

BIOFACH Congress Forum Digest 2019**“The organic system: healthy in a holistic approach”****Introduction**

Health is one of the four Principles of Organic Agriculture that we have defined at IFOAM – Organics International. The principle of Health states that: ‘Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant animal and planet as one and indivisible.’ It points out that the health of individuals and communities cannot be separated from the health of ecosystems – healthy soils produce healthy crops that foster the health of animals and people.

Organic agriculture has a lot to offer in the context of ‘positive health’. First of all, organic food contains less pesticide residues. This has been scientifically researched many times. Furthermore, consumers with an organic lifestyle take seasonality and proximity into consideration. Not only does this contribute to a healthy environment, it also encourages greater creativity and diversity in cooking, which again contributes directly to one’s health. Many organic consumers are also conscious about meat consumption and animal welfare.

In this congress forum digest we look at the positive relationship between organic and health by showing the deeper connections between our production systems and our overall well-being. We collected the outcomes of the Biofach 2019 congress sessions related to health and looked at the whole production system, starting with soil, then water, biodiversity, our overall relation with agriculture, diets, quality and processing and ended with communication around health and a future perspective, providing all together a holistic perspective.

SOIL**Mikroplastik im Boden, (k)ein Thema für die Biobranche?! / Johannes Augustin, Stiftung Ökologie & Landbau, Germany**

We are all familiar with the pictures ‘plastic islands’ which pollute oceans and seas. At this point we know little about the effects of micro-plastics in our soils on soil structure, soil living beings and plant growth. However studies indicate that micro plastics have a negative effect on the water retention capacity of soils as well as on soil micro biotical activity. This again may severely impair yields. We also know that plants, through their root system, can take up nano-plastics. Science is only at the very beginning of understanding the impact of plastic pollution on soils, let alone that there is a solution to e.g. bind the microplastics and clean up soils.

WATER

Eine neue Sicht auf Wasser und seine Qualität / Manfred Mödinger,

Unternehmensberatung Mödinger

Water is the most important 'food stuff', although we do not often realize so. In Central Europe there are many public water sources and wells from which water is tapped, bottled and sold. In Germany the Society for quality mineral water has set up standards for 'bio-water'. These standards consider water as a product of agricultural and landscape, albeit with another timescale than the usual production seasons. By taking a catchment area approach the application of this standard may have a huge effect on reduction of pollution and over fertilization.

RELATION WITH AGRICULTURE

Wie zwischen Landwirtschaft und Gesellschaft über das Essen eine neue Beziehung entsteht / Henning Niemann, Kompetenzzentrum Ökolandbau Niedersachsen GmbH (KÖN)

Nowadays it seems that many persons have lost their relationship with production, and, as a consequence, also with their culture, and therewith with parts of themselves and their ancestors. Several local initiatives work on the re-establishment of a food and agriculture. For instance by telling new and old stories about food and by offering experiences like Community Supported Agriculture and festive tasting events. More and more farms open their gates to welcome visitors. Citizens discover how their personal well being is related to joy, community, sense of satisfaction and emotional bondage with soils.

DIETS, QUALITY, PROCESSING

Organic diets for a green planet / Konrad Hauptfleisch, IFOAM Organics International, Germany

The so-called Western Diet, with lots of meat and high levels of resource consumption, is establishing itself world-wide as economic development progresses. The Nordic diet, comprising more fruit, more sea fish and more berries gathered in the wild would be more recommendable. Is it possible to implement a change in food patterns along the entire value chain, right down to the level of agriculture in balance with the carrying capacity of the earth? Several initiatives and most prominently the EAT Lancet Commission, consisting of 30 scientists, presented a healthy diet coming from sustainable agricultural production systems. It roughly corresponds to the notions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The systemic approach is said to be transferrable to the whole world; provided that "homo economicus" be replaced by "homo econologicus". This again requires a radical change in the agricultural and food sector, both top-down and bottom-up, starting out from agriculture as well as from the consumer side, and incorporating voluntariness through information and education and regulations on feeding the community.

Is quality a coincidence? A think tank about organic food and well-being / Johanna Stumper AöL

In a fish bowl session experts told from their perspective what defines quality of organic products.

Business perspective: Quality aspects come from nutrition, origin, culture, tradition and the environment. Urged to buy less but at higher quality – buying cheap can be a false economy, it's not about price, if you know where your ingredients come from and you spend more on them, then they will have a greater overall value. Genuine products with good traceability is key to real quality.

Academic perspective: analysis of organic vs non organic products shows significant nutritional differences on average – for example meta-analyses show significantly fewer pesticides, cadmium, anti-biotics and more phenolic compounds in organic products.

