



20 January 2020

PRESS RELEASE

BIOrganicLifeStyle on BIOFACH with pavilion, press conference 'All lights on green for an organic decade' and seminar 'Challenge for organic growth: harmonisation of residue handling in EU'

The presence of BIOrganicLifeStyle.EU (Biols) on the BIOFACH from 12th – 15th February in Nuremberg, Germany, cannot be missed. The Biols pavilion will host 17 Dutch and 15 Italian organic companies presenting their specialties. On 12th February this pavilion will host the Biols press conference 'All lights on green for an organic decade'. As part of the BIOFACH Congress, Biols organises a seminar on Friday 14th February on harmonisation of residue handling in the EU. Harmonisation of residue handling is an important challenge to tackle for further growth of organic food and farming.

"**BIOrganicLifeStyle.EU**" (Biols) is an international project in which the most representative and important organic agri-food trade organisations from Italy (European Organic Partners) and from the Netherlands (Bionext) cooperate. The BIOFACH from 12th - 15th February in Nuremberg, Germany, offers many opportunities to emphasize on the specific features of organic agricultural production methods in the EU and to raise more awareness for the European organic logo.

The Biols Pavilion (booth numbers 5-111, 5-119 and 5-129) will host 17 Dutch and 15 Italian organic companies presenting their specialties. In the lounge area centrally located amid these companies, **the press conference 'All lights on green for an organic decade'** will take place on Wednesday 12th February at 14.00. Bavo van den Idsert, specialist in international organic developments, will state different reasons why organic is the winning food & farming formula of the coming decade. "Organic was already booming in the EU and worldwide in the past decade, but be aware for the coming ten years: it is going to explode," says Bavo van den Idsert. "I am in organic for over thirty years, but I have never seen so many lights on green for a huge step forward."





Why organic is the winning food & farming formula of the coming decade

Since 2016 the organic market is growing with double-digit figures worldwide already. In the international trend report established by Bionext, Bavo comes to the estimation that the organic market in 2018 went up to € 44 billion in the EU. This enormous growth will at least continue, what brings us close or even over € 100 billion in 2025. But it is even more likely that we will face a more massive transition to organic. The urgent challenges for climate, biodiversity and soil fertility have brought governments into action.

With the publication of the recent 'Green Deal' for the coming decade by the new EU Commission it is clear that organic will be in the centre of the food and farming policy of the entire EU. The Commission aim is to use 40% of the financial means for climate action in agriculture. Furthermore the EU Commission has taken up 'sustainable food, protection of the environment and preservation of biodiversity and INCREASE ORGANIC FARMING' as main goals in the Green Deal publication of December 2019. This support for organic will diminish the price difference between organic and conventional and that will further strengthen the growth of organic.

And there are many more reasons why organic will speed up in the next years. New estimations of the development of organic will be presented at the press event based on facts and figures.

The enormous growth of organic is creating space for innovation and diversification. Examples of private added value certification in Germany and the Netherlands will be highlighted at the press conference.

Challenge for organic growth: harmonisation of residue handling in EU

Despite all contributing factors to the growth of organic, there are still some important challenges to tackle. One of them is the way residue cases are handled at the moment in the EU. As part of the BIOFACH Congress, BiOrganicLifeStyle.EU organises the **seminar 'Challenge for organic growth: harmonisation of residue handling in EU'** on Friday 14th February from 10.00 – 11.30 (Hall St. Petersburg – NCC Ost). Representatives from trade, the 'Anti-Fraud Initiative' and labs will share latest project results and their knowledge with the audience.

A big threat for the fast-growing organic market is the disharmonized situation of residue handling by inspection bodies and authorities, varying from zero tolerance to a case by case approach and different approaches in between. Therefore the Organic Trade and Processing





Organisation (OPTA) took in cooperation with Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FiBL) the initiative to start a common project that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches. Bernhard Speiser, project leader: “We will present the first outcomes of this project. Our aim is to present cornerstones for a harmonised approach, that is in the scope of the new regulation in 2024.”

International market players, represented by Karst Kooistra from Tradin Organic, experience a lot of uncertainty and growing risks in the market, when it comes to residue findings in organic. “What is considered as proper organic in one EU country can be decertified in another EU country, because of a different interpretation. This kind of uncertainty could be a real showstopper for organic developments. We have to solve this if we want to make sure that ambitions of the EU Commission with organic can be fulfilled.”

The techniques for residue analysis are constantly becoming more and more sensitive. Meanwhile, it is technically possible to detect residues of chemicals below the level of one part per billion. Eurofins will present the technical development of the labs. But do these developments help the organic sector? The organic regulation is originally set up as a process based regulation. Farmers and processors are not allowed to use chemical-synthetic substances. But what does it mean when traces of substances are found? Is it contamination, caused by conventional production where it is allowed to use these substances? Or is it fraud? Jochen Neuendorff member of the Anti-Fraud Initiative has a clear message: “It could be, but there are many other and more effective ways to cheat.”

Johanna Mirenda (Organic Trade Association) will contribute with perspectives from the US market. “We struggle with the same subject and even in the more harmonised approach we face many difficulties. For the perspective of the global growth of organic, harmonization between EU and US would make sense as well.” Bavo van den Idsert (representing Bionext) concludes in name of the entire organic sector: “For organic farming, trade and processing it feels pretty unfair that they have to deal with the chemical pollution from conventional farming. The current focus on residues should become more balanced and better to handle. At the end organic shows that proper production without chemical-synthetic substances is possible and that is the





ambition of the Commission for all agriculture in the EU.”

BIOrganicLifeStyle.EU

Biols (BIOrganicLifeStyle.EU) is an international project in which the most representative and important organic agri-food trade organisations from Italy (European Organic Partners) and from the Netherlands (Bionext) cooperate. It's a campaign in Germany, France and Italy, financed with aid from the European Union. The main objective is to promote organic lifestyle and contribute to the awareness of the added value of organic agricultural production methods in the EU. The goal is to increase the perceived value of products proud to exhibit the European organic logo, ensuring an image of European excellence together with tradition and national cultural heritage. By following the green leaf (the European organic logo), people can enjoy organic food and live clean with European organic. Consumers are more concerned about their nutrition habits (e.g. where food comes from and how it has been processed) and they find a clear answer in organic foods and beverages. “Think organic” will be the new European consumers' lifestyle.

Note to editors:

If you are interested in attending the press conference 'All lights on green for an organic decade' on Wednesday 12th February 14.00-14.45 and/or the seminar 'Challenge for organic growth: harmonisation of residue handling in EU', please contact Atie van Olst, email atie.biolseu@gmail.com.

The press conference and the seminar will both be in English.

