



The Swedish Market

Superfoods



**Open Trade
Gate Sweden**
National Board of Trade



Export superfood to EU and Sweden

Cooperation between Sweden and Bolivia

The information of this report was prepared as **part of a project**, in which the National Board of Trade Sweden/Open Trade Gate Sweden is involved in **Bolivia** in 2020 and 2021. The target group is therefore primarily Bolivian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are currently exporting to countries within the EU and the American markets, but still without a presence in the Swedish market.

However, the information in this report is also relevant to a wider range of companies from any country that are interested in getting an overview of the Swedish market for superfoods.

Superfoods

The purpose of this report is to screen the Swedish market for selected superfoods and provide a detailed overview of the current trends, key players and opportunities offered.

A superfood is a nutrient-rich food considered to be especially beneficial for health and well-being (Lexico). The Bolivian food products identified within this category are quinoa, chia, amaranth, palqui, canihua, camu camu, cocoa, maca, sesame seeds and acai. The products are categorised into natural ingredients or processed food. While the focus of the report is quinoa, chia seeds and amaranth, many aspects covered in the report are also relevant to companies working with other superfoods.

All Nordic importers mentioned in this report handle superfoods to some extent. They are importers, distributors, food manufactures, specialised health shops and/or retailers.

Exporting to the European Union (EU)

Sweden is a member of the EU together with 26 other countries. The EU is a customs union, meaning that all member states apply the same rules and regulations concerning, for example, import of goods. Once you enter the EU, the goods move freely within the EU. An importer can, for instance, customs-clear goods in The Netherlands and then forward them to a client in Sweden without paying any additional custom fees, nor is there any need for additional documentation when crossing EU borders.

Requirements for export to the EU

As an exporter outside of the EU that is searching for new opportunities to export to the EU, the first thing you need to do is to find out about the requirements that the EU applies for importing your goods. In order to be able to identify all applicable rules, you will need to classify your product with a tariff code. Only when the product is classified will you know exactly which fees, tariffs, licences, rules and regulations apply for that specific product.

A tariff code is a product-specific code as documented in the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS code) which is an international standardised system of names and numbers for the classification of commodities. The vast majority of countries around the world use the HS code system, including the EU. The EU's tariff codes are 10 digits long, adding 4 digits after the international HS code. The tariff code is also called the "product code" or TARIC code in Europe. As an example, the TARIC code for quinoa is 1008500000.

The requirements for food entering the European and Swedish markets can be divided into two parts. The first is mandatory requirements, that must be fulfilled in order for your product to be allowed onto the EU market. These requirements ensure that all food that is sold on the EU market is safe for consumption. Besides the mandatory requirements, there are voluntary requirements such as organic certification and compliance with private standards. These are not required by EU law, but may be requested by your importer or retailer in the EU.

You can find more information about the mandatory requirements on the website of [Open Trade Gate Sweden](#) or by contacting Open Trade Gate Sweden, where we offer free consultation concerning all mandatory requirements for exporting to the EU, including help in identifying the correct TARIC code for a specific product:

OTGS@kommerskollegium.se

Voluntary requirements

Food safety is a top priority for the entire European food sector and most players demand certificates of different kinds in order to guarantee safe products to European consumers. These certificates are not mandatory according to EU legislation but are demanded by the vast majority of players on the market and therefore necessary in order to enter the market.

For processed food, HACCP-based management systems like BRC (Global Standard for Food Safety), IFS (International Featured Standards) and SQF (Safe Quality Food) are commonly asked for by importers. Which certificate a buyer or a company prefers can, however, differ. BRC is most common in the UK and north Europe (including Sweden) while IFS is normally preferred in central Europe. In order to try and harmonise the market and its request for different certificates, the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) was launched in 2000. All of the above-mentioned certificates have been benchmarked and approved by GFSI.

The increasing demand in north Europe for social and environmental responsibility has resulted in several different certificates, initiatives and sourcing policies, all under the name Corporate Responsibility (CSR). The most common and basic request from importers is signing a code of conduct in which the exporter declares they will follow local laws and regulations in terms of labour and environmental issues. More comprehensive initiatives, mainly demanded by bigger co-operations within the food industry, are so-called social certificates and initiatives, like BSCI (Business Social Compliance Initiative), SA8000 (Social Accountability International), ETI (Ethical Trade Initiative), SMETA (Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit), UTZ and Fair Trade. Each country and each company in Europe has its own approach to CSR and which certificate or initiative it prefers, making it difficult for suppliers to choose the “right” certificate. Many bigger Swedish retailers and importers are members of [Amfori BSCI](#) and follow its recommendations about social compliance.

The demand for certified organic products is a growing trend in Sweden and the supermarket chains have reported annual increases for the past 10 years. In recent years the demand has stabilised, but this segment is still expected to grow. In order to market your product as organic, it must have been grown according to [EU legislation](#) for organic produce and the processing facilities must have been audited by an accredited certifier. Only then can the EU organic logo be put on the product.¹

Recommendation

Look at your main market when deciding upon which certificate to implement.

¹ New EU organic legislation is also expected to enter into force on 1 January 2022, read more about the new legislation [here](#).

Introducing Sweden – the short version

Sweden is located in the north of Europe and is one of the Nordic countries, together with Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland. It is a large country in terms of size, but a mid-sized country in terms of population. The total area is almost as big as France or Spain, but with a population of only around 10 million people, which is equal to approximately 0.13% of the world's total population. Annual population growth is approximately 0.8%, immigration representing a substantial part.

Sweden has been a full member of the EU since 1995, but has decided to stay out of the Euro monetary system and still uses its national currency, the Swedish krona (SEK). The average exchange rate for 1 US dollar was 9.45 SEK in 2019.

