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WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers,

Autumn has reached Europe, and unlike nature at this time of year, our work is not slowing down. I would like to take this opportunity to look back at the past intense month and look ahead at what else this autumn and winter have in stock.

Political developments and their impact on organic

I would like to start off by highlighting a few major political events relevant for the organic movement and sector.

On 19 October, the European Parliament approved its own **Farm to Fork Strategy** initiative report with 452 votes in favour. With this vote, the Parliament supports the principles, mechanisms and rules promoting the environment and human health and recognises the contribution of organic farming to transitioning towards more sustainable food systems. We collaborated with other NGOs and civil society organisations, to ensure EU stands by the Farm to Fork strategy and its targets of 25% organic land and 50% reduction in pesticides and antibiotics by 2030. [Interested readers can find more information in a dedicated article.](#)

On 22 October, the European Commission's [public consultation on the Inception Impact Assessment for 'new genomic techniques'](#) closed. In its consultation, the Commission aimed at identifying crucial issues before it publishes a new legal proposal for so called '**New Genomic Techniques**', which could leave organic food systems unprotected. We contributed to this consultation, representing the European organic movement's voice. [Read more in the second part of our previous article](#) and rest assured that we will keep you posted about each step along the way.

Our work on the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** reform also continues. After the Parliament approved the new CAP Regulations in September, the final vote is expected to take place in November 2021. In the meantime, Member States are drafting their CAP Strategic Plans that will play a major role in reaching the 25% organic land target by 2030. Our report '[Organic in Europe – Prospects and developments for organic in national CAP Strategic Plans](#)' highlights potential targets and associated budgets for organic land at the national level to achieve 25% organic land on average across the EU.

Looking ahead a bit further, many of you know the **new Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 will apply from 1 January 2022**. The basic regulation published in June 2018 will be accompanied by around 23 acts of secondary legislation, most of them not yet published. To help our members and organic stakeholders interpret the changes, we are working on a guide. Stay tuned for the launch of its first version in November.

Organic operators met at the Organic Food Conference

This year's hybrid edition of our bi-annual [Organic Food Conference](#) (formerly Organic Processing Conference) gathered organic food processors, retailers, traders, importers, and control bodies as well as policy-makers from all over Europe online and in Warsaw, Poland. Participants and speakers discussed 'the future of organic food', exchanging about supply-chain development, market trends and more on 30 September-1 October 2021.



Ryszard Kamiński, Undersecretary of State of Poland's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and I had the honour to open the Conference. During seven inspiring sessions, speakers and participants discussed how to increase both demand and supply for organic food to reach the EU's 25% organic land target, sustainability and nutrition labelling, packaging and organic, expected changes in the new EU Organic Regulation and organic market development. In his closing speech, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Janusz Wojciechowski, recognised organic farming as part of the solution to the climate and biodiversity crises. For full coverage, [read our article in this newsletter](#), [our 10 take-aways](#) and [browse our Twitter moments](#). Recordings will be available on the Organic Food Conference website in November. Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member? You can already [Watch the recordings on our member extranet](#).

Organic businesses & businesses interested in organic will meet at IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business

At the start of winter, we will organise the 4th edition [of IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business](#). On 7 December, IFOAM Organics Europe's members, their members and companies involved or interested in organic will gather digitally and discuss current hot topics, such as organic market development and societal trends, and the new EU Organic Regulation. Are you a (partially) organic business or are you interested in venturing into organic? [Register now](#) and [have a look at the programme](#).

We are also looking forward to the 7th edition of [TP Organics' Organic Innovation Days](#), taking place virtually 30 November-1 December. This year's event titled 'Better inputs for organic farming' is co-organised with Horizon 2020 projects [RELACS](#) and [Organic-PLUS](#). [Check out the programme and register by 28 November](#).

Ending on a celebratory note, I'm happy to announce that 2022 will also be the year of the European organic movement's 20th anniversary. Together with our international network and the birthdays of IFOAM Organics International and IFOAM Asia, we will celebrate 2022 as the year of organic.

We are looking forward to celebrating with all of you!

Organic regards,

Eduardo Cuoco
IFOAM Organics Europe Director



POLITICAL HOTSPOT

26 October marked the final day for final contributions to the Commission's [inception impact assessment](#) (roadmap) on the **Sustainable Food System Framework Initiative**. This initiative is expected in 2023, when the European Commission will propose a legislative framework on sustainable food systems. To shape this legislative framework, stakeholders and citizens are encouraged to reply to this roadmap. You can find IFOAM Organics Europe's feedback [here](#).

Why this initiative?

The Sustainable Food System Framework Initiative comes at a very special time in EU food policy. The initiative is one of the actions following up on the [Farm to Fork \(F2F\) strategy](#), the Commission's flagship strategy aiming to comprehensively address the challenges of sustainable food systems.

The F2F strategy states "there is an urgent need to reduce dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials, reduce excess fertilisation, increase organic farming, improve animal welfare, and reverse biodiversity loss". Emphasising "the transition to sustainable food systems is also a huge economic opportunity".

To address this urgent need and accelerate the transition towards more sustainable food systems, the Commission will "publish a legislative proposal for a framework for a sustainable food system". This roadmap is the first step to the publication of this legislative proposal.

What is the aim of this initiative?

The European Commission aims to mainstream sustainability in all food-related policies and strengthen the resilience of food systems. In addition, the roadmap identifies several problems with the current food system, which it also tries to remedy, including:

- * Lack of incentives for actors of the food system to produce/place sustainable food on the EU market;
- * Negative environmental and social externalities, including health, are not reflected in the price or cost of foods – creating market distortion making unsustainable food products cheaper;
- * Consumption decisions are taken on the basis of short-term costs, disregarding long-term/real costs and impacts – due to various reasons, such as but not limited to, the affordability of sustainable foods.

And what about the roadmap on sustainable food systems itself?

In [its roadmap](#), the Commission links conventional ways of producing and consuming food with environmental degradation and declining human health. It calls for a paradigm shift and general transformation of consumption, production, labelling, promotion and distribution systems.

To achieve this paradigm shift, some of the proposed contents for this initiative are:

- Common definitions and general principles and requirements for sustainable food systems and foods;
- General minimum standards to be met for foods produced or placed on the Union market and related food operations;
- Responsibilities of food system actors;
- Provision of information on the sustainable performance of the food (sustainable labelling); and
- Minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement in schools and public institutions.



What has IFOAM Organics Europe replied?

[IFOAM Organics Europe's reply](#) highlights the principles of action and measures that could allow the Sustainable Food System initiative to succeed and achieve this paradigm shift. It emphasises ensuring that organic food, which is part of the solution to face the current environmental and social crises, continues to develop.

In terms of principles, the reply highlighted, among others:

- The need to consider food as a common good, not merely as a commodity ;
- Ensure fair wages for farmers; and
- Ensure policy coordination and coherence across all agri-food policies.

Regarding specific policy suggestions, IFOAM Organics Europe insists on essential issues, including the need to internalise externalities, push for pesticide reduction, the key role that sustainable public procurement (and particularly a minimum mandatory target for organic products therein) can play and the place of 'new breeding techniques'.

Moreover, as mentioned above, the Commission has foreseen a sustainability label by 2024. While IFOAM Organics Europe is favourable to sustainability-related information for consumers, such labelling must be as comprehensive as possible and consider factors such as the impact of the use pesticides on the environment and society, respect for biodiversity, impact on soil fertility and air, and animal welfare. It must especially not undermine existing labels such as the organic label.

What are the next steps?

Yesterday marked the last day of this first phase for the Sustainable Food System Framework initiative. The public consultation for this initiative, a second stakeholder and citizens' consultation that follows the roadmap, will take place during the first quarter of 2022, and the proposal for a legislative framework on sustainable food systems should be published during the fourth quarter of 2023.

