



Pathways to phase-out contentious inputs from organic agriculture in Europe

Organic-PLUS Webinar 21 October 2020

Welcome & Introduction

Associate Professor Dr Ulrich Schmutz (Coordinator)
Judith Conroy (Project Manager)



Research Centre
for Agroecology, Water
and Resilience



UNIVERSITÀ
DI PARMA



UNIVERSITY OF
THESSALY



UNIVERSITÀ
degli STUDI
di CATANIA



UNIVERSITY OF
HOHENHEIM



OSLO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
CONSUMPTION RESEARCH NORWAY SIFO



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 774340

Organic-PLUS a quick history



Padova, Italy June 2018



Aarhus, Denmark June 2019



Brussels, 18-month report Jan-2020



Policy Session

RELACS & Organic-PLUS

Brussels Jan-2020

Phase-out	Private Standard	Federal State	State (EU or none-EU)	EU Organic Regulation?	2020	2030	2040	2050
Phase-out of non-organic manure			EU	2020				
Phase-out of non-organic straw			EU	2020				
Phase-out of peat	Demeter DE, Garden Organic	Catalonia?	UK 2020 home, 2030 commercial	2030				
Cu phase-out in potatoes	Bioland DE, Demeter DE	Bavaria, Wales?	Norway 2017 phase-in Netherlands, Denmark	2030				
Cu phase-out in tree crops (olive, citrus)			Denmark	2040				
Cu phase-out greenhouse crops (e.g. tomato)	Demeter DE		Denmark	2040				
Phase-out of mineral oils	Naturland DE		EU	2020				
Phase-out of fertilisers from non-organic sources				2030				
Phase-out of all animal derived fertilisers	Vegan Organic, Biozyklisch-Vegan			2030				
Phase-out of antibiotics			NOP USA, NOP-export UK	2040				
Phase-out of synthetic vitamins and anthelmintics				2040				
Phase-out of all plastic from fossil fuels	Garden Organic		NOP USA	2050				7


May 2020

Green Deal:

- **25%** certified organic land by 2030 in EU
- some countries likely to be above **50%** before end of Organic-PLUS (Oct-2022)
- Regulation-1991 could become standard for all livestock stocking and fertiliser inputs – in 2041? (**100%**)

Sister project RELACS & Organic-PLUS



Project name website	RELACS www.relacs-project.eu	Organic-PI  www.organi ORGANIC PLUS
IMPACT Consumer Research Dissemination	No Yes IFOAM-EU network	Social science research Yes
PLANT Cu Mineral Oil	Experiments Experiments	Experiments Data
LIVESTOCK Anthelmintics Vitamins Antibiotics Animal bedding	Experiments Experiments Experiments No	Experiments Data Experiments Experiments
SOIL "Bio-economy" Fertiliser "Vegan" Fertiliser Peat Plastic Mulch	Data/Modelling No No No	Experiments Experiments Experiments Experiments
MODEL Modelling	Yes	Yes and LCA

LIAISON

– what others say about Organic-PLUS



LIAISON



Optimising interactive innovation



ORGANIC
PLUS

Web: www.organic-plus.net

Twitter: [@OrgPLUSresearch](https://twitter.com/OrgPLUSresearch)



Research and Innovation
Action
Horizon 2020 fund



CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GR, IT,
NO, PL, SE, TR, UK



25 partners
led by the Centre for Agroecology,
Water and Resilience -
Coventry University (UK)



5/2018 - 4/2022



4.1 Mio. €
public funding (EU)



Organic PLUS has received funding from the
European Union's Horizon 2020 research
and innovation programme under grant
agreement No 770840

A little bit more about Organic PLUS

Despite high production standards, organic farming often still relies on contentious inputs such as copper and mineral salts for plant protection, just as a growing medium or fertilising material for seedlings, manure from non-organic farms as fertiliser, or food based plastics as mulch. Organic PLUS aims to identify and optimise existing alternatives to these inputs and to assess their effects in order to make informed recommendations for policy (and practice) on how to phase out contentious inputs.

The Organic PLUS teams are testing alternatives to these contentious inputs in their laboratories and field trials. They are assessing their suitability including environmental and economic effects. They are exchanging with farmers all over Europe to learn from their experiences and to understand their concerns. A survey studies consumer attitudes towards organic farming. All these insights feed into science-based advice for practitioners and policy makers.



"Organic-PLUS" means minimising, and eventually phasing out contentious inputs from certified organic agriculture.
Organic PLUS website

Highlights!



