

# Consumers and FoodTech- Scenes from a Troubled Marriage

Håkan Jönsson

Associate Professor

Division of European Ethnology / Department of food technology  
Lund University

# Starting points

- A consumer perspective deals with *perceptions* of foodtech, not foodtech in itself
- The aim is to give a broad overview of changing views of foodtech among consumers
- I deal with dominant trends, not the same as saying that every consumer shared the same view on food tech at a certain point in history
- Attitudes to foodtech differ between social groups and also between different situated practices (e.g. family meal vs public meals)
- Focus today is on the ideological standpoints of certain influential groups in society and their view on foodtech

# The meal-in-a-pill – utopia or dystopia?

In 1993 people will “take, in condensed form from the rich loam of the earth, the life force or germs now found in the heart of the corn, in the kernel of wheat, and in the luscious juices of the fruits. A small phial of this life from the fertile bosom of Mother Earth will furnish men with substance for days. And thus the problems of cooks and cooking will be solved.”

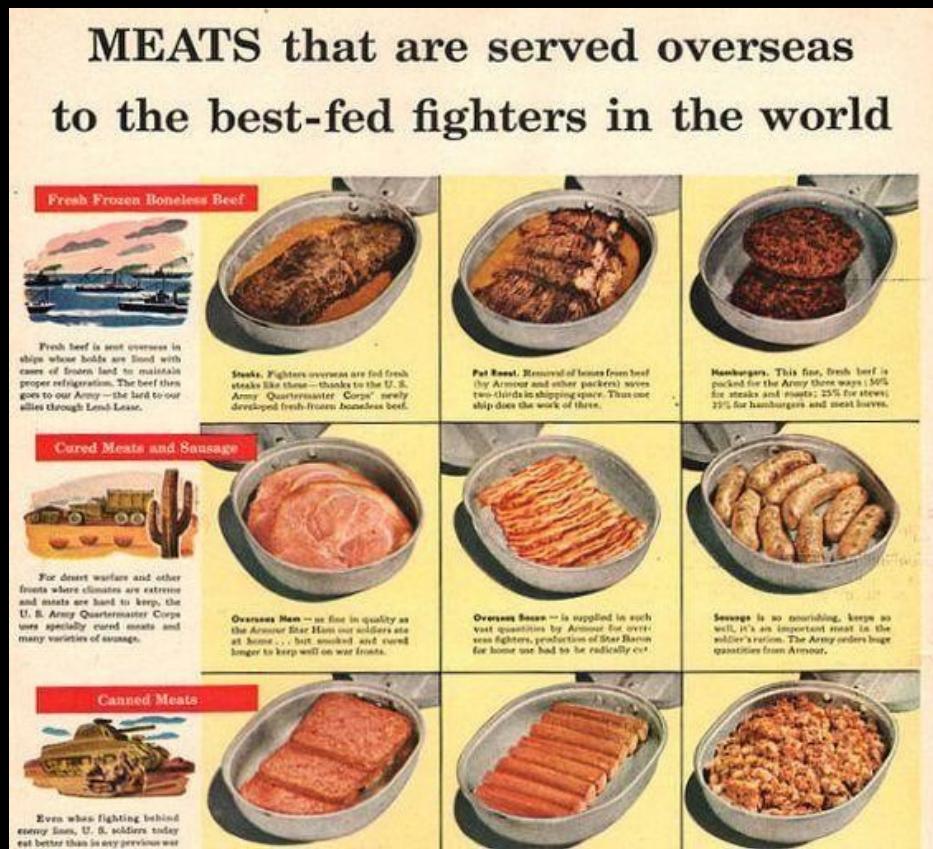
(Mary Elisabeth Lease, American suffragette, 1893)

Satirical science fiction take us to New York in 2050

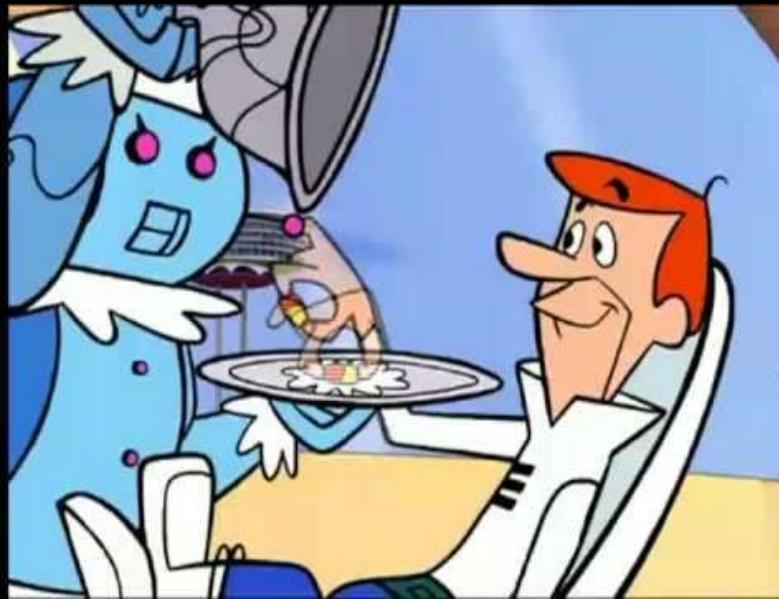
“When the last pie was made into the first pellet, women’s true freedom began.”