While IFOAM Organics Europe has welcomed this initiative, these ambitious words must now be translated into action and into clear, binding and ambitious measures. The EU institutions can count on the organic movement – joined by many – to play its part to support the transition towards more sustainable food systems!

For more information on the Sustainable Food Systems Framework Initiative & the Farm to Fork Strategy and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



1 NEWS

1.1 Policy

Organic Regulations

Looking for a guide to run you through the new EU Organic Regulation? We've got you covered!

New Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 will apply from 1 January 2022. The basic regulation published in June 2018 will be accompanied by around 24 acts of secondary legislation, some of them still to be published.

Additional acts of secondary legislation will be published in the following months and years, making reading and understanding the new EU organic regulation very challenging for organic operators and other stakeholders.

Do you know about the impact of the new EU Organic Regulation on your daily work?

Are you looking for a comprehensive guide to run you through the new EU Organic Regulation?

Don't worry, we are working on a guide to help our members and other operators navigate the labyrinth of the new legal framework.

The beta version of this guide will go live in a few weeks!

The guide will simplify reading the regulation by:

- Grouping content areas, e.g. if you are a food processor you will have all the requirements relevant to your activity in one place,
- Making easily accessible referenced articles of other EU legislation,
- Highlighting the main changes compared to the current regulations, and
- Providing recommendations for the implementation of unclear requirements and/or requirements with room for interpretation.

The objectives are:

1. Simplifying the reading for operators and other stakeholders, so they will not need to navigate the numerous legal acts and cross-references with difficulty
2. Possible harmonization of the new rules in the different Member States and Third Countries, through recommendations for implementing certain requirements which may give room for different interpretations.

This work was made possible thanks to early commitments from these seeders:

- [Servicio de Certificación CAAE S.L.U.](#) (CAAE) - **Golden Sponsor**,
- [Ecocert](#) - **Golden Sponsor**, [Controllo e Certificazione CCPB - CCPB Srl](#) (CCPB) - **Silver Sponsor**,
- [Organic Farmers & Growers Ltd](#) (OF&G) - **Silver Sponsor**,
- [Ekoagros](#) - **Bronze Sponsor** [Bionext](#), and
- [Czech Technology Platform for Organic Agriculture](#) (CTPEZ).

IFOAM Organics Europe's members can contact emanuele.busacca@organicseurope.bio for questions on the EU Organic Regulation. Please note that we will not answer to non-members' requests.



For information about what you can gain from being a member, read our membership page and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.

THANK YOU

GOLDEN SPONSORS OF OUR PROJECT
DEVELOPING ORGANIC: PESTICIDE USE AND CONTAMINATION



Climate Change

EU organic movement's reply to public consultation on carbon farming initiative

The European Commission invited stakeholders to provide input on to a [roadmap for the Commission's initiative aimed at developing sustainable carbon removal solutions](#), including a carbon farming action plan.

As European organic movement, we replied stressing the land use sector's crucial role meeting long-term climate objectives. However, we also replied that the focus of climate mitigation should lie on ambitious emission reduction in all sectors. Farming practices standard in organic farming can significantly contribute to soil carbon sequestration while delivering benefits for healthy soils, biodiversity protection, resilience, and climate adaptation.

These are further key points of our feedback:

1. The strong interlinkage between biodiversity and climate objectives requires them to be addressed together. Also, explicit safeguards for biodiversity, ecosystem services and animal welfare are needed. Only solutions that also deliver benefits for biodiversity and other environmental objectives should be supported;
2. Residual agricultural emissions that remain even after ambitious emission reductions, e.g., methane emissions from livestock or nitrous oxide emissions from soil, could be compensated by carbon sequestration in agricultural soils but not by pure forestry offset;
3. Carbon markets should not be a way for other sectors to reduce their net greenhouse gas emissions by action in agriculture and the focus should instead lie on how new and existing public funds, like the Common Agricultural Policy, can be used to best incentivise favourable management practices.

Read [our reply on the Commission website](#).

For more information on climate change and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact hanna.winkler@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.

COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland

From 31 October-12 November, the [UN's climate change conference \(UNFCCC COP26\)](#) will take place in Glasgow, Scotland in partnership with Italy.

COP26 was originally scheduled in November 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), our current food system is responsible for 21-37% of global emissions and is far from sustainable. **To meet the Paris climate targets, all sectors, including food and agriculture, must drastically reduce their emissions.** We will closely follow the developments and continue to stress the need reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the agriculture sector through practices that also deliver benefits for adaptation and biodiversity and make our agricultural systems more resilient.

For more information on climate change and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact hanna.winkler@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members find messages, myths, questions & answers and communication materials on the topic in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#).

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Plant health care

MEPs in COMAGRI made a first step to improve statistics on organic agriculture

On 12 October, the Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI) adopted their [report on the proposal for a Regulation on Statistics on Agricultural Inputs and Outputs](#) (SAIO).

The results of the vote are relatively positive for the organic sector. COMAGRI's position contains relevant proposals to improve statistics on organic farming, such as the creation of subcategories on organic agriculture for statistics on the use of plant protection products (PPPs) and on crop production (area and quantity produced). The report also proposes to collect more precise data on PPPs, meaning



at least the quantities and the name of the active substances used, per type of crop, the dose of application, the date of application, and the surface area where the PPP was used. These data should also be published at meaningful level of details according to the report. Finally, agricultural MEPs voted in favour of collecting data not only on pesticides and fertilisers but also biocides and veterinary products.

What comes next?

The vote in plenary is scheduled in the week 22 November. The Council of the EU is still working on its position, and dialogues are not expected to start before 2022.

Please contact mathilde.calmels@organicseurope.bio for questions on pesticides and natural inputs. Do note that we prioritise our members' requests.

IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).

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Biodiversity, soil and water

Over 1 million signatures demanding a restoration of biodiversity & support for farmers

Across Europe, more than 1 million citizens are calling for a reduction of 80% in the use of synthetic pesticides by 2030 (and 100% by 2035); measures to restore biodiversity on agricultural land, and massive support to farmers to transition towards agroecology in the EU. These were the demands of the [European Citizens Initiative \(ECI\), Save Bees and Farmers](#).

If the ECI is validated, both the European Commission and the European Parliament will be obliged to react to the citizens' demands for a synthetic pesticide-free and bee-friendly agriculture.

The next phase will see the validation of 1,161,256 The organisers have 3 months to hand over signatures to national competent authorities for validation, the authorities then have 1 month to validate the signatures. The organisers considered the ECI would be successful if it reaches a minimum of 1.15 million signatures, with the current numbers, this implies a possible optimistic outcome for biodiversity, climate protection, and natural resources.

Why this European Citizen Initiative?

Synthetic pesticides present major risks for human health and the environment, including for bees and the farmers using them.

In its European Green Deal, the Commission vowed to increase biodiversity by, among other things, lowering pesticide use, particularly the most toxic ones. Not banning such substances would be in direct conflict with the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies' goals, and now, with the direct request from European citizens.



Food Policy

The Farm to Fork Strategy: An ambition to safeguard

It is a busy time for stakeholders active on the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy. On 19 October, the European Parliament's Plenary voted on its own initiative report on the strategy. The Plenary approved report by the environmental (ENVI) and agriculture (AGRI) committees – with 452 votes in favour, 170 against and 76 abstentions – voting for principles, mechanisms and rules supporting the transition towards more sustainable food systems. This result was not given for granted given the strong push by certain lobby groups ahead of the vote to weaken some of the more ambitious parts of this report.

Attempts to undermine the Farm to Fork Strategy

Ahead of the vote, on 14 October, IFOAM Organics Europe signed a joint civil society statement, together with 26 more organisations calling on the EU to **stand by the Farm to Fork strategy**, highlighting that the “aspirational targets are a vital element of the [F2F] Strategy as they set the course for the transition towards sustainable food systems and will ensure that progress for getting there can be measured”.

