

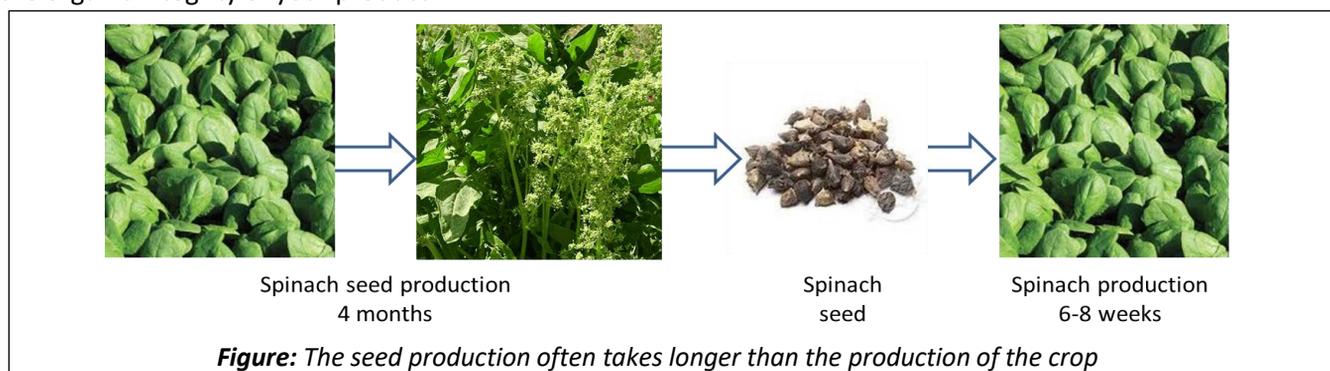
Values and benefits of organic seeds

Problems

Some stakeholders in the organic sector are not aware of the values and benefits of organic seeds. Therefore, unless required to do so by regulation, they are not motivated to use or promote organic seed. Especially since organic seed is usually more expensive than conventional seed.

Solutions

Organic integrity: Seed production is part of the production process and takes a lot of effort and time¹ (figure). Starting the organic production cycle with organic seed or vegetative propagating material as an input, increases the organic integrity of your product.



Live up to consumer expectations: Consumers expect organic farmers to use organic inputs. This is one of the reasons for the European Commission to tighten the EU organic rules on seed use. Derogations allowing the use of conventional seed and vegetative propagating material should expire in 2035.²

Lower risk of residues: Unlike conventional seeds, organic seeds are propagated in an organic environment. This reduces the risks of chemical residues on the seed. In addition there are indications that some residues persist into the seedlings and even into the final product. For instance in the case of plants with low mass growth during cultivation (e.g. fresh herbs) or in organic fruits originating from conventional plants.³

Practical recommendations

- Educate stakeholders in the organic sector about the values and benefits of organic seeds⁴.
- Create demo fields with varieties of which organic seed is available.
- Organic seeds are the first step towards organic breeding. By buying organic seed, you stimulate seed producers to select and develop varieties that are better adapted to organic growing conditions.

Further information

1. PA#21 [The difference between certified organic seed and “untreated” conventional seed](#)
2. Organic regulation (EU) 2018/848
3. https://orgprints.org/34877/1/Poster_Speiser_Bernhard_2018-phosphonate_strawberries.pdf
4. Why use organic seed ? www.liveseed.eu/tools-for-practitioners/videos

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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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