Optimisation and adaption of pioneer farmers' novel solutions

Large share of research organisations in the consortium; farming SMEs involved as stakeholders



Local synergies with other research projects

Interesting links/videos/reports of Organic PLUS



<https://organic-plus.net/>



Report: Available Alternatives or Copper and Mineral Oil Reduction Strategies (updated version 2019)
<https://organicplusnet.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/d3.2-0-available-alternatives-or-reduction-strategies-cu->



Organic PLUS factsheets on alternatives to contentious inputs (multiple languages) <https://organic-plus.net/factsheets/>



BBC report on Organic PLUS and plastic mulching
<https://videopress.com/v/RzhiLcQ4U>

Innovation and co-creation in Organic PLUS

Innovation in Organic PLUS

Alternatives to contentious inputs in organic farming are usually novel approaches and only used by pioneer farmers. They may be alternative inputs (e.g. biodegradable instead of plastic mulches), or system changes, i.e. avoidance of some inputs through a redesign of farming practices (e.g. improved ventilation to better prevent diseases and reduce the need for antibiotics). Organic PLUS contributes to the development, validation and dissemination of these innovative solutions. The consortium tests their effects (e.g. on plant or animal health) in the soil, identifies their optimal usage and adapts them to specific context conditions or new research developments (development and validation stage). It then disseminates these results to farmers to induce a change in farming practices, and to policy makers to effect a change of existing EU, national and regional regulations (dissemination stage).



Innovation Cycle. The stages the project has moved through are highlighted in yellow

Source: Malpas G. Science in Research 4 (2016) 1-10
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12541-016-0001-0

Co-creation in Organic PLUS

To achieve their targets, Organic PLUS members cooperate closely among themselves as well as with farmers and other important actors in the organic farming sector.

Internally, work is divided into six work packages (WPs) in which partners from different countries collaborate on specific tasks. All WPs operate autonomously within the boundaries of the consortium agreement. Each is led by an experienced European scientist. The coordinator acts as a research manager and ensures that all targets are met.

Organic farmers are a central target group as well as a source of information. At the beginning of the project, partners visited organic farms and advised on different countries to provide information on the current use of contentious inputs. Apart from this, cooperation with farmers mostly takes place on the local level. For example, partners in Germany and France are testing and piloting organic farmers who already avoid contentious inputs in order to learn from them and disseminate their good examples. As regular on-farm visits in all participating countries, farmers may share their concerns about contentious inputs, but also about the identified alternatives. Some partners also perform trials on actual commercial farms and community gardens and engage with farmers there.

The consortium also wants to learn about the attitudes of consumers towards organic farming, since these are an important success factor for any changes in organic farming. For this purpose, Organic PLUS partners have conducted a large consumer online survey as well as focus groups and joint meetings of farmers and consumers.



The Organic PLUS consortium (left) at meeting in Padova, Italy, June 2018
Source: <https://organicplus.net/>

"We are working together not only with all the countries, but also with certain people who are really interested in this subject, in Turkey and Poland, and is that not a great advantage!"
Interview with an Organic PLUS member

Good Practices & Lessons Learned



Interaction with the funding mechanism



Interaction between the case study partners



Interaction with external stakeholders



Interaction with the case study context



Contribution to societal challenges

Under the lead of the coordinator, the consortium developed a common framework and distributed roles at an early stage during the proposal writing. This helped to identify and address gaps.

Within the limits of the consortium agreement, Work Package leaders manage their WPs autonomously. This demonstrates the partners' trust in each other's disciplinary expertise, but requires particular effort to ensure integration.

Organic farmers in Europe are among Organic PLUS' key stakeholders. However, engagement with them works better in some countries than others, depending on the local project partner's pre-existing network.

The different disciplinary backgrounds of partners ('applied' agricultural research vs. modelling) correlate with different opinions about how much theoretical abstraction is required and possible in the modelling of phase-out scenarios.

By testing not only alternatives to contentious inputs, but system changes that make these inputs unnecessary, Organic PLUS seeks to broaden the scope of choices available to farmers.

It is difficult for some actors such as small organisations or SMEs to engage as full partners in H2020 projects due to the high administrative burden associated with this status.

The lead partner brings multiple assets to the project: Scientific expertise, administrative and project management skills, international reputation, a large stakeholder network, and access to research infrastructure and support.

Partners differ in their assessment of how to engage with farming businesses and have different degrees of related experience. In particular, some research partners face difficulties in reaching farmers.

International cooperation also means cooperation of partners have unequal access to staff, expertise, or alternative funding sources. Costs for activities such as experiments may also differ greatly between countries.

The project must find a delicate balance between the intention to improve existing agricultural policies, and farmers' interest not to make certain practices public and to prohibit them prematurely.

Highlights!



