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#### Theme

This issue focuses on the new *Knowledge Synthesis* from ICROFS on future possibilities and barriers for the continued development of organics in Denmark



# Welcome to ICROFS



By Niels Halberg, head of ICROFS

## New international centre in Denmark

*ICROFS welcomes you to a new international research centre with a new name, international board, statutes, programme committee, staff, web site, and this international newsletter, ICROFS news.*

The International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems has been established by the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, who decided to give the Danish research centre an international mandate and an international board with members from Africa, Asia, America and Europe. Accordingly, in June 2008, the Danish DARCOF changed its statutes and name to the "International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems", in short, ICROFS.

ICROFS is a "centre without walls," coordinating the funding of research groups in various universities and institutions. The groups perform research in organic food and farming systems through collaboration in many subject areas.

### Purpose of the centre

The main purpose of ICROFS is to initiate, coordinate and monitor high quality research of international standard in organic food and farming systems. Further, the aim of ICROFS is to stimulate international and trans-national research and secure impact of the research results through support and dissemination.

### Organisation

ICROFS is headed by a board of directors consisting of research leaders and stakeholders from Asia, Africa, America, Europe, and Denmark. The board will develop and pursue an overall strategy for enhancing international research in organic food systems.

Further, to ensure the relevance of the Centre's research and development

### Your input to *ICROFS news*

In front of you is the first issue of *ICROFS news* in pdf-format.

ICROFS listen to our readers's response with pleasure, as we are here for you! Therefore, any responses are more than welcome, be it about the new format, suggestions to improvements, changes, content and more.

Contact us at: [simon.rebsdorf@icrofs.org](mailto:simon.rebsdorf@icrofs.org)

activities in Denmark, a programme committee has been appointed with representatives from universities, farmers associations and NGOs affiliated with organic farming.

### Activities

The secretariat of ICROFS supports the funding bodies and the active researchers in relation to activities such as coordination of trans-national – and Danish – research programmes, knowledge syntheses, international collaboration through research projects, research education, communication and dissemination. These activities contribute to the research development and enhance the synergy created by the collaboration between different research institutions.

### Organic Eprints

Since 2002, the Centre has developed

and open-access archive for research papers in organic agriculture, Organic Eprints. And in 2003, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, FiBL, joined the project as an international partner. Organic Eprints has more than 4,000 visits a day ([www.orgprints.org](http://www.orgprints.org)).

### European cooperation

The centre is also coordinating European trans-national research concerned with organic food and farming systems under the headline of Core Organic. Moreover, ICROFS is actively involved in a European research project on improving the organic certification system.

ICROFS participates in the EU research Framework Programmes and in ISOFAR (International Society of Organic Agriculture Research). In the EU Framework Programmes, FP5 and FP6, ICROFS has coordinated several projects. Moreover, ICROFS is actively engaged in the development of a European research vision for an Organic Food and Farming Research Agenda 2025: "Food, Fairness and Ecology".

### Research facilities and infrastructure

Over time several organic research facilities have been set up to provide an opportunity for different projects to use the same research fields, herds, etc.

## Vision of the Danish Minister

Minister of Agriculture, Eva Kjer Hansen's official statement about the new international centre:

"With the establishment of ICROFS as an international research centre without walls, it is my ambition that Denmark should be the leading country for increasing international cooperation on organic research.

Through shared knowledge and cooperation across countries and continents, all of us will get the best out of the research resources. Further, organics has some interesting potentials in relation to sustainable production of foods and adaption to climate changes.



To me, it is thus obvious with a strong international research cooperation as a basis for development of the contributions of organics to solving present global challenges."

*Eva Kjer Hansen, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries*

This allows close cooperation between different research environments, with a high degree of interdisciplinary collaboration, synergy, and complementary research.

The centre's website is [www.icrofs.org](http://www.icrofs.org), and in months to come, the centre's new name will find its way to the numerous web pages and other relevant web resources.

#### New staff

According to the international mandate of ICROFS, two new staff members have been appointed to assist and coordinate the preparation and execution of the centre's strategy, in order to strengthen the scope and quality of research in organic food systems on an international level:

#### CORE Organic Network coordinator

Agronomist Fabienne Grousset joined ICROFS in September 2008. Her previous post was with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Italy.

#### International coordinator

In October, agronomist Lise Andreasen was appointed for this position. Andreasen is HD, MA in applied environmental economics, and her previous post was in the Climate Secretariat at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, working with strategy and planning.



