

Infoodmation: Decoding marketing and media's role in shaping healthy and sustainable food choices

Susanne Pedersen

Aarhus University

Hannah Boen

KU Leuven

Simone Mouritzen

Department of Management at Aarhus University

Alina Both

Department of Management / Aarhus University / Aarhus BSS

Yara Qutteina

Institute for Media Studies, KU Leuven

Cite as:

Pedersen Susanne, Boen Hannah, Mouritzen Simone, Both Alina, Qutteina Yara (2026), Infoodmation: Decoding marketing and media's role in shaping healthy and sustainable food choices. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (132484)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



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Abstract

The objective of this session is to integrate perspectives on food marketing from industry, governments, and civil society across Europe to tackle a key challenge: promoting healthy, sustainable eating. Drawing on the Infoodmation project - a multidisciplinary initiative aimed at understanding how food-related information shapes consumption patterns and how this knowledge can be leveraged for healthier, more sustainable diets – it explores how food-related information across media and digital platforms shapes consumption. Offering a comprehensive view of the current status of food communication, the session delivers actionable insights for marketers, policymakers, and stakeholders through four papers mapping this ecosystem.

Paper 1 is titled: “Developing a Framework for Comprehensively Mapping Food Marketing and Communication in 7 European countries” by Hannah Boen, Yara Qutteina, Tim Smits, Media, Information & Persuasion Lab, Communication Sciences, KU Leuven, Belgium. It maps the landscape and tools used in food communication by private, public and civil actors.

Paper 2 is titled “What you see is what you eat – Mapping message strategies in food media content” by Alina Both, Simone Lykke Tranholm Mouritzen, Susanne Pedersen & Klaus G. Grunert, Department of Management, Aarhus University, Denmark. It builds on paper 1’s framework by examining how messages are framed and delivered via positive vs. negative appeals and emotional vs. rational strategies.

Paper 3 is titled “Unpacking European Adolescents’ Exposure to Food (Marketing) Communication on Social Media: A Diary Study” by Yara Qutteina, Bram Spruyt, & Tim Smits, Media, Information & Persuasion Lab, Communication Sciences, KU Leuven, Belgium. The paper adds behavioural insights by tracking real-life social media exposure to food-related communication among vulnerable youth.

Paper 4 is titled “The noise on our plates: An integrative literature review of the communication effects of food media and marketing strategies” by Simone T. Mouritzen, Alina Both, Susanne Pedersen, and Klaus G. Grunert, Department of Management, Aarhus

University, Denmark. It analyses potential effects of these messages, marketing and digital platforms on food choices, focusing on vulnerable groups such as children, adolescents, and low socio-economic populations.

By applying this comprehensive approach to understand food marketing and communication strategies, elements and effects, this session will hopefully stimulate discussion on the ethical and strategic responsibilities of marketers and policymakers in promoting healthy and sustainable diets.