

ICROFS *news*

4/2010
November

Newsletter from the International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems

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Attention:
ISO FAR submission deadline
is extended to 31 December
2010. See [page 14](#).



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- 3rd ISO FAR Scientific Conference: New submission deadline: 31.12.2010

- New version of Organic.Edunet



Organic Food Quality & Health

- FQH 2011: Organic Food and Health Research

- Journal: Organic Agriculture



Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists

- 24th NJF Congress in Uppsala

- CERTCOST workshop at BioFach 2011

- CERTCOST workshop on preventing fraud in Brussels



59 CORE Organic II pre-proposals

Your input to ICROFS news

We listen to our readers's response with pleasure, as we are here for you!
Therefore, any responses are more than welcome, be it about the new format, suggestions to improvements, changes, content or anything you can think of.

Contact us at: simon.rebsdorf@icrofs.org



59 CORE Organic II pre-proposals

The CORE Organic II application process takes place in two steps:

Step 1:

The deadline for the first step was in October 2010. The 21 CORE Organic partner countries had a total of 59 research pre-proposals for the first call. Each project consists of researchers from between 3 and 13 countries.

Now, the partners have assessed these pre-proposals of the first CORE Organic II call. And a short-listing of applications was performed at a meeting on the 25th and 26th November 2010. All applicants will be informed by the 7 December 2010.

Step 2:

Short-listed applicants will then be invited to submit a full proposal with a deadline of 14 February 2011. A guideline for full proposal applicants will be available on this web-page.

Full applications have also to be submitted through the call submission website.

Read more at the CORE Organic II project website: www.coreorganic2.org.



Organic RDD programme is in place

In September, the Danish Food Industry Agency (FERV) received 50 applications for the future Organic Research, Development and Demonstrations programme, Organic RDD. This programme will run from 2011-2013.

In total, applicants have applied for four times the fixed amount of 92 mio. Danish kroner.

The final composition of the Organic RDD programme is planned to be published during December 2010.

Follow the process at ICROFS' website: www.icrofs.org.

ICROFS coordinates research project in three African countries

From 2011, ICROFS is coordinating the new research project called ProGrOV.

This project will focus on improving productivity and growth in existing organic value chains in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Read more on [page 11](#).

Organic Eprints is your database!

Especially for newcomers users of the on-line research database, Organic Eprints, we bring some information about the free, open research archive.

Organic Eprints is an open access archive for publications, project descriptions and other information about research on organic food and farming systems.

The archive was established in 2002 by ICROFS, and is today run in collaboration between ICROFS, [FiBL](#) (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture) and [BÖL](#) (Bundesprogramm Ökologischer Landbau) with the help from national editors from several European countries.

Organic Eprints contains over 10,000 items and has over 14,000 registered users. It has more than 5,000 visits a day.

Ilse A. Rasmussen is the coordinator in ICROFS. Her E-mail is IlseA.rasmussen@icrofs.org.

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Find us on at the Facebook page "ICROFSorg."



Read about [Organic.Edunet](#) on [page 14](#).

A better nitrogen use to improve organic wheat production



CORE organic

Different crop management strategies are investigated in representative soils and climatic conditions of Denmark to enhance the yield and quality of organic wheat. The agronomic practices include the use of manure, catch crops and the composition of the crop rotation. Among these, manure application was the main factor affecting yields. Model predictions indicate that wheat yield could be improved by increasing manure nitrogen.

The sustainability of organic farming largely relies on the quality of production and the price to consumers. In the case of cereals, the improvement of grain yield and quality is essential in a competitive production system.

The "AGronomical and TEchnological methods to improve ORGanic wheat quality" (AGTEC-Org) project has been developed under the CORE Organic ERA-net to identify agronomical and food processing technologies that enhance the baking quality and nutritional value of organic wheat. This article focuses on the effects of soil type, manure application and use of catch crops on the grain yield and quality of organic wheat.

Field trials in Denmark

The results presented correspond to experiments conducted in Denmark during the years 2007 and 2008 on three sites differing in soil type: loamy sand (Foulum), sandy loam (Flakkebjerg) and a coarse sandy (Jyndevad). Average annual rainfall at the three sites is 700, 625 and 960 mm, respectively.

The crop rotation was composed by spring barley followed by faba bean, potatoes and winter wheat. Manured winter wheat received an average of 110 kg N per ha from untreated pig slurry in spring.

Catch crops were undersown with spring barley, faba bean and winter wheat in spring at Foulum and Jyndevad, and after the harvest of these crops at

By [Jordi Doltra](#), Aarhus University, Dept. of Agroecology and Environment, Faculty of Agricultural Science, Denmark.

Flakkebjerg. All catch crop residues were added to the soil. No catch crops were used in one treatment. Crop management data is summarized in Table 1.

