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Federal Ministry of  
Consumer Protection,  
Food and Agriculture

# *The Federal* **Organic Farming Scheme**



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*Federal*

# Organic Farming Scheme



years. However, organic produce will have to become more competitive in the marketplace if this goal is to be achieved. We need a framework that will enable us to eliminate the continuing weak points in the production, processing and marketing of organic produce.

The comprehensive set of measures which the German government has launched with its Federal Organic Farming Scheme provides this framework. These measures cover all levels, from production to consumption. They will establish the foundation on which organic farming in Germany will be able to grow on a sustainable basis.

## Dear Reader,

One of the fundamental ideas behind organic farming is to act in harmony with nature. This concept entails fostering natural life processes and closing material cycles as much as possible. Organic farming protects and conserves natural resources to a high degree, provides for particularly species-specific animal husbandry and has a wide range of positive effects on the environment. By foregoing the use of chemical and synthetic pesticides, for example, organic farming supports diversity among flora and fauna. Additionally, organically-produced food meets the consumer's growing desire for food that has been processed carefully without the use of numerous additives.

In light of the benefits that organic farming has to offer society, the German government has set itself the goal of increasing the amount of organically farmed area out of Germany's total agricultural acreage to 20 percent in ten

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Renate Künast". The signature is fluid and cursive.

*Renate Künast  
Federal Minister of Consumer Protection,  
Food and Agriculture*

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## 1. Background and guidelines

In the summer of 2001, the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture commissioned a project team comprised of representatives from associations and science and headed by the Federal Agricultural Research Centre to develop a proposal for a package of measures to foster organic farming in Germany. This team consisted of the following members:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Prof. Dr. Folkhard Isermeyer<br>(head of project team) | Federal Agricultural Research Centre,<br>Brunswick                             |
| Dr. Hiltrud Nieberg                                    | Federal Agricultural Research Centre,<br>Brunswick                             |
| Prof. Dr. Stephan Dabbert                              | Institute of Farm Management,<br>University of Hohenheim                       |
| Prof. Dr. Jürgen Heß                                   | Department of Organic Farming and<br>Plant Production, University of Kassel    |
| Thomas Dosch   | Bioland – Federal Association for<br>Organic Biological Agriculture            |
| Dr. Prinz Felix zu Löwenstein                          | Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft<br>(Organic Food Industry Association) |

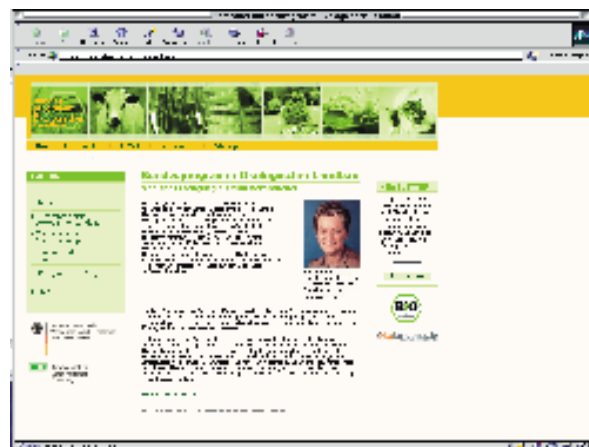
A hearing of representatives from trade and industry, associations, consultancies, science and administration laid the foundation for the team's work. The entire text of the team's proposal can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.bundesprogramm-oekolandbau.de>.

Federal Minister of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture Renate Künast has decided to incorporate the proposed measures into the Federal Organic Farming Scheme which will translate them into practice. This scheme supplements existing support measures with the aim of improving the basic conditions necessary for

expanding organic farming. At the same time, it strives to increase supply and demand on a balanced, sustainable basis.

These measures tackle all levels of organic farming, from the production to the consumption of organically-produced food. Plans include training and information measures. Emphasis is also being placed on research promotion, the development of new technologies and steps to translate research findings into practice.

The scheme was allocated € 35 million in funding for the year 2002. A similar amount has been earmarked for 2003. The Federal Office for Agriculture and Food has set up an Office for the Federal Organic Farming Scheme. Its Internet page at [www.bundesprogramm-oekolandbau.de](http://www.bundesprogramm-oekolandbau.de) serves as the central platform for information and dates.



The Federal Organic Farming Scheme is based on the following guidelines:

## 1. Free the organic farming discussion from ideological ballast

Prejudices arising from ideology continue to keep many farmers, advisers and even scientists from being impartial when examining organic farming. Conversely, we find farmers who over-hastily convert their operations in anticipation of market opportunities without having made careful plans. On the consumer side, there are people who ascribe all sorts of effects to organic produce that they do not have. Others avoid organic produce on principle because they associate it with an unattractive „health food freak“ image.

Prejudices on both sides steer not only consumer behavior but also corporate or scientific efforts in the wrong direction. Consequently, one important goal of the Federal Organic Farming Scheme is to provide all players involved, from



consumers to producers to distributors all the way to researchers, extensive information about organic farming.

## 2. Invest in people's minds

The funding that has been made available for the Federal Organic Farming Scheme is to be used as efficiently as possible. For this reason, the focus is on those areas where funds can be deployed with a knock-on effect. This funding is to be used to prompt economic processes in which consumers and operators help expand organic farming in their own interest through their action. Here too, the scheme gives center stage to informing people.

This is not about deploying additional funding to make organic farming more profitable for a short while. The point of these efforts is to help eliminate the fears that farmers, operators and consumers have about embarking on something new, in this case, taking up organic farming or buying organic produce, and encourage them to weigh objectively the opportunities and risks involved.