This came as a response to attempts ahead of the vote attacking the F2F Strategy's ambitions and particularly the targets of the Farm to Fork strategy. For instance, on 12 October a [Euractiv event, sponsored by CropLife](#), titled "Farm to Fork: What the analysis and data tell us" took place. During this event, results from the Joint Research [Centre](#) report and two similar studies by [the USDA](#) and from [Wageningen University](#) were presented – the latter published with funding from CropLife Europe, CropLife International, Euroseeds, Copa Cogeca and Fertilizers Europe.

Studies are not impact assessments

The three studies – by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), USDA and Wageningen University – foresee a decrease in yields and incomes if the Farm to Fork's targets were to be pursued.

However, these studies:

1. Are based on modelling with limited relevance to the objectives of the F2F and do not constitute a comprehensive impact assessment; and
2. Do not include many of the positive aspects that the F2F strategy aims to achieve, such as the reduction of food waste or the change of dietary habits.

The Commission has [summarized the scope of each study](#), and it becomes clear that these studies have a limited scope and can therefore not provide a comprehensive analysis of the consequences of the F2F strategy. Indeed, most of the F2F actions and supportive policies are not considered, including the effects of the organic action plan, or how food waste reduction and dietary changes will impact our food system.

Moreover, none of the studies mention cost of inaction and the impact this would have on the climate and biodiversity crises. In this context, the [op-ed by BEUC, IPES-Food and CEO underlines that](#) "If we were to conduct an 'impact assessment' of our current food systems, assuming only small tweaks along the way to 2030 or 2050, the outcomes would surely be catastrophic. The costs of inaction on climate change, biodiversity loss and pesticide poisoning would dwarf any potential losses under the Farm to Fork strategy".



To find out more about lobbying strategies aimed at undermining the targets of the F2F strategy, please see [Le Monde's article](#) [in French] about the "Intense agribusiness lobbying against 'Farm to Fork'" or [DW's article](#) about "how big farm lobbies undermine EU's agriculture plan".

Using partial findings from these studies present the risk of being misleading. Other studies counterbalance the three mentioned studies, such as [IDDRI's blog post "The Farm to Fork strategy: an ambitious and realistic innovation pathway for the European food system"](#), highlighting that "the European Commission's stated aim with the Farm to Fork systemic strategy is to ensure the future competitiveness and resilience of European agriculture", in a context of "increasingly fragile" agricultural systems.

The European Parliament's Greens/EFA also produced an interesting document, "[How the Farm to Fork Strategy can Fix our Food System](#)", underlining how this strategy can help us make food systems more sustainable, efficient, resilient and fair, and why this is essential. The document replies to questions such as "Do synthetic pesticides help farmers secure higher revenues?" or "Is yield the only factor that influences farmers' income?" or again "Is the current food system a threat to ecosystems? What are its hidden costs?".

For more information on the Farm to Fork Strategy and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact silvia.schmidt@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#).

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1.2 Research and innovation

Research and innovation advocacy / TP Organics

Take part in EIP-AGRI workshop on farm data!

Are you a farmer, an adviser, an Operational Group member, or a tech company using farm data solutions? Applications are open to take part in the workshop [Farm Data for Better Farm Performance](#). The workshop will take place online on 9-10 December 2021.

The aims of this workshop are:

- Take stock of on-going successful projects and initiatives that collect and make use of farm generated data to improve economic and environmental performance;
- Explore the role of the different stakeholders on economic and environmental data collection at farms and their use for agricultural production; and
- Provide an environment to exchange best practices on economic and environmental farm data collection, use and sharing.

Within the workshop, the following main questions might be discussed:

- Which type of economic and environmental data is being generated on your farm?



- Are you using the service of third parties for the analysis and interpretation of the data generated on your farm?
- What is the value of agricultural data?
- How important do you deem information about extreme weather events?

The event will include a brokerage activity where participants will present projects and ideas and meet other people sharing the same interests. More details and a link for the application form are on [the EIP-AGRI website](#). The call closes on 29 October 2021.

Knowledge for organic

Watch RELACS' new video about copper replacement in oil rose plantation

A new [RELACS](#) video explores the work and research currently pursued in the Rose Valley in Bulgaria. Organic farmers are researching replacements of traditional copper Plant Protection Products (PPP) sometimes used in organic farming.

What is the issue?

Both rust on the rose and black leaf spots are economically important diseases in the oil bearing rose, since they significantly impact the plant. In the first case, favourable conditions like hot weather and humidity can lead to the fungus infection, reducing the yield of rose blossom up to 30-50% in some years. Black leaf spots on the other hand, typically appear late May and early June and may also reduce the yield in some years between 30-50% and lead to defoliation of plants. Importantly, this premature defoliation reduces yield in subsequent years.

How can organic farmers solve this?

[BIOSELENA](#), the Bulgarian Foundation for Organic Agriculture, is testing 4 alternative products for replacing PPP's, comparing alternatives' effects with the effect of a traditional product. The new tested Plant Protection Products as well as the traditional copper hydroxide are contact fungicides. For them, the weather forecast must be monitored very carefully, and the climate conditions must be followed to limit the attack of economically important diseases and to obtain more stable results in disease control.

What are the results?

Rose blossoms from separate sections are harvested each morning, weighed, then distilled, including reference and control sections, to compare the yield of rose blossom and rose oil. The institute has been implementing this experiment for three years and already reported results for the first two years. These show the protective effect of new products is comparable to traditionally used PPPs'. The yield of rose blossom is between 8-15% higher in the new tested products and the yield of rose oil increased by 10-12%, leading the path for promising alternatives in organic farming.

The work BIOSELENA is carrying out is summarised in [a new video](#) in collaboration with the RELACS project and the Institute for Roses and Aromatic Plants.





RELACS seeks to promote the development and adoption of environmentally safe and economically viable tools and technologies to reduce the use of external inputs in organic farming systems. [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) is responsible for the communication and dissemination of project results as well as the coordination of the science-practice-policy dialogue.



RELACS has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773431. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Enlarge your organic farm knowledge through videos

A versatile collection of video content from the [Organic Farm Knowledge](#) Platform is now available on its own [YouTube channel](#), accessible to everyone.

A great advantage of the YouTube channel is that it is divided into different subject areas, which makes it easier for practitioners to find specific content.

Video on crop production, soil, animal husbandry, farm management, food chain management, and environment and society are available. The channel offers a good educational opportunity to acquire knowledge on certain topics and get them explained visually. You can learn more and [subscribe to the new YouTube Channel](#).

We also invite you to watch the [video introducing the Organic Farm Knowledge platform](#) to learn about the platform and better understand its offerings and the wide range of tools and resources for organic farming.

Learn more about Organic Farm Knowledge at www.organic-farmknowledge.org. [Subscribe](#) to the newsletter to receive periodic updates via email, and do remember to follow the Organic Farm knowledge platform on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for news and events.

Organic Farm Knowledge was originally set up by [ICROFS](#) (International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems) in the framework of the [OK-Net Arable](#) project. It is currently being developed further by the project [OK-Net EcoFeed](#). Both projects are coordinated by [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) and are funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The third core partner of the Organic Farm Knowledge platform is [FiBL](#) (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture).

For more info please contact organic-farmknowledge@fibl.org.



Organic Farm Knowledge is a product of OK-Net Arable and OK-Net EcoFeed. These projects have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreements No. 652654 and No. 773911 respectively. The information contained within this platform only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.