*Fabienne Grousset is newly appointed CORE Organic Network coordinator at ICROFS.*



*Lise Andreasen is newly appointed international coordinator at ICROFS.*

#### The International Board

ICROFS is headed by an international board of directors consisting of research leaders and stakeholders from Asia, Africa, America, Europe, and Denmark.

This board develops and pursues the overall strategy for enhancing international research in organic food systems.

The Board members represent - among others - smallholders in Africa through IFAD, international organic organisations such as IFOAM and FAO, the international research network Diversitas, European organisations and research institutions such as INRA and FiBL.

The board members and their affiliations are listed below.

#### The programme committee

The Programme Committee refers to the Board and is composed with regard to the contents of current national research programmes within the framework of the Centre.

The Committee has one observer in the Board and will make recommendations on new national research projects and programmes, as well as on continued funding or adjustment of existing research programmes to the Board.

The members of the Programme Committee are listed below.

### Members of the new International Board

#### International members

- » Urs Niggli, IFOAM/ FiBL, Switzerland
- » Dr. Bernard Hubert, INRA/ CIRAD, France
- » Prof. Louise E. Jackson, University of California, Davis
- » Dr. Mwatima Juma, IFAD, Tanzania
- » Prof. Wenliang Wu, China Agricultural University, China

#### Danish members

- » Thomas Harttung, Director Aarstiderne (chairman)
- » Aage Dissing, OrganicDenmark
- » Director Annette Toft, the Danish Agricultural Council
- » Vice-dean Henriette Giese, University of Aarhus
- » Vice-dean Katherine Richardson, University of Copenhagen
- » Department director Henrik C. Wegener, Technical University of Denmark

### Members of the new Programme Committee

- » Director Thomas Harttung, Aarstiderne (chairman)
  - » Klaus Loehr-Petersen, The Danish Biodynamic Association
  - » Gert Holst Hansen, Danish Agriculture
  - » Karen Søgaard, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, University of Aarhus
  - » Pia Frederiksen, National Environmental Research Institute
  - » Dorte Lau Baggesen, the National Food Institute
  - » Thomas Roland, the Danish Consumer Council
  - » Alex Dubgaard, Institute of Food and Resource Economics
  - » Erik Steen Jensen, Risø, Technical Univ. of Denmark
  - » Bruno Sander Nielsen, the Danish Agricultural Council
  - » Søren Nilausen, the Danish Agricultural Advisory Centre
  - » Svend Christensen LIFE, Univ. of Copenhagen
  - » Poul Pedersen, Organic Denmark
  - » Michael Tersbøl, Organic Denmark
  - » Lisbeth Munksgaard, Centre for Advanced Food Studies (LMC)
  - » The Danish Food Industry Agency (observer)
- Secretaries:**
- » Niels Halberg and Simon Olling Rebsdorf, ICROFS



**Theme**

This issue focuses on the new *Knowledge Synthesis* from ICROFS on future possibilities and barriers for the continued development of organics in Denmark



# Organics as the future norm for sustainability

By Thomas Harttung, Chairman of the Board, ICROFS

In May 2007, the Danish Ministry of Food asked ICROFS to carry out a “knowledge synthesis”, a fact finding work that should clarify the opportunities and barriers for development and a market based growth in the Danish production, processing and trade of organic products.

The background for the execution of the knowledge synthesis is a growing demand for organic food – both in Denmark and in many other countries. The increasing demand and the rising international trade with organic products provide both new opportunities and a more competitive market.

## Supply and demand

One of the preconditions for maintaining the Danish organic production is that the quality and supply of organic food meets consumer wishes and expectations. Another precondition is that consumers have confidence in the way the food is produced – that the production lives up to the organic principles.

From this starting point, ICROFS has prepared a comprehensive survey of the Danish organic sector and its future prospects, and an assessment of what barriers are the most important to overcome in order to secure the future of organics.

## Scenario meetings

In the course of this knowledge synthesis, two public meetings have been held with a wide range of participants from the whole sector, including farmers, vegetable and fruit growers, processors, financiers, trade organisations and research-



ers. There has therefore been ample opportunity to contribute viewpoints to the work, and we have benefited tremendously from the great interest and willingness to participate in the debates.