The market for organic produce can be expected to see sustainable growth when people base their decision in favor of organic farming or organic produce on a thorough consideration of the pros and cons. Consumers who are firmly convinced persuade others to use organic produce and farmers and operators who are firmly convinced launch their own activities which, when added together, have a much greater impact than short-term government funding. It is particularly important to win over young people for the objectives pursued by the scheme because it is in younger years that future consumer habits are established, just as the values that prospec-



tive farmers and operators develop during their training years will shape their future decisions.

Strengthening research in areas of relevance to organic farming is also vitally important. If the government is to expand this sector on a long-term basis, organic farming must become more competitive. This cannot be achieved by using short-term cash injections to persuade individual operators to convert or invest. On the contrary, what is needed are practicable solutions to current problems facing farms and businesses in the organic food sector. Such solutions must be found with the help of practice-oriented research and the implementation of research findings. Organic farming has an enormous need to catch up in this area. Both corporate and government-funded agricultural research have focused much of their efforts on areas related to



conventional farming in years past. As a consequence, organic farming operations have comparatively few research findings that they can apply to actual practice.



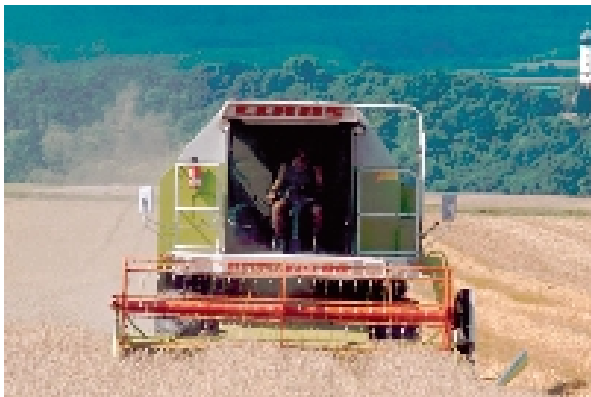
### 3. Oil the organic chain

Farmers and operators are more likely to convert to organic farming when they expect good marketing opportunities. It is therefore extremely important to tap the potential for expanding organic farming, starting at stores and working back to the producers. The first step is to inform consumers about what makes products bearing the new eco-label different. It is also essential to encourage not only food retailers and health food stores but also restaurants and institutional caterers to increase and improve their advertising and self-promotion efforts.

The question of whether organic produce can be successfully marketed depends largely upon its quality and how much more it costs than conventional products. The food industry is therefore a key player in this connection. This is not only a question of „going organic“ but also of making organic produce more competitive vis-à-vis conventional products with the help of innovation and rationalization. Government can help here by conducting research and conveying know-

ledge and information. The more transparent getting information is, the lower the barriers to „going organic“ are.

Farmers are the first link in the food production chain. Most farms tend to be small, making farmers particularly dependent on government measures in research, development and know-how to fill the gaps in their knowledge about and experience with both the production and marketing of organic produce.



#### 4. Use modern media

Today, people are inundated by information of every kind. It is therefore not enough to simply make information about organic farming „available“ just anywhere and anyhow. The information on offer must be available to all and be presented in an interesting and understandable way so that it does not take much effort for different groups to use it as they need it. This is why the Federal Organic Farming Scheme has given center stage to setting up a centralized Internet portal for organic farming matters.

This portal was designed to offer everyone – from elementary schoolchildren to university graduates – the information they are looking for, in a form that fits their needs.

In addition to the Internet portal, the scheme also uses mass media in traditional ways to inform the general public about organic farming and to publicize the Internet portal as an important source of more extensive information about organic farming. Active efforts are being taken to reach operators and draw their attention to organic farming, using primarily those channels where this important target group usually receives other advertising messages. These include attractive presentations at trade fairs and film reports on successful farms converting to organic farming, all aimed at gradually correc-



ting the outdated image of technologically backward organic farmers in overalls.

Media and the Internet cannot, however, take the place of personal contact. The effect of a person-to-person discussion between „colleagues“ or between farmers and other groups of society

cannot be rated highly enough. For this reason, those producers and consumers who find their way to the central Internet portal will also find information about demonstration farms where they can directly experience organic farming and meet the farmers behind it.



## 5. Ensure sustainability

The real challenge policy-makers have to meet is to initiate a process to gradually expand organic farming and to improve this process on an ongoing basis. Setting up a two-year federal program that intervenes in the plans of farmers, manufacturers and distributors and then abandoning the individual projects to their fate even before the program has expired would not be very helpful. The two-year Federal Organic Farming Scheme, however, is part of a comprehensive organic farming policy.

The Federal Organic Farming Scheme aims to remedy within a short time frame weak points that particularly hinder the expansion of organic farming and which other policy fields have failed to tackle adequately to date. However, some of these weak points cannot be constructively eli-

minated in the course of a two-year program. For this reason, elements falling into this category, such as the Internet portal and efforts in the field of research and development, were laid out right from the start for a period of more than two years. Special care is being taken in all parts of the scheme to ensure that rather than giving priority to serving the contractors' interests, the individual measures fit optimally into the overall concept.

## 2. Measures being conducted under the Federal Organic Farming Scheme

The Federal Organic Farming Scheme contains a wealth of measures to eliminate the primary obstacles to the balanced, sustainable growth of supply and demand on the market for organic produce. These measures include:

- Providing concrete assistance to farms that already produce organic food and farms wanting to convert to organic production. This assistance covers a wide range of information, training and advisory activities. Information about organic farming will be provided on the Internet, at trade fairs, to multipliers and at seminars.
- Informing the primary and processing stages about the rules governing organic production. Activities here include providing suggestions and ideas to foster innovation and competition, as well as assistance to facilitate the exchange of information at seminars, trade fairs and on the Internet.

