Introduction

Food is central to human life. It sustains us, our communities, and is a cornerstone of culture.

But what should be honoured as life sustaining has in many ways become a commercial commodity. Many people have never been to a farm and don’t know where food comes from or how it is made. Worse still one-third of food produced globally is wasted\(^1\), approximately 793 million people are suffering from hunger\(^2\) while a further 1.9 billion people are overweight or obese\(^3\). At the same time, 1 out of 4 farms have disappeared in the EU between 2003 and 2013\(^4\), destroying the backbone of rural economies and such trends severely threaten the long-term viability of rural areas. Not to mention the increasing industrialization of food processing. The current food and farming system is broken.

But there is good news. In the last few years there has been a major shift – good food has taken centre stage. From the media to public institutions, from the largest supermarkets to the smallest cooperatives, it is no longer a question about the need for good food but rather how to get there. And organic is a strong part of the movement that sees sustainable food production and consumption as vital for the health of the environment, people and communities. Many European countries are seeing double-digit growth in organic markets. Scientific evidence is increasingly confirming the environmental, social and economic benefits of organic. And although the gap between supply of organic produce and demand for organic food is still evident, organically-managed land area is showing positive movement on this front too\(^5\).

Organic is playing an important role in the change we want to see. As part of a global Organic 3.0 process, organic is committed to enable an uptake of truly sustainable farming systems and markets based on organic and agroecological principles. Together with all those working to improve agriculture and food production, we can have an impact on the policies that directly shape the kind of food and farming systems we have in Europe. Together, we can also improve the engagement of farmers, processors and consumers alike, and enhance the transparency and fairness of supply chains.

This document emerged out of the discussions led by IFOAM EU in its collective vision development process. The discussions on strategies that IFOAM EU facilitated showed that achieving our vision of transforming food & farming systems is only possible through the joint efforts of all the actors of the food chain from farmers to certifiers & processors, traders & retailers to citizens, and civil society organizations to policy-makers. This publication is thus an invitation for to start – or continue! – actively shaping the agri-food systems that we want to see in Europe and beyond.

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\(^3\) [http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/)
\(^4\) [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7089766/5-26112015-AP-EN.pdf/e18e5577-c2a4-4c70-a8c7-fd758ea7b726](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7089766/5-26112015-AP-EN.pdf/e18e5577-c2a4-4c70-a8c7-fd758ea7b726)
TRANSFORMING FOOD & FARMING
FOOD AND FARMING SYSTEMS ARE FAIR, ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS, HEALTHY AND CARING ACROSS EUROPE AND THE WORLD

ORGANIC ON EVERY TABLE

● Policy makers widely recognize the contributions of organic farming and promote it
● Citizens continue to increase their consumption of organic food and have easy access to it
● Organic and agroecological practices are employed on more than half of EU farmlands

A HOLISTIC ANSWER FOR AGRICULTURE & FOOD

● Continual innovation increases the resilience and environmental performance of organic farming and food production
● Crop varieties and animal breeds are conserved, shared and allowed to flourish
● Working with fellow food and farming actors, organic contributes to the wellbeing of farms, the environment, rural communities and society

TRANSPARENT & FAIR FOOD CHAINS

● The environmental, social, and public health costs of farming are reflected in payments to farmers and in the cost of food
● Farmers and workers are fairly remunerated: value and power are fairly distributed across the system
● New business models and communications foster trust, and citizens engage with farmers and artisans
To succeed in transforming food and farming, high quality food must become widespread. Citizens must have easy access to organic and agroecologically produced food. This can be achieved through increased production matched with increased recognition of the—both economic and social—value delivered by food produced in this way.

The right incentives and coherent policies supporting the ecological and social services that farmers produce and provide can go a long way. For example, by changing the focus of the CAP to fundamentally support farmers whose approaches inherently work towards the socio-economic and environmental sustainability of their own farms, their regions and the citizens. Governments and the private sector also play a key role in shaping how we eat through the choices made - from canteens in schools & hospitals to catering in offices & restaurants. Access to land is critical for the development of sustainable farming with policies used to address land grabbing, limit land concentration, foster generational renewal and support prospective farmers. A positive environment for sustainable food & farming requires also a robust information on production and market trends to inform future investment.

Farmers play a key role too. As chemical pesticides and fertilisers begin to fail and become even more expensive, more and more farmers are turning to organic and agro-ecological practices to manage pest and disease, increase soil fertility and preserve the natural resources that sustain their farms in the long term.

