



Press Release

February 2018

## **BIOFACH 2018: Organic breeding of plants and animals for more independence of the sector - Organic right from the start!**

**BIOFACH special show illustrates what organic breeding has already achieved and what is going to be important in the future**

**When the international organic sector meets again in Nuremberg from 14 to 17 February 2018 for the start of the year, the "Meeting point Organic right from the start" will celebrate its premiere. The aim of the BIOFACH special show is to demonstrate what organic breeding has achieved to date and where further development work is still needed so that organic farming can continue to maintain its independence in plant and animal breeding, i. e. in terms of varieties and breeds, in the future. The "Meeting point organic right from the start!" is a special BIOFACH show. The content is designed by bioverita and bundles numerous breeding initiatives.**

The "Meeting point Organic right from the start" presents individual breeding areas on different "thematic pillars". In addition, various breeding initiatives with their respective projects are presented on this area. In a communication forum, which is part of the special show, individual breeding projects will be presented and general topics related to organic breeding will be discussed.

### **Organic breeding for independent organic farming**

For organic farming, plant breeding is of paramount importance. Markus Johann, CEO of bioverita: "Organic farmers depend on varieties that produce good results without the support of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Varieties that meet the requirements of organic farming and organic producers are far from being available for all crops. And where they are available, it is far from certain that this will continue to be the case in the future. This is because the threat posed by new genetic engineering methods and the increasing concentration of a few suppliers is immense for the organic sector.

**Through the work of the organic breeders, the independence of the organic movement is promoted and a counterpoint is set against the increasing power concentration of the seed multinationals."**

**„An important component of a sustainable way of thinking are varieties that have been specially bred for organic farming," Johann continues. The varieties from organic breeding should result not only in high and stable yields.** They must be able to transform the restricted nutrients in the soil very efficiently into the best possible quality, have a high resistance to diseases and pests, yield good straw yield, form strong roots and exhibit good processing and baking quality. Organic table fruit cultivation, for example, differs significantly from conventional intensive fruit cultivation, especially in terms of fertilization and plant protection. Most common commercial varieties require intensive crop protection, which is very costly with organic products and often does not guarantee a sufficient yield security. For this reason, the development of new varieties that combine excellent quality with the best suitability for organic farming is of great importance.

## **Organic in Animal breeding**

For livestock independent organic breeding is also essential for the organic sector. Markus Johann: "In the case of cattle, female animals in particular are already being bred on organic farms. Ruminants are perfectly developed for the digestion of cellulose and for outdoor grazing. Organic cattle breeding therefore focuses on good grazing ability, animal health and longevity. The sector is also working intensively and successfully on alternatives to existing methods for chickens. The first breeding approaches, for example to completely prevent the killing of male chicks in the organic sector, have been realised by the ökologische Tierzucht gGmbH, an initiative of the organic farming associations Bioland and demeter.

**„Our common goal is to make organic breeding more well-known and visible - also on the market.** Consistent implementation of the organic concept is becoming increasingly important to consumers. One of our major tasks is to bring the topic closer to the consumers in an understandable way," emphasizes Amadeus Zschunke, the Bioverita President, who is also Managing Director of Sativa-Rheinau AG. We were able to realise this special exhibition thanks in particular to the support of various companies, foundations and organisations that are already very sympathetic to organic breeding. We are really very grateful for this engagement", continues Zschunke.

## **Breeding initiatives and organisations at the special show " Meeting point Organic right from the start":**

Apfel:gut Fruit breeding  
Bingenheimer Saatgut AG  
bioverita – for Organic right from the start  
Ellenberg's Kartoffelvielfalt GbR  
European Consortium for organic plant breeding (ECO-PB)  
European Consortium for organic animal breeding (ECO-AB)  
Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau (FiBL)  
Forschung & Züchtung Dottenfelder Hof - LBS e.V.  
Getreidezüchtung Peter Kunz  
Getreidezüchtungsforschung Darzau  
IFOAM Seed Plattform  
Keyserlingk-Institut  
Kultursaat e.V.  
Ökologische Tierzucht gGmbH  
Poma Culta Apple Breeding  
ReinSaat KG  
Saat:gut e.V.  
Sativa Rheinau AG  
Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft – Saatgut- und Tierzuchtfonds

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# Annex: Impressions of different themed pillars from the Special exhibition "Meeting Point Organic right from the start".

## Organic vegetable breeding



### New varieties for the modern breeding conditions on organic farms!

#### Different company forms

Organic breeding involves both nonprofit initiatives and companies.

#### Passion alone is not enough

It takes up to 15 years before a new variety is available. Breeding takes a lot of time, money and work.

#### This requires financial resources

In order to finance their development work for organic farming, organic plant breeders receive support from dedicated companies, foundations and private individuals, and generate license income.

#### The task is complex

The selected plants must be well-suited to the conditions on the organic farms.

#### The new varieties should therefore

- > convert nutrients well
- > show a high resistance to diseases
- > be good at dealing with climate change
- > provide good yields
- > and taste great



## Organic Animal Breeding



### For animals that best fit organic farms

#### The basics and objectives of organic poultry breeding

- > Organic feeding, without synthetic amino acids
- > Sheds with covered outdoor climate area and natural light
- > If possible an outdoor run no cages
- > Male chicks should be raised
- > No prophylactic use of antibiotics
- > No clipping of beaks, combs and wings
- > No performance enhancements that lead to overloading and restriction of natural body functions

#### Current situation

- Most organic poultry farms keep commercial high performance birds (hybrids).
- These either gain a lot of weight quickly or they lay a lot of eggs.
- In Germany, 40 million male hybrid laying chicks are killed every year on the first day of life.



## Value Chain



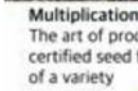
### Beacon Project - Cereals

#### Organic Buure Bread at Coop Switzerland



#### Breeding the wheat varieties

At the Cereal breeding association, Peter Kunz (GZPK) in Feldbach in the canton of Zurich and on other Demeter farms in Switzerland over a period of seven to ten years.



#### Multiplication

The art of producing several tons of certified seed from a few kilograms of a variety



#### Cultivation and Harvest



#### Delivery and Handling



#### Milling

At Swissmill, the Coop partner mill in Zurich.



#### Baking

In 5 large-scale Coop bakeries and 46 bakeries in large Coop stores. That is where the tasty bioverita organic Buure bread is made.



#### Sale

The bioverita organic Buure bread is sold in around 800 Coop outlets throughout Switzerland.



#### Getting the customers on board

For successful marketing, it is important that the benefits and importance of organic breeding are also clear to consumers. With the bioverita label, the added value can be communicated easily and clearly.