- ▶ Intensively preparing trade so that it is able to satisfy consumer wishes for advice that is both good and fair. This entails offering people working in retail trade further training opportunities.
- ▶ Providing consumers with pinpointed information about the organic farming production system and about the value and merits of organic produce. These activities also include offering institutional caterers qualified advice on converting to organic fare and developing information for use by young people, day-care facilities and schools providing general education.
- ▶ Setting up and operating a centralized Internet portal to serve as an „information hub“ where the latest information from various sources is brought together and edited to be understandable and tailored to meet people's needs.
- ▶ Supporting research and development projects as a superordinate measure. This, along with measures to foster the transfer of technology and know-how, is to fill existing gaps in people's knowledge about and experience with organic farming.

## Overview of individual measures

### Set A – Agricultural production



- A1 The central Organic Farming Internet portal
- A2 Development of information material on organic farming for classroom instruction at agricultural vocational schools and agricultural trade and technical schools
- A3 Continuing training for advisers, veterinarians and heads of working groups
- A4 Grants to cover the cost of obtaining conversion advice
- A5 Informational events on organic farming for active and young farmers
- A6 Establishment of a network of demonstration farms
- A7 Development and production of film reports
- A8 Presentation of organic farming at agricultural trade fairs



### Set B – Primary marketing and processing

- B1 The central Organic Farming Internet portal
- B2 Information material on the processing of organic produce for use in basic and continuing training activities in the food sector and food industry
- B3 Information for the food industry
- B4 Presentations at food industry trade fairs to demonstrate the processing of organic produce
- B5 The Organic Food Innovation award

### Set C – Trade, marketing and consumers

- C1 The central Organic Farming Internet portal
- C2 Consumer information about the organic farming production system
  - ▶ Information campaign
  - ▶ Press and media work
  - ▶ Experience Organic Food days
  - ▶ Traveling exhibits, information stands, decentralized events
  - ▶ Events for young people
  - ▶ Games for pre-schoolers
  - ▶ Film competition with events



- ▶ Coordination with producers and trade
- ▶ Evaluation of all C2 measures

- C3 Set up a photographic archive on organic farming
- C4 Information material on organic farming for use in schools offering general education
- C5 The Organic Farming at School competition
- C6 Information for persons working in food retailing and in health food retailing
- C7 Concepts, check lists and manuals for evaluation of the presentation of organic produce at various sales outlets

C8 Information on the use of organic produce for the restaurant trade and in-dustrial caterers

C9 Awards to cooks who use organic produce And an evaluation of the entire scheme

**D/E: Research and development projects and measures for the transfer of technology and knowledge in the organic farming field**



## Individual measures in detail

### Set A – Agricultural production

**A1 The central Organic Farming Internet portal (also measures B1 and C1)**

There is still not enough information available about organic farming. Not just producers and consumers, but also businesses that trade in agricultural goods, first-stage processors and commercial enterprises that want to devote themselves more to organic farming are also faced with enormous problems with being properly informed.

For example, there is no list which companies wanting to market primarily organic produce from specific regions can use to find suitable sources. Institutional caterers who want to use

organic produce also have only a limited overview of the market. Consumers and local multipliers such as journalists, schools and consumer advice centers wish to get an overall picture of which direct marketers, health food stores, catering services and even organizers of study trips are to be found in their area without having to go to great lengths.

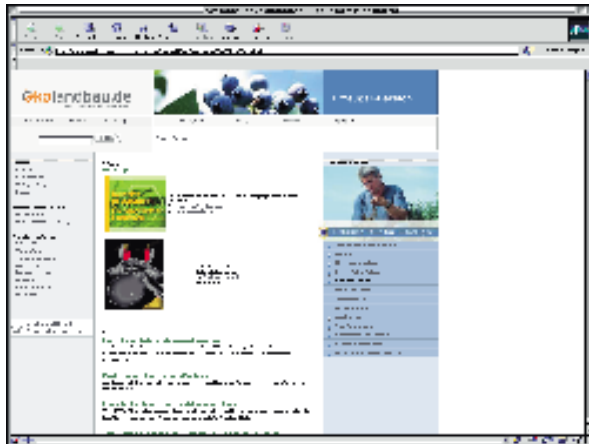
Information on specific areas is available from a variety of institutions and agencies. This information is not, however, interlinked in any way and is frequently not tailored to the needs of the individuals seeking it.

The Organic Farming portal functions as an „information hub.“ Here, the latest findings from various sources are gathered, processed and put into a form that is understandable and tailored to meet demand. The portal efficiently provides information for all interested user groups. These groups include farmers, food processors (such as bakers, butchers, brewers), food manufacturers (in the convenience food sector, for example) and distributors (such as those in the first marketing stage, food retailing or the health food trade) and companies in the catering trade. The portal also offers a wide variety of information on organic farming, horticulture and special-purpose crops, on processing organic produce and about organic produce for consultants and advisers who work in these fields, scientists, veterinarians, students and teachers as well as consumers in general.

Special pages for children and young people offer information tailored to these age groups. Here, visitors can learn in fun ways about the principles underlying organic farming and the characteristic features of organic food. This sub-portal also offers an extensive collection of information material for classroom use.



The Organic Farming portal also features progress reports and updates on the results of the measures being implemented under the Federal Organic Farming Scheme. This Internet portal provides access to all important information, services and developments.



Besides calendars of events, address databases, discussion fora and a wide variety of material for downloading, this portal also offers a comprehensive search function and an alphabetical index.

The Organic Farming portal can be accessed at [www.oekolandbau.de](http://www.oekolandbau.de). Visitors interested in receiving the latest news on selected portal areas on a continuous basis can add their names to a special mailing list. The Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture is interested in ensuring that the Organic Farming portal also takes users' wishes and needs into optimal consideration and welcomes ideas and suggestions for the portal's content. These can be sent to [info@oekolandbau.de](mailto:info@oekolandbau.de).