Copenhagen Food System Centre's work supporting organic development - Interview with Line Rise Nielsen

Our colleagues, Joanna Wierzbicka, Strategic Initiatives Manager, and Bérénice Cau, Project and Fundraising Assistant, met with Line Rise Nielsen, Food Policy Director at Changing Food, to talk about the work of the Copenhagen Food System Centre and what it is doing in terms of organic.

How does the Copenhagen method support organic development?

Copenhagen's method is one of increasing the quality of food in professional kitchens parallel with an organic conversion – an exercise to be completed within the existing operating budget.

The method has been developed and tested in collaboration with experts and kitchen professionals, and has, among other things, resulted in the City of Copenhagen being the world's most organic capital with an average at 87%, throughout the city's 900 kitchens.

It has been applied in several municipalities in Denmark and works throughout a broad range of actors, in small and big kitchens, in kindergartens, schools as well in elderly homes, hospitals, prisons and private professional canteens.

When it comes to the kitchens, they have to go through a major change in the way they prepared their meals with a focus on changing the diets, using less meat and much more and better greens, less and better meat and cook from scratch and reducing food waste.

Working with the principles of this kind of organic conversion, it becomes natural to work with more fresh produce and less convenience, which automatically leads to more creativity and satisfaction for the kitchen staff, and in most cases means less absence and higher efficiency.

The method focuses about mindset, based on how to use your money properly. It is like keeping your house. It's a mindset that your plate also looks like organic farming (seasonable food, balance between vegetables and meat). You look at who eats – for instance children have different needs than elderly. You eat seasonal and not too much meat. The goal is to turn public kitchens into 90 per cent organic within the same budget.

This can be achieved because it starts in the kitchens and lead to educating staff in making food in another way. It is a transition in the way you think about food and the way responsibility is.

In Copenhagen, to measure organic progress, the authorities made organic certification for meals, based on how many kilograms, not money, have been used. As a result, there is a [label for kitchens](#) that have minimum 30, 60 or 90 per cent of organic food measured in kilograms. It gives a very clear picture on how much organic food is there.

Berlin wants to apply the same approach, but they do not have adapted labelling. In Berlin, there is one label for 100 per cent organic meals.

What challenges do you see in public procurement in relation to the development of organic?

As the need for an independent organisation was felt, Copenhagen House of Food was created which started counting how many kitchens, how many employees and how much money was spent on food every year. This amount of money is often not known. However, when you know how much your basket is, you know how much power you have to shop.



Public procurement looks at food as a product rather than value. The discussion about food quality is left out even though there is a need to talk about the fact that food is alive and have proper qualities. However, policymakers see food as a range of products that need to be as cheap and involve as much quantity as possible.

But “bigger is better” principle is not healthy for small businesses, the climate, or the environment. Small producers are too small to compete in tenders. If you want a healthy meal, you need to pay more, invest in it. And you will discover that you can get a lot of high-quality vegetables for the price of poor-quality meat. It is like a food economy. You can ask for more quality, if you have knowledge regarding food – and the procurement officers unfortunately do not. So, they need assistance.

The dialogue between policy, sellers and kitchens is the key here. You need to find your locally adapted ways to build it. Developing such approaches involves a lot of work, but it is worth it.

Do you have examples of best practices in mind? Could you say a few words?

2 years ago, the Hospitality school in Copenhagen made a strategy that they wanted to be 90% organic and more sustainable. Because of the argument that the students must have the highest level of culinary quality and the highest knowledge of the connection between the plate and the farmland, the school believes that it is their responsibility to teach the new generation of chefs how a sustainable meal is established.

To that regard, the students need not only be good wholesalers but also good fishermen and butchers, it is more than just organic. The students need to understand the products they are using, how to cut it, understand their freshness and their sustainability. For example, butchers are asked to be present and explain why they have chosen the meat they have sold. For the greens, the amount is that small that it can be local greens and direct agreements can be made. Farmers also come to the schools with their goods and explain how it is produced and how it can be used in a good manner to understand the seasonality.

A new tender is being made, divided in 5 categories: (1) dairy & eggs, (2) basic food, (3) meat, (4) fish, (5) greens. The project is in progress and the contract should start the 1st of August.

What message would you like to pass on to policymakers?

There is a need to have a higher standard. They should try to follow the money regarding meals they are responsible for. And see the food system as complex as IT or engineering – they need experts to assist them to make changes.

This interview is part of the FoodSHIFT project. IFOAM Organics Europe contributes to the conceptual framework for further development of governance strategies and food policy strategies. We will also disseminate project outputs within the organic network and at our main events.

[FoodShift2030](#) will launch an ambitious, citizen-driven transition of Europe’s food system to a low carbon, circular future. This Horizon 2020 project is promoting food systems innovations in nine cities across Europe. More information about the nine FoodSHIFT Labs is available [on the FoodSHIFT2030 website](#). Follow the project on social media using @FoodSHIFT2030 on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).





FoodShift2030 has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 862716. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Intercropping for boosting organic farming in EU – ReMIX policy brief

The European Green Deal addresses the challenges of a fair sustainable food system. To realise the EU Green Deal, the [Farm-to-Fork Strategy](#) sets goals to significantly reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides and fertilisers as well as increase the agricultural land under organic farming to at least 25% by 2030.

Intercropping can help reaching the 25% target of organic agricultural land

Species mixtures, also known as intercrops, can enhance and improve the control of pests, diseases, and weeds, while increasing crop productivity and resilience to biotic and abiotic stresses – including those exacerbated by climate change. Intercropping is still a minor practice, but areas cultivated with cereal-legumes mixtures have steadily increased for 10 years, mainly in organic farming. Thanks to these positive effects, Intercropping is an important element of Europe's agroecological transition.

ReMIX: Redesigning European cropping systems based on species mixtures

For the past four years, scientists, experts and farmers of the Horizon 2020 [project ReMIX](#) worked hard to design productive, diversified, resilient and environmentally friendly cropping systems that are less dependent on external inputs. ReMIX showed that intercropping is a promising solution to overcome many of the limitations in organic arable cropping.

Intercropping offers following benefits for organic farming:

1. Increasing and stabilising yields for organic arable crops,
2. Improving the protein autonomy of organic farms, and
3. Saving worktime and inputs.

ReMIX recommendations: “Intercropping must be a pillar of the Farm-to-Fork Strategy”

To boost the adoption of intercropping by a larger number of farmers and contribute to reaching the Farm-to-Fork targets, policy and financial support is needed. In particular:

1. European farm subsidies of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) should favour intercropping in organic farming while the contradictions in the rules and administrative barriers should be resolved;
2. Public authorities need to support the development of value chains for intercropped products and new markets;
3. Public authorities should support breeding programmes for intercropping and provide advice on suitable varieties; and
4. Public authorities should support participatory research capitalizing on the know-how of farmers and allowing them to take ownership of new practices.

You can read the full policy brief “Intercropping for boosting organic farming in Europe” in [our website library](#).

Make sure to follow @OrganicsEurope on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to stay tuned about the latest updates.

The Horizon 2020 project [ReMIX](#) exploits the benefits of species mixtures to design more diversified and resilient agroecological arable cropping systems. [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) is a project partner representing the European organic movement and ensuring knowledge transfer and dissemination towards stakeholders and policy-makers.



ReMIX has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727217. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

LIVESEED and OK-Net EcoFeed highlighted to be EU-funded research projects demonstrating potential of more sustainable alternatives

The [EU Green Deal](#) and its related [Farm-to-Fork](#) and [Biodiversity](#) strategies identified agroecology and organic farming as one of the sustainable farming practices that can help achieve the strategies' targets.

The EU has funded several research projects dedicated to advancing agroecological research under its Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020. These projects are contributing to an increased understanding of the practical implementation of ecological and low-input farming practices, along with their environmental, climate and social benefits.