Soil and crop management effects

A soil effect as well as a manure effect in grain dry matter and quality was found in terms of grain

Treatment	+M +C	- M +C	+M -C
FOULUM			
Soil organic carbon (%)	2,0	2,2	2,2
Sowing	25. Sep	25. Sep	25. Sep
Manure (N-P-K) (kg per ha)	110-21-120	0-0-70	110-21-120
Harvest date	12. Aug	12. Aug	12. Aug
FLAKKEBJERG			
Soil organic carbon (%)	0,9	0,9	0,9
Sowing	5. Oct	5. Oct	5. Oct
Manure (N-P-K) (kg per ha)	110-17-90	0-0-60	110-17-90
Harvest date	21. Aug	21. Aug	21. Aug
JYNDEVAD			
Soil organic carbon (%)	1,1	1,1	1,2
Sowing	26. Sep	26. Sep	26. Sep
Manure (N-P-K) (kg per ha)	110-18-105	0-0-70	110-18-105
Harvest date	9. Aug	9. Aug	9. Aug

Table 1. Crop management: +M/-M (with/without manure); +C/-C (with/without catch crops). Average dates are presented. Soil organic matter was measured in autumn 2008.



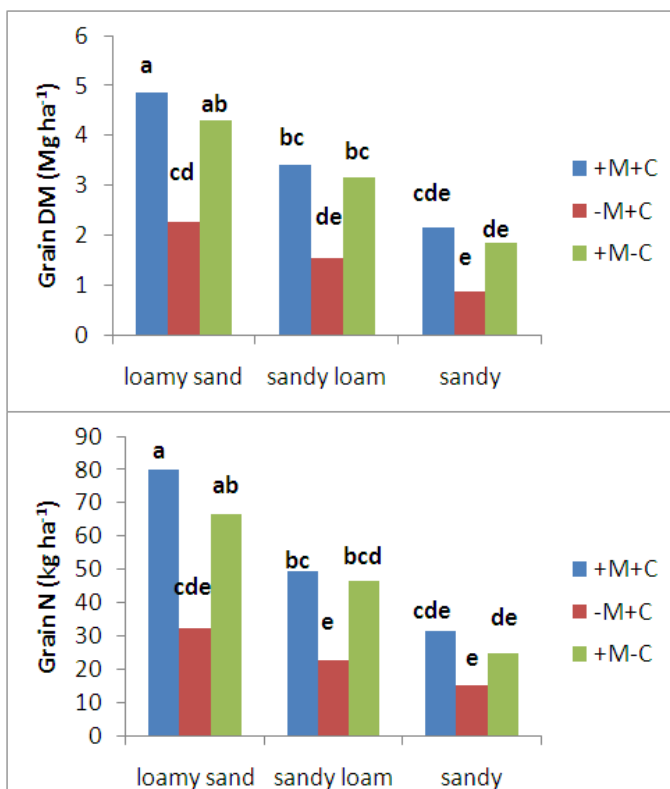


Fig. 1. Winter wheat grain dry matter (DM) and N yield in three different soils and cropping systems. Values are averages of years 2007 and 2008. Different letters indicate significant effect at $P < 0.05$.

nitrogen content (Fig.1). Grain yields were higher in the loamy sand soil and lower in the coarse sandy soil. Within each site application of manure resulted in a significant benefit. The effect was more pronounced in the loamy sand soil where yield was about twice (increase of 2.6 Mg per ha and 48 kg N per ha) in comparison with the treatment without manure. A minor impact of manure on yield and grain N was found in

the more sandy soil (maximum increase of 1.3 Mg per ha and 16 kg N per ha). Introducing catch crops in the rotation in the treatments with manure had no significant effect on yields. This may relate to the cropping system characteristics, since no catch crops were used with the crop previous to winter wheat. Thus, the N mineralized from catch crops residues had probably been taken up by the crop prior to the winter wheat.

References

Doltra, J., Lægdsmand, M., Olesen, J.E. 2011. Cereal yield and quality as affected by nitrogen availability in organic and conventional arable crop rotations: a combined modeling and experimental approach. *Eur. J. Agron.* DOI: 10.1016/j.eja.2010.11.002.

Olesen, J.E., Petersen, B.M., Berntsen, J., Hansen, S., Jamieson, P.D., Thomsen, A.G., 2002. Crop nitrogen demand and canopy area expansion in winter wheat during vegetative growth. *Eur. J. Agron.* 16, 279-294.

There was, however, a significant reduction of the N leached after harvest of winter wheat at the sandy and sandy loam soils when using catch crops (Doltra et al., 2011).

Towards a better N use

The FASSET model was calibrated and validated for winter wheat under Nordic conditions (Olesen et al., 2002; Doltra et al., 2011) and used to analyse scenarios of increasing manure to cereals in the rotation with catch crops (Fig. 2). Simulation outcomes indicate the possibility of achieving yields close to that obtained in a similar non-organic rotation by applying, depending on the site, 200-300 kg N per ha in manure. This could be done without significant increase of the N lost by leaching (Fig. 3) while the losses due to ammonia volatilization would strongly depend on the application system. The response to increasing N rates might,

however, be overestimated since no effects of weeds or pest are considered in FASSET.

Current regulations limit the N that can be imported from conventional to organic farming in Denmark. This has raised the question of whether these policies should be revised to improve N use in organic cereal systems. Research must be addressed for that purpose, particularly dealing with the effects of manure timing and application system, storage facilities and odor emissions, as well as the impacts of weeds and pests, on the yield and quality of organic wheat.