## A2 Development of information material on organic farming for classroom instruction at vocational agricultural schools and agricultural trade and technical schools

Germany has no standardized, centrally available information material on organic farming for use at vocational agricultural schools or agricultural trade and technical schools. At present, instructors and students have to compile information from a wide variety of sources as needed. This project aims to rectify this unsatisfactory situation by addressing information on questions of relevance to various topics (such as conversion planning and conversion calculation) in ways that not only make its use in the classroom attractive to both students and teachers but also produces good learning results. Curricula and their contents are analyzed as part of this measure to ensure that instruction materials include entry-level information but also deal extensively with all aspects of organic farming.

This measure includes drawing up and producing brochures, sets of transparencies, documents for photocopying, interactive CDs and exercises. Vocational agricultural schools and agricultural trade and technical schools are each sent a free copy of these materials which are additionally made available for downloading at the Internet portal.

### **A3 Continuing training for advisers, veterinarians, heads of working groups and a nationwide trainee program for graduates of universities and technical colleges**

The demand coming from agricultural enterprises for qualified advice on converting to organic farming has grown sharply and cannot be adequately met at the present time. Bottlenecks in advisory services lead not only to delays due to longer waits. Farms could also face production errors and a lack of profitability as a consequence. However, many conventional advisers and veterinarians feel the hurdle is still too high for them to deal with organic farming or to become professionally involved in this field. Instruction at universities and technical colleges is often very theoretical and concrete problems involved in organic farming generally receive too little attention.

Against this background this measure offers an extensive range of continuing training activities:

- ▶ A trainee program at advisory organizations in the organic farming field for university and technical college graduates. This program is designed to give participants a practical introduction to their future work as organic farming consultants. This training also includes four one-week courses at joint training centers to coach management skills.
- ▶ Introductory seminars that include study trips for advisers who presently work in conventional agriculture.
- ▶ Introductory seminars for veterinarians. These seminars last several days and include study trips.



- ▶ Nationwide working group meetings lasting several days for special advisers and veterinarians who already work in organic farming.
- ▶ Advanced training courses for volunteer heads of regional organic farming working groups. These courses last several days and focus on moderation methods and public relations work.

### **A4 Grants to cover the cost of obtaining conversion advice**

It is vital for farmers considering converting their operations to organic farming methods to be thoroughly advised in advance in order to avoid making wrong business decisions. To help them take the step to getting qualified advice, a measure is being planned to provide all farming operations that seek advice from licensed experts with a grant to partly cover the extension costs incurred. This grant will not be contingent upon whether the particular farm converts to organic farming methods.

This measure will also compile a list of licensed advisers. This list includes advisers who demonstrably have the necessary professional experience.



#### **A5 Informational events on organic farming for active and young farmers**

In Germany, discussions about organic farming are frequently colored by ideology. However, objective information is a prerequisite for deciding which path is best for a particular farm. Informational events covering a wide variety of agricultural topics are usually offered in the evening and primarily in the wintertime to accommodate farmers' work schedules. To date, however, these activities have often ignored or paid inadequate attention to the subject of organic farming.

Providing comprehensive information could potentially induce farm managers, young farmers and farm employees to take a closer look at organic farming.

- ▶ As part of this measure, 200 events to inform people about organic farming will be held throughout Germany in the years 2002 and 2003. Scheduled in the afternoon or evening, these activities offer an extensive range of factual information on organic farming.

These events target all interested farm managers, young farmers and employees at farms that have used conventional farming methods to date. Since its purpose is to foster a better understanding of organic farming in general, this information is provided regardless of whether participants are actually considering converting their operation.

- ▶ Approximately 20 to 25 weekend activities revolving around organic farming will be offered especially for young farmers in 2002 and 2003. These events start in the afternoon and end two days later, also in the afternoon. They are aimed at all young farmers, – regardless of whether they have a conventional or

organic farming operation, who have taken over or will be taking over a farm and at junior managers who have or are slated to hold a managerial position at a larger farm. The aim of these activities is to convey in general the most objective picture possible of organic farming. Consequently, participation is not dependent upon whether the individual is seriously considering converting to organic farming.

- ▶ An interim evaluation was conducted in late 2002 to provide information on how well these activities have been accepted. The content of these events will be adjusted accordingly if necessary.

#### **A6 Establishment of a network of organic demonstration farms**

The opportunity to exchange information directly with other farmers and to have a hands-on look at organic farms is extremely important for farmers who are considering converting from conventional to organic farming. Some regions, however, do not have any organic farming operations that would be appropriate for this or they do not have farmers who would be willing to make their farms available for demonstration purposes.

For this reason, a network of some 200 organic demonstration farms has been set up throughout Germany. This network gives not only farmers but also organic produce marketers and other groups with an interest in organic farming easier access to suitable demonstration farms that could serve as models. It also provides individuals an opportunity to obtain practical information on a person-to-person basis.



The farms comprising this network are located throughout the country and reflect the production priorities typical of their respective region. The farmers participating in this network are willing to open their farm to the public several days a year for a direct exchange of information with other farmers and interested groups.

A central office coordinates and looks after the network and supplies corresponding information material that is tailored to the individual farm.

#### **A7 Development and production of film reports**

Under this measure, film reports are being produced which convey a modern image of organic farming, processing of organic produce as well as of the use of organic produce in catering firms.

These films portray successful business people in the organic food sector and their modern operations with the aim of boosting acceptance of organic farming and enhancing the image of organic food manufacturing.

