

Introduction of new varieties to the market

Problems

Breeding new organic varieties can only be successful, if these varieties find their way to the market. Introducing unknown varieties to the retail sector and consumers is a challenge, thus it is a risk for the breeders.

Solutions

Sharing risks

Disease resistance is an important trait for organic farmers, but not necessarily for traders, retailers and consumers. Informing the whole supply chain about the problem (crop disease) and the solution (resistant variety) is important to get new varieties accepted. Knowing in advance that the retail sector is willing to market the new variety reduces the investment risk for breeders and farmers.⁽¹⁾

Dutch Potato covenant

In 2016, potato late blight caused major problems for Dutch organic growers. Bionext involved breeders, farmers and retailers in the solution to this problem; the use of *Phytophthora* resistant varieties.

Twenty-eight parties throughout the supply chain signed a covenant to speed up the breeding, growing and market introduction of new resistant potato varieties. The aim: 100% organic potatoes from resistant varieties in 2020. This ambitious goal has almost been achieved in 2019, with twenty-two resistant varieties covering 80% of the Dutch organic table potato market.^(2,3)



Figure: Retailers, farmers and breeders sign the Dutch Potato Covenant, July 2017 (Photo: Bionext)

Practical recommendations

- Traits that might be beneficial to farmers are not necessarily beneficial to traders and consumers. Therefore, communication with retailers should start in an early stage.
- A covenant between the relevant partners in the supply chain can help to introduce new varieties to the market.
- Short supply chains can support the introduction of new varieties.

Further information

1. [Understanding the obstacles and opportunities for successful market introduction of crop varieties.](#) Nuijten et al., 2018
2. [Blog on Agricolgy.co.uk](#) on the Dutch potato covenant
3. [Info sheet](#) on the Dutch potato covenant on the Bionext website

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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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