Sweden – in numbers

Sweden has the largest share of single households per capita in the world with over 50% of the total population living by themselves (ec.europa.eu/eurostat). Individualisation of society, urbanisation and a high level of equality between men and women are said to be the main reasons behind this development. This is also reflected in the range of single-serving packaging that can be found in an average Swedish supermarket.

85% of the population lives in cities and that number is increasing every year, leaving the rural parts of the country more and more uninhabited (www.SCB.se).

5% of Swedes are vegetarians. For young Swedes between the ages of 15 and 24, 10% are vegetarians and 5% are vegans (www.foodfriends.se).

20% of Swedes think locally produced food is the most important feature when choosing a product (www.foodfriends.se).

Andersson is the most common surname and the average family in Sweden has **1.75 children**.

Based on the facts above...

...future Swedish food could be vegetarian, domestically produced and packaged in single-serving packages.

The market

Quinoa

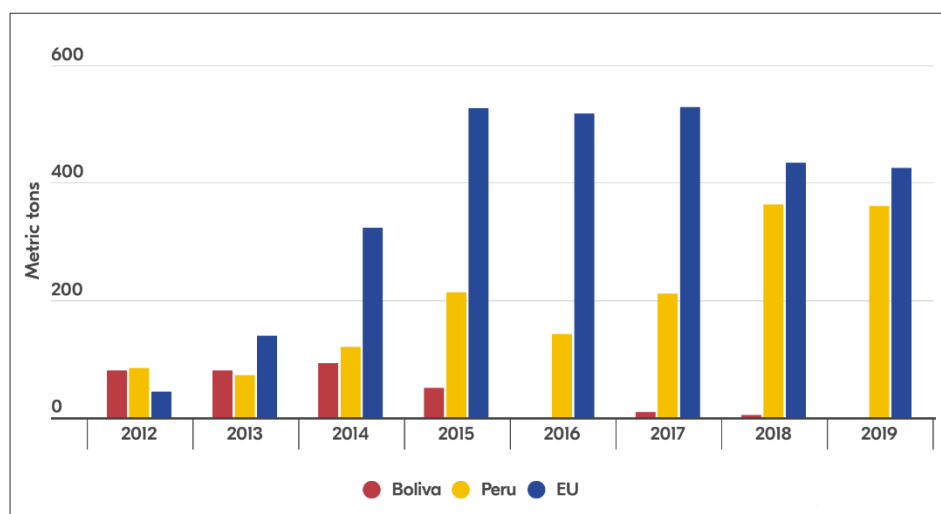
The market for quinoa in Sweden has followed the same development as the rest of Europe: from a hyped novelty product in a new market to a well-known product in a stable market. Competition is tough and all major importers already have a supplier. In order to enter as a new supplier, you need to be better than your competition in terms of quality, variety and/or price. Furthermore, quinoa is nowadays produced in Europe. Spain, France and Sweden all have their own cultivations, but still only limited volumes compared to the dominant countries of Peru and Bolivia. Since 2016, the quinoa varieties Vikinga and Titicaca have been grown in the southern parts of Sweden. This quinoa is certified KRAV organic and sold under the brand “Nordisk Råvara” (www.nordiskravara.se).

The average retail price, at the time of writing this report, is around 115 SEK per kilo including 12% VAT.

The difference between Sweden and bigger countries in Europe is that a lot of the quinoa supply comes from other European countries via big importers and food manufacturers. The biggest exporter of quinoa to Sweden is Germany followed by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In terms of direct imports, Bolivia is showing a negative trend since 2013 and export to Sweden of quinoa was at zero in 2019. Peru, on the other hand, is taking a market share. The share of direct imports of quinoa to Sweden from Peru was 46% in 2019. Furthermore, Sweden is also re-exporting quinoa to its neighbouring Scandinavian countries, Norway being the biggest partner.

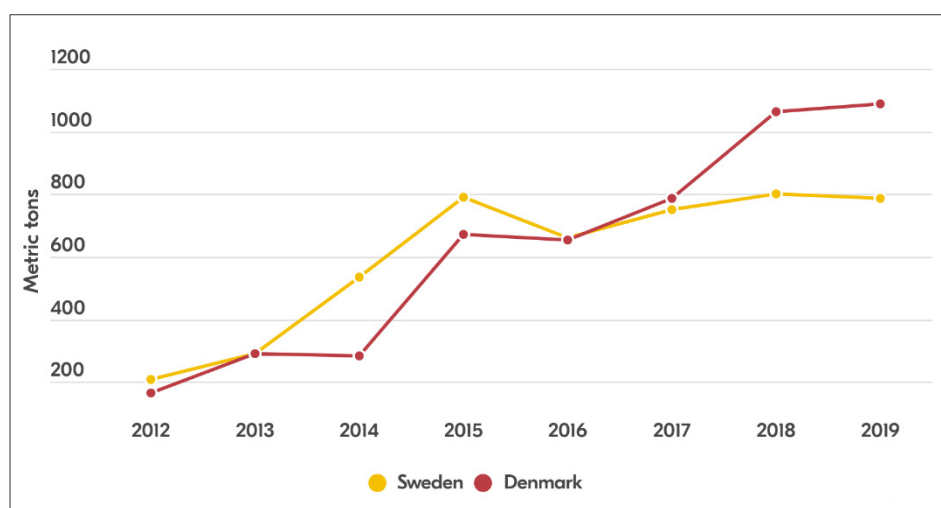
Denmark is the biggest importer of quinoa of the Nordic countries, beating Sweden with 300 tons in 2019. Its share of direct imports from Bolivia and Peru was 50%. Taking into consideration the fact that only 5.8 million people live in Denmark, compared to Sweden's 10 million, there is definitely potential to increase imports of quinoa to Sweden.

