Knowledge transfer in organic farming in Estonia

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Esterházy Palace, Eisenstadt, Austria
• In 2017: 199,947 ha organic land, 1888 producers and 165 processors
• 20% of the total agricultural area in Estonia is organic
• In addition: 260,662 ha of wild collection area
Education and advisory

• Currently it is not possible to obtain a degree or to specialize in organic farming
• Specialised organic farming advisory system does not exist in Estonia
• The demand for new knowledge is very high and all farmers applying for organic farming support are obliged to participate in training events: four days in 5 years. Available topics: production, processing and marketing
Knowledge transfer programme

• The Ministry of Rural Affairs prepared a long-term programme of knowledge transfer in organic farming for the period 2016–2019
• Budget: 720 000 EUR, financed from the RDP 2014-2020

Consortium:
• Estonian University of Life Sciences
• Estonian Crop Research Institute
• Estonian Organic Farming Foundation
• Centre for Ecological Engineering
• Research Centre of Organic Farming of EULS
Information days

- Plant production
- Animal husbandry
- Processing
- Marketing
- Production and processing
- Organic catering
- Organic sector organisations
Organic conference

Study groups

Cereal, fruit, berries, vegetables, sheep, beef cattle, etc.
Demonstration trials

Cropping systems, plant protection, cereal varieties, berry and fruit varieties and their agrotechnologies
Presentation events in organic enterprises

- Topics: poultry, robotic milking system, milk processing, strawberry production, composting, etc.

Study trips

In Estonia and abroad: UK, Germany, Denmark
Materials

• Quarterly organic farming magazine „Mahepõllumajanduse Leht“, 
• Booklets on dairy cattle, beef cattle, cereals and oil crops, berries, fruits, vegetables, potatoes, beekeeping, herbs, composting, marketing, etc., 
• Electronic guidelines for seed production, small scale processing of fruits, berries and vegetables, etc.,
Portal
www.maheklubi.ee

Provides information on:
• Training events,
• Published materials,
• Other actual topics,
Results

In 2016-2017:

• 146 training days, ½ practical field days
• 27 people participated each day
• Total of 3,878 participations (one person could participate in more than one activity)
• At least one training day in each county
• Dissemination of research results and new technologies
• Opportunity to meet, discuss and share experiences
Challenges

• To transfer knowledge, we need new knowledge!
• Not enough organic farming research in local level on some topics: poultry, dairy cattle, potato and vegetable production, etc.
• No advisors on processing!
Thank you!