Read more

Find more information about the CORE Organic project AGTEC Org on the webpages: <http://www.coreorganic.org/research/> or <http://agtec.coreportal.org>

CORE organic

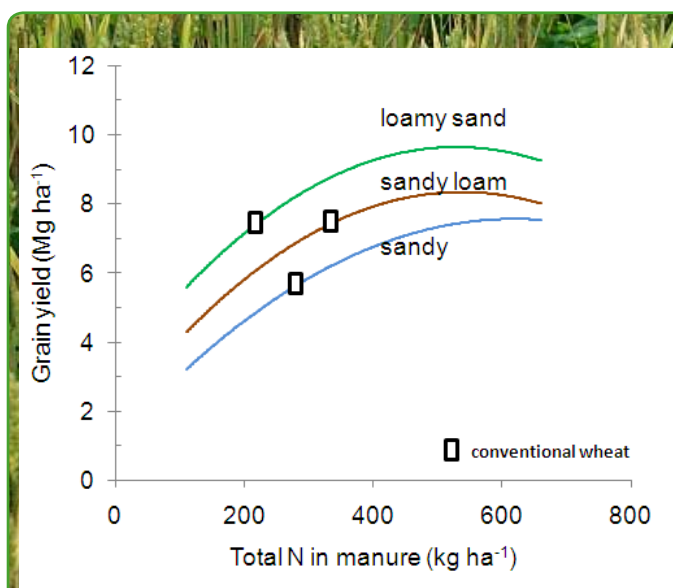


Fig. 2. Simulated grain dry matter yields with increasing levels of N applied in manure to winter wheat in a system with catch crops.

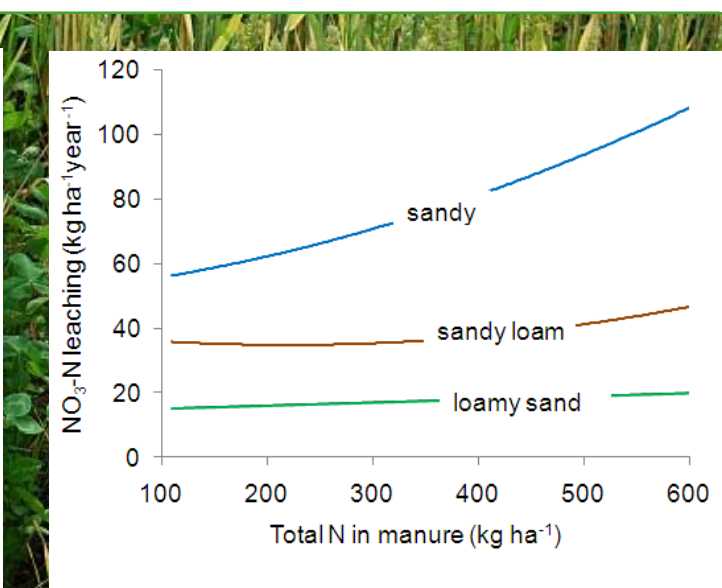


Fig. 3. Simulated average annual leaching during a four-year rotation with increasing levels of N applied in manure to winter wheat in a system with catch crops.

Successful communication of additional 'ethical' attributes of organic food



CORE organic

By Katrin Zander and Ulrich Hamm,
Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences,
University of Kassel, Germany

In a world where more and more organic products are mass produced and where most consumers have only little – if any – contact with the organic farmers who produced their food, many people feel that the underlying principles of the organic movement are increasingly threatened.

A noticeable share of consumers is willing to pay higher prices for organic food which is produced in accordance with higher 'ethical' standards – given that the specific qualities of the food are properly communicated.

There is growing interest in the wider ethical principles which underpin organic agriculture among today's consumers. They want to support disadvantaged societal groups, fairer working conditions, higher standards of animal welfare, and the preservation of tradition and landscapes through their purchasing decisions – and they are willing to pay higher prices for products which support these 'added values'.

Against this background the aim of our research was on the one hand to identify the range of additional ethical aspects, which organic producers are considering in their production processes. On the other hand we wanted to know which of these ethical attributes people are interested in, as consumer concerns, interest and willingness to pay for these 'additional values' are prerequisites for developing new market segments. By merging these results we generated recommendations for reorienting marketing strategies towards the 'ethical consumer' and for improved communication.

Ethical activities, attributes and arguments

In the empirical part of our research we analysed the additional 'ethical' activities of more than 100 farmers in five European countries (Austria, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom and Switzerland). Based on these results we selected seven different additional ethical attributes with about 1200 organic consumers. We developed egg package labels in order to discuss in depth different 'ethical' arguments with organic consumers in 18 focus groups.

Finally, consumers' willingness to pay for the most relevant additional ethical arguments was elicited by choice experiments with 400 organic consumers.

Most important issues for consumers

The results of the computer-based survey indicate that 'animal welfare', 'regional/local production' and 'fair prices for farmers' are most relevant for the purchase decision. Issues like 'care farming', 'protection of biodiversity', 'consideration of cultural features in production' and 'social aspects

of production' (such as working conditions) are also important, but for a lower share of organic consumers.

