



PRESS RELEASE

SPROUTING DISCONTENT: ORGANIC MOVEMENT REGRETS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S FAILURE TO PESTICIDES REDUCTION

BRUSSELS, 22 NOVEMBER 2023 – IFOAM Organics Europe regrets the European Parliament's inability to agree on a pesticides reduction regulation.

"The European Parliament's watering down and rejection of the pesticides reduction regulation is shameful. Politicians who claim that they defend farmers by refusing to reduce synthetic pesticides fool themselves and the public. Policymakers' lack of political will to take action to reduce pesticides makes it even more obvious that developing organic farming is the best way to protect people's health and nature from toxic pesticides", says Eric Gall, Deputy Director of IFOAM Organics Europe.

The widespread use of synthetic pesticides represents a significant burden on the health of European citizens, and farmers in particular. Synthetic pesticides are also the main cause of the disappearance of birds and insects in the European countryside and are largely responsible for polluting our waters with toxic substances.

Organic farming is the proof that it is possible to produce sufficient quality food without relying on synthetic pesticides. The organic approach to plant health care is mostly based on preventive and indirect agronomic measures, such as crop rotations, to manage pests and diseases, which can be complemented when needed for some crops with biocontrol solutions such as natural substances, most of which easily degrade in the environment.

Ends.

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Background information

Are you interested to know more? Have a look at:

Previous press releases:

- [IFOAM Organics Europe welcomes progress on pesticides reduction negotiations](#) (24 October 2023),
- [Baking soda more dangerous than synthetic pesticides?](#) – EU decision-makers on the brink of endorsing deceptive pesticide metrics (16 October 2023)



Background documents:

- Policy Brief: [Correcting the Farm to Fork indicator - A prerequisite for pesticide reduction in the EU](#) (16 October 2023)
- [An FAQ with general background information](#) (June 2022)
- [GLOBAL 2000's paper](#) showing the HRI-1 systematically overestimates the risk of natural substances used in organic farming compared to synthetic substances (June 2022)
- [IFOAM Organics Europe's note](#) (June 2022) explaining it is possible to build a better indicator based on data on pesticides sales, taking into example [the French indicator NODU](#)

Videos:

- [Explaining the flawed pesticides indicator](#)
- [Organic's approach to plant health care and pesticides regulation](#)

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND ITS BENEFITS FOR CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY

IFOAM ORGANICS EUROPE

Organic farming's systemic approach:

- Helps mitigating climate change
- Supports farmers' adaptation to climate change
- Creates resilient farming systems

All while it protects and improves biodiversity!

#OrganicsPartOfTheSolution

ORGANIC FARMING

Climate benefits

- Reduced emissions by non-use of synthetic fertilisers
 - ⊕ 20% of global agricultural GHG emissions could be reduced using no synthetic fertilisers
 - ⊕ 40% less NOx emissions/ha
 - ⊕ Less dependency from fossil fuel intensive external inputs
- Improved manure management
 - ⊕ 70% lower methane emissions
 - ⊕ 50% lower nitrous oxide emissions
- Reduced GHG emissions and increased carbon sequestration
 - ⊕ Additional 3.5 tonnes C/ha soil organic carbon stocks
 - ⊕ Additional 450 kg C/ha/yr carbon sequestration
 - ⊕ 15% less energy consumed per kg of product
 - ⊕ More resilient to changing weather conditions
 - ⊕ 1082 kg CO2 eq/ha/yr avg climate protection performance

Water benefits

- ⊕ 28-39% less nitrate leaching
- ⊕ Water bodies are protected from contaminants

Biodiversity benefits

- ⊕ 30% more species
- ⊕ 50% more individuals
- ⊕ 20-95% more plant species*
- ⊕ 150% higher abundance of plant species*
- ⊕ 23% more insect species
- ⊕ 30% more pollinators

*in field and field margins

Soil and plant health benefits

- ⊕ Improved soil quality and fertility
- ⊕ Better structure
- ⊕ Higher humus content
- ⊕ Better soil aggregate stability
- ⊕ 22% less soil erosion
- ⊕ 26% less soil loss
- ⊕ Increased water infiltration rate by 137%

Biodiversity and healthy soil = adaptation

- ⊕ Increased biodiversity supports natural pest control
- ⊕ Stabler yields during drought periods
- ⊕ Increased adaptability to future environmental conditions

Other benefits:

- Keeps animals with outside grazing areas and has clear rules on stocking densities
- Aims for closed nutrient cycles without using synthetic pesticides and fertilisers
- Includes beneficial management practices like crop rotations and organic fertiliser
- Offers a diversity of farmland through mindful land use and protection of natural habitats

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References for above figures can be found in IFOAM Organics Europe (2022), Organic agriculture and its benefits for climate and biodiversity. <https://bit.ly/3U231ve> / No. Lamkin and Bruce Pearce (2020), Organic farming and biodiversity. IFOAM Organics Europe. <https://bit.ly/3gq9rYd>.

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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.