## Making the synthesis

Although ICROFS has had the sole responsibility for the content of the final synthesis, the work has been knowledge based in the sense that all the information in this synthesis is based on either scientific studies or comprehensive interviews with representatives from the sector. This is all documented in a range of background chapters, which have been available for comments. On the right, you can get an overview of the various chapters (in Danish).

## A changing organic sector

The knowledge synthesis has investigated in detail the organic landscape of Denmark, and there are many indications that the sector is changing. This provides many opportunities

and we sense great enthusiasm among the actors in the sector. The present market opportunities are very good and many producers and processors face serious challenges in meeting the demand.

## Global food perspectives

But the situation also obliges us to act in order to secure the long term sustainability of organics. In a world where strategic food policy in merely a year has gone for a secondary position to the top of the list in the global political debate, organics is in a unique position to take the next leap forward. Energy efficiency, nature protection and poverty reduction is already a part of the organic principles. Now the task is to incorporate them into everyday organic practice.

## “The Danish model”

Denmark is coming out more and more clearly as an organic pioneer. The “Danish model of organic development” is at the same time modern, innovative and ecumenical – whereas organics in some other countries seems to be a retrospective, low-tech and fundamentalist niche. In this way, Denmark creates a foundation for organic food systems to move from an idealistic mirage to a new global norm for sustainability.

## List of Contents - the 19 chapters [written in Danish, clickable in pdf]

1. The development of the organic market
2. Why do consumers buy organics?
3. The potential for conversion to organic farming in Denmark
4. Possibilities and barriers in organic livestock production
5. Possibilities and barriers in organic plant production
6. Economy and organic farm production
7. Drivers and barriers for conversion to organic farming seen from a sociological perspective
8. The organic processing sector in Denmark
9. International trade
10. Actor analysis - the interplay with retail
11. Catering and organics
12. Present and future organic rules
13. Food security and health in relation to organic foods
14. Energy and manure supply from biogas
15. Nature in the agricultural landscape - society's expectations to organic farming
16. Energy use and green house gas emission in organic agriculture
17. Archetypical organic actor strategies
18. Scenarios for developing in the market for organic foods
19. Organic futures: Actor-workshop and Scenario game

The above chapter titles link to the respective articles at [Ecowiki.org](http://Ecowiki.org) (all written in Danish).

## Summary in English

A summary of the knowledge synthesis in English is located here: [www.icrofs.org/Pages/Publications/synthesis\\_08.pdf](http://www.icrofs.org/Pages/Publications/synthesis_08.pdf) (50 pages, 1 MB)

# Development, growth and integrity in the Danish organic sector - a summary

By Simon Olling Rebsdorf, information officer, ICROFS

**The new research-based knowledge synthesis recommends five task areas to secure the future of organics in Denmark. This is a summary of the results of the comprehensive fact finding work carried out by ICROFS.**

The knowledge synthesis shows that organics has a strong foothold in Denmark: the consumers demand organic products, the retail business is very open to organic products, organic production gives good economic results for the producers, and there is room for much more organic agriculture in Denmark.

A large obstacle in the path forward is the conversion to organic production, as the demand for organic products is larger than the production in Denmark. The primary producers hesitate in their reaction to the market signals and the conversion is too small. This means that there is an unused potential in both the home and export markets.

But there are also other obstacles. The knowledge synthesis thus recommends five essential, long term strategic efforts that are to secure the future for the organic sector in Denmark. They are based on a range of grounds or preconditions, which the work has exposed.

## Five recommendations

Based on the present situation of the organic sector, the knowledge synthesis recommends five important focus areas where an effort should be made, in order to secure the organic market of the future.

### 1. More new products on the shelves

The market is ready for more organic products. Value-based demand from the trendsetting consumer evokes a response in retailing, and the interest within retailing stimulates processing companies and producers. The present positive dynamics in the market must be continued and strengthened, for one thing, by support of product development.

### 2. Organic intensification

There is a pressing need of a targeted, long term effort for increased conversion to organic production. The effort should focus on communicating an attractive and visionary image of organics as a future part of agriculture, and creating better conditions for conversion through long term contracts. In addition, new types of organic farms should be developed, which combine organic intensification with multi-functionality and new forms of cooperation between specialised operations.

### 3. Maintain and strengthen consumer trust

The knowledge synthesis shows that consumer trust is crucial to the development of the organic market and production system. Trust must be maintained through a continued improvement of methods of production and processing in line with

the organic principles. And an open and participatory communication with consumers must be ensured.

