Some results from the Farmer Consumer Partnership project

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Farmer Consumer Partnership project (CORE-FCP)

- Look for innovative generic communication arguments that can strengthen the link between producers and consumers in the European organic sector
- 5 countries AT, CH, DE, IT, UK

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Project Objectives

• Identify Organic Plus values (more than EU organic regulations)
• What was used by more then 100 SME companies on websites and leaflets
• Testing of the most promising communication arguments with consumers (Different methods)
• Recommendations
## Generic arguments tested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protection of Biodiversity</th>
<th>Protection of traditional plant varieties and traditional animal breeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animal Welfare</strong></td>
<td>When the animals are transported to the slaughterhouse, they are accompanied and looked after by a person they know in order to reduce unnecessary stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Production</strong></td>
<td>Using regional supply chains to reduce food miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair prices</strong></td>
<td>Of the total price for every litre of milk, five cents are additionally paid to local Farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Care farms</strong></td>
<td>Integration and participation of disabled people in the work place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Support for family farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural features</strong></td>
<td>Revival of traditional artisan processing methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support of the local economy

The farmers get fair prices that allows them to secure their livelihood and future

Providing support and work for disadvantaged young people and former convicts

Good working conditions for farm workers

Preservation of the local cultural landscape
## Information-Display-Matrix (1200 consumers, May/June 2008)

### Organic milk

|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|

#### Fair prices

- Fair prices for farmers

#### Price

- Product price

#### Regional production

#### Protection of biodiversity

#### Social aspects of production

#### Culture

- Preservation of cultural features

#### Animal welfare

#### Care Farming

- Support of disadvantaged people

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**Fair prices for farmers, C:**

The farmers get a fair price that allows them to secure their livelihood and future.

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*By clicking on the empty fields you can see the information for the various products. Once decided for a product please click on the header of the selected product.*
Most important attributes by First accessions (%)

- Animal welfare
- Regional production
- Fair prices for farmers
- Product price
- Care farming
- Social criteria
- Biodiversity
- Cultural features

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Focus groups

• 3 per country in April 2009 (1 with regular)
• Animal welfare < regional, followed < fair price
• Most participants disliked
  ◆ Emotional touch (hearts) and cartoon pictures
  ◆ Lack of relevant info

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Willingness to pay

- 80 consumers per country
- Nov 2009
- 6 choice sets
  - with and without OrganicPlus arguments
Results

- Many organic companies use arguments not covered by standards in communication
- Consumers are most interested in
  - ‘regional/ local production’
  - ‘animal welfare’
  - ‘fair prices to farmers’
Local and regional production

- Local/regional supply and markets
  - Not really covered in any organic standards

- Environmental, economic and cultural aspects

PGI/PDO
- New labelling requirements
  - EU agriculture or
  - Country code

Concern

Organic standards
What we learned about “local”

- Specific labelling of the place of production
  - e.g. from Berkshire (or farm address) rather than more abstract terms “regional product”
  - Allows consumer to judge themselves how local it is
  - Concepts of ‘local/regional’ vary between consumers and product categories

- Potential confusion with other labels
Impact on animals

Animal health and welfare is enhanced

- Emphasis on principles in the EU regulation
- Some coverage in rules

- Potential conflicts with other goals
- Defining animal welfare?
  - Wellbeing in the sense of health and welfare
  - Animals rights

- Welfare certification protocols
  - e.g. Freedom food
  - Welfare quality project

Concern  Organic standards
For example

**Products:** Meat

**Activities:** Animals are slaughtered on the farm or at the small local abattoir nearby to reduce the transport distance. Slaughter is as quick and painless as possible.

**Claims:** ‘Well Hung Meat company’; Tasty, organic and produced to the highest standards of animal welfare.
What we learned about animal welfare arguments

• Consumers like animal welfare arguments and associate organic with high animal welfare

• Several issues already in standards
  ◆ Free range
  ◆ Access to pasture

• Difficult to justify additional premiums

• Difficult to identify clear organicPlus arguments that can be verified
Economic impact & fairness

- Not addressed directly in any organic standard

- Fair and equitable financial returns for all operators

- Products available and affordable to consumer

- Fairtrade standards
- Organic ethical trade pilot schemes
For example

Products: Dairy

Activities: A fair price for local farmers, ensuring their existence and future

Claims: ’Fair prices for our dairy farmers: 5 cents directly; actively for the domestic organic farmers as fair prices ensure the future.
Fair price arguments

- Willingness to pay only in Germany and Switzerland
  - Where argument has already been used for several years
- Consumers in UK focus groups clearly disliked thinking about farmer welfare
- Appears product specific
  - Might work for dairy but not for eggs
  - Claims need to be verifiable
Final thoughts

- EU regulation does not cover several areas that are of concern to producers and consumers alike
- Differences between what farmers like to say and what consumers care about
- Efforts for “additional claim” should be well targeted
  - Areas of clear difference
  - That interest the consumer
  - Where claims can be verified
- Focus effort on communicating core concept of organic
Acknowledgements and further information

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The UK member of this network is DEFRA

Further information at [http://orgprints.org/17852/](http://orgprints.org/17852/)