Happy Coco

<https://happycoco.com/en/>

Offers vegan and organic dairy alternatives for yoghurts and desserts.

LIVEKINDLY co. (Oumph!)

<https://oumph.net/>

A company making plant-based meat alternatives using soy as their main ingredient.

So Fine

www.sofine.eu/fi/

So Fine tofu products have been on the Finnish market for several years.

Nurishh

www.nurishh.fi/

Vegan cheeses.

Alpro

www.alpro.com/uk/

The Belgian producer of plant-based dairy alternatives has been present in Finland for several years.

Oatly

www.oatly.com/nl-nl

A Swedish food company that produces oat-based alternatives to dairy products.

Hälsans Kök

www.halsanskok.se/

A company producing meat substitutes.

Naturli

www.naturli-foods.fi/

A company manufacturing vegan ice creams and meat substitutes.

5.3 Products with the best growth potentialities, opportunities for Flemish companies

Pro Luomu association's CEO believes that the best growth potential within the organic food market are fruits and vegetables because their demand keeps rising. Due to the Finnish climate the crop seasons are much shorter than in most of Europe. When it comes to dairy and meat, Finns prefer domestic products. Strong categories are also juices and frozen products, but products which are both organic and vegan can also bring interesting opportunities.



There is also still room in the meat replacement category. Products come and go, and people are still looking for the tastiest option. It will be essential to find products that have demand; products with a good taste which are also sustainable, healthy, and not too pricey.

Flemish companies have possibilities with products such as vegan chocolate and pastries (foodservice), as well as with new, innovative products. But the competition is hard in Finland: 90% of new products are not on the shelves anymore after one year. Innovative products are a must, while the taste should still fit the Finnish tastebuds. Price and branding are certainly criteria that play a significant role. This is where Flemish companies could offer interesting and tempting products.

Source: Interview with Ms. Aura Lamminparras, CEO of Pro Luomu, (05/2022)

6 Specialist stores, chains and importers of organic and/or vegan products

Ruohonjuuri Ekomarket



Ruohonjuuri has 15 stores plus a webshop. In Sweden, the company operates a webshop under the name Happy Food Store.

www.ruohonjuuri.fi/in-english/
www.happyfoodstore.se

Information and instructions for suppliers: <https://ruohonjuuri.com/pages/instructions-for-new-suppliers>

Aduki



Aduki has been in the business since 1980. Aduki is an importer and a wholesaler and is supplying all possible distribution channels in entire Finland.

Please see instructions and contacts in English from the website: www.aduki.fi/trade-with-us



Helsingin ekotukku



The wholesaler Helsingin Ekotukku has been importing and distributing organic and eco products since 2005. It carries 40+ ethical brands and 600 different products.

www.ekotukku.fi - tukku@ekotukku.fi

The company also has a web shop for consumers: www.ekolo.fi/

Organic Health



Organic Health is an importer and wholesaler of organic foods.

www.luomuruokatukku.fi/info-in-english/

Life



There are about 60 franchising-based Life stores in Finland. Life Finland Oy is a subsidiary of Life Europe AB. Altogether, there are about 300 stores in the Nordic countries. Products can also be purchased online.

www.life.fi

Contact: www.life.fi/yhteystiedot, to get in touch with the purchasing department send an email to valikoima@life.fi, send samples to: Life Finland Oy / Valikoima, Sorvaajankatu 15, 00880, HELSINKI, FINLAND (samples are not returned)

Itu Biodyn



Itu Biodyn is an importer of organic products. It has a webshop for consumers.

www.lupauspuoti.fi/fi

<https://itubiodyn.fi/>



Makrobios

makrobios

Makrobios is an importer of organic products, and it also sells products under the Makrobios brand.

<https://makrobios.fi/site/>

Information and contacts for new suppliers <https://makrobiosfi.valioravinto.fi/site/makrobios-in-english/>

Greenroom



Greenroom imports organic and natural products.

www.greenroom.fi/

Contacts via an online form: www.greenroom.fi/ota-yhteytt-1

Miraz Trading



Miraz Organic is a wholesaler of natural cosmetics and organic products.

<https://miraz.fi/en/>

Vegekauppa



Vegekauppa is an online store selling only vegan products.

www.vegekauppa.fi/



7 Associations, organizations, and fairs

7.1 Associations and organizations

Pro Luomu - Finnish Organic Food Association



<https://proluomu.fi/>

The Finnish Organic Food Association Pro Luomu is the organic sector's national co-operation organisation and member of IFOAM EU. Pro Luomu promotes the production and consumption of organic food in Finland.

All the companies and associations operating in the organic sector can join as a member. All the actors in this value chain are represented, from producers to distributors like supermarkets and catering companies.

Luomuliitto - Organic Association



www.luomuliitto.fi/

Luomuliitto's main goal is to advance and promote Finnish organic production but also to facilitate networking between the organic companies and encourage consumers to be active actors. Luomuliitto has about 1,700 producer members and 12 regional member associations.

Luomuinstituutti - Finnish Organic Research Institute (FORI)



<https://luomuinstituutti.fi/>

The Organic Institute is a joint network of experts from the University of Helsinki and the national Natural Resources Center. It supports the whole food chain and promotes organic food production in Finland through research, science communication, education, and development projects.



Kevätmessut (Spring Fair)



<https://kevatmessut.messukeskus.com/>

Kevätmessut has different themes such as living and renovating, spring garden, interior design, self-catering, and local and organic food. The organics part of the fair is rather small. The fair takes place every year in Helsinki.

Gastro Helsinki



<https://gastro.messukeskus.com/?lang=en>

Gastro Helsinki, Finland's leading trade fair for the hotel, restaurant, and catering industry, presents the sector's latest products, trends and innovations. Many of the importers of organic foods are present as exhibitors here. The Gastro fair is organized every two years.

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