Figure 1: Quinoa supply to Sweden (ITC)



Source: EU Commission

Figure 2: Total imports – Sweden vs Denmark



Source: EU Commission

Chia seeds

The Swedish market for chia seeds has experienced the same development as in the rest of Europe since the product was introduced as novel food in 2009. Swedish importers quickly jumped aboard the global hype as chia was introduced as the new superfood and basically all the players within the superfood segment added chia seeds to their product portfolio. Now the hype has passed, the market is more stable and chia has moved onto supermarket shelves. Even though the demand for chia is lower compared to when it was first introduced to the market, it is still considered to be a new product and consumption is expected to grow in the future.

Chia seeds are not categorised with an individual HS code, like quinoa, but are imported under the general HS code “other oilseeds”, which makes it difficult to obtain accurate data and statistics on imports to Europe in general and Sweden in particular. Many players are sourcing their chia seeds from other importers within Europe, especially the big supermarket chains; where for instance both ICA and Axfood have suppliers in Italy.

The average retail price, at the time of writing this report, is around 160 SEK per kilo (including 12% VAT), ranging from 120 to 225 SEK depending on the origin, brand and certification.

Amaranth

While quinoa and chia seeds are nowadays available as a mainstream product to consumers via supermarket shelves, amaranth is still seen as a niche product sold by smaller specialised health and superfood players. Amaranth is often categorised as a pseudo grain, together with quinoa, teff, buckwheat and millet, for example. The pseudo grains are all known for their extremely high levels of protein, fibre and low-glycaemic index carbohydrates and are full of vitamins and minerals. All of that, combined with the fact that they are gluten-free, make them a perfect match with the current health trends.

Like chia seeds, amaranth does not have its own unique HS code and accurate data of imports to Europe and Sweden are therefore difficult to get. The amaranth sold by Swedish importers often comes from India and is packed in the Netherlands. There are also examples of pre-packed mixes of seeds where amaranth is an ingredient together with quinoa and millet, for example.

Processed products with superfood ingredients

In recent years, there has been an explosion of processed food products with superfoods as ingredients. Examples include healthy snacks and energy bars with added protein, and gluten-free alternatives to traditional carbohydrate products like pasta made out of soybeans and alternatives to meat like the bleeding hamburger (see for example Risenta and Beyond Meat). This trend is clear to everyone in the business, but there are no statistics to rely on nor any reports showing actual numbers of sales because these products often are categorised under a bigger product group. For example, pasta made of quinoa will fall under the product category pasta, together with all other types of pasta variety. What is clear though is that these kinds of products are trending and that new products are constantly popping up on supermarket shelves.

Market segments – in general

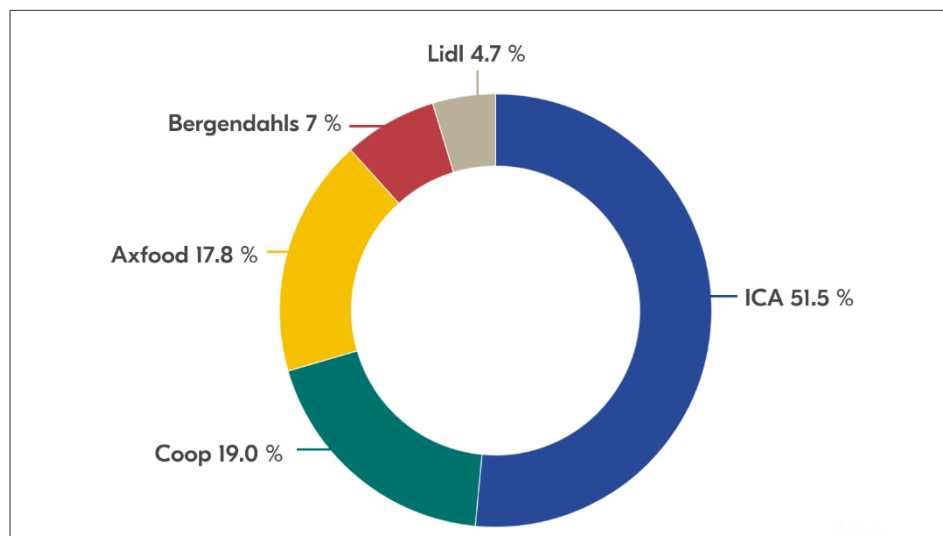
Food retail

Around 70% of all food consumed in Sweden is sold via supermarkets or other general grocery stores that offer a wide assortment of food and household products. The stores are of different formats and have different price strategies such as large full-assortment hypermarkets, medium-sized supermarkets focusing on fresh perishables, hard-discount stores offering a limited assortment and smaller convenience stores.

Development over the last 20 years has gone more towards the establishment of large hypermarkets at the expense of smaller stores. Furthermore, discount stores are growing and taking market shares and account for approximately 12% of the total retail sector.

The sector is dominated by four retail groups; ICA Group, Coop Sweden, Axfood and Bergendahls Food, which together account for around 90% of the total Swedish retail market.

Figure 3: Market shares between the largest retail brands



Source: Dagligvarukartan

ICA GROUP

ICA Group is the largest food retailer in Sweden with a 51.5% share of the total market. In 2019, the group had a total turnover of 119 billion SEK. It has around 1300 stores within the country, ranging from small convenience stores to large hypermarkets. Each storeowner is independent but is a member of the ICA association.

Within the group, there are different subsidiaries and departments that are responsible for different areas in the supply chain such as buying, distribution, logistics, marketing, training, retail development, financing etc.

ICA Group also has subsidiaries in the Baltic countries where it is the third biggest retailer. It also has a close co-operation with one of Finland's leading retailer, Kesko Group. This combination makes ICA Group the second biggest retailer in Scandinavia.

COOP

The co-operative KF group is the second largest retail group in Sweden, with a 19% share of the market. The group is a federation owned by 30 consumer co-operative societies with a total of 3.5 million individual members. KF operates around 650 stores across the country, from minimarkets to hypermarkets.