Farmers and operators in processing and manufacturing who are interested in obtaining information about the possibilities for and limits

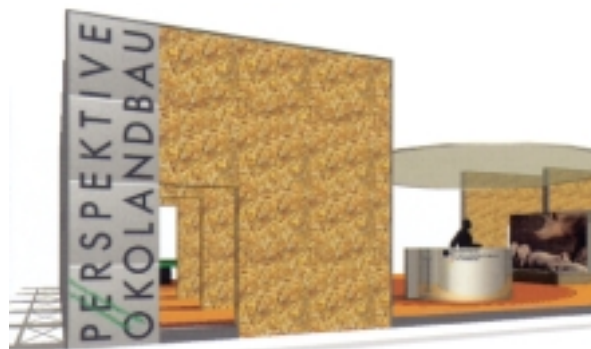
to converting their operations to organic methods sometimes have difficulties finding operations with similar starting conditions in their general vicinity. In these cases, film reports can provide initial information about possibilities and limits because they spotlight a wide variety of operations.

Shorter versions of the individual films are also produced for use at trade fairs and other events in order to inform the respective target group and other consumers about organic farming and the production and preparation of organic produce.

#### **A8 Presentation of organic farming at agricultural trade fairs**

Agricultural trade fairs are extremely important for helping farmers form an opinion and for providing them specialist information. Organic farming has not, however, been able to draw much attention to itself at major agricultural trade shows to date.

For this reason, the special contributions which the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection,



Food and Agriculture has organized for the major trade shows Eurotier 2002 and Agritechnica 2003 showcase organic farming in such a way that it stands out as an attractive and equal-ranking exhibitor next to the stands sponsored by major agribusiness firms. The focus of the Ministry's activities (which include the supporting program and the provision of technical advice) was on organic animal husbandry at Eurotier 2002 and will be on its presentation of organic plant cultivation at Agritechnica 2003.

A mobile exhibition that is suitable for presenting organic farming at smaller trade fairs and regional agricultural shows will also be created.

## Set B – Primary marketing and processing

- B1 The central Organic Farming Internet portal (see A1)**
- B2 Information material on organic farming and on the processing of organic produce for use in basic and continuing training activities in the food sector, including specialized food trade**

The special requirements must be taken into account in industrial, artisanal as well as in on-farm processing of organic produce. At present,



it is often difficult to obtain information about which ingredients are allowed or which processing techniques are the best for particular areas of the food industry (such as butchers or bakers). Vocational training for food-related occupations does not deal sufficiently with the market opportunities or the special requirements involved in the processing of organic produce. It frequently fails to teach students the skills needed for handling raw materials according to organic farming standards. These include not using certain processing aids. This measure develops suitable materials (brochures, sets of transparencies, documents for photocopying, interactive CDs and exercises) for instruction use in various segments of the food industry. These materials are sent to trade and technical schools and can also be downloaded from the Organic Farming portal.

- B3 Information material for the food industry on the use of organic produce**

Many companies in the specialized food trade (such as the butcher's trade or baker's trade) and the food industry (such as industrial processors) have not looked into organic farming to date because they have only vague notions of the possible problems and opportunities involved in converting to organic methods. In many cases, management has no contact to organic farming or the company in question is so small that it cannot make anyone available to look into the matter.

As a first step, special informational events that are geared to a specific sector provide this kind of company basic introductory information. This information is then deepened and developed at specialized seminars on the use of organic

produce. This service is rounded out by a hotline that answers questions three hours a day, Monday through Thursday.

#### **B4 Trade fair presentations to demonstrate the processing of organic produce**

Getting the food industry to start processing organic produce is extremely important for the development of the entire organic food segment. Once important processors convert their production operation to organic produce, farmers will soon follow suit.

Major trade fairs are an extremely important factor in shaping the opinions of decision-makers in both the food industry and agriculture. This applies not only to the specialist information that visitors to such fairs receive but also to their feelings about specific production techniques and production systems. The organic food segment has had little success to date with drawing attention to itself at trade fairs involving the „food industry“ as well.

This is why the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture uses special activities at major food industry trade fairs to present the processing and use of organic produce in such a way that this field can compete with the stands hosted by multinational corporations. The focus of the respective activity (such as the supporting program and technical advice) meshes with the particular fair. One example is the key note Processing of Organic Meat and Meat Products and Organic Milk and Milk Products which was the focus at InterMeat/InterMopro 2002. Another is the Use of Organic Produce in Away-from-Home Consumption at Internorga 2003.

#### **B5 The Organic Food Innovation Award**

Special standards must be observed when processing organic produce. Some of the food technology options that conventional food processors use are not permitted in the processing of organically-produced food. This is why processing and manufacturing organic food is particularly challenging. Making organic farming more competitive will require more innovation in the processing field (including logistics).

Established as an incentive for new developments, an innovation prize is to be awarded in 2003 to single out outstanding innovations in the processing of organic produce.

The selected projects will be presented at the ANUGA 2003 trade fair for the food and beverage industry which will also serve as the venue for the award ceremony.

## Set C – Trade, marketing and consumers

- C1 The central Organic Farming Internet portal (see A1)
- C2 Consumer information about the organic farming production system

The recently launched eco-label provides consumers with information about the quality of the products bearing this new seal. However, there continues to be widespread ignorance about how food is produced and processed on organic farms. To remedy this situation, a large-scale campaign is being conducted in 2002 and 2003 to inform consumers about important issues revolving around organic farming. This campaign will use objective information to dismantle the overemphasis on ideological arguments and reduce people's reservations about trying something new, all with an eye to setting into motion an objective discussion and consideration of the pros and cons. Such an approach is the most likely to change consumer behavior on a lasting basis. This campaign uses a variety of communications media in order to reach as many people as possible.

Here, consumer information is being provided through several different measures:

### ► Information campaign

The information campaign primarily aims at enhancing consumer perception of and attention to organic produce. In addition, it is designed to convey basic information about the production process as well as about the quality of organic produce so that consumers recognize the personal and societal benefits. For this purpose, conventional media such as advertisements,

brochures, posters and reports are being used first and foremost.



### ► Press and media work

Intensive, nationwide press and media work is being used to arouse and serve the interest in organic farming, organic processing and final products among journalists and members of the media. Subjects related to organic production systems are prepared for use in the media, in the form of articles, reports, interviews and the



like, to inform and sensitize multipliers and consumers.