### 4. Synergy between organics and society

Methods of organic production can contribute to the promotion of nature and biodiversity and the reduction of aquatic pollution and emission of greenhouse gases. A larger distribution of organic farming can have a particular effect on biodiversity in selected areas, where there is a special need of protection.

There are also opportunities for combining protection of environment and nature with production of bio energy and development of new special products. More organic farmers could open their farms to visitors in order to combine nature experiences and interactions with farming.

### 5. Honour the large needs of new knowledge

There is a large need for continued research and expansion of knowledge in order to advance the development of organic food production and food systems.

Important areas of development are synergies between different organic operations, organic intensification, deliberate use of diversity in and around the fields and improvement breeding, as well as processing and micro processing and the sectors contributions to nature, environment and rural development.

This fifth effort is described in detail on [page 7](#).

## Theme

This issue focuses on the new *Knowledge Synthesis* from ICROFS on future possibilities and barriers for the continued development of organics in Denmark

## Articles



## A good basis for organics

The market-based organic sector in Denmark rests on the following four fundamental conditions:

### 1. Existing value-based market

The market opportunities for organic products are exceptionally good, and there is a large growth in retail trade. The export has only gone up marginally, while there has been a large increase in import. The latest mega-trends in the food area have moved consumption to a focus on value-based consumption, connected with symbolic aspects and global responsibility by a fairly large consumer segment, trusting fundamentally in organic actors.

### 2. Retailing interest stimulates innovation/product development

Many retail businesses now use organics as part of their strategic branding, as organic consumers belong to the trendsetters in food. There has been a positive market innovation, increasing the availability and visibility of organic goods. The new interest and increased organic sales have stimulated the interest in product development in the processing industry, creating room for a range of smaller organic companies - but they need to be backed with knowledge.

### 3. Organic production gives good economic results

In general, organic production gives a higher operational income than conventional production. Even so, there has been a very limited conversion to organic production in later years. In 2007 there has been a slight increase in the organic production area and a net gain of some forty farms, but the supply situation still needs to be substantially improved.

### 4. Room for more organic agriculture in Denmark

Geographically speaking, there are very good prospects for a larger organic production. Organic agriculture could contribute substantially to the conservation of natural values and the promotion of biodiversity. There is some overlap between the areas with a large potential for organic production and the areas with particular societal obligations and challenges as concerns nature protection and the development of landscapes and rural areas.





# Organic futures – a scenario game

By Hugo F. Alrøe, senior scientist, ICROFS

## Theme

This issue focuses on the new *Knowledge Synthesis* from ICROFS on future possibilities and barriers for the continued development of organics in Denmark



**In search of opportunities and barriers for the continued development of organics in Denmark, ICROFS arranged scenario games involving representatives from the organic sector. By way of four future scenarios, possible futures were pinpointed as a basis for the knowledge synthesis.**

What are the opportunities and barriers for the continued development, growth and integrity of the Danish organic sector? This is the key question in the knowledge synthesis that the International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems (ICROFS) has carried out for The Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries during 2007 and 2008.

### Four future scenarios

In order to answer such a question, we have to pinpoint the future, or rather a few plausible futures, because the opportunities and the barriers will depend on what the future course is, and because the development of organic agriculture is a very complex and heterogeneous dynamic process. We developed four scenarios for the organic sector in Denmark in 2020, which differed with respect to four critical and uncertain driving forces: changes in consumer preferences, the supply of organic produce, international competition and the capability for innovation in the sector. All the scenarios faced some equally critical, but quite certain driving forces: increased globalisation, global climate changes and rising energy prices.

The four scenarios are:



Representatives of organic processors. Photo: ICROFS

#### The projection:

Logically organic – the organic market is doubled in line with a projection of the present development

#### The global:

A world of a difference – the organic market is quadrupled based on a strong competition from abroad and high imports, while maintaining a very high consumer confidence

#### The regional:

An extreme spatial challenge – the organic market is quadrupled based largely on Danish produce with a high innovation pace and a very high consumer confidence

#### The collapse:

Once was organics – the organic market has dropped to one half of the present market due to a massive loss of consumer confidence.

#### Various actor strategies

In order to get a nuanced and realistic idea of what the scenarios mean in terms

of future opportunities and barriers, it is essential to investigate the strategies that organic actors follow. There are many different actors in the organic sector, who have different values and goals and different views on what organics is about, and who all influence the course of the sector to a larger or smaller degree. As a first step, three archetypical strategies of organic actors were formulated, the mainstream strategy, the alternative conservative and the alternative innovative, that were used as a tool to acknowledge and deal with the heterogeneity among organic actors.

