Best Practice Organic Approaches to Rural Development Policy

Denmark: Organic training and market development schemes

Background
Training on organic farming and market development can play an important role in helping advance the organic food and farming sector. Under the Danish Rural Development Programme the Danish Agrifish Agency and Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries invites groups of producers, companies and other organisations to submit applications for projects focused on market development, consumer awareness and training and educational programmes for farmers and the organic food sector. The scheme combines measure 133 supporting producer groups for information and promotion activities for products under food quality schemes and measures 111 Vocational training and information actions set out under the current rural development Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005. Each year a combination of EU and national funding is made available for market promotion, consumer awareness and training and educational programmes for producers (5.37 million euro), export promotion, (1.34 million euro) organic conversion of public kitchens (3.76m euro).

Activities
Promotional activities and increasing consumer awareness
Activities are supported in relation to promotional activities and increasing consumer awareness for organic food and farming. Beneficiaries are required to provide information regarding the specific benefits of organic agriculture and food for the environment, animal welfare, and nature protection as a means to promote organic product sales.

Initiatives include the organisation of exhibitions and fairs, promotions targeted at specific food groups e.g. milk or types of consumers e.g. families with children, cities dwellers, information materials, social media and advertising campaigns, supermarket collaboration.
through in-store visibility or point of sale displays as well as export promotions within EU. These projects are supported with up to 70% (EU/MS) financing, and 30% financing from the applicant.

**Practitioner Training and educational programmes**

Schemes also support practitioner training and educational programmes. These initiatives seek to strengthen knowledge and competencies regarding organic food, farming and food preparation as well as inspection and labelling for people in the food sector ranging from farmers to staff in food companies, stores and public/private kitchens and canteens. Projects can receive up to 100% financing.

Projects have supported conversion checks where a farm advisor provides a farmer with an overview of the farm could look as organic farm e.g. practical challenges, investments, market opportunities and costs. Other projects seek to organise training days and network groups for farmers focusing on new farm practices such as improving animal welfare, enhancing biodiversity, reducing environmental and climate impacts, new product development, and local marketing.

The scheme has also been used to promote large-scale conversion of public kitchens in Danish cities to organic in the context of the Danish Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries’ target that by 2020 up to 60% food used by public kitchens is organic. Training is provided for the staff on organic food and production methods and can involve visits to farms as well as courses on food preparation focusing on less waste, more greens, less meat, and more efficiency. A strong emphasis is placed on delivering high quality organic meals at a reasonable price. Mobile training teams have also been developed through other projects to spread knowledge of organic food and products in the food service industry, strengthen product development and sales competencies in micro- and small organic food companies and helping small companies to work more professionally with retailers.

**Further Information**

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<th>where:</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
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<tr>
<td>what:</td>
<td>Organic training and market development scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>how:</td>
<td>Danish Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005, Measure 111 Vocational training information actions, Measure 133 Supporting producer group for information and promotion activities</td>
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1 Annual expenditure varies year on year. Budget for export promotion and organic conversion of public kitchens represent supplemental funds since 2011.