The consumer choice tests reveal a considerable additional willingness to pay for increased 'animal welfare standards' and for 'regional/local production'. An additional willingness to pay for the 'fair prices for farmers' argument could be found in Germany and Switzerland.

Communication of the ethical characteristics

In order to activate consu-

mers' willingness to pay we highly recommend targeted communication of the specific ethical characteristics of the production processes. That way consumers are given the opportunity to make their purchasing decisions according to their personal ethical considerations.

Regional/local production

With regard to 'regional/local' production consumers prefer precise information on where the product was produced – or at very least the specific production re-



The consumer choice tests reveal a considerable additional willingness to pay for increased 'animal welfare standards' and for 'regional/local production'.

gion. Clearly, consumers appreciate being able to judge themselves if a product is locally produced or from a particular region.

Against the background of the difficulties in defining regional/local production – and increasingly complex supply chains – we highly recommend defining the production place as precisely as possible, rather than referring to ‘regional’ or ‘local production’.

Animal welfare

Communicating any additional concerns on ‘animal welfare’ is particularly difficult, since consumers already - correctly - associate organic farming with higher animal welfare standards. While most consumers are interested in animal welfare, the reality is that they know only little about it. This and the lack of clear and accepted definitions of higher animal welfare standards are key drawbacks for the organic farming sector when wishing to promote these concerns.

The fair prices for farmers

The ‘fair prices for farmers’ attribute needs concise information. A definite premium on the average prices as used by some dairy companies appears to work rather well in our experiments with milk, as it did with eggs.

However, marketers must take care not to connect the ‘fair price’ arguments with the ‘Fair Trade’ concept, which has been successful in international trade. Consumers clearly do not see the situation of domestic farmers as comparable to those of poor farmers in developing countries.

How to communicate ethical values

The communication of additional ethical values is most likely to be successful if customers concerns are properly met. In any case, farmers who wish to make claims about additional ethical activities should target their efforts on areas where there are clear differences in

their practices compared to existing organic standards. In doing so, businesses can ensure that their activities are clearly visible to consumers and that consumers can easily verify any argument – thereby creating credibility and building trust.

Common definitions and standards are lacking

The communication of additional ‘ethical’ attributes needs a common understanding of these concerns. There are severe shortcomings in this respect, not only because common standards are missing, e.g. for the terms ‘fair’ and ‘regional/local’.

In our belief it is time for the organic movement to start a comprehensive discussion on the additional ‘ethical’ attributes associated with its farming and processing activities. Many consumers already have their own ideas on what is ‘fair’ and what is ‘regionally/locally’ produced, and that is why it is not up to the producers and marketers to define these terms on their own.

As common definitions and standards are lacking in most areas, and given the different ways in which these ‘ethical’ claims can be interpreted by consumers and producers alike, organic businesses should be very cautious when making claims in these areas.

Read more

Find more information about the CORE Organic project FCP on the webpage: <http://www.coreorganic.org/research/>



CORE organic



Markets and Institutional Capacity



By [Jan Holm Ingemann](#), Department of Economics, Politics and Public Administration, Aalborg University, Denmark



Adequate explanations concerning the introduction of production and consumption of organic food in Denmark imply the necessity to engage a certain understanding of markets. Markets should subsequently not be seen as entities nor places but as complex relations between human actors. Further, the establishment, maintenance and development of markets are depending on the capacity of the actors to enter into continuous and enhancing interplay.

Current empirical and analytical evidence from the COP project seems to support the conclusion that the introduction of organic alternatives has been rather successful in Denmark. Supplementary, the conclusions reveal that the success to a high degree must be attributed to specific agricultural policy means as well as specific social processes.

Policy means and processes have facilitated and coordinated adequate interplay between several actions and actors. The actions are concerned with a complex of issues like supply, demand, technology, marketing, regulation and administration, etc. Further, the actions are taken by a complex of actors from the public as well as the private sector.

However, these findings imply comprehensive challenges to the theoretical construct of mainstream agricultural economics because it tends to focus on optimization of the supply side only. In a theoretical WP we are thus aiming at engaging and evolving conceptual frameworks able to embrace and concurrently explain the findings.

A broader focus

Our analysis of the findings compared to mainstream theory, points so far at especially one issue where the latter seems to be unable to

provide satisfactory conceptual explanations: supply, demand and the meeting of the two in a specific context. Mainstream theory tends to focus on optimizing the supply side and to treat demand as well as the creation, maintenance and evolution of markets as exogenous and without relations to time and space. Subsequently, mainstream theory also tends to limit focus to supply-side issues detached from context when agricultural policy is investigated.

In search for adequate conceptual frameworks to explain the Danish case, we have experienced that fragments of institutional economics appear to be the most promising. Our focus is especially to throw conceptual light on the creation, maintenance and evolution of markets and the potentials of agricultural policies and politics in that connection.