**Food & farming actors**

- **Reach out** and engage with farmers interested in sustainability
- **Invest in the development** of production capacity
- **Build sustainable value chains** to ensure economic viability & avoid dependency on subsidies
- **Engage with land access movements** to preserve and increase the number of organic farmers and the amount of land farmed organically
- **Communicate better & involve citizens:** use a diversity of channels to tell the story of the benefits of organic & agroecology
- **Engage** with policy-makers, schools, chefs, health advocates & community leaders to develop policies that support healthy production & consumption

**Policy-makers**

- **Ensure coherence between policies** related to food & farming, health, education and environment
- **Reform the CAP** to ensure that environmental and socio-economic outcomes delivered by farmers are fully incentivized and rewarded
- **Use green procurement** to stimulate sustainable diets in public canteens and private sector mass catering
- **Prioritize access to land** for new organic & agroecological farmers as the basis for food sovereignty in rural and urban areas
- **Develop comprehensive production & market data information systems** to enable actors make informed investment decisions

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**IFOAM EU is already working on:**

- Making conversion to organic more attractive by helping to ensure that the rules and economics of organic are conducive to conversion and innovation
- Increasing the EU funding dedicated to organic and enhance organic innovation
- Promoting the availability of inputs adapted to organic systems and fighting against inputs threatening organic production
- Developing the capacity and representativeness of organic associations

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What can we do to make sure that organic on every table is a reality? These are some of the ways people are already making strides, and also where more needs to be done.
A HOLISTIC ANSWER FOR FOOD & AGRICULTURE

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Organic works with nature to achieve the best possible results for people, animals and planet. Organic farming is about cultivating natural resources in a coherent way that takes the different elements and their impact on each other into account; and through this means it aims to benefit the environment, the people doing the farming and the people eating the food produced, as well as animals. Organic is therefore a system-based approach that works with and is inspired by natural production cycles. As we are continually learning more and more about the interconnectedness of soil, microbes, plants and animals, human healthy and food systems, organic also has a strong spirit of continuous improvement and innovation. Working together, farmers; food manufacturers, certification and inspection bodies, traders, distributors & retailers; consumers, NGOs & civil society organisations; and policy makers, can transform food & farming. Improvement in all areas is needed, from environmental to economic sustainability, from fairness to transparency and accountability. A systems perspective and a spirit of continuous improvement are inherent to the organic model, making it a key driver of the transformation.

What can we do to make this transformation a reality? These are some of the ways people are already making strides, and also where more needs to be done

IFOAM EU is already working on:

- Demonstrating the solutions organic can provide to societal problems
- Building bridges with all working to transform food & farming
- Engaging in intersection between environment and agriculture policy

Food & farming actors

- Improve how we grow and manufacture food by reducing resource use, increasing productivity & recycling, improving animal health & welfare, and avoiding waste
- Promote consumption of healthy diets with high levels of plant proteins and less – but better quality – animal proteins
- Improve the quality of processed food & eliminate unhealthy ingredients with a view to the role food plays in health
- Enhance knowledge: get involved in research projects & share knowledge across the value chain on innovative solutions for production & processing challenges
- Create links with sustainable community development initiatives such as short-supply chains, bio-districts, urban agriculture & community supported agriculture
- Improve communication & engagement on sustainability in organics

Policy-makers

- Increase funding for organic & agro-ecological research
- Support (local) approaches to rural revival such as bio-districts, community supported agriculture and city food networks
- Integrate agriculture in education and social policies, including the development of good governance models that can promote sustainable diets & food education
- Support the development of formal education & advisory systems with organic & agroecological focus
- Tax the use of pesticides & fertilizers and re-invest the money into agroecological research & innovation
- Allow the use of recycled nutrients of suitable quality on farmland for soil fertility
- Develop and implement organic action plans as to enable organic & agroecological actors to address key sustainability challenges
TRANSPARENCY & FAIR FOOD CHAINS
MAKING IT HAPPEN

It is a good time to be organic, never before has the market been so big or growing so fast. But along with the move beyond the niche, supply chains must keep the organic spirit. To have transparent and fair food chains, value and power must be distributed fairly among all the operators in the system. Business models and supply chains are needed that generate more added value for primary producers, and that connect citizens with producers physically and virtually. Policy-makers have an important role in preventing misbalance in the value chains. Many traders and companies are already supporting sustainable, fair agriculture projects delivering quality produce throughout the world. They lead by example.

What can we do to make transparent & fair food chains a reality? These are some of the ways people are already making strides, and also where more needs to be done

IFOAM EU is already working on:

- Increasing the credibility, fairness and transparency of the organic food chain by supporting the development of new certification & inspection tools
- Building capacity & increasing the representativeness of organic associations
- Evaluating potential for advocacy on true cost accounting/value pricing

Food & farming actors

- Become informed and inform others about the true cost of food
- Develop new tools to create transparency from farm to fork and enhance business-to-business communication
- Engage all actors including intermediaries & retailers in dialogue about ways to increase transparency & fairness
- Develop & adopt a code of fair pricing & fair relationships for supply chain actors
- Inform citizens about the origin of what they are eating and how it was produced
- Strengthen direct marketing

Policy-makers

- Encourage operators to make price & production data available to better see market functioning
- Promote cooperation between value chain actors
- Set up public control bodies to ensure fair competition and transparency

What can we do to make transparent & fair food chains a reality? These are some of the ways people are already making strides, and also where more needs to be done