(Anna Dodd, Social Conservative, 1887)

# War – a boost for food tech and an underestimated factor in food consumption preferences



# The futurist food of the early post war period



# The Swedish version

Georg Borgström, founder of SIK,  
environmental pioneer

Inspired both engineers and the new left  
with his global and technological outlook

"The pessimist of all pessimists", at the  
same time an advocate for foodtech as a  
way to ensure food for all in a growing  
population



# The future in 1955

- – Frysforskningen har visat vägen för konserveringsmetoder, där själva livet bevaras, sade professor Borgström. Den känsligaste av alla levande organismer, sperman, har man lyckats hålla vid liv med lågtemperaturbehandling. Fisk som bedövats och frusits ned har man lyckats hålla vid liv i flera veckor. Konserverad levande fisk är fölaktligen redan en realitet vid amerikanska laboratorier...
- Djupfrysningen är den dominerande metoden för närvarande, men det är inte säkert att den blir den allena saliggörande. Torkade biffar som återfår normal saftighet efter två års lagring finns redan, pulvriserad mjölk och grädde har en jättemarknad i USA, färdigt kaffepulver som bara behöver blandas med vatten har redan erövrat 27 procent av marknaden i samma land, detta trots att aromen inte kan bli så fin som vid den konservativa tillagningsmetoden. Men man sparar tid.
- Besträllning och atombombardemang är andra konserveringsmetoder som kan komma till användning i framtiden. Därtill kommer automationen, som gör att ett helt bageri så småningom kanske kan skötas av en enda man. Men han är inte bagare. Han är ingenjör.
- Matlagningen överflyttas mer och mer från hemmen till fabrikerna. När en husmor i dag köper sin färdiga mat, köper hon inte bara en vara, hon köper också tid. Eller omvänt: livsmedelshandlarna har blivit de största distributörerna av arbetskraft för hemmen.

# - 1970: Refining taste



Milk is homogenized, i.e. the fat is finely divided to avoid creaming. In addition, taste and texture get improved.

(Vår Kokbok, 1983)



Ur bildserien: I PARADISETS LUSTGÅRD Nr 1: "Evas dröm".

**Hennes dröm – vår verklighet**

Gå vi än tusenden av år tillbaka i tiden, alltid har kvinnans strävan att ta vara på jordens rikedomar varit evigt densamma. Utvecklingen har dock givit henne alla större möjligheter här till. Tänk om modera Eva haft tillgång till Perstorps renä och förtrollande attika, som sedan 50 år tillbaka garanterar goda, kristallklara inläggningar, där de värdefulla vitaminerna bevaras på ett mycket effektivt sätt.

**PERSTORPS  
ättika**

100 % SÄKERHET FÖR LYCKADE INLÄGGNINGAR

Till SKÅNSKA ATTIKAFABRIKEN A-B., Perstorp.  
Sänd undertecknad gratis Edra två nya receptböcker.

Namn: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adress: \_\_\_\_\_ Hm. 27/1.