Coop Sverige, which is a subsidiary of KF, handles all import, wholesale and distribution in Sweden. Furthermore, Coop Trading A/S, based in Denmark, handles the international buying of branded and private label products for all consumer co-operative organisations in the Nordics – Coop Sweden, Coop Denmark, Coop Norway and S-Group in Finland. The combined number of stores for all these four groups accounts for 30% of the total food retail market in the Nordics.

AXFOOD

Axfood conducts food retail and wholesale trade within Sweden and is currently the fastest-growing grocery retailer in Sweden. The retail business includes supermarkets under the brand Hemköp, discount stores under the brand Willys, of which the majority are wholly owned, and convenience and online stores under the names Tempo and mat.se, which are run by independent retailers. Furthermore, Axfood is the owner of Urban Deli, which is a combination of a food hall, restaurant, food store and online web shop. In total, the group owns or collaborates with approximately 1200 stores and has a market share of almost 20%.

Both wholly owned and independent stores normally buy their goods through the central buying department of Axfood, APP. It handles all imports and is responsible for the development of private label products.

Axfood works closely together with United Nordic, a part-owned company that imports products in co-operation with Supergros (Denmark), NorgesGruppen (Norway) and Tuko Logistics (Finland). The combined number of stores within the United Nordic group accounts for approximately 20% of the Nordic food retail market.

BERGENDAHL'S FOOD

Bergendahl's Food is a retailer and wholesaler with around 180 owned and affiliated stores, giving them an overall market share of approximately 7%. The main retail activity is conducted through the large discount store City Gross, which holds a strong position in the south of Sweden.

Bergendahl's Food has invested in a massive expansion for the City Gross chain lately and over 30 new stores have been established across the country in just a few years. It is currently in fourth place for the total share of the market, but its ambition is to be the second biggest group after ICA.

Specialised stores

In addition to the larger grocery stores, there are also many smaller specialised stores such as bakeries, deli stores, ethnic food stores, *free-from* stores and fruit and vegetable stores that mainly focus on the local market where they are situated. These smaller players normally do not import directly themselves, but source their products from local Swedish suppliers.

GRAM

Is a package-free grocery store that sells all its products loose and by weight. No pre-packed products are allowed. Consumers bring their own containers to the store or use the FCS-certified paper bags provided. Its assortment is 90% certified organic and focuses on locally sourced products. However, you can also find imported products from around the world.

FRAM EKOLIVS

FRAM EKOLIVS is an organic food store that is operated as a staff co-operative, focusing on locally produced products that are organically certified. All products that are not produced in Sweden are Fair Trade-certified and have been transported by truck or boat. Air-freighted products are banned.

HAPPY FOOD STORE

A concept store in Stockholm operated by the Finnish company Ruohonjuuri, focusing on organically certified food, health and beauty products. Among other brands, it offers superfoods from the organic-certified food importers Aduki (www.aduki.fi) and Foodin (www.foodin.fi).

Food service

The foodservice sector contains establishments such as restaurants, hotels, coffee shops and fast-food outlets. One part of the sector is on a wholesale level, with business-to-business relations, and the other part is private consumption. Of the total share spent on food, the average Swede spends 25–30% on meals consumed outside of the home, which is one of the highest proportions in Europe and is affecting the sales going out of grocery stores negatively. Seven of the largest wholesaler groups supplying the foodservice sector account for 65% of the market.

Martin & Servera (Axfood) is the biggest company with a 38% market share of the foodservice sector, followed by Menigo (Brakes Group) and Svensk Cater (EuroCater) with a 12% share each. All of the companies have their own import departments.

Furthermore, there are many strong small and mid-sized wholesalers, especially in the metropolitan parts of Sweden like Stockholm and Gothenburg, which specialise in a certain product or market segment. This category includes ethnic food companies like Sevan, companies supplying the bakery industry with ingredients such as Kobia, or Dafgård's that focuses on frozen food.

Food processors

The sourcing of raw materials for the food-processing industry is for the most part done domestically, but importing is on the rise and therefore could prove interesting for exporters from outside of the EU. The most important players in the sector are establishments like bakeries, meat plants and dairies, which together account for approximately half of the total food-processing industry.

Farmer co-operative-owned companies account for a large part of the food-processing industry and are dominant within meat, dairy, cereal, starch and animal production. The Swedish company Lantmännen, for example, is owned by around 33 000 farmers, has more 8000 employees and operations in 22 countries, which makes it one of the biggest companies in Scandinavia within agriculture and food processing.

Around 30% of the total food produced in Sweden is done so by foreign-owned companies. The Norwegian group Orkla, for instance, owns three Swedish food-processing companies: Procordia Food (canned food etc.), Abba Seafood and Kåka (bakery ingredients).

Several multinational companies like Unilever (convenience food), Barilla (Wasa crispbread) and Carlsberg (beverages) also operate in the Swedish market with their own production units. Other large groups include Paulig (Santa Maria) and Aarhus Karlshamn (refined oils and fats).

Caldic is one of the largest suppliers of ingredients and raw material for the entire Nordic food industry. It imports products from all over the world and has about 1700 articles in their assortment. Caldic is part of the Dutch company Caldic Group.

Health and organic food companies

The current trend of eating healthy organic food, which nowadays is considered to be mainstream, started out as a niche market driven forward by smaller independent innovative companies with a clear vision about how food should be grown, produced, transported and consumed. When superfood products like, for example, quinoa and chia are moving to retail and closer to mass consumption, niche food companies often focus on other products, being in a constant search for the next superfood. Furthermore, the Nordic market for health food products has gone through some consolidations in the past years; the company Midsona has acquisitioned several Nordic and European brands within the sector and by doing so has fast become a dominant player in the market. This consolidated market development within the sector could make it more difficult for smaller companies on their own. Companies will need either to grow faster than the market or consolidate their business with other players.

