

Data network for better European organic market information

Editorial by project coordinator Raffaele Zanoli¹

Dear Organic Data Networkers,

The 3rd issue of our newsletter contains some important news about progress made in building a stronger network of organic market data collectors, publishers and users.



In this issue you will find the full text of the final statement on organic market data collection and EU regulation, discussed and approved by our network after the first European Workshop held in Newbury earlier this year. We believe the statement is a balanced and realistic position on how better organic data could be collected by small changes to existing regulations, and how the organic market will benefit from improved harmonization of data collection procedures.

In the next months we will be engaged in preparing the Code of Practice for the initiation and maintenance of good organic market data collection and publication procedures (OrMaCode).

The Code of Practice will consist in a list of principles/objectives and related indicators covering the different key areas of organic market data collection, processing, storage and publication/dissemination.

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It will be consistent with the European Statistics Code of Practice (COM(2005) 217 final). OrMaCode is intended to be a tool for guiding future organic market data collection, processing and dissemination in Europe. Associated to the OrMaCode we will produce a practical Manual. The Manual will contain specific guidelines for applying OrMaCode.

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It will also contain guidelines on the collection of relevant set of data (price data, custom data, production data, trade data, retail and consumption data), and on the way to ensure that quality criteria specified in the Code of Practice will be met.

The OrMACode and the Manual, together with the enhanced Database produced throughout the project, are the core outputs of our OrganicDataNetwork project, and we want them to be thoroughly "crowdsourced" and discussed among all partners and stakeholders participating in our network.

To achieve this aims, we will be using our online Organic Data forum, and we will hold our 2nd European Workshop in Bari (Italy) on **July 10-11, 2014**.

The workshop will concentrate on finding practical solutions to the identified problems, such as data quality improvement measures and the development of model pathways for the implementation of organic market data collection procedures.

During the workshop:

- we will provide a training session on the OrganicDataNetwork database for data collectors
- we will provide together suggestions for the Code of practice and the Manual for organic market data collectors, on the basis of the draft prepared by the OrganicDataNetwork team
- we will discuss how information exchange between data collectors could continue after the end of the OrganicDataNetwork project.

To make all this process the most participatory as possible, we have already prepared a specific section of our Organic Data Forum (http://www.organicdatanetwork.net/odn-organicdataforum.html) to discuss and crowdsource the principles/objectives and related indicators covering the different key areas of organic market data collection, processing, storage and publication/dissemination, to for part of the OrMaCode. We hope to read your contributions there!

Thank You!

Prof. Raffaele Zanoli

Coordinator, OrganicDataNetwork







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Statement on data collection and EU regulation

On March 13, 2013 the first workshop of organic data collectors was held in Newbury (UK) in the framework of the EU Project OrganicDataNetwork.

Based on the results of the workshop as further discussed on the project online forum with all involved stakeholders, the following statement was issued:

The review of the political and legal framework for organic production, currently implemented by the Commission is an occasion to improve current practices and methods of organic market data collection. One major obstacle is that data already collected is not used due to lack of harmonisation and methodology. Therefore the harmonisation of methodology in data collection is of utmost importancee.g. in order to use the potential of data already collected by authorities.

The OrganicDataNetwork consortium believes that an improvement of current mandatory data provision of the member states, usually based on the data of the control bodies or on administrative data or data of the statistical offices will contribute to both the inspection system and market transparency.

- 1. Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 Art.93 (2) on statistical information to be provided by the Member States should be fully implemented in the Member States.
- 2. Additionally to Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 Art.93 (2) collection of turnover data from processors, wholesalers, retailers, importers and exporters should be made mandatory.
- 3. To be of any use, Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 Art.93 (2) should more precisely define the statistical data referred to and should seek harmonisation in the product classification and nomenclature, with specific reference to Eurostat codes. Furthermore, production data on volumes should be collected by product or product group respectively.

4. To increase the use of data collected by control bodies, it needs to be coupled with the harmonisation of definitions and concepts used in the inspection system.

Additional improvements in data collection can be achieved by the administrative authorities through:

- 1. a unique and permanent identifier for each inspected operator (e.g. tax code or any other unique code used at national level) should be established ensuring the portability of such identifiers when changing control body.
- 2. Commission Regulation (EC) 2286/2003 on the Community Customs Code should be amended by rendering mandatory for import/export operators the C644 code (Certificate of organic inspection) in Box 44 of the Single Administrative Document (SAD) when importing/exporting or re-exporting organic products². Besides an extra digit should be appended to TARIC code on relevant organic products, as already experimented by the Italian custom authorities in 2012 for cereals and oilseeds. This will allow the improvement of current foreign trade data collection by differentiating organic and non-organic trade. Amendments to the EC Regulations on the collection of Intra- and Extra-EU trade statistics by Member States will then allow the differentiation of the statistics on trade which are collected monthly from trade operators.

Finally, the OrganicDataNetwork consortium recommends that improving data collection should be one action point of a new European Organic Action Plan envisaged by the aforementioned review of the political and legal framework for organic production.

² Currently, the code is optional for operators.

