



European Consortium for Organic Plant Breeding

Welcome to the 7th European Workshop on Organic Seed Regulation in Brussels 2013

- **Hosted by Flemish Government**
 - **54 participants from 16 different countries**
 - **Two half days of intensive exchange and discussion**
- **Roadmap for the harmonisation and increased usage of organic seed**



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Brussels 9th 2013

Program 9th October 2013

- 14:10 Aim of the meeting and short update of the previous workshop (M. Messmer, S. Howlett)
- 14:30 Revision of the organic regulation process and its impact on organic seed (L'Her)
- 14:50 Country reports
Summary of online survey, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, France, Czech Republic, Italy, Greece, Spain
- 16:15 **Coffee break**
- 16:45 Perspective of seed and breeding companies
- 17:45 Perspective of organic farmers organisation
- 18:15 Plenary discussion
- 20:00 **Dinner at Ethiopian restaurant KoKoB in city centre**

Program 10th October 2013

- 8:30 IFOAM EU role related to seeds (E. Busacca)
- 9:30 Three case studies on production and use of organic seeds
- Potato (J. van Hoogen, Agrico)
 - Cereals (E. Muehlhausen, KWS)
 - Vegetables (H. Haitsma, Vitalis)
- 10:10 **Coffee break**
- 10:30 Discussion in supgroups
- 12:00 Presentation of outcome of group discussion
- 12:15 Plenary discussion & Development of roadmap
- 13:00 **Light Lunch offered by Flemish Government**

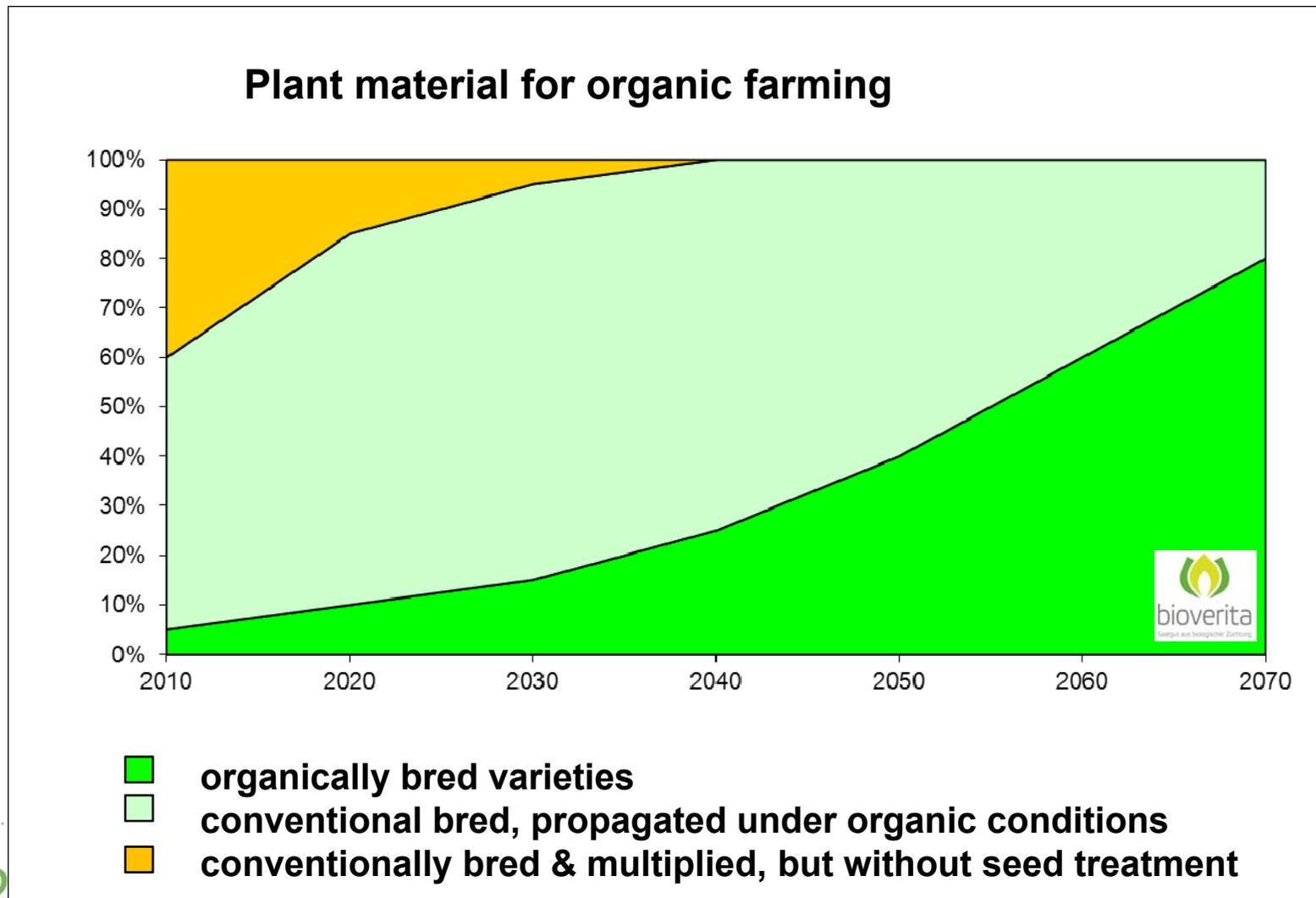
Why is ECO-PB active in organic seed

Plant Breeding	Variety testing	Seed propagation
Conventional breeding	Conventional	Conventional untreated
conventional breeding	conventional	organic
conventional breeding	organic	organic
organic plant breeding	organic	organic