Two projects coordinated by IFOAM Organics Europe, LIVESEED and OK-Net EcoFeed, were selected in the CORDIS' Agroecology Results pack. LIVESEED boosted organic seed production and plant breeding, while OK-Net EcoFeed helped organic farmers move toward 100% organic and local feed. Both projects can contribute to reaching the Farm to Fork target of at least 25% of EU farmland under organic production by 2030.

The [CORDIS' Agroecology Results Pack](#) provides useful knowledge for:

- Preparing and evaluating CAP Strategic Plans;
- Designing eco-schemes;
- Enabling the EU's recently adopted [Action Plan for the development of organic production](#); and
- Mobilising stakeholders to upscale promising results from EU-funded research and innovation actions.

Key results of LIVESEED and OK-Net EcoFeed, such as the systems-based breeding concept, the EU router database for organic seed, the ration-planning tool for pigs and poultry, and the Organic Farm Knowledge Platform were showcased and made available in 6 languages.

Read more on the CORDIS website or the project website:

LIVESEED: [Cordis Results Pack](#); [project website](#)

OK-Net EcoFeed: [Cordis Results Pack](#); [project website](#)





LIVESEED has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727230 and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation under contract number 17.00090. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.



OK-Net EcoFeed has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 773911. This communication only reflects the author's view. The Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

LIVESEED project comes to an end after 52 months

The LIVESEED project came to an end on 30 September 2021, after 52 months of activities. Started in June 2017, 51 project partners put their hearts and souls into boosting organic seed and plant breeding.

During this time, several resources, tools, practice abstracts, booklets (many of which translated into several EU languages), videos, research reports, and presentations were produced and made available through the [project website](#).

All these materials are a useful source of information for all those active in organic seed and plant breeding.

Among the documents we would like to highlight:

- The booklet with project outcomes and results "[LIVESEED - Boosting organic seed and plant breeding across Europe](#)";
- [Boosting organic seed and breeding across Europe: recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers](#) (booklet);
- [Recommendations per topic and per target group](#) (posters);
- [A national roadmap towards 100% organic seed by 2036](#)" (policy brief); and
- [Policy and stakeholder recommendations to boost organic seed & breeding sector](#) (report).

Although the project's website will not be updated anymore, IFOAM Organics Europe will keep it up and running as a repository for all these documents until September 2024 and will archive it afterwards.

Got any questions regarding website or results? Please contact us at agnes.bruszik@organicseurope.bio, bram.moeskops@organicseurope.bio, or write Dr. Monika Messmer at the Research Institute of Organic Research (FiBL) Switzerland at monika.messmer@fibl.org.

For more knowledge on organic seed and plant breeding we invite you to visit the dedicated section on the [Organic Farm-Knowledge Platform](#), the [ECO-PB website](#), [Organic EPrints](#), and the [EU Router Database](#).



We thank all project partners for their commitment and contribution along this journey to boost organic seed and plant breeding in the EU!

Visit the [LIVESEED website](#) to learn more and relive the project's developments on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) using @LIVESEEDeu and #LIVESEEDeu.

LIVESEED aims to boost organic seed and plant breeding across Europe. IFOAM Organics Europe and FiBL-Switzerland coordinate the project with 50 partners covering 18 EU countries. The [LIVESEED](#) project will increase transparency and will provide recommendations on organic seeds. The project partners analyse national seed databases and factors influencing organic seed production and use. They also explore national policies, smart practices, build EU infrastructure and analyse issues on propagation. The partners also want to advance testing protocols to improve the availability of organic seeds, ensuring they are adapted to the realities of organic farmers. LIVESEED is an EU Horizon 2020-funded project.



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2 IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE DEVELOPMENT

They make it happen! Playing a key role in the value chain: Transilvania Acasă

Organic food & farming systems aim at developing and adopting new tools to create transparency from farm to fork and enhance dialogue between all value chain actors. Promoting fairness and transparency of the organic food chain is part of our [Vision 2030](#). Together with food and farming actors across Europe, we are leading the way toward its goals as movement and sector.

In the North-West region of Romania, the [AgroTransilvania Cluster](#), an association of 70 agrifood producers, traders, cooperatives, local authorities, chamber of commerce, universities and research institutes was created in 2013. The cluster facilitates the competitive reorganization of the agrifood industry by encouraging collaboration between business entities in the sector.

The association promoted the "Transilvania Acasă" (Transilvania at Home) initiative, which under sustainable values, aims at supporting producers and strengthening relationships to create a strong brand under which products can be marketed. The non-profit organization is set up to maintain cluster producers/members together, gain a position in the agrifood market, and enter to the major shopping centres to market their products. As of today, the number of producers who joined the concept and market their products have grown to 23 and keeps rising.

Learn more about this and other initiatives that are transforming food and farming in Europe and get inspired on www.euorganic2030.bio and share it on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).





The work of IFOAM Organics Europe on this topic is co-financed by the LIFE programme of the European Union, under the under the Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). This publication only reflects the views of the authors and its sole responsibility lies with IFOAM Organics Europe. CINEA is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.

Share with us your organic initiative and inspire others to transform food and farming systems!

The European organic movement's vision is transforming food and farming in Europe. To achieve this ambitious and [shared Vision for organic in 2030](#), we collect successful initiatives and projects that are [transforming food and farming](#) and can inspire other food and farming actors and policy-makers.

[Submit your initiative now](#) if it is not older than five years and addresses one of the following aspects:

- Organic on every table: initiatives and examples that make organic widely available and recognised;
- Improve – Inspire – Deliver: initiatives and example that develop organic further and inspire others;
- Fair Play – Fair Pay: initiatives and examples to achieve more transparency and fairness in the value chain.

If your initiative is in line with our vision, we will upload it to [EUorganic2030.bio](#) and promote it on our social media using #EUorganic2030.

Need inspiration? Have an initiative? [Visit EUorganic2030.bio](#)



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**HAVE AN INITIATIVE THAT TRANSFORMS FOOD AND FARMING? VISIT
EUORGANIC2030.BIO TO SEE INSPIRING EXAMPLES AND SUBMIT YOUR OWN!**



This project is co-financed by the European Union, under the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). The sole responsibility for this communication lies with IFOAM Organics Europe. The EASME is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information provided.



IFOAM Organics Europe Council will meet on 23 November 2021

The next edition of IFOAM Organics Europe Council meeting will take place on 23 November 2021.

Are you a member of IFOAM Organics Europe? Contact your national representative ([Council member](#)) for an update of these meetings.

Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe Council member? Go to [our member extranet Council space](#), where we upload all details.

Not a member yet? Check out [membership advantages](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio for more information.



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Need inspiration communicating organic's benefits? Members can check our updated arguments

In spring this year, we asked our membership to help us improve our [database of organic's benefits](#). Based on your valuable input, we updated and further developed some of your priority topics. Thanks to your input, the updated arguments database will help you strengthen your communication about how organic delivers on various topics.

What's new? Organic's benefits for...

- [Biodiversity](#)
- [Plant health care](#)
- [Research & Innovation](#)
- [Seeds & breeding](#)

On top of the above, the argument database contains updated information on [CAP & rural development](#), [Climate change & food security](#) and [GMOs & new GMOs](#). We continue updating these topics and will develop new topics in the coming months. Of course, we will inform our members when new content is available.

Background information

The [arguments database](#) is available for our member on the [member extranet](#) and is split into topics. Each of these topics is clustered in several sections, organising the information in a logical way: main messages, frequently asked questions, relevant position papers and scientific resources as well as communication materials like visuals, infographics and videos.

For questions, constructive feedback and talks about collaborating on the database, please reach out to eva.berckmans@organicseurope.bio. If you are having troubles accessing the arguments database or member extranet, please contact communication@organicseurope.bio.



