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Title	Assessing the country of origin-image of Finnish food supplies The consumer point of view to image formation		
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Abstract

During the summer of 2005 Finnish food supplies were faced with a massive amount of negative publicity as the national leaders of distinct European countries accused Finnish food of being low quality and plainly bad. The question, which was raised quickly in Finland after these accusations was, how has our food, here considered as delicious and as health-maintaining, can receive such claims? The author of this study saw a hole in existing studies; the country of origin-image of Finnish food supplies has received merely minor examinations especially within the foreign audience. Therefore this study was conducted; in order to find out objectives of the image campaigning of Finnish food supplies and to discover the perceived image of these supplies among the foreign public. The intention was not to provide a generalized view of the image of these food supplies; moreover the purpose was to study the phenomenon of image formation within a given group of foreign consumers.

The purpose of this study was to assess the country of origin-image of Finnish food supplies; in addition, the purpose was to provide insight on the consumer point of view to image formation. In order to reach this given purpose, it was divided into three distinct sub objectives:

- to define the pursued country of origin-image of Finnish food supplies and the means used to communicate it
- to describe the perceived country of origin-image of Finnish food supplies abroad
- to analyze the different mechanisms of country of origin-effects of foreign food supplies on product evaluation

The research was conducted by interviewing experts from the Finnish food industry. In addition, foreign exchange students were interviewed in order to find out the foreign consumer perspective on Finnish food supplies. The main findings of this study were the fact how food supplies are due to certificates and quality control be of high quality and pure, however can not be marketed sufficiently abroad due to the limited monetary resources. Due to this information gap the foreign consumer does not possess a clear image of the food supplies originating from Finland and therefore tend to evaluate them rather negatively. The importance of country of origin-cue to the consumer in foreign food evaluation was seriously questioned as price tended to be the decisive factor when purchasing food. The affective process was the strongest mechanism of the country of origin-effects. Co-operation between the Scandinavian countries, and also within the Finnish food sector, is needed in order to ensure successful and sufficient image campaigning, which would enable visibility among the international food markets.

Key words	country of origin-image, Finnish food supplies, foreign food evaluation
Further information	