Consumers and trends

The strong health trend has paved the way for healthy natural food, meaning that, for instance, quinoa has gone from being a niche product to a mainstream product. The consumption of quinoa is still not as high as that of, for example, pasta, rice and potatoes, but quinoa can nowadays be found in most supermarket stores rather than in niche health stores and it is the retail sector that is leading the commercialisation, while niche health food companies are focusing on finding the next big superfood.

The explosion in recent years of different diets has also helped the development of the health food category. The names and methods of the diets differ, but common to most of them is a lower intake of

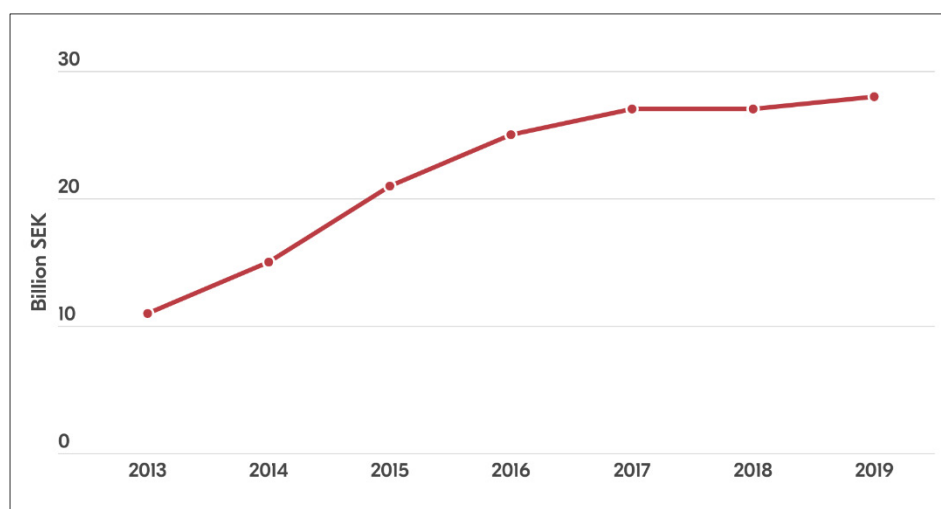
carbohydrates, which makes quinoa a perfect substitute for rice, potatoes and pasta.

Sweden has one of the highest rates of gluten intolerance in the world and there is a growing demand for gluten-free products. This has resulted in a constant search for new products, and a wide range of gluten-free products can be found in an average supermarket store.

Organic certification

The biggest food trend in Europe in general, and Sweden in particular, in recent years has been organic certification. The organic boom in Sweden started in 2013 when there was alarm about the pesticides used on conventionally grown bananas. The EU minimum pesticide residue levels were not exceeded in any of the tested bananas, but some brands had residues from as many as seven different types of pesticide and their active ingredients had gone into the pulp of the fruit. At the same time, no pesticide residues were found in the organic bananas tested. The media coverage of the tests resulted in supermarket chains deciding to stop selling conventional bananas and only sell organic bananas. It also meant that consumers demanded more certified organic products in supermarkets. The yearly increase of sales of organic food in Sweden between 2013 and 2017 was more than 10%, but slowed down in 2018. In 2019, the increase of certified organic sales was only 1% and some retail chains reported a drop in sales. The reason for the stagnation is thought to be the growing trend of eating plant-based convenience food where the offer of organic certification is still not developed (www.ekoweb.nu).

Figure 4: Growth of organic food sales in Sweden



Source: ekowebb

KRAV vs EU organic

There are two organic labels on the Swedish market: the [EU organic logo](#) and the Swedish KRAV certification. [KRAV](#) is the one best known among Swedish consumers. The focus of KRAV is sustainable food production and its rules are stricter than those of the EU organic certification. KRAV rules are also more extensive and cover more areas of the food industry such as certified fishing, certified food stores and certified restaurants. The biggest difference between the two standards is within animal welfare and pig farming where KRAV is more demanding, focusing on the well-being of the animals.

Examples where KRAV is stricter than EU organic:

- Health – The additive nitrite is forbidden
- Social responsibility – Workers should have the right to join unions; no child labour, no forced labour
- Pollution – Farms are not allowed to be situated close to roads with heavy traffic
- Climate – 80% of the energy for greenhouse cultivation should be from renewable sources
- Biodiversity – Biological pesticides like piperonylbutoxide are forbidden



KRAV vs EU organic

KRAV is primarily a Swedish certification while EU organic is known in the whole of Europe. Focus on the EU organic logo and if your Swedish partner requires KRAV, they should be able to help you with the certification process.

Plant-based and vegan

One aspect that contributes to slowing down climate change and global warming is to consume more plant-based food and less red meat and through that create a more sustainable food system. However, highly specialised industrial agriculture of crops is also having a negative effect on the environment. There are over 250 000 known edible plants in the world, but only three of them account for 60% of the world's consumption (rice, corn and wheat).

The plant-based food trend is strong and the share of Swedes eating vegetarian food at least once a week has gone from 43% in 2018 to 57% in 2019. Women are taking the lead: 67% report that they eat vegetarian dishes at least once a week; for men the number is 48% (www.foodfriends.se). At the same time, the consumption of meat went down 4% in 2019 compared to 2018. The supermarket chains are closely following this trend, constantly introducing new innovative vegetarian alternatives.

Recommendation

Swedes love stories! Tell the story about yourself and your production. For example, if you are a small-scale producer, try and back your story with studies showing the environmental benefits of small-scale production compared to large scale production.