Market types

The market is not an unequivocal entity. Several different phenomena can be characterised as markets. My local supermarket is one type of market and the internet quite another. Markets have different characteristics according to the field – e.g. markets for real estate have other characteristics than markets for food. And

context matters too: markets for food are different in Germany and Denmark, and we will also reveal several differences when we compare contemporary markets with those 50 years ago.

Markets are in general neither territorial fixed;

which are e.g. the GPS-coordinates for the grain market or the market for real estate? Producers and users does rarely meet in a direct, physical sense; nevertheless, relations are currently established which in turn imply buying and selling



the introduction of organic alternatives has been rather successful in Denmark. The success must be attributed to specific agricultural policy means as well as specific social processes.



as well as new products, techniques, knowledge and types of transaction.

These relations are the expression of markets but their form varies depending on field, time, place, culture and tradition. Markets are subsequently not places but rather contextual, relational

phenomena.

The conceptualisation of markets as sketched above, imply the recognition that markets are not predefined, does not evolve on their own, and that they change form and substance according to context. Thus, it is necessary to create, main-

tain and develop markets as relations between human actors and to constitute and develop markets considering practice, routines and trajectories according to the specific context in question.

Markets as a complex of relations

The findings in relation to the relative success of bringing Danish organic foods forward also reveal that it is inadequate to look on the market for organic foods. It is necessary, instead, to conceptualise the market in question as an intertwined complex of markets. This complex, for instance, comprises markets for means of production, knowledge, finance, markets for supply from farmers to processing, markets from processing to whole sale and further to retail, markets for imports and exports, etc.

The complex of markets constituting what we in every day terms express as 'the market for organic foods' is constituted, maintained and developed in an interplay involving actions that are both economic and political as well as related to civil society.

It is further necessary to realise that the actions in that interplay are limited by the competences of the participants and based on fundamental rules of the game – according to the specific context – and that the actors can choose actions and interplay to make the market-complex more or less adequate and efficient.

Institutional capacity

The ability of a society to establish, maintain and de-

velop markets according to local/national competences and potentials as well as according to changing global challenges can be labelled as 'institutional capacity'.

That concept and its theoretical implications seem promising when explanations concerning the success of Danish organic policies should be generated.

When the organic sector was seriously introduced and institutionalised in 1987 (the first law concerning organic agriculture passed parliament) it was not by coincident. The introduction was an obvious result of the specific institutional capacity embedded in and around Danish agriculture. It was thus based on deliberative competences practised and developed for more than 100 years in an institutional triangle involving economy, politics and civil society. And grass root pioneers, agricultural organisations, political decision takers, public administration and private companies were the key actors.



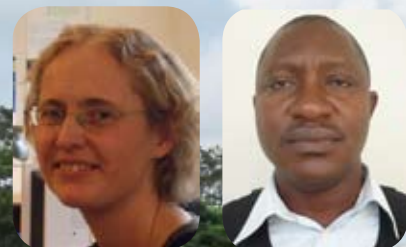
Read more

Find more information about the DARCOF III project COP on the webpage: www.icrofs.org/Pages/Research/darcofiii_cop.html

The project is funded by the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries



A glance of the enthusiastic development of the organic sector in Nigeria



By MSc.Soc. Jette Hagensen, Denmark and Dr. Joe Atungwu, University of Abeokuta, Nigeria

In Nigeria, the first programme on organic agriculture started at The University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB) in 2004. In September 2010 the first author attended the 1st international summer programme on organic agriculture at UNAAB targeted at scientists, farmers, businessmen and policy makers. She met a well qualified, holistic oriented and enthusiastic group of scientists, students and summer course participants, who gave hope that the organic development in Nigeria will soon be growing and developing in many directions.



Nigeria is a country very rich in natural resources – oil, gas, minerals and fertile agricultural land. Nigeria is also rich in human capital as it is the most populated nation in Africa, with approximately 150 million inhabitants, made up of more than 300 tribes. About 70 percent of the population is living in the countryside, most of them dependent on agriculture.

However, organic agriculture is in its infancy in Nigeria. Currently only one farm is certified and producing lemon grass for export. However, another farm is under way to get organic certification by foreign standards. A small but growing group of farmers are adopting the organic methods and market their crops locally.

The cooperation with western partners on organic agriculture - and also more generally - has been very limited. One reason is a history of political instability and security problems. Countries like Kenya, Uganda and Ghana has started the organic development 10-15 years earlier.

The first programme

The first programme on organic agriculture started in 2004, when UNAAB founded "The Organic Agriculture Project in Tertiary

Institutions in Nigeria" (OAPTIN) in cooperation with Coventry University, UK and supported by EU.

Realizing the benefits of organic agriculture in Nigeria, OAPTIN led the formation of a regional network known as "West African Network on Organic Agriculture Research and Training" (WANOART) in 2009. WANOART is a consortium of five Universities in West Africa in cooperation with Coventry University supported by EU.

Opportunities and challenges

The conditions for agriculture in Nigeria are very diverse, in the south the soil

is fertile and there is almost always plenty of rain, which means you can harvest 2-3 times a year. According to the scientists at UNAAB the biggest challenges here are weed management and seed quality. Pests and nematodes are also issues they have to look seriously into.