3 EVENTS

3.1 Preview of events

Save the date: Webinar on organic approach to plant health 16 November, online

On 16 November, from 10:30-12:00, MEP Eric Andrieu (S&D) will co-host our webinar on the organic approach to plant health in a pesticide reduction perspective. As the European Commission is finalising its proposal for a revised Sustainable Use of pesticides Directive (SUD), this webinar comes at a good time.

Tune in to get answers to questions like:

- What are the challenges to implement and develop the organic approach to plant health in the EU?
- How can EU policies support the development of this unique approach to plant health to achieve a 50% reduction in the use and risks of pesticides by 2030, as set out in the Farm to Fork strategy?

There will be simultaneous interpretations in English and French. Further information on programme and registration will follow soon. IFOAM Organics Europe members will find early information on [our member extranet](#).

Revised Sustainable Use of pesticides Directive (SUD) expected early 2022

With the Farm to Fork strategy, the European Commission has set out an ambitious framework for developing a sustainable food system for the EU, including a target to reduce the use and risks of chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030. The key role of organic agriculture in this transition has been recognised by also setting a target to achieve 25% of agricultural land under organic area by 2030.

In early 2022, the European Commission will present a proposal for a revised Sustainable Use of pesticides Directive (SUD), which is currently the main EU instrument to reduce the impact of pesticides on human health and the environment. According to the Farm to Fork strategy, this will be one of the main tools to reach the Farm to Fork's target on pesticide reduction, in particular by strengthening provisions for Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Organic and other integrated approaches lead the way

A successful reduction of synthetic pesticide use needs to be well-prepared. Alternative approaches such as organic agriculture – but also IPM, biocontrol and agroecology – can lead the way towards an agrifood system free of synthetic pesticides provided that the entire political framework enables their development.

As the Commission finalises its proposal on the revised SUD, it is relevant to discuss the challenges and policy options to enable pesticide reduction strategies based on effective and ready-to-use alternative approaches, such as organic farming.

For more information on plant health and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this issue, please contact mathilde.calmels@organicseurope.bio. IFOAM Organics Europe members can find more information on [the member extranet](#) and background materials in the [arguments database on the member extranet](#) (main messages, arguments/FAQs, visuals & videos).



For information about what you can gain from being a member, read [our membership page](#) and contact membership@organicseurope.bio.



This event is co-financed by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament.



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Registration open: 6th European Conference on Copper in Plant Protection 17-18 November 2021, online

[Registration for the 6th European Conference on Copper in Plant Protection is now open!](#) Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW), IFOAM Organics Europe and the Julius-Kühn Institute are pleased to invite researchers, national and local authorities, politicians, industry, and practitioners to discuss the following questions:

- Which innovations support copper minimization?
- Which research and development projects can solve the challenges?
- What political framework conditions are necessary for this?

Day one will focus on the policy framework for minimising copper (conference language German), while day two will be dedicated to presentations of practical trials, product and strategy innovations for copper minimisation (conference language English).

Have a look at the [programme](#) for further information! On 17 November, IFOAM Organics Europe's Policy Coordinator Mathilde Calmels will present the [Strategy for the minimisation of copper in organic farming in Europe](#) developed by IFOAM Organics Europe in 2018. The day after, on 18 November, she will present the first results of the national workshops on copper organised within the [RELACS project](#), focusing on farmer's acceptability of copper alternatives.

Places are limited, [so remember to register](#) by 16 November!

Gefördert durch:



aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages



Day two is carried out on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) as part of the Federal Program for Organic Farming and Other Forms of Sustainable Agriculture (BÖLN).



Rue du Commerce 124 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium – Phone: +32 2 280 12 23 – Email: info@organicseurope.bio

Save the Date & Register now for the Organic Innovation Days 2021

[Register now](#) to attend this year's Organic Innovation Days and discuss [Better inputs for organic farming](#). TP Organics' annual public event will take place online 30 November-1 December, 2021.

For this year's edition of Organic Innovation Days, TP Organics is collaborating with the European research projects [RELACS](#) and [Organic-PLUS](#). These two Horizon 2020-funded EU projects aim to reduce the use of contentious inputs in organic farming.

What to expect?

The first day will discuss alternatives to contentious inputs in organic farming and participants will take a closer look at crop protection products. Different alternatives and results will be presented by the experts of the projects and discussed afterwards.

On the second day, Organic-PLUS and RELACS experts will present the socio-economic results of the projects in 3 sessions:

- Consumer perspectives and citizen juries;
- Socio-economic and environmental impacts of alternative tools and technologies;
- Acceptance level of different alternative inputs, towards a European roadmap for replacing contentious inputs.

These exchanges will be followed by a high-level policy debate on how to tackle contentious inputs in organic farming before the event is concluded with an outline of the next steps.

Consult the [event webpage](#) to stay up to date, [download the draft programme](#) and [register](#) by 28 November!

The event will take place online via the virtual event platform Hubilo. You will receive the link to the online event together with the confirmation email.

Present on social media? Share your thoughts and pictures from the event using the hashtags #OrganicInnovationDays #OID2020 #TPOrganics as well as the Twitter handles [@TPOrganics](#), [@RELACSeu](#) & [@OrgPLUSresearch](#).



These sessions are financed by the projects RELACS and Organic-PLUS, which have received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreements No 773431 and No 774340, respectively



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Register now for IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business on 7 December, online – The event for companies involved & interested in organic

[Register now](#) for the upcoming 4th edition of [IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business](#), taking place virtually on 7 December. This successful platform for exchange between players from the whole (organic) supply chain brings together IFOAM Organics Europe's members and their members, as well as companies involved or interested in organic.

Join us and discuss current hot topics and trends in organic. In the morning session, we will talk about organic market development and societal trends, while the afternoon will be dedicated to the new EU Organic Regulation and pesticide residues.

Have a look at the sessions we are organising

- Organic market development & societal trends
- The new EU Organic Regulation: general update, processing rules, cleaning & disinfectants
- How to deal with pesticide residues?
- Quick update on the Organic Regulation Guidelines

Interested? [Register now](#) and take your chance to exchange and network with participants, policy-makers and (organic) companies.

More details on the programme are available on the [event page](#). Stay tuned for event and speakers updates by visiting [IFOAM Organics Europe's website](#), checking out our [LinkedIn event](#) and following @OrganicsEurope on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)!

Should you have any questions, please contact mariavittoria.borghetto@organicseurope.bio.

We are looking forward to meeting you virtually at IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business 2021!



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3.2 Review of events

Regenerative agriculture in the EU and UK: policies that could help farmers transition 22 September 2021, Online

On 22 September, the [European Environmental Bureau](#) (EEB) organised a workshop to discuss the potential role of public policies in enhancing the transition towards regenerative agriculture, both at EU and UK level.

Soil health, central to organic farming, is also at the hearth of regenerative agriculture. As both movements share the common objective of protecting and enhancing soil health, we are currently following the debate on regenerative agriculture.

What should supportive farm policies look like?

In the first presentation of the draft recommendations from the AgriCaptureCO₂ project, Célia Nyssens, Policy Officer for Agriculture at the European Environmental Bureau, gave a general overview of the current EU policy framework concerning soil health and protection, highlighting its fragmentation and its weaknesses. Indeed, she claimed that stronger policies are needed, capable of fostering a holistic approach where climate, soil, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods are deeply interconnected.

To reach this objective, the AgriCaptureCO₂ specifically project recommends a policy scheme with a strong regulatory baseline for regenerative agriculture. Second in order of importance would be CAP conditionality, followed by incentives from both public and private fundings. According to Célia Nyssens, governments should invest in this regenerative paradigm, enabling factors at individual, social and material levels to support the agricultural community.

How can regenerative agriculture contribute to climate action?