► Experience Organic Food days

Experience Organic Food days under the banner of „Eat and Drink with All the Senses“ were conducted throughout Germany from October 3 – 6, 2002. The Experience Organic Food days were opened with a kick-off event during the celebrations commemorating the Day of German Unity in Berlin on October 3, 2002. „Arenas of the Senses“ were set up in 12 cities, each creating a realm revolving around the five senses. These arenas provided consumers an opportunity to learn that besides being beneficial to the environment and good health, organic produce are also a sensual experience. The Experience Organic Food days were flanked by numerous other decentralized events about the country (more about those below). Experience Organic Food days are also scheduled to be held in various cities throughout Germany in 2003 as part of the Federal Experience Organic Food Program.

► Decentralized events

To supplement the other consumer information measures, direct contact with consumers is being pursued with the help of traveling exhibitions, information stands and events at organic farms, mills, bakeries and the like. Twelve traveling exhibitions are being set up for a week at a time at busy public locations throughout the country. The exhibitions offer information about the special features of organic farming and produce and provide answers to the most important questions raised by consumers. Twelve information stands will also be prepared and set up at weekly farmers' markets and trade fairs for distributing information and brochures and for

offering one-on-one discussions. Activities such as tours and open houses are being conducted in conjunction with schools, special-interest groups and institutions on location at organic farms, mills, bakeries and other processing facilities.



► Informing young people about organic farming

A number of special informational events target young people with the aim of arousing their interest in agriculture in general and in organic farming and organic produce in particular. Two show trucks with multivision shows and other features are being deployed primarily at schools and events for young people. Besides transporting the audiovisual program offered by the multivision show, these show trucks also offer interesting interactive ways of learning about organic farming and its products. Attractive give-aways are handed out or raffled off.

► **Organic farming games for pre-schoolers**  
Most children know very little about modern agriculture or where food comes from. However, fundamental attitudes that have a long-term influence on the individual's behavior are often established during the pre-school years. Which is why a game box has been developed as part of the Federal Organic Farming Scheme to teach children between three and six years of age about agriculture and, most importantly, about organic production methods. Designed to be played by groups, Krümel the Tomcat's Farm is a game that can be played by entire pre-school groups. Besides explaining the rules of the game, the accompanying booklet for teachers also provides general background information, a wealth of other ideas for playtime activities and additional suggestions for teaching children about organic farming. The game box is being provided to all pre-school facilities in Germany free of charge.

► **Film competition for film schools**  
A film competition for film schools of all types on the subject of organic farming specifically targets students, young people and young consumer groups in general. The winning films and commercials will be shown in public to foster acceptance of organic farming, enhance the image of organic food production and support organic produce. Prizes will be awarded in the three categories 30-second commercials, 5-minute films and 20-minute films.

► **Coordination of consumer information measures with producers and trade**  
The individual measures being conducted as part of the consumer information campaign (C2) will be synchronized with consumer information campaigns launched by producers and organic

food distributors. Displays with brochures from the above mentioned information campaign and information and tasting stands are set up at various sales outlets.

► **Evaluation of the consumer information measures**  
Here, the measures conducted in the course of the consumer information campaign (C2) are evaluated to determine each measure's effectiveness and how it influences consumers. Resultant findings will be used to draw conclusions for ongoing and future projects.

### **C3 Set up a photographic archive on organic farming**

For certain parts of the Federal Organic Farming Scheme, such as the central Internet portal or presentations of organic farming at trade fairs, and for collaboration with the media in general, it is extremely important to have a collection of suitable photographs on hand so that providing photos when needed does not entail time-consuming searches.

A photographic archive with 2,000 to 3,000 photos relating to organic farming is presently being set up to meet this need. The first pictures were made available for downloading at the central Internet portal in October 2002. The purpose of the photos in this archive is to document organic farming as a modern form of agriculture. The archive also features an extensive subject index which helps even non-specialists find the images they are looking for.



#### **C4 Information material on organic farming for use in schools offering general education**

General-education schools play an important role in informing children and adolescents about organic farming and food production. Whether and to what degree these subjects can be conveyed to students depends to a large extent upon how good the available information material is.

With this in mind, information on organic farming and the methods used to process organic produce has been prepared in attractive and easily understandable forms for all levels of general-education schools and is being provided for classroom use in order to foster understanding for this method of farming. In addition to a factual analysis and methodological and teaching tips, this information also includes sets of transparencies, work sheets for photocopying, exercises and suggestions for study trips and projects which are not limited to use at school. Instruction units and materials are made available for downloading at the Internet portal and schools are notified when they become available.



#### **C5 The Organic Farming at School competition**

Going beyond classroom instruction, a new competition has been set up to motivate students to deal with the subject of organic farming in active and fun ways. The competition is open to students and classes in various grades. Entrants must focus on organic farming in a way that reflects the respective class-room subject. Be it a radio play, collage or web site, the students themselves decide on the medium to be used. A jury will evaluate the submissions and select the best work. The prizes will be presented to the winners at a public ceremony.

#### **C6 Information for persons working in food retailing or in health food retailing**

Attractive food is inviting. Consequently, the way organic produce are presented plays a crucial role in buying decisions. The importance of this fact is frequently underestimated or the particular store does not have qualified personnel for dealing with customer expectations or presenting products in ways that meet those expectations.

An unprofessional presentation of organic produce not only lessens sales success but also helps give organic farming a somewhat backward image. A special continuing training concept has been developed to reduce existing deficits among food retailing staff and, on a separate basis, among people who work in health food stores. Appropriate materials (booklets, transparencies and visual aids) plus introductory and continuing training courses that include study trips to farms and food processing operations which follow organic principles have been created for this purpose. The continuing training

concept and attendant materials can also be used outside the framework of the Federal Organic Farming Scheme.

