

Incentives to use organic seeds set up by the supermarkets

Problems

Preferably, organic farmers cultivate their fruits and vegetables using certified organic seeds, however the desired varieties are not always available. The higher price and the absence of real incentives for farmers to use only organic seeds, lead to a low demand for certified organic seeds.

Solutions

Incentives for organic farmers

Nowadays, the main supermarket chains have a quite complete offer of organic products, while medium size supermarkets have at least several organic products on their shelves. If all the supermarkets would ask their organic producers to ensure, that the seeds used are organic, the demand for organic seeds would likely increase. Such request from supermarkets can stimulate farmers to use organic seeds, but only on the condition that long-term contracts between organic farmers and supermarkets, simultaneously ensure a stable and healthy trading relationship.

As an example, the Spanish company Biovegs, with 150 hectares of organic field, producing potato, broccoli, carrot and wheat, exports 90% of their production. The 3.5 million kilograms of broccoli produced yearly, is fully sold to well known Belgian, German and French organic supermarkets, that require from the producer to use organic seeds.



Field visit to Biovegs (16 April 2018, Sevilla)

Practical recommendations

- All parties involved, such as consumers and supermarkets, should request organic farmers to use organic seeds for the cultivation of organic products.
- Supermarkets must give attractive contracts to organic farmers, in which they ensure fair prices and durable conditions.
- Supermarkets should not decide which varieties organic farmers grow. Instead, supermarkets should support farmers to use the best varieties suitable for their specific growing conditions.

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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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