After a short introduction concerning the current climate and environmental crisis, Joe Stanley, Head of Training and Partnerships at the [Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust \(GWCT\)](#), presented the main principles of regenerative agriculture, explaining how they can contribute to climate action. These principals are biological diversity, maintain living roots, soil protection, integration of organic matter and reduced cultivations.

Stanley also showed the interim results of a Conservation Agriculture trial, a five-year project made in partnership with the [Syngenta Sustainable Farming Initiative](#) and the [National Institute of Agricultural Botany \(NIAB\)](#). According to Stanley, the first outcomes of this project are extremely positive on the environmental front, especially concerning soil health and the reduction of food production's carbon footprint. In these terms, it seems that "Conservation Agriculture" (another term for regenerative agriculture) should be central to move towards a more sustainable agri-food system.

Nonetheless, the audience addressed several questions to the speaker regarding the effective sustainability of this type of agriculture, since the trials are in fact conducted on non-organic farms and the use of pesticides and fertilisers is allowed. Stanley claimed that, in the future, they hope to

integrate a more organic approach, but until now they believe that synthetic inputs are still fundamental to guarantee a productive agricultural sector in the UK.

Supportive farm policies: Farmers' point of view

During the workshop, farmers from various EU countries started a panel debate always related to supportive farm policies. Paul Wiss, Austrian organic farmer, talked about the importance of introducing measures to improve soil health in terms of organic content, while Stelio Kteniadakis, Greek organic farmer, claimed that public policies should foster organic farming as the best way to fight climate change. In particular, they stressed the need to invest in educating farmers to support them in the transition towards organic food production.

How should policymakers harness and shape private financing for regenerative agriculture?

After a first presentation from Célia Nyssens, another panel debate began with Lucy Bates, Technical Manager at [LEAF](#) (Linking Environment And Farming), who talked about [LEAF Sustainable Farming Review](#) and the importance of raising public awareness on regenerative agriculture.

Ana Frelih-Larsen, coordinator of the [Ecologic Institute](#)'s activities on agriculture and soil, expressed a particular concern on payment schemes for carbon farming, underlined the potential risks that they can entail. The Ecologic Institute has indeed published a [Technical Guidance Handbook](#) on setting up and implementing result-based carbon farming mechanisms in the EU, which provides critical reflections on the possibilities and limits of this result-based schemes for carbon farming.

Andrew Bowen, CEO of the [One Carbon World](#), has then deepened the topic of carbon credits. One Carbon World is a carbon neutral not-for-profit organisation and a global resource partner of the [Climate Neutral Now Initiative](#), launched by United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to promote the voluntary use of carbon market mechanisms. Moreover, it is also one of the partners involved in the AgriCaptureCO2 project.

Gilles Dufrasne, policy officer at [Carbon Market Watch](#), took the floor focusing on the case for caution in carbon markets, starting from a great explanation of what carbon credit is and of the difficulties in measuring its concrete results. The panel debate ended with a practical case: Duncan Farrington, British farmer, raised awareness on carbon emissions in agriculture, explaining how he is tackling its farm's footprint through [LEAF farming strategies and by achieving the Carbon Neutral Gold Standard](#).

The European Environmental Bureau organised this event as part of the AgriCaptureCO2 project, a three-year H2020 funded project looking at the potential of soil as a carbon sink, whilst promoting the implementation of regenerative agricultural practices.

Discussing the future of organic food – 6th Organic Food Conference

On 30 September and 1 October, the 6th edition of our [Organic Food Conference](#) took place in Warsaw and online, with the collaboration of the Polish Chamber of Organic Food. During these two days, organic food processors, traders, retailers, importers, and control bodies discussed and exchanged views and ideas about the current EU organic sector, focusing on EU policy strategies and consumers' as pivotal drivers for the organic development.

Setting the scene

Eduardo Cuoco, Director of IFOAM Organics Europe, welcomed more than 100 participants from all over Europe, announcing the conference's central themes: the future and developments of the organic food and market, including the organic regulation. Following, Ryszard Kamiński, Polish Undersecretary of State of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, opened with a speech stating the relevance of a common goal for the European Green Deal, the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and the Organic Action Plan. The Undersecretary further endorsed the process of organic food that Poland is undertaking: "We are including more organic farming systems formation in our agriculture schools, so farmers have more knowledge about organic farming. Poland will continue developing its organic sector in the coming years with a variety of measures".

Promising numbers from the organic market

According to the World of Organic Agriculture, the organic market grew by 8% to €45 billion in 2019. In the words of Helga Willer, Deputy Head of Department of Extension, Training & Communication, at the Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL): "These are promising numbers, but the organic area will have to continue to grow in coming years to reach the 25% organic land target by 2030".

Concurrently, the major trends of the organic market define promising developments, as organic land is diversifying, and local production is steadily increasing. Additionally, e-commerce is rapidly growing, and consumers are buying organic food more often according to Krystyna Radkowska, President of Polish Chamber of Organic Food. The obstacles, however, can be identified with the need to strengthen consumers' awareness, rising production costs, and elimination artificial packaging.

How to reach the 25% target?

"Organic is not a niche market anymore, it is part of the solution and the EU Commission recognised this in its EU Green Deal". These words by Eric Gall, IFOAM's Deputy Director and Policy Manager, kicked-off the second session about how both organic and conventional businesses are working to achieve the Farm to Fork project's target of 25% organic land by 2030.

Together with Barbara Altmann, Head of Strategic Securing of Raw Materials Rapunzel Naturkost, the focus was laid companies' role in developing the organic sector. For this, she identified networking of large and small companies as key for the common organic vision and further underlined: "We deeply care for the fairness principle. We try to offer fixed prices for certain years to make it interesting to organic farmers to grow crops. We also invest in organic breeding".

Sylwester Struzyna, BioPlanet SA CEO & PIZE's Vice-CEO, explored important arguments for the 25% organic land target. Among others, the CEO listed the need for farmers to access knowledge for providing organic food. "Campaigns increasing the profile of certification can help, just like training of sellers & customers", he observed.

Panellist Chiara Faenza, Responsible for Sustainability & Values Innovation Coop Italia concluded with an important remark: "To achieve 25% organic land target, we believe we need concrete, time-bound



actions for the organic market and economic support focusing on marketing and demand support”.

The problem of nutrition and sustainability labelling

Together with Hans Kaufmann, Head of Communications of BNN (the German processors and retailers association), and Anne-Claire Asselin, Founder of sustainability consultancy Sayari, the focus shifted towards organic nutrition and sustainability labelling initiatives. Silvia Schmidt, Policy Associate Manager at IFOAM’s Organics Europe, opened the discussion by reflecting on the shortcomings that labelling may have for organic products: “NutriScore does not per se reflect naturalness of products, while the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) label does not sufficiently consider environmental externalities, such as impacts on biodiversity, animal welfare, or other externalities”. In view of a recent campaign conducted by BNN, Kaufmann informs how organic companies should raise awareness among consumers about the shortcomings of the NutriScore.

During her intervention, Asselin showed how the PlanetScore, a method of scoring the environmental impact of a certain product that was recently developed by several French stakeholders, also includes environmental externalities in its calculation method.

The new EU Organic Regulation: What changes for operators?

IFOAM’s Organics Europe Regulation Manager, Emanuele Busacca, opened the second day by introducing the session on the opportunities and challenges of the new EU Organic Regulation. On 1 January 2022, the new EU Organic Regulation will apply, resulting in changes in the processing and marketing systems among EU Member States. According to Laurence Bonafos from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), the legislation on production standards and regulations is practically complete whilst work on international trade and imports is still ongoing.

“Major changes for organic producers, processors and traders can be expected in the new EU organic regulation, but changes for organic processors will be manageable” said Alexander Beck, member of IFOAM Organics Europe’s Interest Group of Organic Processors and Traders, and AÖL Executive Board Member. Beck further reminded that from 2024 organic producers are obliged to use organic cleaning and disinfection products, which is in line with environmental EU Green Deal targets but poses implementation challenges.

