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Axfood to test e-commerce to consumers

Axfood AB is set to start an e-commerce pilot project to consumers. Starting on 22 April, 100 selected customers – in this first step only Axfood employees – will be able to order groceries online from Hemköp’s Torsplan store in Stockholm and then pick them up in grocery bags at the store or have them delivered directly to them at home. “This is the first step of a pilot project,” comments Anders Strålman, President and CEO of Axfood. “During the autumn we will expand the trial to an additional two of our stores in Stockholm.”

In the next ten years, the amount of money that people in Sweden spend on e-commerce will increase dramatically, from SEK 54 billion to about SEK 300 billion, according to a new report published by HUI Research. The food retail sector will account for a large part of this growth, as interest in having groceries delivered home is growing rapidly, mainly among consumers – mostly in big cities – who are short on time.

“We are seeing growing interest in e-commerce among all of our customers,” says Strålman, who views digital business as a vital complement to traditional store sales in the future.

Shopping for groceries online has had annual growth of around 40%, but from very low levels in terms of total volume for the food retail sector. There are also a number of challenges, such as in logistics and how to handle refrigerated and frozen products.

“We see exciting opportunities in this growth, in combination with the current digital trend. Within the next five years, digital sales of groceries will likely account for a significantly larger share,” says Anders Strålman.

At present, Axfood already conducts extensive e-commerce for groceries, but in the form of business-to-business (B2B) sales via Axfood Närlivs and Axfood Snabbgross which offers an e-commerce channel for customers. They also supplies groceries to the home delivery companies Linas Matkasse and Middagsfrid.

For further information, please contact:

Claes Salomonsson, Director Press Relations, Axfood AB, tel. +46-702-89 89 83

Axfood AB conducts food retail and wholesale business in Sweden. Retail business is conducted through the wholly owned store chains Willys and Hemköp, comprising 257 stores in all. In addition, Axfood collaborates with a large number of proprietor-run stores that are tied to Axfood through agreements. These include stores within the Hemköp chain as well as stores run under the Handlar’n and Tempo brands. In all, Axfood collaborates with approximately 820 proprietor-run stores. B2B sales are conducted through Axfood Närlivs and the wholly owned Axfood Snabbgross chain. Wholesaling is conducted through Axfood Sverige. Axfood is listed on Nasdaq Stockholm AB’s Large Cap list. Axel Johnson AB is the principal owner, with 50.1% of the shares.