#### **C7 Concepts, check lists and manuals for evaluating the presentation of organic produce at sales outlets**

Efforts here revolve around developing a concept for evaluating the presentation of organic produce as one of the measures aimed at improving the presentation of organic produce. This will give food retailing and other sales outlets (health food stores, bakeries, butcher shops and the like) the opportunity to have test persons assess their presentation of organic produce. The results are then evaluated and corresponding suggestions for improvements are developed. When desired, particularly good presentations will be showcased on the central Internet portal.



#### **C8 Information about the use of organic produce for the restaurant and industrial catering trades**

Organic produce has played only a subordinate role in the catering trade to date. But it is this market segment in particular that offers enormous potential for spreading the consumption of organic produce in coming years. Many restaurant owners and institutional catering managers have only vague information about organic produce. Problems in procuring organic produce, with the higher price of organic produce, questions about product quality or about the degree of preprocessing are viewed as hurdles to using organic produce in the first place. Reservations about organic farming often hinder people from taking the first step toward even considering the subject of organic produce or the particular company is so small that it cannot spare any of its employees to look into organic produce on an indepth basis.

This measure has developed suitable information material that provides a survey of fundamental knowledge about organic farming and the various aspects of using organic produce in institutional catering kitchens. A manual has also been prepared with practical tips for introducing organic produce and for successfully purchasing such produce on an ongoing basis.

Informational events for all categories of bulk consumers are being conducted throughout the country, offering not only basic information but also the opportunity for personal contact. These are rounded out by workshops and study trips to farms. These activities show interested companies what opportunities await them in this new market. They also offer a chance to discuss technical questions and establish contacts.

Additionally, a hotline has been set up to provide interested companies competent information and supplementary specialist know-how every day from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. from July 2002 through October 2003.

### **C9 Awards for cooks who use organic produce**

In addition to the above information services on the use of organic produce for the catering trade and industrial caterers (C8), „models“ can also help dismantle prejudices and reservations. To assist the above information services, organic farming operations, which have implemented an organic farming concept, are being awarded prizes in the competition „Bio-Star 2003.“ The competition distinguishes between six categories: refectories, canteens, social services, catering trade/hotels, catering firms as well as schools and day-care centres for children. The award ceremony will be held in March 2003 at the INTER-NORGA trade fair. The concepts of the award-winners will be presented at ANUGA 2003. Award-winning companies will be allowed to use their award for their own marketing activities.

## Evaluation of the entire Federal Organic Farming Scheme

As a first step, a plan for evaluating the entire Federal Organic Farming Scheme is being developed. This plan will provide the basis for another call for tenders for conducting the evaluation. The objectives of this evaluation will include answering the following questions:

- ▶ Is the combination of measures used by the Federal Organic Farming Scheme adequate for achieving the scheme's specific objectives?
- ▶ Have the scheme's objectives been achieved? Which measures should be continued (in modified form if need be)?
- ▶ Was the (relative and absolute) amount of funding adequate for the measures?
- ▶ Did the Office for the Federal Organic Farming Scheme implement the scheme (tender and award of contract) effectively?



## Sets D and E – Support for research and development projects and for measures for the transfer of technology and knowledge in the organic farming sector

Gaps in people's knowledge and experience are considered to be major obstacles to the growth and spread of organic farming. These gaps are to be filled by increasing the amount of research being conducted.

Government assistance for research and development is particularly necessary because industrial research findings benefit conventional farming much more than they do the organic farming sector. Given that organic farming largely foregoes the use of purchased inputs and in light of the comparatively small size of this subsector, industry seldom finds it to be worth its while to invest in research and development in this field. The lack of knowledge in turn hampers the continued development of organic farming and production growth.

In light of this situation, the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture has developed a Program to Support Research and Development Projects and Measures for the Transfer of Technology and Knowledge in the Organic Farming Sector on the basis of the proposals submitted by the project team. This program pursues the goal of filling important knowledge and experience gaps in the organic farming sector and, in the process, boosting its competitive strength, from production to sales, on a lasting basis. It targets university institutes, research facilities, private enterprises, organizations and research centers that conduct departmental research under the ministry's purview. This program was originally set up to run through the year 2003. It is now to be extended past this date.

Based on this program, research contracts are being awarded for specific topics which would help meet special needs for advisory and decision-making aids at the Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture.

The ministry can, on the basis of a special funding guideline, award grants or allocations for other projects arising from this program which do not directly contribute to meeting the ministry's needs in this area. This guideline differentiates between projects in the area of the production, processing and marketing of products listed in Annex I of the EC Treaty (projects within the agricultural sector) and projects outside the production, processing and marketing of products listed in Annex I of the EC treaty (projects outside the agricultural sector).

In keeping with the objectives pursued by the Federal Organic Farming Scheme, funding will be provided for projects in the following areas in particular:

- ▶ Projects to boost the efficiency of agricultural production methods with the aim of increasing the organic produce market's prospects for growth.
- ▶ Projects that seek new strategies for making species-specific animal husbandry compatible with profitability and improved quality.
- ▶ Projects that balance as optimally as possible organic farming with the objectives of nature conservation.
- ▶ Projects that seek solutions to urgent problems arising in connection with the storage, first marketing stage, processing and marketing of organic produce.
- ▶ Projects that support and foster the transfer of technology to practice.
- ▶ Projects that fill existing gaps in people's knowledge about the problems that organic farming faces at political, legal and societal levels.

The Program to Support Research and Development Projects, the ministry guidelines, Annex I of the EC Treaty and a list of projects and research contracts that have already been approved or awarded can be found at the Internet address <http://www.bundesprogramm-oekolandbau.de> under the heading Measures and Tenders.