Michel Reynaud, IFOAM’s Organic Europe Board Member (and Vice-President of the Ecocert Group), highlighted: “During 7 years of work on new EU Organic Regulation, IFOAM Organics Europe contributed to its development via advocacy towards the Commission, the Parliament, the Council as well as national ministries via letters, meetings and through and with our members”.

Packaging and organic: Less is more

The new EU Organic Regulation foresees little requirements in terms of materials used for packaging organic products, but “covering organic food in plastic does not feel to be in line with organic principles, especially that of ecology” commented Dóra Drexler, Board Vice-President, IFOAM Organics Europe / ÖMKi, opening the second session focusing on the role of packaging in organic.

Sarah Compson, Chair of IFOAM Organics Europe’s Interest Group of Organic Processors and Traders and Soil Associations’ International Development Manager, explains that a survey found that the biggest barrier to purchasing organic products was packaging in non-recyclable plastic. At the same time, the challenges to packaging standards in the EU are the missing regulations and the swapping of one packaging solution for another, which is not necessarily better and more ecological, according to Compson.



Valentina Pizzi, Marketing and CFO of Pizzi Osvaldo, and Steven IJzerman of EkoPlaza, provided two successful examples of business models that managed to dismiss plastic packaging and replace it with new recyclable and sustainable materials - thanks to research. Johanna Stumpner, of IFOAM Organics Europe's Interest Group of Organic Processors and Traders and AÖL Executive Board member, presented 'Biokunststofftool,' a tool to inspect and compare bio-based packaging that is now available in Germany and the United Kingdom. This innovative tool describes and evaluates five material groups based on ecology, social compatibility, and safety & technology.

Careful, minimal & mild processing: The ProOrg Project

Roberto Pinton, Board Member at IFOAM Organics Europe and ProOrg partner, guided us through the relevance of careful, minimal, and mild processing methods: "Legislative frameworks in the EU limit organic food processing. We need more investment in research, and we need to manage projects together". At the same time, information about food processing, the impact on the environment and environmentally-friendly packaging are key for a positive perception by consumers', according to Pinton. A similar focus on consumers is presented by Karin Beukel, Circular Food Technology Co-Founder: "We need big industry players to take part in the sustainable process and be more risk taking to enhance the upcycling industry and understand consumers' needs and wishes. There's huge potential here, but it's really a matter of the full industry and research".

Commissioner concludes: Organic's benefits are part of the solution

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission Janusz Wojciechowski concluded the Organic Food Conference with a powerful statement: "The full potential of organic farming lies not only in its environmental benefits, but also in its ability of bringing real benefits to organic farmers and society. Now it is time for all of us to take action on the Organic Action Plan. I look forward to work with you in this goal".

Jan Plagge, President, IFOAM Organics Europe concluded: "As organic movement and organic sector, we are ready to be part of the solutions and actions in transitioning towards sustainable food and farming systems. The main challenge is to convert not only farmers and processors, but how to change consumption and cooking habits of consumers. We need a holistic approach of converting the whole value chain, including consumers".

'Thank you's' and more information

Thank you to our participants for attending the Organic Food Conference 2021 and to our members, presenters, organizers, sponsors, donors, and media partners! You made this Conference possible, insightful, and inspiring.

Those of you who were unable to attend will be able to catch up on the highlights of the event by watching the recordings, which will be accessible on the [Organic Food Conference website](#) in November. Are you an IFOAM Organics Europe member? [Recordings are already available on our member extranet!](#)

You can also read about the conference's 10 important takeaways on [our website](#).

For more information on the Organic Food Conference and IFOAM Organics Europe's work on this, please contact events@organicseurope.bio and browse www.organicfoodconference.bio.





Our Director speaks on biodistricts at ‘Added Value of the Organic Farmer, Bioregions’ conference

12-14 October 2021, online & in the Netherlands

On 12-14 October, the Conference ‘Added Value of the Organic Farmer, Bioregions’ discussed the broader benefits of organic farming and bioregions, online and in the Netherlands.

The conference included speeches by prominent Dutch and international speakers, workshops, and farm visits aimed to help farmers gain access to opportunities considering the new European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and to inspire them to envision and manage the future management of their farms.

IFOAM’s Organic Europe Director, Eduardo Cuoco, joined the discussion on 13 October for the presentation [Bioregions Boosting Biodiversity](#), together with Martien Lankester, Executive Director of Avalon Foundation and Michaël Wilde, Director of Bionext.

Eduardo [reflected on the broader benefits of organic farming](#) calling on the necessity to change the rural areas through innovations. In this context, he reminded, bioregions or organic districts play an important role by creating an “alliance of organic farmers, rural actors, business actors and local authorities, who decide to work together and put organic in the center of the development model”.

Bioregions have the capacity to “bring new jobs, protect our landscape, and build a stronger rural community” he added. That is why IFOAM Organics Europe fully supports the idea of organic districts; a social innovation that will be a strong reality in the European Union.

[Watch Eduardo’s intervention.](#)

The role of Demo Farms in Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems: a workshop for policy makers

The family of [FarmDemo](#) projects – [NEFERTITI](#), [PLAID](#) and [AGRIDEMO](#) – organised a workshop to raise awareness among local and regional authorities about the need to support demonstration activities on the ground. These activities foster peer-to-peer learning and innovation uptake in the agrifood sector. Yet there is still a gap in the policy support of demonstration activities across Europe.



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Representatives of eight European regions took part in the interactive discussions with the project partners, advisers and farmers. Alfred Grand, organic farmer from Austria and member of the Horizon Europe Mission Board on Soil Health, provided a testimony on the benefits for the farmers to be part of a demo farm network. From his perspective, demo farms serve as a bridge between farmers and researchers. They are an excellent tool to showcase new developments to peer farmers and at the same time, to bring their own innovation to the scientific community. Importantly, demo farms allow to engage non-farming communities such as schools, universities or consumers.

To make these demo farm networks really effective, a systemic approach is needed, emphasized Alfred Grand. Such an approach entails a focus beyond the production and farming issues: it should also include topics of relevance to the whole society. Among them are for example societal challenges such as climate change, employment, biodiversity loss, and revival of rural areas.

Interested to find a farm demo in your area? Check out the [network's website](#) and follow the [NEFERTITI](#) project for the updates on the upcoming events.

The [NEFERTITI project](#) is an EU-wide connected network of demonstration and pilot farms to enhance knowledge exchange and innovation uptake. It established 10 interactive thematic networks, connected 45 regional clusters of demo-farmers and related actors in 17 countries. IFOAM Organics Europe is a partner in the project. Make sure to follow @NEFERTITI EU on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) & [YouTube](#) to stay tuned about the latest updates.

4 MAKING EUROPE MORE ORGANIC – SUPPORT IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE

The contributions of sponsors allow IFOAM Organics Europe to focus on its most important work – representing organic stakeholders. This funding is a means to co-finance IFOAM Organics Europe events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.

IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE KEY SUPPORTER 2021





5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1 October-31 October 2021

[Good Food Good Farming European Action Days](#)

On - and offline

16 November 2021

[Webinar on the organic approach to plant health](#)

Online

17-18 November 2021

[6th European Conference on Copper](#)

Online

30 November-1 December 2021

[TP Organics' Organic Innovation Days](#)

Online

7 December 2021

[IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business](#)

Online

15-18 February 2022

[BIOFACH 2022](#)

Nuremberg, Germany

23 September 2022

[EU Organic Day](#)

European Union

2022

[10-year anniversary of IFOAM Asia](#)

[20-year anniversary of IFOAM Organics Europe](#)

[50-year anniversary of IFOAM Organics International](#)



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