



PRESS RELEASE

EU ORGANIC MOVEMENT WARNS AGAINST GREENWASHING

BRUSSELS, 13 FEBRUARY 2023 – IFOAM Organics Europe warns against the misuse of claims, labels, or communication initiatives about food products, that contribute to greenwashing and hinder the agroecological transition towards sustainable food systems. Claims and labels on packages range from regenerative, local, organic to ecological agriculture. However, not all that glitters is gold, or green in this case, and the increasing use of the term “regenerative agriculture” is a case in point.

While the reasoning and farming method behind a claim like ‘regenerative’ can be with the best intentions, it is just as much used for greenwashing purposes. [The European organic food and farming movement welcomes the adoption of some regenerative practices in conventional farming and looks forward to cooperating with serious regenerative actors.](#) However, IFOAM Organics Europe is concerned that use of the term is taking forms undermining the meaning, goals, and potential of regenerative agriculture, including organic farming.

As Jan Plagge, IFOAM Organics Europe’s President puts it: “Farming practices aiming to regenerate soils, biodiversity and landscapes are at the heart of organic agriculture. The organic movement embraces regenerative principles, all of which are included in [organic principles of ecology, health, fairness, and care](#), and seeks positive collaboration with serious regenerative farmers and actors. With an eye on the current climate and biodiversity crises, the planet can use all help there is, and some so-called regenerative practices can be a good first step to convert to organic, the only certified sustainable agriculture practice at EU level. Organic agriculture is and continues to be the leading sustainability initiative for transforming EU food and farming”.

As there is no single scientific nor legal definition of “regenerative agriculture”, the term has been increasingly mis-used in recent years to promote and brand approaches that deliver few environmental benefits, while allowing the use of a range of degenerative practices and synthetic pesticides with well-known downsides for biodiversity. Indeed, any farm, product or company can claim to be “regenerative”, making general statements regarding the benefits of “regenerative” farming impossible.

Eric Gall, IFOAM Organics Europe’s Deputy Director & Policy Manager continues: “It is essential to better inform consumers about the environmental consequences of different agriculture production systems, but some claims and labels, including the use of the term “regenerative” in some cases, rather contribute to greenwashing. This greenwashing misleads and confuses consumers, misdirects investments and policy, undermines serious regenerative actors, and hinders the needed genuine transformation of the food system towards sustainability and agroecology, including organic farming.

Ends.

Contact details

Eric Gall, Deputy Director, +32 491 07 25 37, eric.gall@organicseurope.bio

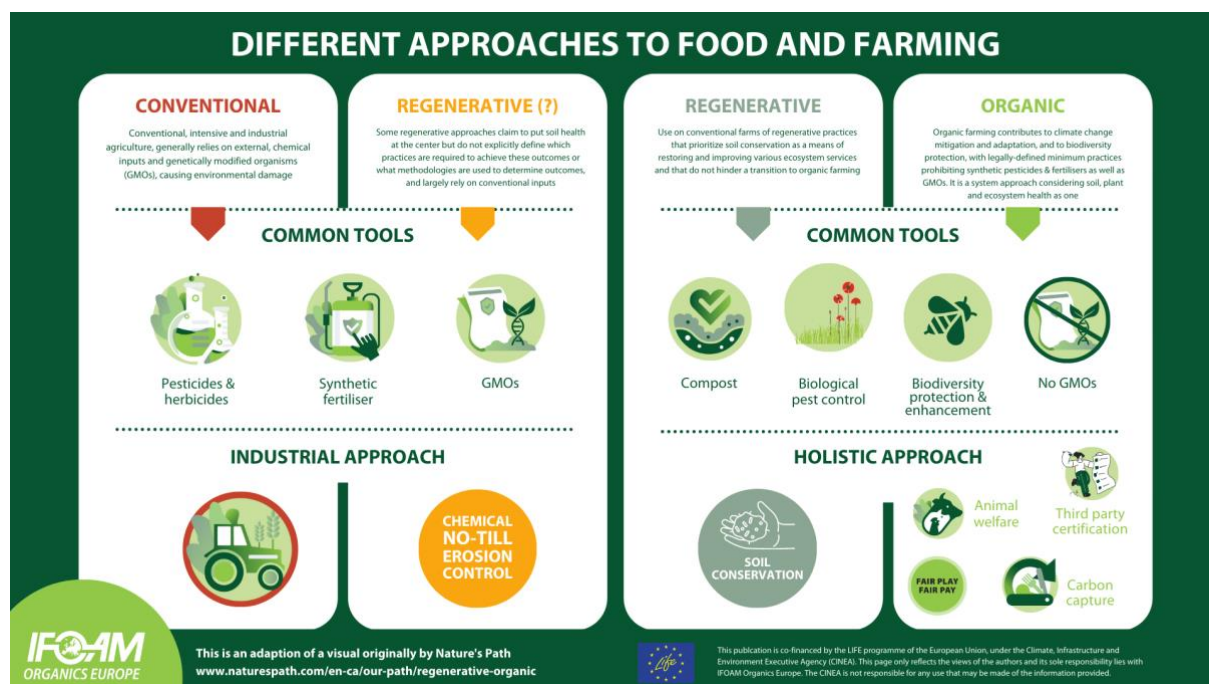
Eva Berckmans, Communications Manager, +32 2 416 52 32, eva.berckmans@organicseurope.bio

or visit www.organicseurope.bio

Background information

Read more organic & regenerative agriculture’s history and the dangers of greenwashing of the term “regenerative” in [IFOAM Organics Europe’s new position paper on regenerative agriculture.](#)

To get informed about the legal action we took to protect reliable environmental labelling, please read our press release [EU organic movement takes legal action to defend reliable environmental labelling of food products](#), which is also [available in French](#).



IFOAM Organics Europe is the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming. With almost 200 members in 34 European countries, our work spans the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.