In the northern part of Nigeria the soil is sandier and the rain is much less. The number of trees is going down, and due to that soil erosion and desertification is spreading. In the north the more industrialized agricultural methods during the last 30 years has brought a lot of pesticides, which are not always used according

to the instructions.

Only 30 % of the arable land in Nigeria is cultivated to day. In some places they still use shifting cultivation, where you raise crops on the land for some years and then it will lie fallow for 3-5 years or more. It can last up to 20 years to reestablish arable land, which results in great area demand. There is a challenge to distinguish this kind of agriculture from organic agriculture in the consciousness. Several organic farmers told about their change from this praxis to intensive organic methods with compost and mulching, using leguminous plants and crop rotation. It is obvious that this change of praxis has a large potential for raising the output.

The climate change

The climate change is another challenge. You cannot any more plan from previous knowledge of the climate, as the rain is becoming unstable. This year the usually dry period in august between the long and the short rainy season didn't show up, and in other periods the rain especially in the north fails. In UNAAB they emphasized that the key to good soil fertility and the best way to avoid erosion in all parts of the country is to build and maintain a good soil quality by using compost and mul-



Participants from the summer programme



Compost and mulching practices

ching.

The awareness and demand for organic products in Nigeria is still very low, but has started growing. The certified organic products are – like in other African countries – produced mainly for export. During the summer programme they recommended certification in small farmers groups with an internal control system supplied by a random sampling from certification body/ EU.

A different challenge which they also focus on at UNAAB is to encourage entrepreneurship. How can you make a good economy, e.g. how can you start from a smaller plot and develop your agricultural business without taking too much economic risk? Growing vegetables out of season, where the marked demand is higher, is one way to success. Another could be developing new products from e.g. bee production like health products.

Spreading knowledge and action

At UNAAB they collect and develop knowledge from abroad, especially they get a lot of inspiration from the partnership with Coventry University in Britain. They also do local research, and they encourage the farmers to contribute to the

knowledgebase by being precise and systematic, to do logbook notes, to collect knowledge from local experience and to measure and do experiments, using tools as humidity measurer and soil tests.

At UNAAB 700 students have their own plot, growing fruits and vegetables as a part of their study to show practical results. They sell the products in the organic shop at the university area. The shop is also selling products from local organic farmers. UNAAB is also working on the dialogue with their neighboring vil-

lages to make them grow organic, and they offer them market opportunities in the organic shop at the university campus.

The OAPTIN programme includes research, education and extension. They encourage the farmers and universities to start up organic groups in their area inspired by www.coventry.ac.uk. They also recommend starting cooperative marketing groups. In 2009 they trained 23 Nigerian graduates at a 7 week course. Many of them are now growing organic fruit and vegetable, having bees and fishponds,

and animal husbandry.

One of the graduates who visited the summer programme said “The best thing that can happen to any farmer that wants to make profit is going organic.” On the question “Can you grow more or less food using the organic methods, his answer was: “I believe that depends on the competence of the farmer, you have to use the best organic practice, doing everything at the right time, observe and work precisely to get better output.” This might be a global truth, but anyway the interest of the students at UNAAB to find out if and how going organic can feed the world, was remarkable.

Practical examples on organic techniques

AT UNAAB they recommend agro forestry and intercropping e.g with leguminous trees as Acacia Albina, or by mixing fruit trees like papaya and plantain with lower fruits like pineapple or vegetables like cassava or soyabeen.

They do research on crop rotation e.g. with corn, sunflower, sesame and soyabeen, and they recommend green manure as groundnuts, even if, as they say, a conventional farmer would



Contact information

UNAAB has put machinery in place for the establishment of a centre of Excellence on Organic Agriculture to fast track holistic development of organic agriculture in Nigeria. The University is very interested in further development of organic agriculture, and is seeking partners for future co-operation. For enquiries please contact Joe Atungwu on email: jojeratl@yahoo.com.



Students in the field

never do that. If you want to use conventional manure, they recommend composting it for at least 6 months before using it on organic land. All over Nigeria it is also possible to buy organic fertilizer such as "Neem Sunshine".

In the animal husbandry they work with prevention, correct feed and good living conditions – and then to observe the animals. They use a number of herb extracts, as they also do in the crop production, but they emphasized the need to use bio-pesticides as the last option. For example they treat chicken for worms with dried papaya seeds, which is grounded to flour, dissolved in water and added to

lemon juice. They use basil extract against Coccidiosis. They give the chickens this through the mouth, by taking away the water for

a few hours and then offer the chickens this juice for 24 hours.

For pest management they use neem, ginger, garlic,

papaya leaves, wood charcoal and other organic materials. Here they also want spraying to be the last action to be done: Largely the rule of the thumb is prevention rather than cure. Prevent, get knowledge of the biology of the pest, and adopt management strategies based on principles such as exclusion, avoidance, protection, eradication, resistance and host plant resistance. They have a special focus on neglected underutilized species NUS which is currently being promoted in organic agriculture particularly because of the nutraceutical potentials of NUS crops.



Neem – the miracle plant. You can use any part of the plant, e.g. dry the leaves, pound them and mix with water to spray – it helps to keep insects away.



