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PRESS RELEASE

Mainstream organic and innovative diversification drive the market

All lights are on green for the big breakthrough of organic as a main stream farming practice in 2030. The battle for bio as mainstream will certainly be won. But when this mission of the pioneering organic sector is fulfilled, can it rest in peace or will the restless pioneering spirit find new destinations to develop food and farming beyond bio? 'The certainty of the organic breakthrough and the uncertainty of the destination of the organic pioneering spirit, are the most interesting topics of the actual phase of organic,' says Bavo van den Idsert, organic specialist from The Netherlands, at the BIOLS.EU press conference on the BIOFACH.

Battle for bio as mainstream will be won

Though the market shares of organic food and agriculture are still relatively small, the fast growth of the shares in recent years shows where we are on track. Now that Austria, Swiss, Denmark and Sweden are the first EU countries trespassing the barrier of 20% organic area, more countries will follow soon. Policy in Germany and France, the biggest organic markets in Europe, is speeding up organic growth substantially. And this is taken up by the ambitious new EU Commissioner Frans Timmermans. The recently published new Green Deal outline by the EU Commission shows his ambitions. For the first time in history stimulating organic farming becomes part of the EU farming policy. If only half of the published ambitions becomes true, this will be an important push in the already fast growth of organic.

Other main drivers behind the fast growth of organic are the multinational food giants and big supermarkets. They finally picked up the tremendous potential consumer interest in organic. Since the last twenty years they have penetrated in organic, giving new impulses to the market.

Growing consumer awareness that we have to transfer to a natural lifestyle is the steady soil for the transformation to organic food and farming. Consumers care more and more about their health, the climate, biodiversity, clean water and more social fairness. This is with thanks to organizations like the UN that have published the necessity of agro ecology for decades and gave big support to awareness with 17 sustainability goals. For eight out of seventeen of the Sustainable Development Goals organic agriculture is part of the solution: life on land





(biodiversity and soil fertility), life below water (no chemical fertilizers), climate action (carbon farming), clean water and sanitation (no pesticides and fertilizers), zero hunger (save the soil for enough food for the future), responsible consumption and production (organic saves the environment), decent work and economic growth (no exposure to chemical pesticides), and good health and well-being (German study: people who eat mainly organic have a healthier lifestyle than people who eat conventional products).

Bavo van den Idsert: 'With this powerful developments I estimate that organic farming can reach 20% in 2025 and the consumption will cross the 100 billion at the same time.'

The new 'bioeconomy'

And what about the pioneers, will they survive? Bavo van den Idsert: 'For answering this question, we need to look to different aspects. When we look to the farmers' perspective, a huge new innovation well is entering organic production. After a period of efficiency and specialization, the pioneering spirit is looking for new techniques and practices that enlarge soil fertility, taste quality, biodiversity and carbon uptake in the soil. New words are born, like carbon farming, spatial crop rotation and agroforestry. Totally new concepts for organic poultry farming are born, which are better understandable for consumers than current EU regulations for organic poultry.'

The second innovation perspective is the distribution and the economic practice behind it. Bavo: 'I think there is a huge opportunity for the specialized organic shops to challenge the conventional retail with organic added value concepts. There are great opportunities for innovations, combined with a new 'bioeconomy' that restores the connection between farmers and consumers. The recent developments in France, with a doubling of sales in specialized organic shops in five years, are an interesting proof of how it can work out in practice. Latest developments in France, with 5% growth of sales in specialist organic retail but no less than 20% growth of sales in conventional retail in 2019, illustrate that conventional retail is up to the challenge, because they don't want to be swept away by the new 'bioeconomy' of the specialized pioneering sector,' says Bavo van den Idsert. 'But what they lack is the ethical motivation behind organic and little intrinsic will to innovate.'

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



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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, the website www.biolseu.eu the guide to follow the leaf.

End of message

Note to editors:

High res image of the press conference is available for download at www.biolseu.eu/de/press-release-de

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