Food online

The total turnover for food bought online was 7.1 billion SEK in 2019, which was equal to a growth of 22% compared to the year before, and the share of Swedish people grocery shopping online is expected to continue to grow (www.postnord.se). For the first quarter of 2020, the growth was 27% and estimates say that every second Swede will be grocery shopping online after 2020. One of the main reasons for this rapid increase is thought to be the effect of Covid-19, which has made consumers see the benefits of buying their food online rather than in a physical store. The average consumer that buys food online is between 26 and 35 years old, has kids and lives in a metropolitan area ([Digital Mathandel](#)).

Locally grown

20% of Swedish consumers claim that being locally grown is the most important characteristic of a product when grocery shopping (www.foodfriends.se). Swedish produce has been a trend for many years, which has affected the assortment of the supermarkets, resulting in new

Swedish products popping up on the shelves every month. An example of this trend is the initiative Nordisk Råvara that is trying to grow more crops in Sweden and in that way promoting and helping to create a new Swedish food culture with focus on locally grown crops (nordiskravara.se).

No plastic

Following the EU Parliament approval of the law banning single-use plastic items such as plates, cutlery, straws and cotton bud sticks, plastic is no longer fantastic. The Swedish government implemented an extra tax for plastic bags in retail stores in 2020, which has led to new paper packages and bags popping up in stores on a regular basis. Companies such as IKEA are also working towards only using recycled or renewable plastic in all their operations.

Social media impact

Food communication and media channels are changing, and it is the younger population that is driving the development forward. 50% of Swedes aged between 15 and 24 say that social media is the most important format for food inspiration. In addition, families with children claim social media is most important for inspiration when preparing their meals (37%). The only group that still relies on food magazines and TV shows for inspiration is Swedes aged 55 and above (www.foodfriends.se).

Recommendation

When the ways to reach consumers are changing, it is important to analyse which target group you want to communicate with before investing in marketing.

Superfood players

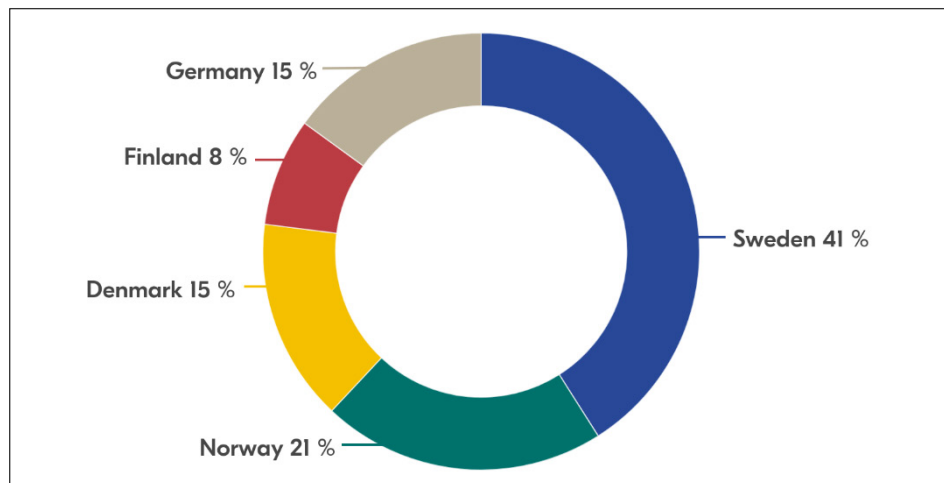
MIDSONA

Wholesale

Health and organic

Midsona is listed on the Stockholm stock exchange (NASDAQ Stockholm) and had a turnover of 3081 million SEK in 2019. It is one of the leading companies in the Nordic countries in health foods, organic foods and personal care, with the ambition to be market leader in Europe in the future. Midsona has a large portfolio of strong established brands and continues to grow its business by acquisitions all over Europe. It currently operates and sells its products in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Germany.

Figure 5: Midsona turnover per country



Source: midsona.com

Examples of Midsona brands

URTEKRAM

Urtekram started as a small spice shop in central Copenhagen in 1972 and today it offers certified organic products within the food and beauty as well as haircare and skincare segments. You can find the brand in all Nordic countries and other parts of the EU. Furthermore, it has a wide range of products that are promoted as gluten-free. Urtekram is part of the Midsona group.

Packaging

Urtekram has an ongoing project with the aim to make all its packages plant-based and originate from renewable raw material. In 2019, 85% of its packages were made of sugar cane.

Assortment

The products of Urtekram target end consumers, and of the products identified in this report you find quinoa and chia seeds which are all certified EU organic (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

KUNG MARKATTA

Kung Markatta started as an innovative small company in 1983, being among the first in Sweden to focus on organic and KRAV-certified food products. It was also the first company to bring quinoa to the Swedish market in the 80s. Kung Markatta is part of the Midsona group.

Assortment

Kung Markatta has a wide range of the products identified here, offering four different varieties of quinoa and chia seeds. Some are certified EU organic and some are certified KRAV organic. Furthermore, one of its quinoa products is also Fair Trade-certified (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

FRIGGS

Friggs was founded in Sweden in 1968 and first started out to sell its products via health food stores. Famous on the Nordic market for its rice cakes, its products can be found in basically all supermarkets across the country. Friggs is part of the Midsona group.

Assortment

Friggs offers corn cakes and cookies flavoured with chia seeds and quinoa. Its products target end consumers (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

RISENTA

Wholesale

Health and organic

Risenta had a turnover of approximately 319 million SEK in 2018. It started as a small family business in Sweden in 1940 and since 2015 has been part of the international company Paulig-Group. Its products can be found in basically all supermarkets across the country.

Assortment

Risenta has a wide assortment of chia and quinoa products. Most products are certified EU organic but it also has some conventional products in the assortment (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

SALTÅ KVARN

Wholesale

Health and organic

Producer

Saltå Kvarn had a turnover of 187 million SEK in 2018. It is an organic food company that started in 1964 and is owned by various foundations. Its assortment can be found in all major supermarkets as well as in health stores. Saltå Kvarn also operates on the wholesale market and sells to restaurants and caterers.