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Project members at the 4th project meeting in Montpellier in October 2013 (Photo: Kai Kreuzer)

OrganicDataNetwork develops methodology for collecting organic data - Report from the fourth project meeting

Kai Kreuzer³

The EU project OrganicDataNetwork, in which 15 partners in ten countries are taking part, organized the fourth project meeting from 3-4 October 2013. After the meetings in Ancona, Frick (Switzerland) and Newbury (England), the workshop took place this time in Montpellier in the south of France. The topics on the agenda were the monitoring of data quality by means of plausibility checks, the development of an organic database and the implementation of case studies to improve methodology. At the one-and-a-half-day event, participants in the project in the various countries explained their approach and their suggestions for developing a common

strategy. The aim of the EU project is the publication of a handbook in December 2014, and this will be its most important outcome.



Project coordinator Raffaele Zanoli. Phot. Kai Kreuzer

In 2012, France recorded organic turnover of €4.1bn, said Dorian Flechet (picture) from Agence Bio at the meeting in Montpellier. In recent years there has been a big increase in the land area cultivated by organic farmers, and now nearly 4 % of agricultural land in France is farmed organically. With the help of clearly presented graphics, he demonstrated with more data that, for example, the organic

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turnover in south-west France is around 50 % higher than in the north-east of the country (Alsace-Lorraine). However, before a survey of data like this is complete every year, several months have been spent not only on gathering the statistics but on collating on many levels the figures provided by the most diverse actors like inspection agencies, associations, organizations, wholesalers and exporters.



Dorian Flechet explains the development of organic farming in France. Photo: Kai Kreuzer

Helga Willer from the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and Diana Schaack from the German Agricultural Market Information Company (Agrarmarkt Informations-Gesellschaft, AMI) reported on the progress made on the database of OrganicDataNetwork. This database has over 8,000 entries for 2011 alone. It contains the details of land area (hectares), production, retail sales and exports and imports (volume and value).

Corinna Feldmann from the University of Kassel and Diana Schaack from the Agricultural Market Information Company (AMI) dealt in detail with possible sources of error in collecting organic market data. First, possible discrepancies are identified by means of plausibility checks. Once they have been identified, they are examined by the authors and the people who have compiled the data for processing. If the discrepancies turn out to be errors, they have to be corrected without delay. Sources of error can be differing classifications, transposed digits, commas in the wrong place and confusing units like decitonnes (dt) with tonnes (t).

Different methods are used for the plausibility checks: comparison of data year on year and comparison between two countries with comparable farming conditions can be a good indicator of whether figures are realistic. A comparison with conventional yields can also be a reliable indicator. "If the relation between the volume of the harvest and the stated land area is double what conventional farming produces, then we know something can't be right," says Feldmann. Discrepancies also occur when annual data sometimes come from different sources and especially when different methods are used to collect and aggregate the data. Occasionally, different categorization of products leads to diverging results. Take the example of tinned tomatoes - they could be listed under vegetables, processed products or fine foods.



Corinna Feldmann of Kassel University. Photo: Kaí Kreuzer

According to Feldmann and Schaack: "In the case of increases or decreases of more than 100 % in production volumes or land area, it's always necessary, therefore, to question the people responsible for providing the data."



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Quite apart from that, it makes sense to carry out double checks at the compilation stage in all cases, so that the collected data can be checked for correctness by a particular author. "The coherence of the data and checking by means of comparing with other figures is a very important contribution to optimizing data collection," says Susanne Padel from the Organic Research Centre in England.

Using case studies, data from France, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, Britain and several Mediterranean countries are currently being examined to test and compare the feasibility and practicability of the processed data. Above all, those project partners who themselves collect market data find this process helpful. With status-quo reports from individual countries already available, the project partners collecting market data are now in a position to become involved in direct discussion of their experiences, to compare methods and thus to learn from particularly well functioning examples. The annual process of establishing the size of the organic market in the working group "Arbeitskreis Biomarkt" in Germany under the direction of AMI was given as an example and sensible practice.

The experience gathered from the data collection and the case studies will inform the most important output of the project: the Code of Practice and the manual for organic market data collection. The Code of Practice will consist of a list of principles/objectives and related indicators covering the different key areas of organic market data collection, processing, storage and publication/dissemination. It will be consistent with the European Statistics Code of Practice (COM (2005) 217 final) and developed in strict collaboration with Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union located in Luxemburg. The manual will contain specific guidelines on the collection of relevant sets of data (price, customs, production, trade, retail and consumption data) and on the way to ensure that quality criteria specified in the Code of Practice will be met.

Regarding dissemination, i.e. public relations work for the OrganicDataNetwork project, there was agreement that flyers should be distributed and laid out at various trade fairs in Europe, and at some events there should be a presentation of its work. A workshop is scheduled at the Organic World Congress which will be held in October 2014 in Istanbul.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Martin Cottingham (picture), who compiles the annual organic market report for the UK for the Soil Association, said: "This was the most useful of these meetings so far because we are getting into the core of the project." And Dorian Flechet from Agence Bio added: "As the project is developing, we are more confident about speaking with partners and exposing problems in order to find solutions."



