



Online event
05 May 2021
10.00-12.00 CEST



Transition towards 100% organic seeds and the role of organic animal and crop breeding in the new Organic Regulation Which implications for the processing and trade sector?

Program

- 10.00 **The need for organic animal and crop breeding and implications of the provisions in the new organic regulation**
- *Mariateresa Lazzaro, FiBL Organic Plant breeding team*
- 10.20 **The benefits of organic breeding for the organic value-chains. Direct experiences by organic breeders**
- *Amadeus Zschunke, organic plant breeder, director Sativa Rheinau AG*
 - *Wytze Nauta, organic animal breeder, Dutch Organisation for Organic Breeding*
- 10.50 **Involvement of the value chain in organic breeding**
- *Gert-Jan Lieffering, Quality Development Manager at Eosta BV / Nature & More*
- 11.05 **Panel discussion - How to boost organic breeding with value-chain collaborations**
- *Edith T. Lammerts van Bueren, Emeritus professor Organic Plant Breeding, Wageningen University & Research*
 - *Steven IJzerman, Quality manager UDEA*
 - *Federica Bigongiali, Foundation "Seminare il Futuro" / Seed the Future*
 - *Amadeus Zschunke, Wytze Nauta, Gert-Jan Lieffering*
- 11.45 **Questions, feed-back and debate**

Introduction to the topic

The new Organic Regulation (EC No 848/2018) includes several provisions related to seed sourcing and type of crop cultivars to be used in organic farming. Even though organic seed use is already mandatory (EC No 889/2008), there is still a high number of derogations to use non-organic seed with strong differences among the EU Member States.

Organic consumers around Europe assume that organic products come from organic seed and the current situation of widespread use of derogations poses a threat to consumers' trust. Currently, only a small range of adapted cultivars are available as organic seed and this, especially when considered together with the higher price of organic seed, is a barrier for farmers.

The situation is challenging in the livestock sector as well. The choice of breeds other than the ones selected for conventional farming is very limited and there is lack of robust animals, adapted to organic farming systems, that remain healthy and efficient producers under free-range conditions and farm-based feed.

In the new regulation, the legislator has introduced basic principles related to cultivar and breeds more adapted to organic and helpful to increase biodiversity in farming systems, together with a series of specific provisions related to seed and crop varieties:

- **Phasing out of derogations for the use of non-organic seed by 2037;**
- Definition of **Organic Varieties** and set-up of a temporary experiment in order to facilitate market access for this type of plant reproductive material;
- Introduction of **Organic Heterogenous Material** for highly genetically diverse plant reproductive material that can enter the market upon notification instead of variety registration.

These general objectives and specific provisions, connected with the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies to reach at least 25% organic certified farmland in the EU, will strongly increase the need for organic seed.

Reaching 100 % of organic seed from cultivars adapted to organic farming is a huge challenge for the sector and this transition implies the risk for different type of bottlenecks along the value-chain, which can be mitigated only with the involvement of all stakeholders of the sector.

Additionally, the challenge is even higher when considering the current debate on **new genetic engineering methods**. Should these technologies, not accepted by the organic movement, be deregulated for the conventional sector in the future, a bottleneck of seed availability might happen to organic farmers before having reached the independence with organic seed and breeding. The problems related to the use of new genetic engineering methods is even stronger in the animal sector due to the extreme global concentration of conventional animal breeding initiatives.

The target of 100 % organic seed from cultivars adapted to organic farming cannot be reached without involving all stakeholders across the organic sector. Actions are needed to increase the offer of locally adapted cultivars (in terms of range and quantity) and specific breeding for organic farming is required for arable, vegetable and fruit crops, involving stakeholders across the whole organic sector and long-term public and private investments. The many benefits of organic breeding span the whole value chain. However, organic breeding today plays only a niche role and needs to be more strongly promoted.

In this workshop we will present the aspects of organic seed and breeding and the key issues related to organic animal breeding of relevance for traders and processors.