### Workshop with a wide range of actors

After the scenarios were formulated, a range of key actors from all parts of the sector were invited to a workshop on the futures of organics in April 2008. Seventy actors attended, including organic and conventional farmers; key persons from dairies, slaughterhouses, milking companies and other processors; mainstream and specialist wholesalers, retailers and financiers; people from catering, public kitchens and private can-

### Summary of results

An English summary of results and recommendations from the knowledge synthesis can be found at <http://ecowiki.org/OekologiskUdvikling/EnglishInformation>.

teens; and representatives from consumer and trade organizations, together with journalists, representatives from the ministry, scenario consultants and the organizers from ICROFS.

The attendance confirmed the heterogeneity of the sector, and to further accentuate this point, the workshop started with an evening event, where three prominent international actors, each representing one of the three archetypical actor strategies, gave their view

*In this market, it is clear that we have to make long term contracts with the producers to ensure the volume*

Henrik Rendbøll, Super-Gros, year 2020 in the Regional Scenario Game

on the future of organics: Nicholas Saphir, executive chairman for OMSCo, The Organic Milk Suppliers Cooperative, UK; Benoît van Ossel, managing director for the fruit company Les Coteaux Nantais, France; and Guy Watson, founder of Riverford Organic Vegetables, Devon, UK.

The evening dinner stroke the first note of next



Organic consumer representatives. Photo: ICROFS

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*I live right next door to the national park, and in 2020 I have converted my farm to organics. I have bought all the land that I could get my hands on within the national park, since the land prices dropped to the floor. I have farm tourists, 250 heads of cattle and 500 ha out in the marshland. I make "Tidal milk" that is rich in micro minerals, in a concept production for Arla. I have eight windmills and all my technology is based on electricity*

Mikael Nørby Lassen, conventional dairy farmer, year 2020 in the Regional Scenario Game

Photos: ICROFS



*The participants of the scenario game tasted two various sets of dishes, one with Danish organic food (blue plate, all ingredients procured strictly within 100 kms of the conference) and one with organic food from foreign countries (white plate).*

day's scenario game, as half of the quests got a global organic menu and the other half a local menu from within a 100 km radius. Next day at lunch, the menus were switched. After the dinner, the Danish minister of food, Eva Kjer Hansen, held an insightful speech where she expressed great hopes for the results of the work and outlined a vision for a more international future research in organic food systems.

### The scenario game

The next day, the actors participated in a scenario game developed in cooperation with the EU Commission's Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) in Seville, which was carried out here for the first time. It turned out to be a rich and inspiring day. The global and the regional quadrupling scenarios were played out, and the inputs were captured by eight notetakers.

The participants were divide into groups accor-

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*Our joint operation is centred round a village. One has maintained his conventional pig production, but all the land has been converted. We have involved the citizens in the village in managing nature, establishing paths etc. And we have attracted several conventional farmers to this kind of operation*

Lars Skytte, Dømmestrup, vegetable grower, year 2020 in the Regional Scenario Game

Photo: ICROFS



*Discussions during the scenario games.*

ding to their role in the sector (farmers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, investors, consumers and trade organisations). There were first introduced to the idea of scenarios, the scenario game and their part in the game. Their role was to "act themselves" in the year 2020, and try to figure out and explain how they as farmer, buyer, consumer, etc. would react in the organic market that was described in the scenario.

Each game started with a presentation of the scenarios that placed the participants in year 2020. Then they were asked to discuss some basic questions within each group: What were the challenges of getting here? What were the strengths in 2020? And what were the weaknesses? After this, the groups presented their viewpoints in plenum and reacted to the statements of the other groups in a structured debate and exploration of opportunities.