### 3. Implementation of the Federal Organic Farming Scheme

#### The contract awarding process

The Federal Organic Farming Scheme is being implemented largely through the awarding of contracts. These activities must comply with the requirements set forth in the contract awarding regulations.

The invitation to tender and/or the tendering documents list the conditions and criteria for participation. The tasks to be performed are divided into lots on the basis of type and scope in order to give small and medium-sized businesses an opportunity to participate in the competition as well.

The Office for the Federal Organic Farming Scheme reviews those tenders that were received before the stipulated deadline. The final decision on which tenders will be awarded contracts lies with the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture. In most cases, external experts and members of the respective advisory committee are also consulted in the evaluation of the tenders received. The jury that decided on the contract for the Internet portal included members of the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food, four representatives of the Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture, and one representative each from the Federation of German Consumer Organisations, the German Agricultural Marketing Board (CMA) and the Federal Agricultural Research Centre (FAL).

#### Advisory committees

A cross-sectoral committee provides flanking support for the entire scheme. Members of this committee offer the requisite scientific superstructure and have the technical background necessary for coordinating the scheme's content with the organic farming sector's actual needs.

#### Members of the advisory committee for the Federal Organic Farming Scheme

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Prof. Edda Müller</b>             | Managing member of the Presiding Board of the Federation of German Consumer Organisations |
| <b>Elke Röder</b>                    | Director of the German Association for Natural Food and Products                          |
| <b>Thomas Dosch</b>                  | Bioland – Federal Association for Organic Biological Agriculture                          |
| <b>Dr. Felix Prinz zu Löwenstein</b> | Chairman of Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (Organic Food Industry Association)   |
| <b>Prof. Dr. Jürgen Heß</b>          | Department of Organic Agriculture, University of Kassel                                   |
| <b>Prof. Dr. Stephan Dabbert</b>     | Institute of Farm Management, University of Hohenheim                                     |

In addition, each of the projects conducted under the scheme will be flanked by a separate advisory committee. The members of these committees have precisely defined functions and have been selected with an eye to ensuring that the committee as a whole offers the specific technical knowledge necessary for evaluating and supporting the respective project with its own particular features and target groups. The advisory committee for the central Internet portal is listed here as an example for these committees.

## Members of the advisory committee for the central Organic Farming Internet portal

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Dr. Felix Prinz zu Löwenstein</b>    | Chairman of the Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (Organic Food Industry Association)  | Represents the interests of organic food associations in the advisory committee<br>As a practising farmer, also represents the target group „farmers“                        |
| <b>Prof. Dr. Ulrich Hamm</b>            | University of Neubrandenburg   | Specialist knowledge in the field of trade and marketing (particularly food marketing)   |
| <b>Prof. Dr. Jürgen Heß</b>             | University of Kassel<br>Department of Organic Farming and Plant Production   | Co-author of the Federal Organic Farming Scheme<br>In-depth knowledge of the scheme's objectives<br>Specialized knowledge of research involving organic farming              |
| <b>Richard Marxen</b>                   | Agentur M&P  | PR   |
| <b>Prof. Dr. Angelika Meier-Ploeger</b> | University of Kassel<br>Department of Organic Food Quality and Food Culture  | Expertise in designing an attractive portal for the „children and adolescents“ target group  |
| <b>Dr. Hiltrud Nieberg</b>              | Federal Agricultural Research Centre (FAL)   | Co-author of the Federal Organic Farming Scheme<br>Organic farming expert  |
| <b>Anne Ort-Gottwald</b>                | Editor of the magazine Brigitte published by Gruner + Jahr in Hamburg  | Combines an interest in organic farming issues with professional know-how in conveying these issues to the general public  |
| <b>Hans Heinrich Matthiesen</b>         | Hessischer Rundfunk, Frankfurt (Landfunk)<br><br>Member of the executive committee of the German Federation of Agricultural Journalists (VADJ) | Has also knowledge of the information needs of conventional farmers<br>Contribution to the portal's objective of informing as many farmers as possible about organic farming |
| <b>Joachim Weckmann</b>                 | Managing director of the company Märkisches Landbrot GmbH  | Specialized knowledge in the processing field, as a pioneer in the organic baked goods sector<br>Also extensive corresponding knowledge of the topic of the Internet         |
| <b>Doris Senf</b>                       | Buyer for the University of Oldenburg canteen<br>Pioneered the use of organic produce in industrial catering                                   | Specialized knowledge in developing information tailored to actual practice in the catering trade  |

|                                |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Dr. Steffen Borzner</b>     | Agentur „public affairs“<br>Operator of the Internet site<br>www.demeter.de  | Spezialized knowledge in efficient interface management with the Internet services offered by organic farming associations   |
| <b>Markus Buch</b>             | Co-owner of Buch – der Markt, a small family-owned business in Germany's Taunus region   | Good knowledge of conditions in conventional retail trade<br>Many years' successful experience in marketing organic produce<br>(Organic produce account for 10 percent of turnover at his superstore which has an integrated health-food store.)<br>Contribution: Adjusting the service to dovetail more closely with employee requirements and retail traders |
| <b>Prof. Dr. Helmut Krcmar</b> | University of Technology in Munich,<br>Department of Informatics, Chair for Business Informatics<br>Topics: Information management und computer aid for team work;<br>The Ökoradar project, an innovative Internet portal involving more than 80 German companies and institutions | Specialized knowledge in the field of information and communications technology  |
| <b>Dipl.-Ing. agr. Hubert</b>  | Hessian Service Centre of Agriculture, management consulting   | Technical consultant for organic farm business management  |
| <b>Antje Mann</b>              | Head of the Food and Nutrition Division of the Bavarian Consumer Advice Center   | Knowledge of consumer information needs based on her consultancy experience in the organic produce field<br>Experience with satisfying these needs using the Internet  |



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