
ORGANIC SEED REGULATION

CONTENT

- **Seed regulation and ‘organic seed regulation’ - (viewpoints from the IFOAM EU GROUP)**
- **Quality seed / Certified seed**
- **The organic seed regulations framework in Europe – current status and recommendations for future development - Thomas F. Döring et al.**
- **Organic seed databases in EU**
- **Danish research programmes in organic seed production**
- **The Danish Implementation of EU PRM (Plant reproductive material) legislation and it’s importance for Biodiversity (slides and viewpoint from NaturErhverv)**

PAPER

The organic seed regulations framework in Europe –current status and recommendations for future development

Thomas F. Döring et al

HOW TO MAKE THE ORGANIC SEED SECTOR MOVE FORWARD

Currently, potential players lack a strong incentive for development because current regulations are not clear or coordinated enough among countries.

Stakeholders in the organic sector therefore agree that in order for the organic seed sector to move forward it should aim

- (a) to sell or use more organic seed;
- (b) to have more seed companies involved in producing organic seed;
- (c) to reduce the price of organic seed; and
- (d) to further harmonise European organic seed regulations as different rules are still applied by member states.

ORGANIC SEED DATABASES IN EU

- With the aim to increase transparency, the EU member states are required to maintain a database of available organic seed material and subsequently produce an annual report regarding the derogations granted in the individual member states.
- The aim of the annual report is to increase production and utilisation of organic seed material.
- Seed companies can enter their organic seed products in the database and customers (producers) can then check the availability of organic seed for numerous varieties.
- Databases are also used to manage derogation requests by producers and can generate statistical information such as changes over time in derogations sought for a particular crop.

[ORGANIC SEED DATABASES](#)

ORGANIC SEED DATABASES IN EU

- While some organic seed databases are large and well used (e.g. OrganicXseeds in Germany), there are some countries for which organic seed databases are not publicly available at all.
- In others, such as Italy or Switzerland, the available databases are reportedly not used by many producers.
- Reasons for low usage of databases include the absence of some locally interesting varieties (as reported for Italy) or limited participation of seed companies (as reported for Switzerland).
- The wider organic movement should therefore recognise that increased investment in seed databases is necessary to improve the situation of the organic seed sector.

ORGANIC SEED DATABASES IN EU

- Currently there is no common European database, although there is common usage of some larger databases among countries sharing the same language.
- If a common European database on organic seed were set up, it would need to incorporate national databases within it.
- One great advantage of a European database would be to encourage sourcing of organic seed from similar environments across Europe.
- A potential disadvantage of an EU-wide database is that it would be more difficult to resolve derogation queries than when databases are limited to national level.

SUGGESTED WAYS TO IMPROVE THE DATABASES

- Latin species names should be shown;
- meaningful and consistent units should be used for quantities of seed;
- cross-links between national databases should be improved, such as by standardising plant names;
- databases should be made more user-friendly;
- in some cases, seed companies need to update entries more regularly;
- varieties on national databases could be marked for their regional appropriateness
- information should also be given about how soon a listed variety is to be available (this is particularly significant because organic producers frequently seek derogations if a seed company is not able to deliver organic seed within a short enough time frame, typically a few days).

REFERENCES

- Barbieri, P. & Bocchi, S. 2015. Analysis of the Alternative Agriculture's Seeds Market Sector: History and Development. *J. Agric. Environ. Ethics* 28: 789-801. DOI 10.1007/s10806-015-9563-x
- Bocci, R. 2009. Seed legislation and agrobiodiversity: conservation varieties. *J Agric Environ Int Dev* 103:31-49
- Bocci, R., Ortolanim, L., Micheloni, C. 2011. The seed sources of organic farmers in Italy. In: The 17th IFOAM Organic World Congress: Organic Seed Preconference. Cheongwon-gun, Korea: Heuksalim Institute pp 172-176
- Döring TF, Howlett S. 2011. Europe's organic seed dilemma. *Org Res Cent Bull* 106:6
- Döring TF, Bocci, R.; Hitchings, R.; Howlett S.; Lammerts van Bueren ET, Pautasso, M.; Raaijmakers, M.; Rey, F.; Stubsgaard, A.; Weinhappel, M.; Wilbois, K.P.; Winkler, L.R. & Wolfe, M.S 2012. The organic seed regulations framework in Europe – current status and recommendations for future development. *Org. Agr* 2:173-183. DOI 10.1007/s13165-012-0034-7
- Lammerts van Bueren ET, Jones SS, Tamm L, Murphy KM, Myers JR, Leifert C, Messmer MM. 2011. The need to breed crop varieties suitable for organic farming, using wheat, tomato and broccoli as examples: a review. *NJAS - Wageningen J Life Sci* 58:193-205
- Lammerts van Bueren ET, Osman, A. M.; Tiemens-Hulscher, M.; Struik, P. C.; Burgers, s. l. g. e. Burgers & van den Broek. 2012. Are specific testing protocols required for organic onion varieties? Analysis of onion variety testing under conventional and organic growing conditions. *Euphytica* 184: 181-193. DOI 10.1007/s10681-011-0545-4

REFERENCES

Osman A.M., Bonthuis, H.; Brink Van den L.; Struik PC; Almekinders CJM, Lammerts van Bueren ET. 2008. Adapting Value for Cultivation and Use testing to stimulate the release of improved varieties for the organic sector. The case of spring wheat in the Netherlands. *Org. Agr.* DOI 10.1007/s13165-014-0085-z

Renaud, E.N.C.; Lammerts van Bueren E.T. Jiggins, J. 2014. The development and implementation of organic seed regulation in the USA. *Org. Agr.* 4:25-42. DOI 10.1007/s13165-014-0063-5

Rolland, B.; Fontaine, L.; Mailliard, A.; Gardet, O.; Heumez, E.; Walczak, P.; Champion; A. Le & Oury, F. X. 2015. From selection to cultivation with the support of all stakeholders: the first registration in France of two winter bread wheat varieties after value for cultivation and use evaluation in organic farming systems. *Org. Agr.* DOI 10.1007/s1365-015-0140-4

Spataro, G. & Negri, V. 2013. The European seed legislation on conservation varieties: focus, implementation, present and future impact on landrace on farm conservation. *Genet Resour Crop Evol* 60:2421-2430 DOI 10.1007/s10722-013-009-x

Winge, T. 2015. Seed Legislation in Europe and Crop Genetic Diversity. *Sustainable Agriculture Reviews* 15, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-09132-7_1