Principals of organic agriculture and the market place

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Presentation at the 1st IFOAM International Conference for Marketing of Organic and Regional Values
26-28 August 2008, Schwäbisch Hall, Germany
The context

• Rapid growth of the market
• Concerns lack of grounding in core values (‘conventionalisation’)
• Renewed interest in the principles and values of organic agriculture
• Market for certified organic agriculture based on standards/regulation
• Revision of Regulation (EEC) 2092/91
Advise the EU Commission on:

• how to integrate values and principles in standards and regulations

• compare national and private standards with EU Regulation and provide recommendations for harmonisation

• how can dependency on non organic feed and seed inputs be reduced
Work-package organic values

- Identify values from literature
  - Participation in IFOAM process of principles of organic agriculture (POA)

- Focus groups with 119 experienced and newly converted organic producers (AT, CH, IT, NL, UK)
  - Discussion of personal motives and collective ‘organic’ values
  - Comparison with value elements of POA and with European Regulations 2092/91 and 834/2007

- Report on procedure how to integrate values
# Values important to producers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>CH</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>NL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food quality</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental protection</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limiting resource use</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closed cycles</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Food quality

Bio is a assurance for products with low residues (CH, Cf)

- Clearly seen as linked to health
  - Absence of residues and food safety
  - Nutritional content
- Taste and enjoyment of organic food
- Direct relationship between consumer and producer/ producers responsibility
- Authenticity of organic food (typical products)
Environment protection

- Conservation of diversity in crops and biodiversity
- Mixed farms
- Genetic diversity
- Landscape diversity
- Working with and learning from nature

More important to new entrants and consumers
Expected to be more important in the future
Limiting resource use

- Resource self sufficiency
- Closing production cycles
  - Established producers
- Minimising inputs and resource use
  - Energy use, global warming

I have never fertilised; I never considered [bought in] fertilisers, only a good rotation, and well-prepared manure (IT, Cm)
Health

When all values are in balance, you can be sure the result will be a healthy product (NL, Em).

- Concerns for consumers health
  - Healthy products for schools and hospitals
- Personal and family health important motives
- “Systems health” or a “cycle of health”
  - Link between soil health, systems health and the health of the product or product quality

Established producers
### Producers’ values compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POA</th>
<th>EEC 2092/91</th>
<th>EC 834/07</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>3b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental protection</td>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td></td>
<td>3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limiting resources</td>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td></td>
<td>3a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>(3c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.3a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed cycles</td>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td></td>
<td>4a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Value conflicts

- Diversity
- Closed cycles
- Food quality
- Low residues
- Local production
- Environmental conservation
- Social Justice
- Economic sustainability
- Freedom and Independence
- Animal welfare
- Animal health

Organic

Outside

Price pressure
Localness /regional production

• Preferred by producers and consumers for many reasons:
  – Higher farm income
  – More affordable to consumers
  – Better quality/freshness
  – Traceability and trust
  – Direct communication
  – Reduced food miles, energy use
Market and production

![Bar chart showing the percentage of the European market and the percentage of the European area for different countries.](chart.png)
Problems with ‘localness’

- Major markets are not major producing regions.
- Growth in demand and production often not synchronised.
- Disadvantage for producers in marginal regions with few consumers.
- Producers and particularly consumers balance many values when making decisions about buying and selling.
- Does ‘localness’ deliver on all expectations?
Conclusions

• Many values important to stakeholders like are not part of the current EU Regulation and most standards
  – ecological systems and system thinking, fairness, transparency, social values

• However, practice certified to clear standards important for consumer trust in organic
Value harmonisation using POA

- Principles of organic agriculture (health, ecology, fairness and care) represent basic organic value of most stakeholders
- Value harmonisation in standards and regulations should build on POA
- New EU Regulation (EC/834/2007) makes reference to values of all four principles
How to implement all values?

• POA contain ‘difficult’ values and aspirations
• ‘Local’ is important to many organic stakeholders
  – would strengthen functional integration and self-regulation in organic food systems, but
  – simple rules (distance/transport) may conflict with other values
• Labelling of origin of products/raw materials
  – consumers can decide
• Need for democratic dialogue (procedure) about such ambiguous values and their interpretation
Acknowledgements

- Funding by the EU Commission of the project EEC 2092/91 Revision (Contract NO FP6-502397) is gratefully acknowledged. The views expressed are those of the author, not of the Commission.
- Thanks to participants and moderators of the focus groups and all my colleagues in the project.

Thank you for your attention!
Values in IFOAM principles

HEALTH
System health
Soil & plant health
Animal health
Integrity
Resilience
Food quality
Non-polluting

Animals
People (food)

ECOLOGY
Ecological systems
Closing cycles
Site specific
Reduced input use
Self regulation
Bio-diversity
Environment protection

Soils
Systems reliance & self regulation

Naturalness
Sustainability
System thinking

Equity & Respect
Justice
Food sovereignty
Animal welfare
Stewardship
Transparency
FAIRNESS

Precaution & prevention
Responsibility
Excluding GMO
Future generations
Tacid knowledge
CARE

Environment
People