ICROFS coordinates research project in three African countries

From 2011, ICROFS is coordinating the new research project called ProGrOV. This project will focus on improving productivity and growth in existing organic value chains in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania through development of agro-ecological methods, governance and management of chains, and capacity development regarding research focussed on organic and interdisciplinary approaches.

The project will address problem and development issues in primary production, processing and chain management through nine PhD and six MSc studies at African Universities. These studies will be linked together in a discipline-oriented and cross-disciplinary framework. The project is a collaboration between Universities in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Denmark and is funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Read more in the [ICROFS project leaflet](#).



Organic bread-wheat in New England, USA



By [Ilse A. Rasmussen](#), ICROFS and [Ellen Mallory](#), Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, University of Maine

In October 2010, researchers, farmers and millers from Maine and Vermont, USA, organized a trip to Denmark, in order to learn about local bread wheat production, milling and use from their more experienced counterparts with climates similar to their own.

They have received a grant over four years for the project antititled *Enhancing Farmers' Capacity to Produce High Quality Organic Bread Wheat* in which they will carry out research, development and education to improve the production and quality of organic bread wheat in the two states.

In October 2010, agronomist Ellen Mallory from University of Maine visited Denmark with a group of 22 researchers, extensionists, farmers and millers. The aim was to boost the bread wheat production in Maine and Vermont. They have received a grant of \$ 1.3 million over 4 years from the USDA for the project: *Enhancing Farmers' Capacity to Produce High Quality Organic Bread Wheat* in which they will carry out research, development and education to improve the production and quality of organic bread wheat in the two states.

As part of the project, the researchers organized the trip to Denmark, and a similar one to Quebec in 2009, in order to learn about local

bread wheat production, milling and use from their more experienced counterparts with climates similar to their own.

A few years earlier, in 2006-2007, Ellen Mallory and her husband Eric Gallandt, both from University of Maine had spent a year in Denmark as she finished her Ph.D.-thesis while he spent his sabbatical working with Danish researchers on weed management. During their stay, among other activities, Ilse Rasmussen took them to visit some organic farms in Denmark – where they talked with farmers who grew organic bread wheat.

The bread wheat history

Bread wheat hasn't been grown in significant quantities in Maine or Vermont

for over 100 years. Disease pressures and the development of railroad transportation caused the area of major production to shift to the interior of the United States where it was more economical to produce wheat.

However, the recent "locavore" movement has changed that equation and created a demand for locally-grown bread wheat. Consumers in New England, as elsewhere, are increasingly aware of how food gets to their plate and want to support an agriculture that supports local farmers, local environment and local communities.

Recognizing this opportunity, organic dairy farmers and others, who started growing organic grains for feed, began trying to sell

into human markets that offer twice the price. The problem was that most of the regional knowledge of how to grow high quality wheat suitable for baking was long gone.

Research activities in the Bread Wheat project

10 investigators in the fields of agronomy, weed science, plant pathology, food science and economics are evaluating wheat varieties for characteristics as yield, quality, and taste; researching organic fertility, weed, and disease management strategies; using research results and regional data to estimate profitability and risk for the farmers; and developing tools for farmers such as interactive enterprise budgets and a region-



New England map (Wikipedia).



More information: Follow the weblinks below

- » [Northern New England local bread wheat project](#)
- » [Project website on visit to Denmark](#)
- » [CROPSYS](#)
- » [AG-TEC-ORG](#)
- » [Organic Eprints on bread wheat](#)
- » [AGROLOGICA – Anders Borgen’s website](#)



Anders Borgen demonstrates experiments to the group.

specific production guide. Spring and winter wheat variety trials, with over 25 varieties of each type, are being carried out under organic conditions at two sites in each state. Innovative weed management systems from Europe are being evaluated in spring wheat: either very narrow rows in order to increase the competitiveness of the crop against weeds, or wider rows, to allow for mechanical weed control. For winter wheat, different supplemental “top-dress” nitrogen sources and timings of application are being evaluated for effects on nitrogen availability and crop uptake, grain yield and grain protein.

Networking and education

The project also has an active networking and educational component. One of the unique aspects of the project is the involvement of all the key players along the bread wheat “food chain” – farmers, millers, bakers, and researchers. Workshops, field days and tours foster learning among these groups as well from outside experts.

The group came to Denmark to be inspired by what is going on in research and practice. Their trip was arranged by Anders Borgen, a free-lance researcher who is involved in breeding and research on his own organic farm. The group visited 8 farms, some of which have their own mills and bakeries. At Mørdrupgård, Per Grupe is also working on developing

varieties particularly suited to organic farming practices, very similar to the work now being carried out in Maine and Vermont. Focus on this area is picking up in Denmark: In the beginning of November, a workshop on future development of cereal varieties for organic farming including user-driven breeding was held in Denmark, arranged by Organic Denmark.

