PRACTICE ABSTRACT

DIVINFOOD
Co-constructing interactive short and mid-tier food chains to value agrobioDIVersity IN healthy plant-based FOOD

Legumes for the Plate of the Future. A course for vocational teachers to bring legumes into the culinary universe

Summary

Legumes will play a big role in our plant-rich plates of the future. This course for vocational teachers in culinary education is aimed to arouse interest in the many varieties and possibilities of legumes.

Introduction

Legumes were introduced as an independent food group in the official Danish Dietary Guidelines from 2021,[1] with a quantitative recommendation of eating 100 grams of prepared legumes per day. However, at this time, there were only two recipes with legumes in the full curriculum for chefs.[2] Thus, cooking with legumes was (and still is) a big challenge to implement in many professional kitchens.

A preliminary investigation of barriers, potentials and prerequisites for an upskilling course in legumes at the Copenhagen Hospitality College showed that legumes were considered a 'garnish of satiety'. The study also identified some barriers for the further use of legumes in teaching sessions. These were a lack of qualifications and knowledge, and structural need to adapt the students' teaching to the curriculum and exam where legumes were under prioritised.

Solution / practical recommendation for practitioners

As legumes are foreseen to play a bigger role in the plate of the future, a natural place to start was to create an upskilling course[3] for vocational teachers who teach the culinary students about legumes. The aim was to challenge the teachers' imagination and innovative thinking, and build on their expertise. Moreover, local farming and the diversity in varieties has great storytelling potential, which can be a motivating factor for chefs. In addition to a 2-day cooking-course supplemented presentations on agriculture, nutrition, climate and biodiversity, a fact sheet was created to give examples of the climate footprint of legumes in relation to the climate footprint of other foods.[4] Moreover, a poster was made to illustrate the different species of legumes (of which there are many subspecies and varieties), their overall nutritional content and their impact on soil health (Figure 1).

To disseminate the work further, the course ends with an industry day focused on the same topics as the upskilling course.

To conclude, upskilling among food professionals is needed to overcome barriers around legumes. Legumes will take their place on the plate of the future when they are transformed into a culinary and enjoyable experience. Local farming and interest in the culinary potentials of different varieties, opens a marked opportunity to local production of neglected species of legumes.

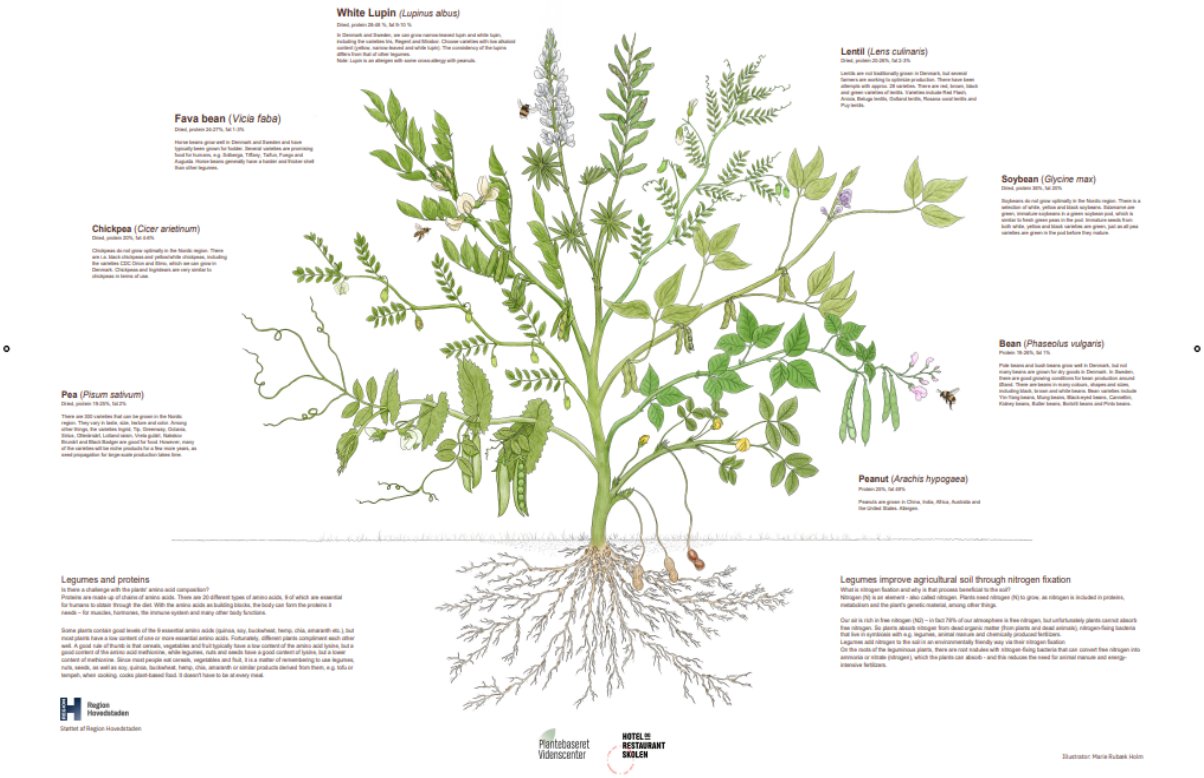

Figure 1. The Legumes for The Plate Of The Future (Illustrator: Marie Rubæk Holm)

Benefits (and limits) for stakeholders

Local farming of legumes and the diversity found in varieties have great storytelling potential among food professionals. However, a fundamental step is to ensure that food professionals gain the qualifications necessary to enable them to produce legumes in many different types of dishes. One place to start is with vocational teachers and the inclusion of legumes in updates curricula.

Further information

Weblinks

[1]Official Danish dietary guideline in English: https://en.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/food/nutrition-and-health/the-official-dietary-guidelines
[2]Textbook that covers the entire training for chefs: https://praxis.dk/eud/gastronom/produkt/gastronom
[3]Course information in Danish for The Plate of the Future: https://hrs.dk/om-skolen/projekter/fremtidens-tallerken
[4]Fact Sheet in Danish about the climate impact of different legumes and other foods: https://hrs.dk/media/4mbavidg/baelgfrugters-og-andre-foedevarers-klimaaftryk-070324-at.pdf

About this practice abstract and DIVINFOOD

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DIVINFOOD - Co-constructing interactive short and mid-tier food chains to value agrobioDIVersity IN healthy plant-based FOOD, is running **from March 2022** to **Feb 2027.**

The overall goal of DIVINFOOD (a multi-actor, participatory project) is to facilitate the use and increase the value of Neglected and Underutilised Crops (NUCs) in food chains to foster healthier diets and more sustainable food systems.

Project website: www.divinfood.eu

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