Assortment

All quinoa products from Saltå Kvarn are certified KRAV organic. It sources the quinoa from Bolivia and Peru. Previously, it also had chia seeds in the assortment as well (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

LANTMÄNNEN “GO GREEN”

Wholesale

Health

Producer

Grower

Lantmännen is an agricultural co-operative and one of Northern Europe's largest players in agriculture, machinery, bioenergy and food products. Lantmännen is owned by 20 000 farmers and in its food division has several brands including Go Green, which focuses on vegetarian “green” products. The food products of Lantmännen are found in all the Nordic markets as well as in the EU market.

Assortment

Go Green has a limited assortment of the identified products. It has conventional white quinoa and EU organic-certified chia seeds from Paraguay (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

RENÉE VOLTAIRE

Wholesale

Online

Health and organic

Renée Voltaire had a turnover of 85 million SEK in 2018. The company started in 2005 with the idea of offering plant-based sustainable food with less sugar to consumers in the Swedish market. The brand can today be found in all Nordic markets as well as in the EU market.

Assortment

Of the identified products, Renée Voltaire offers mixes and ready-to-eat products like granola, mixes, bread and corn cakes. All products are certified EU organic and most of them are labelled as gluten-free (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

SUPERFRUIT

Wholesale

Online

Health and organic

Superfruit had a turnover of approximately 24 million SEK in 2018. The company was founded in 2007 with the goal to be a leading player in the Scandinavian market for superfoods. The company has gone from only wholesaling to multi-channel distribution and its products can nowadays be found in pharmacies, supermarkets and on the web. As of 2018, Superfruit Scandinavia owns three registered brands: Superfruit, Superfruit Foods and KLEEN Nutrition. Its assortment consists of over 100 items within organic food, supplements and health food.

Assortment

Superfruit is in the frontline in terms of building new markets for superfoods. When products like quinoa and chia moved to supermarket shelves it started to look for the next “big thing”. Its assortments contain EU organic-certified chia seeds, but for the rest is mainly niche products like camu camu, acai and maca. Many products originate from Peru (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

NATESSEN

Wholesale

Online

Health and organic

Natessen had a turnover of approximately 15 million SEK in 2018. It is an importer and distributor of organic health foods and superfoods that works according to the “direct trade” principle. It is a multi-channel player selling products under 10 different brands, of which five are privately owned. Natessen products can be found in pharmacies, supermarkets, online and in health food stores. Under the company name Natessen it operates as wholesaler and under Mother Nature and Go For Life it sells to end consumers. Its business idea is to import large volumes in bulk and repack under its different brands.

Assortment

Natessen has a large assortment of superfood products, offering several different types of quinoa, black and white chia seeds, amaranth and camu camu etc. All products are certified EU organic and many products come from a co-operative in the highlands of Peru (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

BIOFOOD

Wholesale

Online

Health and organic

Biofood had a turnover of approximately 135 million SEK in 2019. It operates as an importer and distributor of organic food, with many different brands in its portfolio. It is a multi-channel wholesaler and its products can be found online, in health food stores and supermarkets.

Assortment

Biofood has a large and wide assortment of superfoods under different brands, all of which are certified EU organic. The range goes from ready-to-cook products like pasta with amaranth, to canihua seeds in 25 kg bags. Many of its products originate from Peru and Bolivia, but are packed in the Netherlands. Based on this, it is likely that it does not have that much direct trade to Sweden (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

SELLTON

Wholesale

Gluten-free

Producer

Sellton had a turnover of approximately 33 million SEK in 2018. It operates as producer, importer and distributor of healthy, natural and gluten-free food products under the slogan “Your Gluten Free Choice”. Its brand can be found on online stores and in all major supermarket chains across the country.

Assortment

Sellton offers a range of quinoa products to end consumers, both conventional and certified EU organic. Chia seeds are also present in its assortment (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

Food service players

BODÉN & LINDEBERG

Processor

Food Service

Wholesale

Bodén and Lindeberg had a turnover of approximately 185 million SEK in 2018. It is one of the leading importers in Sweden of natural ingredients such as edible nuts, dried fruits, seeds and spices, and supplies the bakery, confectionery and foodstuff industries in Scandinavia and the Baltic states.

WERNERS GOURMETSERVICE

Online

Food Service

Wholesale

Werners Gourmetservice had a turnover of approximately 24 million SEK in 2018. It operates as an importer and restaurant supplier, focusing on high-quality foodstuff and with the vision to be the leading source of inspiration for Nordic gourmets. As of today, it has 60 employees and since 2018 has been owned by the multinational food company [Orkla](#).

Assortment

Of the identified products, Werners only offers quinoa from Peru. The quinoa is both conventional and certified EU organic (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

ORKLA

Orkla is a Norwegian-based multinational food company with many brands and companies in its portfolio. It is one of the largest suppliers of branded consumer goods to the grocery, out-of-home, specialised retail, pharmacy and bakery sectors. The Nordic and Baltic regions are the company's stronghold and it also holds strong positions in India.

[KÅKÅ](#)

Food Service

Wholesale

Producer

KåKå is one of Sweden's largest suppliers of ingredients for the baking and pastry industries. Since 1999, it has been part of the multinational food company Orkla.

Assortment

KåKå offers conventional quinoa and chia seeds.

