



### Workshop 4.3: Fair and regional: New trends in organic and sustainable food systems

Convenors: **Martina Schäfer** and **Susanne Padel**

#### **Between 'back to the roots' and marketing orientation – An overview of organic 'fair & regional'-initiatives in Germany**

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The market for organic food is very dynamic: The entry of new powerful market partners like supermarkets and discounters lead to stable growth as well as a 'conventionalisation' of the sector. As a consequence of the increasing competition several organic 'fair & regional'-initiatives were established which try to link the idealistic roots of the organic movement with modern marketing activities. This paper compares initiatives from Germany – both bottom-up and top-down – regarding their motives, the standards they want to live up to and the control procedures they have chosen. The approaches of the different initiatives and their experiences are presented, and the chances and challenges of this movement are discussed.

#### **Elaboration and implementation of a domestic fair trade concept in Switzerland**

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and Christian Eichert

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Fairness is an integral principle of the organic farming approach. This paper first introduces philosophic and economic schools of thought to define fairness. Second, the Domestic Fair Trade project coordinated by Bio Suisse, the leading Swiss organic farmers association is presented, and finally the Bio Suisse approach is analysed in comparison to the Code of Conduct elaborated by the German Organic Processors and Traders Association (the BNN-Kodex). The Bio Suisse strategy is discussed both in terms of discourse ethics and economic theory. Success factors for future, similar Domestic Fair Trade approaches as well as limitations of the Bio Suisse strategy are illustrated.

#### **Between food ethics, solidarity and the social construction of alternative markets. Exploring the dimensions of grassroots food movements in Spain**

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and Ángel Calle Collado

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This paper analyses emerging grassroots food movements in Spain, assesses to what extent these constitute a coherent alternative 'paradigm' for sustainable local food systems, and explores relevant dimensions that shape their development and contribution to sustainable rural development. The paper is mainly based on case studies from Andalusia and the Basque country, and stresses that food initiatives have been largely driven by social movements, incl. peasant-based farmers and consumer groups but also agro-ecology movements. As a result, Spanish food movements often have a wider focus and combine ethical values like fairness, solidarity and participative democracy with economic and environmental concerns.

#### **Organic plus – Repolitisation of the food sector?**

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In the late 1970s first agricultural projects have been developed in Austria, aiming at supporting farmer's livelihood in remote and disadvantaged regions. Embedded in a broader process (later named Endogenous Regional Development), economic aspects were combined with organic farming, social, cultural and ecological issues. The paper will reflect on two of these early initiatives (BERSTA and EVI), their underlying ideas, their history and present 'organic plus' features. Both are critical about using such features as a marketing strategy. Instead – according to their understanding of politics – they try to practice other than formalised forms of communicating 'organic plus' to consumers and of maintaining values within the networks.



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#### **Regional production' and 'Fairness' in organic farming: Evidence from a CORE Organic project**

Susanne Padel, Katrin Zander,  
and Katharina Gössinger

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The CORE FCP project aims to strengthen partnerships between producers and consumers through improved communication of additional ethical attributes of organic products. The results show that concerns of various organic stakeholders (including producers) refer to several aspects that are not (fully) covered by the European Regulation such as systems integrity, regional origin and fairness. Testing different arguments with consumers in five European countries showed that the most important ethical attributes to consumers were 'animal welfare', 'regional production' and 'fair prices for farmers'. Communicating ethical quality of organic products represents an opportunity for differentiation in an increasingly competitive market.

#### **Communication in the rural web: a case study of the dairy in Andeer**

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and Corinna Feldmann

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Recent studies dealt with the analysis of arguments used by small-scale producers to successfully distribute their products in a globalized mass market. This contribution is based on the EU Core Organic Project in which information was collected on communication arguments for marketing additional ethical values. The importance and understanding of different arguments is assessed from the point-of-view of the consumer. To approach the research objective a Swiss small-scale dairy was chosen as a case study. The results can be interesting for other small-scale businesses that try to communicate additional ethical values which can be referred to as 'organic plus' commitments.

#### **The construction social sustainability within an organic dairy supply chain**

Claudia Steinlechner,  
and Markus Schermer

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This contribution aims to analyse different perceptions of social sustainability of stakeholders along an organic dairy supply chain in Austria. Farmers and processors point out the importance of fair prices for raw milk to assure the economic survival of the farms. Representatives of the marketing cooperative and the retailer focus on relationships, which should be characterised by transparency and communication. All actors mention a high quality and regional provenance of the product. Consumers discuss fair prices for local farmers, affordability, availability and high quality of the products, as well as regionality, transparency and trust.