Varieties for organic farming

Plant Breeding	Variety testing	Seed propagation
Conventional breeding	Conventional	Conventional untreated
conventional breeding	conventional	organic
conventional breeding	organic	organic
organic plant breeding	organic	organic

Strengthening organic farming by breeding varieties adapted to specific growing conditions



Guidelines for organic plant production

Bio Suisse 17.4.2013



➤ Organic plant breeding defined according to IFOAM

- All steps performed under certified organic conditions
- No technical intervention below cell level
- Respects natural crossing barriers
- Promotes fertility and natural reproduction of plants
- Transparency of breeding methods
- Refrains from patents on living organisms

➤ From 1.1.2014 on cultivars used for the production of Knospe products are preferably from organic plant breeding programs

- If it can be shown that no cultivar in sufficient quality and quantity is available, other cultivars may be used. Bio Suisse is responsible for the monitoring and derogation
 - This includes cultivars according to national seed legislation and UPOV regulation as well as population varieties, niche varieties, land races and farmer's selections



Main Outcomes I

➤ Reporting on organic seed by member countries to the EU needs to be more harmonised.

- *Textual explanations of derogation*
- *Info about why a derogation was issued*
- *Availability of species/varieties on Category 1 (no derogation)*
- *Reports should be structured by derogation category system*

➤ SCOF requested more input from organic stakeholders regarding organic seed issues.

- Main role of reports is to serve as policy instruments

Main outcomes II

➤ Differences and commonalities in the organisational structure of Expert Groups (EG) between countries were discussed.

- *NL: EG comprised of farmers, seed company reps, growers & researchers*
- *DK: EG is the advisory service of Danish Organic Association & variety testing authority*
- *FR: EG is responsibility of Ministry of Agriculture & there are two groups 1) organic seed database 2) derogations*

EG groups are important to decide about suitability of organic seed available, to get support from farmers about decisions for Annex & increase production and use of organic seed

Main outcomes III

- **The wider organic community needs to invest in seed databases**
 - *Currently no common European database*
 - *Some countries have no national databases*
 - *Suggestions made to harmonise existing national databases (e.g. Latin names, meaningful units for quantities...)*

- **To protect seed diversity the use of local varieties should not be hindered by seed regulation**
 - *Possibly allow a derogation for conservation varieties, even those in Category 1.*
 - *Include users of local varieties on EG discussions*

General Conclusions

- **The organic sector has improved in different ways in different countries over the past few years**
 - *Use of National Category 1 has increased*
 - *Seed companies reported rise in organic seed sales in some countries*
- **Potential players may lack a strong incentive for development because current regulations are not clear or not coordinated enough among countries.**
- **Still urgent need for further European harmonisation on organic seed regulation & derogation reports**

Publications

Workshop outcomes summarised in paper:

Thomas F. Döring, Riccardo Bocci, Roger Hitchings, Sally Howlett, Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Marco Pautasso, Maaïke Raaijmakers, Frederic Rey, Anke Stubsgaard, Manfred Weinhappel, Klaus P. Wilbois, Louisa R. Winkler, Martin S. Wolfe (2012). **The organic seed regulations framework in Europe – current status and recommendations for future development.**

Organic Agriculture DOI 10.1007/s13165-012-0034-7

<http://orgprints.org/21904/1/Doring%20et%20al%202012-ORGA%20-%20orgprints.pdf>



Proposals to foster organic seed usage

- Compensate for price difference of organic and untreated conventional seed (private label, government, market chain?)
- Definition of timeline until derogation has to be submitted, otherwise no longer derogation
- «warning lists»: Definition of timelines until when category 1 will be implemented
- Harmonisation of database across countries
 - Timely update, available quantity, more userfriendly
- Broader list of cultivars that are available as organic seed
- discourage use of seeds from companies not investing in organic seed

Proposals to foster organic seed usage

- Harmonisation concerning the handling and labelling of seed mixtures
- Harmonisation about handling of vegetative material
- Derogation for conservation varieties, local varieties, landraces or their inclusion in the data base
- Implementation of expert groups of different stakeholders in all countries
- Guidelines for cultivars derived from breeding techniques not bred in compliance with organic agriculture (IFOAM definition) like cytoplasm fusion

Topics mentioned to be discussed:

- Harmonisation for derogation system (potato)
 - Which criteria used
 - Less derogations
 - Timelines for end of derogation
- Database (satisfaction average 3.2 but nine times 5 and ones 6)
 - Update, availability, userfriendliness
 - To what degree are cultivars available to cover demand
 - How to increase number of registered cultivars
- Harmonisation for Seed mixtures
 - Declaration and labelling
- Cytoplasm fusion (vegetables)
- Farmers participation, handling of local varieties
- Revision of EU seed regulation

Expected outcome of the workshop

- Exchange of status quo and recent progress among countries
- Development of a roadmap on the harmonisation of Organic seed regulation
 - Identify main topics to be enhanced the next 3-5 years in smaller working groups
 - Identify participants that coordinate these working groups
 - Involvement of experts from all European countries (especially in South and Eastern Europe)
- Define role of different stakeholders
 - SCOF, IFOAM EU Group, Seed companies, ECO-PB