

How to improve organic cereal seed availability in Hungary

Problems

Although the Hungarian organic cereal seed production is significant, the seeds are primarily produced on contract basis for export, hence they are not available on the domestic market. Organic propagation material of other cultivated species are also seldom found in Hungary. Knowledge on variety performance in organic fields is insufficient.

Solutions

In order to facilitate strategic planning and harmonise actions, it is crucial to set up a working group on organic seed, involving all stakeholders of the sector (seed producers and retailers, organic certification bodies, researchers, national authorities and policymakers, organic farmers' associations). Experts of this national working group will be able to address the right questions and suggest effective and applicable solutions to boost the organic seed sector.



Figure 1: Organic seed expert group meeting in Hungary (photo: ÖMKi)

Practical recommendations

For a better cooperation and efficiency, regular meeting of the organic seed working group is suggested. Important steps:

- Restructure the national organic seed database to have a user-friendly and informative (incl. variety recommendations) service for farmers.
- Organic seed producers and retailers keep the database up-to-date and retain seed lots for domestic market.
- Circulating and propagandizing the new database by the Hungarian Seed Association and the certification bodies.
- Post-registration performance trials help the variety recommendation: one of the state's variety testing nurseries is converted to organic (2020). Further locations are included through a cooperation with organic farmers operating in the proximity of other state nurseries, in a way that plots are managed with the machinery of the authority. Certain breeding institutions also host these trials to reach the sufficient number of sites.

Further information

1. Hungarian organic seed database: <http://portal.nebih.gov.hu/oko-vetomag>

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LIVESEED: Boosting organic seed and plant breeding across Europe. LIVESEED is based on the concept that cultivars adapted to organic systems are key for realising the full potential of organic agriculture in Europe. Research project 2017-2021.

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