Briefed on Danish research results

In addition, the group visited ICROFS where they were briefed on results from projects such as CROPSYS, an organic crop rotation experiment which has been

conducted at 3 locations in Denmark since 1997 and AG-TEC-ORG, an EU-project which aims to identify agronomic and food processing technologies that improve baking quality and nutritional value of organic wheat and reduce mycotoxin contamination. The Danish research and practice has shown it possible to grow quality bread wheat on good soils with only one year out of four dedicated to green manure. The participants were very interested in the CROPSYS results on greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration and how the different systems were rated based on production. The organic systems with green

manure had a lower emission per unit of production compared to organic systems without green manure and conventional systems.

Inspiration across the world

The visitors from New England were impressed by the enthusiasm and consistent focus on quality among the organic wheat producers, processors and users they visited. They were puzzled, however, that in Denmark, soft wheat varieties are grown for bread. In the US, soft wheat is used for cakes and cookies, and hard wheat varieties with higher protein contents are considered better suited for bread. This could be inspiration for organic producers in Denmark on how to increase quality of bread wheat – albeit not the yield!

Many of the publications from research in Denmark and Europe can be found in the Open Access repository Organic Eprints, and the US researchers were keen to include this database in their further work. Hopefully their own results will later be deposited, so that Danish and other researchers can benefit from their work.

This visit has shown that visitors and hosts alike can be inspired by how things are done in other parts of the world. ■



Education



New version of Organic.Edunet

A new version of the Organic.Edunet Web Portal (www.organic-edunet.eu) has been released.

Through the Organic.Edunet Portal you can find free educational material to support your teaching on Organic Agriculture, Agroecology and Environmental issues in general.

The new version of the Portal features new exciting search mechanisms and new languages, raising the total number of portal languages to thirteen.

Visit the education portal at www.organic-edunet.eu.



Publications

Organic Agriculture - call for papers

The new journal, *Organic Agriculture*, is issued by Springer Publishing in the staging of ISO FAR.

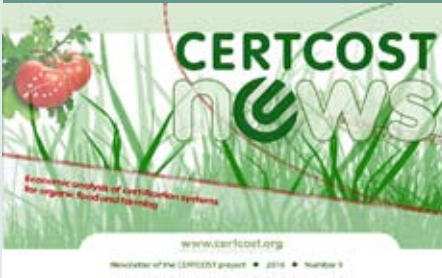
It is the International Society for Research in Organic Agriculture calling for papers for the first issue of the novel journal.

Organic Agriculture will constitute a new platform for the sharing of knowledge within the many cross-disciplinary areas of organic agriculture and food systems.

General information: go to Springer's homepage: www.springer.com/13165



Publications



CERTCOST newsletter on its way

The first issue of the CERTCOST newsletter is close to being published. CERTCOST is a European research project supported by the EC. Its purpose is to improve the organic food certification system in terms of efficiency, transparency and effectiveness. and project is close to being published.

You can subscribe for free by visiting www.certcost.org (click News in the top menu).

Congresses

[18-20 May 2011, in Prague]



The first international conference on Organic Food Quality and Health Research is held in Prague, 18-20 May 2011.

The conference will focus on the state of the art in research on Organic Food Quality and Health in the following areas:

- » Quality and safety of organic plant and animal products
- » Impact of processing on organic quality and safety
- » Standardization of novel methods
- » Organic food authenticity
- » Impact of organic food on animals
- » Impact of organic food on humans
- » Organic related health concepts.

Read more at www.fqh2011.org.

3rd ISO FAR Scientific Conference

[28.9-1.10, 2011; Gyeonggi Paldang, Republic of Korea]



Attention: Submission deadline is extended to 31 December 2010

At the 17th IFOAM Organic World Congress, ISO FAR holds its 3rd Scientific Conference. Deadline for papers is 30. november 2010. Read more at the conference website:

www.isofar.org/kowc2011/index.html

Congresses



24th NJF Congress: Food, Feed, Fuel and Fun - Nordic light on future land use and rural development

[June 14-16, 2011, Uppsala, Sweden; registration opens December 1st, 2010]

The Congress is open to everybody interested in agricultural research. It will be organised around main topics, in common and parallel sessions and poster exhibitions.

Visit the NJF congress website - and read the programme - at www-conference.slu.se/njf2011/index.html

Workshops



CERTCOST workshop at BioFach

[17 February 2011, Nuremberg]

CERTCOST partners will present results from the research project at an open stakeholder workshop at the BioFach Organic world Fair, 16-19 February 2011, Nuremberg, Germany.

At this event, there will be a specific CERTCOST session, where the partners will present recent research results on Thursday 17. February, Room Riga, 10.00-11.30.

- » **10.00-11.00:** *How to improve the certification system? Risk-based inspection and beyond.*
Speakers: Raffaele Zanolli, Susanne Padel, Elisabeth Rüegg.
- » **11.00-11.30:** *The EU logo and other organic logos from the consumer perspective.*
Speakers: Meike Janssen, Ulrich Hamm.

Read more at www.biofach.de/en

Workshop on preventing fraud

CERTCOST invites interested stakeholders to a workshop on "The revised import regime and practical approaches to prevent fraud." the workshop is set up in Brussels on 24-25 February 2011.

The detailed agenda will be published at the CERTCOST website www.certcost.org.