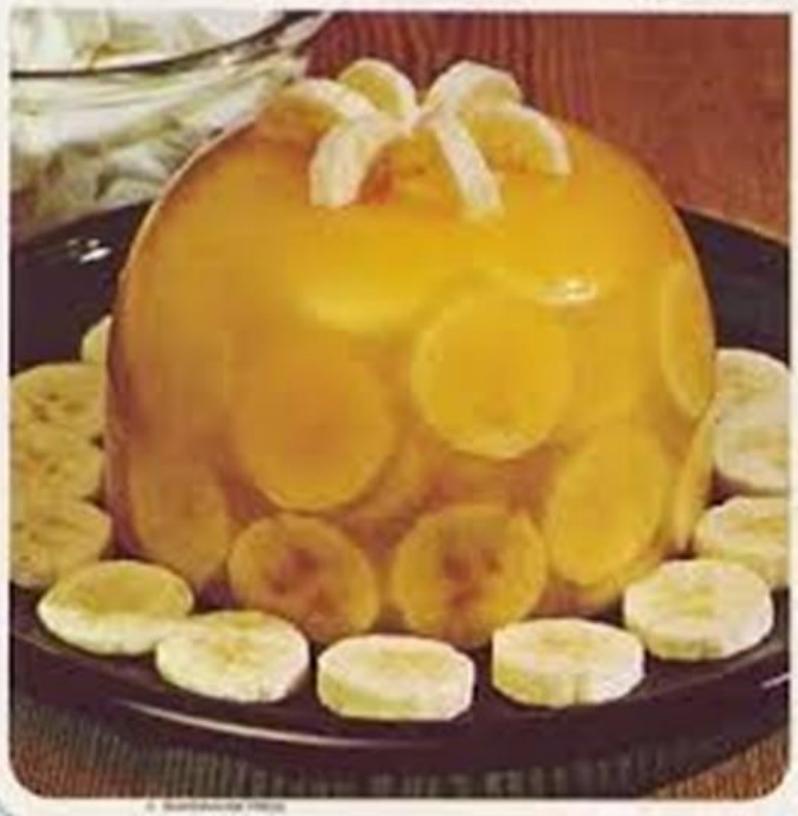
**Gratis!**

Eva Ni åter NYA receptböcker om  
smakfulla hälsosamma och vackra recept  
på maträtter och inläggningar som förlig  
dig till i morgår. Sänd in hela posten!

Apelsingelé med  
bananer

Som avslutning –  
en dessert  
Kort om 17

**23**



# The Protein shift of the 1940s and 1950s

The rise and fall (and return) of Chlorella Cuisine



# The future from 1970-

- The future was to return to food tech of the past
- The new left became anti-tec (and Borgström goes to exile in US)



# Post 1970- The less the merrier



Non-homogenized milk also has a naturally sweeter flavor than homogenized milk because whole cream has a silky texture that is lost when the fat globules are broken apart. It also has a richer flavor, even the 2% and fat free, because our skimming process never removes 100% of the cream.

Professional and amateur chefs recommend non-homogenized dairy products as ingredients to make the best cheese, yogurt, ice cream, whipped cream, or other dairy-based foods at home or in elegant restaurants.

## Shortest ingredient list wins



# Proper Food

Industry cheats us...

Additives, ultra processing, GM etc  
destroys nature and effect health

Machines and humans are the  
problem for safe and healthy food,  
nature is the solution



# The hipster took on and added a new dimension

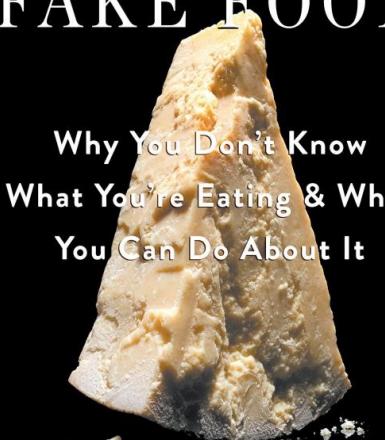
- Gastronomy AND “natural” food
- Cook from scratch, use fresh ingredients
- Avoid artificial food

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

“Olmsted makes you insanely hungry and steaming mad—a must-read for anyone who cares deeply about the safety of our food and the welfare of our planet.”  
—STEVEN RAICHLEN, author of the Barbecue! Bible series

## REAL FOOD FAKE FOOD

Why You Don't Know  
What You're Eating & What  
You Can Do About It



LARRY OLMS TED

MATS-ERIC NILSSON

## DEN HEMLIGE KOCKEN



DET OKÄNDA fusket  
MED MATEN PÅ DIN TALLRIK

# Quantifying degree of processing– SIGA scale–





**WOW!**

A large, stylized yellow comic book-style word "WOW!" with a black outline and a blue starburst effect behind it, centered between the two images.

## Stort test: Så smakar marknadens 9 populäraste proteinpulver



# The return of processed food

A new generation raised by social media and climate anxiety suddenly switches to the food of their parents childhood

Chlorella cuisine returns with a number of similar concepts, cultural negotiations of potential food shortages

And former role models start to look old...

Den som skippar färsbiffen och korven letar efter goda alternativ till köttet.  
Men varför måste dessa tvunget härma den rataade muskelvävnaden?

[Mats-Eric Nilsson](#)

# Are consumers FoodTech friendly or FoodTech negative?

- Depends on:
- A. The dominating rationality of the epoch
- B. The perceived main problem/s of the day:
- Food Security, Gender equality, Stress of Everyday Life, Health = Consumers embrace FoodTech
- Food Safety, Taste, Lifestyle cooking, Health = Consumers react against FoodTech (at the same time as the problems are at the centre of much of the FoodTech development)

Irrational? No!

Consumers do not eat food – they have meals

- A preparation of a meal is a constant navigation between bodily and social needs and wants
- Consumers drive foodtech applications that can assist:
- Commensality and/or Community
- Identity making
- Time management
- Gender relations
- And more...



# Thank you!

Contact: [Hakan.Jonsson@kultur.lu.se](mailto:Hakan.Jonsson@kultur.lu.se)