Food retail players

ICA

Retail

Online

Assortment

ICA offers quinoa, chia and different kinds of mixes under its private label “Gott Liv”. All the products are imported and packed by an Italian service provider and all products are conventional (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

COOP

Retail

Online

Assortment

Coop offers chia seeds under its private label “Änglamark” which always is certified KRAV organic (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

AXFOOD

Retail

Online

Wholesale

Assortment

Axfood offers both quinoa and chia seeds under its private label “Garant”. The quinoa comes from Peru and chia seeds are packed and imported via a service provider in Italy (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

CITY GROSS

Retail

Online

Assortment

City Gross offers both conventional and organic quinoa and chia seeds under its private label “Favorit” (see appendix 1 for further details on assortment).

The product

Packaging

The type of packaging required by the importer depends on the market segment in which the importer operates. For example, a wholesaler that targets restaurants and hotels will probably demand that the product is packed in a 25-kilo neutral paper bag, while a retailer would prefer 500 g cartons with its own private label design printed on the packaging. What all Swedish importers have in common is that all packaging material should be environmentally friendly and come from renewable sources. Basically, all major players within the Swedish food industry are moving away from plastic and are actively looking for new innovative and sustainable alternatives. For instance, Steps is a Swedish research programme that is developing plastic based on raw biomaterial. The Swedish company Stora Enso has developed a new carton packaging for food, without plastic or coating chemicals, called CKB Nude.

Certifications

The majority of the chia seeds, quinoa and amaranth offered on the Swedish market is certified organic but there are also conventional products around. The supermarket chains offer conventional quinoa and chia products to a greater extent than the specialised health and organic companies. The same goes for food-processing companies and wholesalers selling to restaurants, where organic certification is less common. While the Swedish organic certificate KRAV is widely present on the market, the EU organic logo is more commonly found for superfoods.

Transport and logistics

Being a small country in Europe, direct imports to Sweden of superfoods are less common compared to other countries. This is especially so for niche products like chia seeds and amaranth where it is often easier to source them from an importer or packer based in Germany or the Netherlands, rather than going direct to the producer in the country of origin. The bigger European importers and packers also have the advantage of being able to offer a complete range of superfood products from different producers and different origins, which makes it convenient for Swedish retailers, for example, who then can sign a contract with one supplier for several different products and mixes.

Quinoa is imported directly to Sweden by boat and mainly comes from Peru, but imports via European importers are still larger in terms of volume. As mentioned above, Bolivian quinoa used to be imported directly to Sweden, but since 2015 volumes have been at a minimum.

Distribution channels

As mentioned before, superfoods are often imported to Sweden via European-based importers and/or food packers and manufacturers. The biggest exporting country of quinoa to Sweden in Europe in 2019 was Germany, followed by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Looking at the assortment of major Swedish food retailers such as ICA and Axfood, both of them work with food packers and importers based in Italy.

Remember

Trade does not have to be direct. It is still possible to reach the Swedish market by working with importers from other European countries.

Swedish corporate culture – the short version

Swedish corporate culture is considered casual and less hierarchal compared to other parts of Europe. Titles like “Mr” and “Dr” are something from the past and people address each other on a first-name basis. Furthermore, companies do not normally have any dress code policies.

Company hierarchies are flat, meaning that the gap between managing director and employee is short. Employees can take their questions and concerns directly to the boss and employees are often trusted to take decisions directly related to their own responsibilities.

The belief in consensus and compromise is strong. Everybody within the company or organisation should be involved in the discussions before a decision is taken. The model is very democratic, but often leads to long decision-making processes.

Trade fairs

As for the trade itself, while imports to Sweden often go via other countries in Europe, the responsible buyers often travel to the big food fairs across Europe to meet potential new suppliers. For more information about trade fairs you can, for instance, visit the webpage of [Open Trade Gate Sweden](#).

Important food fairs in Europe include:

- [The Nordic Organic Food Fair](#)
- [Anuga](#) – Cologne, Germany
- [SIAL](#) – Paris, France
- [Free From Food Expo](#) – Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- [Biofach](#) – Nurnberg, Germany

Conclusions

Based upon this report on the assortment of quinoa available in the Swedish market, it is clear that Peru is the dominant country of origin and producers from other countries therefore need to find ways to be more attractive to Swedish and European importers. A more competitive price has most probably been the main reason for Peru's dominance in recent years and based only on that criterion it will be difficult for producers from other countries to compete. Other countries need to continue to distinguish its quinoa from that of other origins by adding value to its product. Sustainable agricultural practice and studies about higher nutrition value could be a path to take.

In terms of chia seeds and the stabilised market the product has experienced in the past years, consumers need to rediscover the fantastic attributes of the product and find new ways to consume it in order for the product to continue to grow. Chia as an ingredient in smoothies and puddings or sprinkled on yoghurt will need to be complemented by new products based on chia and new ways to cook with chia. This is a challenge for the whole industry to come up with new innovative products in order to catch the interest of importers and consumers. Could chia oil be such a product?

Based on the fact that the market is constantly looking for “the next big thing”, the Bolivian producers of “new” superfoods, that are still considered niche in the Swedish/European market or still have not entered the market, could attract interest from Swedish importers. This

would mean offering something new and exciting. Products like amaranth and canihua both have the right characteristics for a proper superfood and could very well become the next hype. This could also be something for Bolivian exporters of quinoa and chia to take into consideration and they could maybe start looking to add canihua and amaranth to their assortment in order to broaden their range of products and in that way attract the interest from importers.

Finally, the strong trend of eating new innovative vegetarian and plant-based products could pave the way for Bolivian exporters of processed food with quinoa, chia and amaranth as main ingredients, but at present practically all of these products are being produced in Europe. Importers and retailers therefore must be convinced of the benefits of moving production from Europe to Bolivia.

Further reading

If you want to find out more about how to approach the Swedish market, how to get export ready, ways to find a business partner and what rules and aspects to consider, we recommend you keep an eye on the [Open Trade Gate Sweden website](#).

If you want to read more about exporting grains, pulses and oilseeds to Europe, we recommend you have a look at the website of the [Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing countries \(CBI\)](#).