



Can “Ethical Traceability” reestablish the producerconsumer relation?

Nielsen, Thorkild; Kristensen, Niels Heine

Publication date:
2009

[Link back to DTU Orbit](#)

Citation (APA):

Nielsen, T., & Kristensen, N. H. (2009). *Can “Ethical Traceability” reestablish the producerconsumer relation?*. Abstract from The XXIII European Society For Rural Sociology Congress, Vaasa, Finland.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Can “Ethical Traceability” re-establish the producer-consumer relation?

*Thorkild Nielsen, Senior researcher, email: thon@man.dtu.dk, Niels Heine Kristensen.
DTU Management, Innovation & Sustainability, 2800 Lyngby*

Traceability as a concept has emerged in modern societies and their markets where production and consumption of food have become increasingly separated. An increasing number of intermediaries like shippers, wholesalers, processors, repackers, brokers, importers and exporters are involved in the processes. All of these factors add to the obscurity of how food is produced, how it is handled and from where it originates. Traceability is about keeping track with the history of the food. *Ethical* traceability is about keeping track with the ethical aspects of food production practices and the conditions under which the food is produced. It can be used as a verification process of the methods and practices in use in response to consumer concerns. The emergence of ethical traceability as a realisable concept will need to negotiate both modern supply chain complexities and their governance and the web of private sector and public sector endorsed traceability forms in the food system. Realisation of ethical traceability is not just a morally approved step supported by appropriate technology and communication strategies, but is a politically disputed process.

The aim here is to focus on the communication of production practices in the food chain. In this sense, traceability is about visibility, it is about making the production history of food visible to the eyes of the consumers. In this way traceability allows for producers and retailers to establish a more advanced kind of communication with consumers on production practices. This more detailed communication could facilitate an apparent proximity between the urban and the rural.

Keywords: Ethical traceability, reconnection of consumers and producers

References: Coff, C., Barling, D., Korthals, M. & Nielsen, T. eds. (2008) *Ethical Traceability and Communicating Food*. Dordrecht. Springer.