After the initial discussion, the participants were faced with some key dilemmas: business versus

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*We want to congratulate the sector, because this is really a success which we want to be a part of. It seems like a good business and there is a coherent business plan behind production and sales*

Poul Erik Jørgensen, Nykredit, financier, year 2020 in the Regional Scenario Game

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*Organics is not a train that runs and which you can just jump on – we are the actors, it is us who are going to move this train. We must create a common consumer policy platform for how we want organics in Denmark to develop*

Brian Skov Sundstrup, FDB, consumer representative, in the Global Scenario Game

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*Our largest challenge is to develop our growth potential by making all the inhabitants of the country, indeed all the inhabitants of the world, ambassadors for the movement that organics has been, and which it must continue to be.*

*Therefore we made our biggest challenge our biggest strength, and as early as 2008 we hired our first communicators. We established a large communication business where people could come and see how our farm worked and how we developed, and made the development much more important than how big we had become.*

*It was a huge success, and in no time it became clear that quite a lot of people had the energy and the passion to be a part of the project.*

*They were willing to pay to get close to a farm and become part of it and be allowed to be a part of the development of Danish agriculture. What we thought would cost us money turned out to be part of a movement, because we opened our doors and gave the consumers an opportunity to influence our evolution*

Svend Brodersen, Gram og Nybøl, year 2020 in the Global Scenario Game

commitment and globalization versus trust in the global scenario, and organic as distinct versus differentiated organics and larger production versus increased land prices and the struggle for land in the regional scenario. Finally, after having gone through the dilemmas, the participants were allowed to return to 2008 for a while, to take an outside perspective on the scenario and give critical comments.

The scenario game provided valuable inputs to the knowledge synthesis, which would have been very difficult to obtain in any other way. Equally important, the event communicated key ideas from the knowledge synthesis to a wide range of representatives from the organic sector, and the participants went home with fresh food for thought on the organic futures.





**Theme**  
This issue focuses on the new *Knowledge Synthesis* from ICROFS on future possibilities and barriers for the continued development of organics in Denmark

# Strengthen research in strategically important areas

By Niels Halberg, head of ICROFS

**An important result of ICROFS' *Knowledge Synthesis* is the recommendation of strengthened research and knowledge building. The purpose is to advance the development of organic food production and food systems.**

The knowledge synthesis recommends strengthened research and knowledge building that can advance the development of organic food and farming and the sector's contributions to the societal development through a market based growth of organics.

There is a need for knowledge building within *all parts* of the organic food systems and with contributions from many different research disciplines. The research often has to be cross-disciplinary in order to deal with the connections between the various disciplines.

## Important research needs

Many aspects of research and development targeted toward organic food systems will be applicable in sustainable biological production in a broader sense. Below are listed a range of important research needs that have been identified in the knowledge synthesis, but the list is not to be taken as a complete and adequate list of future research efforts.

## Primary production

In primary production, there is a need for additional R&D in generating increased productivity while other sustainability considerations are continuously improved, including:

- Organic intensification, including improved maintenance

## Summary in English

A summary of the knowledge synthesis in English is located here:

[www.icrofs.org/Pages/Publications/synthesis\\_08.pdf](http://www.icrofs.org/Pages/Publications/synthesis_08.pdf)  
(50 pages, 1 MB)

- nance and use of ecological support functions
- Organically adapted breeds and varieties and organic breeding systems
- Increased use of ICT and robot technologies in crop production to reduce soil compaction and labour use
- Improved nutrient flows, including the combination with production of bioenergy
- New forms of operations and businesses that integrate specialised productions, considered in a crossdisciplinary perspective
- Knowledge of current driving forces, opportunities and barriers of conversion to organic production.

## Food processing R&D

Specific R&D in food processing targeted to industry needs, including:

- Process innovation based on organic values and principles, including e.g. methods to reduce the need of additives
- Techniques and methods of micro-processing that can assist the growing group of small processing companies
- Product quality and food safety seen in connection

with primary production, processing and distribution

- Knowledge of different forms of ownership in the organic niche strategy cluster, to ensure an optimum of integrity as well as economy

## Consumer communication

On the market and consumer side there is a need to investigate new and participatory forms of consumer communication, to ensure confidence and development of the sector, including:

- Development of methods to involve consumers and other interested parties in the development of new management systems and productions seen in connection with the organic values, principles and goals
- Development of methods to document climate actions and contributions to nature quality
- The connection between labelling and other forms of communication and maintaining consumer confidence to the organic food chains
- Development of concepts for catering and large kitchens, enabling the sector to contribute to societal demands on food services
- Knowledge on how the three archetypical actor strategies, 'mainstream', 'alternative conservative' and 'alternative innovative' can contribute to the development and branding of organics in a positive dynamics

## Societal benefits

There is a distinct potential in developing the societal

benefits of organic agriculture, including:

- Improved organic systems adapted to specific environmental requirements in specified geographical areas
- Methods for promoting integrated protection of nature and environment and production of bioenergy
- Knowledge of the potential for carbon sequestration in organic agriculture in connection with the build-up of e.g. soil fertility
- The effect of the organic sector on rural development and anchorage in local communities, including how local processing can contribute to employment and economic activity
- Methods for an overall assessment of benefits and costs of the externalities of organic agriculture as an element in a more wholeness oriented and simple regulation of agriculture's impacts on nature, environment, etc.