Optimisation and adaption of pioneer farmers' novel solutions

Large share of research organisations in the consortium; farming SMEs involved as stakeholders



Local synergies with other research projects

Good Practices & Lessons Learned



Interaction with the funding mechanism

Under the lead of the coordinator, the consortium developed a common framework and distributed roles at an early stage during the proposal writing. This helped to identify and address gaps.

It is difficult for some actors such as small organisations or SMEs to engage as full partners in H2020 projects due to the high administrative burden associated with this status.



Interaction between the case study partners

Within the limits of the consortium agreement, Work Package leaders manage their WPs autonomously. This demonstrates the partners' trust in each other's disciplinary expertise, but requires particular effort to ensure integration.

The lead partner brings multiple assets to the project: Scientific expertise, administrative and project management skills, international reputation, a large stakeholder network, and access to research infrastructure and support.



Interaction with external stakeholders

Organic farmers in Europe are among Organic PLUS' key stakeholders. However, engagement with them works better in some countries than others, depending on the local project partner's pre-existing network .

Partners differ in their assessment of how to engage with farming businesses and have different degrees of related experience. In particular, some research partners face difficulties in reaching farmers.



Interaction with the case study context

The different disciplinary backgrounds of partners ('applied' agricultural research vs. modelling) correlate with different opinions about how much theoretical abstraction is required and possible in the modelling of phase-out scenarios.

International cooperation also means cooperation of partners have unequal access to staff, expertise, or alternative funding sources. Costs for activities such as experiments may also differ greatly between countries.



Contribution to societal challenges

By testing not only alternatives to contentious inputs, but system changes that make these inputs unnecessary, Organic PLUS seeks to broaden the scope of choices available to farmers.

The project must find a delicate balance between the intention to improve existing agricultural policies, and farmers' interest not to make certain practices public and to prohibit them prematurely.

Interesting links/videos/reports of *Organic PLUS*



<https://organic-plus.net/>



Report: Available Alternatives or Copper and Mineral Oil Reduction Strategies (updated version 2019)

<https://organicplusnet.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/d3.2-o-available-alternatives-or-reduction-strategies-cu->



Organic PLUS factsheets on alternatives to contentious inputs (multiple languages) <https://organic-plus.net/factsheets/>



BBC report on Organic PLUS and plastic mulching
<https://videopress.com/v/RzhLcqUu>

"We are working together not only with all the countries, but also with certain people who are really interested in this subject, in Turkey and Poland, and is that not a great advantage?"

Interview with an Organic PLUS member

Webinar LIVESTOCK (WP4) last month





Pathways to phase-out contentious inputs from organic agriculture in Europe

[Home](#) [About](#) [Workpackages](#) [O+ Team](#) [Resources](#) [Videos](#) [Contact](#) [News](#)

Organic Animal Husbandry systems – challenges, performance and potentials (IAHA)

[organic-plus.net](#) [Annual Meetings](#) [Sep 24, 2020](#) [1 Minute](#)

The Organic-PLUS and RELACS projects teamed up with IAHA and several EU-Core Organic projects to share results on organic livestock research. The proceedings (111 pages) of the IAHA Video-Conference on Organic Animal Husbandry, held 21. and 22. September 2020 (linked to the 20th Organic World Congress of IFOAM – now in 2021) are found here:

Otto Schmid, Marion Johnson, Mette Vaarst, Barbara Früh (Eds.) (2020) Organic Animal Husbandry systems – challenges, performance and potentials. Proceedings of the IAHA Video-Conference.

[iaha-video-conference_livestock_owc2020-proceedings-2020](#)

Download

Webinar PLANT & SOIL (WP3 & WP5) today



Program

10:00 - 10:15: Welcome

10:15 - 11:30: First session - presentations

11:30 - 12:00: Lunch break

12:00 - 13:30: Second session - presentations

13:30 - 13:45: Short break

13:45 - 14:30: Third session – presentations

14:30 - 15:00: 10 separate group meetings

15:00 - 15:25: Feedback and highlights from the group works

15:25 - 15:30: Closing the day

A compiled 15-minutes video from the event will be produced; hence, discussions will be recorded.
Do you agree?



Pathways to phase-out contentious inputs from organic agriculture in Europe

Thank you

ulrich.schmutz@coventry.ac.uk, judith.conroy@coventry.ac.uk



Research Centre
for Agroecology, Water
and Resilience



UNIVERSITÀ
DI PARMA



UNIVERSITY OF
THESSALY



UNIVERSITÀ
degli STUDI
di CATANIA



UNIVERSITY OF
HOHENHEIM



OSLO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
CONSUMPTION RESEARCH NORWAY SIFO



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 774340