Journalist/consumer communication perspective: want to inspire and inform readers, but sometimes the message is unclear, and even producers themselves aren't sure what is best to communicate

Processors perspective: has become about quality as a synonym for safety, but quality is about much more than the absence of harm. By reducing quality to this narrow definition, it ultimately limits our resources to work towards a sustainable future as we are separating ourselves from nature when we are actually indivisible from it.

The session concluded that quality is about how we produce things beyond the impact on the human body; ultimately organic takes into account a holistic view, incorporating environmental considerations too – summed up in the idea of 'healthy soil, healthy plants, healthy animals, healthy people'!

Organic processing in Europe, quo vadis? / Johanna Stumper AöL

The organic market for process food is still growing, but overall growth rate is going down (exception is Spain). Currently Processed organic food shares is 50% of the market. We can observe that non-organic food producers begin to tell better stories and consumers trends going towards fresh and convenient. Therefore, the market value growth rates for processed organic food are expected to slow down. We also see that retailers have a high influence on pricing; organic is no longer 10-20% higher in prices than non-organic, due to growth in private label organic products – they are often in the same price category as non-organic products. This place the Organic food industry in a challenging position between development and innovation and consumer's opinions. At the same time There are no mandatory standards for organic food processing, just some general legal rules and many private standards, which often contradict each other. As such, 16 partners from 8 EU countries came together in a project consortium for 'organic processing' to develop a multi-dimensional assessment framework for good and careful processing. Also the EU commission started to discuss which methods/technologies should be allowed for organic.

<http://projects.au.dk/coreorganicofund/research-projects/proorg/>

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

foodporn 2050. Ein Speeddating zur Zukunft unserer Ernährung / Anne Baumann, AÖL

Food Porn ist eine glamouröse visuelle, Onlinepräsentation des Kochens oder Essens, der Instagram Generation. Essen wird dort zu einem Tool der Selbstverwirklichung, der Weltverbesserung oder Provokation. Welchen Einfluss nimmt diese glänzende Oberfläche auf unseren individuellen Ernährungsstil? Wie wird unsere Ernährung in 30 Jahren aussehen und wie schaffen wir es, Bio dort voranzubringen? Die Speeddating session hat in kurzer Zeit viele Ideen von vor Allem junge Leute hervorgebracht.

Wie sieht unsere Ernährung in einer postfossilen Gesellschaft im Jahr 2050 aus?

Fachhochschule Münster, Deutschland; Christoph Spahn, Deutschland

Wie sieht unsere Ernährung in einer postfossilen Gesellschaft im Jahr 2050 aus? In jedem Fall haben wir unsere Lebensstile deutlich verändert und wir leben ökologischer, häufiger in Gemeinschaften sowie innovativer – und all das innerhalb eines gewandelten Wirtschaftssystems. Die verschiedenen Szenarien hatten eines gemeinsam: die Notwendigkeit eines systemischen und bewussten Wandels, um an dieses Ziel zu gelangen. Anhand von konkreten Beispielen wurde dieser Wandel veranschaulicht. So kann ein intelligenter Einkaufswagen die „wahren Kosten“ von Lebensmitteln internalisieren und das Konsumverhalten nachhaltig verändern. Resterestaurants sind wiederum eine Möglichkeit, den Wert von Lebensmitteln zu erhalten. Eine bedingungslose Grundversorgung mit Lebensmitteln ermöglicht eine nachhaltige Ernährung unabhängig vom sozialen Hintergrund. Integriert und extrapoliert wurden zudem Modelle wie das der SoLaWi, des urban gardening, der Gemeinwohlökonomie, der Unternehmensethik, der Kreislaufwirtschaft und der Postwachstumsgesellschaft. In Ergänzung und mit Mut für Neues sind diese Ansätze wichtige Komponenten in einem ökologischen, sozialen und wirtschaftlich gesunden Ernährungssystem.

Erarbeitet wurden diese Szenarien von Masterstudierenden der FH Münster im Rahmen einer Denkwerkstatt. Die Ergebnisse sind hier zusammengefasst: www.fh-muenster.de/ernaehrung-2050.

ROUNDING UP, A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Gesellschaftliche Leistungen des ökologischen Landbaus, politische Implikationen und Entwicklungsperspektiven / Dr. Jörn Sanders, Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institut für Ökologischen Landbau

Der ökologische Landbau gilt als ein nachhaltiges Landnutzungssystem. Dennoch werden die Potenziale des ökologischen Landbaus zur Bewältigung der agrarpolitischen Herausforderungen unserer Zeit in der öffentlichen Debatte unterschiedlich bewertet. Vor diesem Hintergrund liefert die aktuelle Studie „Gesellschaftliche Leistungen des ökologischen Landbaus“ fundierte Antwort auf offenen Fragen.