## International perspective

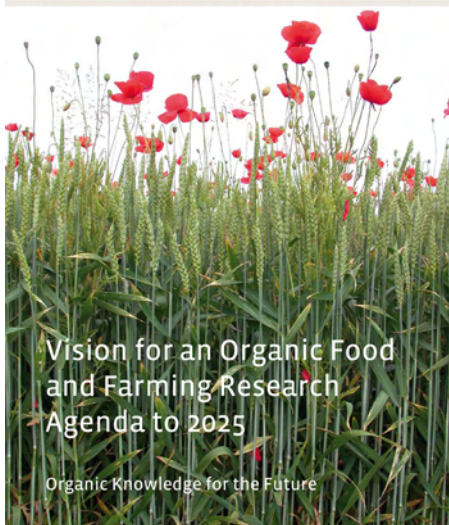
Furthermore, there is a need to focus on the development of the Danish organic sector in an international perspective:

- Knowledge export of organic know-how, its methods and contents and its synergy effects
- Methods for how to increase communication and put common values into practice in global food chains and how to communicate this to the consumer



## Organisation

Technology Platform 'Organics'



**Agenda 2025: Technology Platform**  
IFOAM's [EU group](#) and [ISO FAR](#) have jointly commenced a process towards a [vision for 2025](#) focusing on innovative research into organic food and farming.

Head of ICROFS, Niels Halberg, is co-author to the vision, which is a [44-pages document](#), and which is the outcome of over one year of discussions.

The vision is intended to form the basis of a technology platform in the field, named 'Organics.' The technology platform highlights sustainable food systems and public goods.

Technology platforms have turned out to be instrumental in joining together a series of stakeholders to identify how research should be prioritised within a sector.

Technology platforms are led by the industry but also involves the financial sector, public authorities, the scientific community and the public.

The potential of technology platforms is broadly recognised within the European Union and so far the number of such platforms is 34. But none of them have dealt with agriculture or organics until now, hence this initiative.

Read more about the vision at [Organic ePrints](#) or read [the full document](#) (pdf).

## Publications



### Book on the future of organics

In November 2008, the complete knowledge synthesis on the future of organics will be published by ICROFS. It is described in detail in this issue of *ICROFS news*, in which it is treated thematically.

The knowledge synthesis has come into fruition through a collaboration between ICROFS and a series of researchers and stakeholders in Denmark.

There is a growing demand for organic foods in Denmark, which creates an interest to produce and export organic products – both in Denmark and in other countries. The increased demand and international trade with organic products gives way to new possibilities and a more competitive market.

A summary in English of the knowledge synthesis is accessible at [www.icrofs.org/Pages/Publications/synthesis\\_08.pdf](http://www.icrofs.org/Pages/Publications/synthesis_08.pdf) (pdf, 1 MB).



## Congresses



### Enrolment for the 1<sup>st</sup> Nordic Organic Congress 2009

The first Nordic Organic Congress is held in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 18-20 May, 2009.

You can access the first newsletter, and participants can enrol on the [conference website](#).

The aim of the conference is to create a Nordic forum, focusing on organic foods and sustainable production. ICROFS has been involved in the planning of the content of the congress.



### Denmark is "Organic Country of the Year 2009"

On February 19-22, 2009, the international organic market is meeting for the twentieth time at [BioFach](#), the global organic trade fair.

This year, Denmark is appointed "Country of the Year 2009." Therefore the Danish Ministry of Food and Agriculture and ICROFS will represent Denmark jointly at a common fair stand.

In addition, Danish researchers will participate in a series of seminars, where a number of topics with relevance to organic commerce and consumers will be discussed on a research basis.

Among the topics are the food crisis and food security, organics and climate, public reconversion, health and the Danish organic success in retail trade.

The fair [Biofach](#) is held in Nuremberg, Germany, and gathers around 2,700 exhibitors and 46,000 visitors from more than 120 countries each year.