Martin Cottingham (centre) explaining issues regarding the Organic Market Report in the UK

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The OrganicDataNetwork case studies

Issue 3

Catherine Gerrard4

One part of the OrganicDataNetwork project (Work Package 6) involves carrying out case studies in six different countries/regions: Germany, France, United Kingdom (UK), Czech Republic, Italy and the Mediterranean (a group of non-EU Mediterranean countries).

These case studies primarily aim to produce new/improved organic market reports by using quality checks developed in the project and by exchanging experiences among the study countries. The case studies will also produce a collection of methods and 'lessons learned' during the process which then can be shared or applied Europe-wide. The countries were chosen to give a range from those with established organic markets and long-running market reports (France, Germany, UK), to countries who have produced market reports for only a couple of years (Czech Republic) or where no reports are currently published (Italy, Mediterranean). Each case study will focus on areas of improvement that will address data gaps within their particular country/region. However, there will also be overlap and therefore room for discussion or collaboration between the case study partners e.g. both Germany and UK will be considering ways of improving data on retail sales through non-multiples, Italy and France are both looking into international trade data, and Germany and Italy share a common interest in selected price data.

Susanne Padel explains the work on the case studies at the project meeting in Montpellier. Photo: Kai Kreuzer

The first phase of the case studies has involved investigating the current status of data collection within each country or region. This has built on the work from other OrganicDataNetwork work packages (2, 3 and 4) as well as meetings and discussions with stakeholders (both data collectors and data users) in the case study areas. Below we summarise the results of these investigations for one of the case study countries, the UK. The next steps will involve carrying out the case studies, before a final report will share lessons learned and contribute to the code of practise that will be developed as part of the project.

UK: current status of data collection

Like any other member state of the European Union the UK must provide data concerning organic production to Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Union) on an annual basis: e.g. crop areas and livestock numbers. The data are collected by the control bodies as part of the certification process and are then provided to Defra (the Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Defra first carries out data cleaning and harmonisation then provides the data to Eurostat and produces its own annual publication (freely available for download) based on the organic statistics. Further production data, particularly aimed at

[•] Testing of data collection procedures
• Publishing better market in 6 countries/regions

UK

Germany

Italy

Publishing report the case studies at the work on the case studies at

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predicting future market impacts such as likely surpluses or deficits in supply of organic products, is collected in Wales by the Organic Centre Wales and Aberystwyth University, and in Scotland by Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). Currently there is no similar survey carried out in England. With regards to estimating the annual value of retail sales, the Soil Association (one of the UK's control bodies) publishes an annual Organic Market Report (again, available for free, either as hard copy or to download from their webpage). This report uses a combination of data from retail/household panels, as well as from surveys of multiple retailers and Soil Association certified businesses.

There is currently no data collection within the UK with regards to customs data (organic import or export). This has been done in the past, when the English government had set a target to reduce reliance on imports, but no data have been published for several years. There is also limited data on organic catering and on retail sales through non-multiples such as farm shops, farmers' markets or box schemes.

The UK case study will:

- Aim to increase the harmonisation of control body production data, which will improve timeliness of Defra's publication of the organic statistics.
- Carry out an English producer survey, similar to the Scottish and Welsh survey, and question producers on their future intentions with regards to production levels, but also with regards to remaining a certified organic producer.
- Improve organic retail data collection with regards to non-multiple sales such as farm shops, farmers' markets and box schemes.

More information

More information about the work package 6 and the case studies:

http://www.organicdatanetwork.net/odnworkpackage-6.html

OrganicDataNetwork workshop in July 2014 in Italy

Robert Home⁵ and Daniela Vairo⁶

In the rapidly changing global environment, the organic sector has now developed to the point where the need for improvements in statistical data is becoming particularly pressing, and the consequences of failing to address this are potentially significant in financial terms. However, it is still the case that in most countries only very basic data such as certified organic holdings, land areas and livestock numbers are reported. Information in sufficient quantity and of appropriate quality is essential for sound decision-making but important market data, e.g. the amount of production, consumption, retail sales, international trade or producer and consumer prices, do not exist in most European countries.

In the framework of the project, we are organizing the **second** European Workshop on "finding practical solutions to current organic market data problems". The workshop will be held in at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB), **Italy** on **10-11 July 2014**.

This workshop is the last in a series of two workshops organised as part of an effort to bring together stakeholders in the organic market data sector from European Union, EU Candidate and EFTA countries. The first workshop (held at the Organic Research Centre Elm Farm, Newbury, UK on March 13, 2013) identified organic market data problems. The 2nd workshop will concentrate on finding practical solutions to the identified problems, such as data quality improvement

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measures and the development of model pathways for the implementation of organic market data collection procedures. It is organised by the Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy; the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Switzerland, and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB).

Stakeholders of the organic sector are invited to this workshop based on their knowledge and experience in organic market data collection. The participation at this event will be mutually beneficial for all. This workshop provides a unique opportunity for networking with other experts on European market data and will lead to an ongoing platform for information exchange. The number of participants is limited to 50 experts in organic market data from around Europe.

The primary aim of the workshop is to develop and refine a Code of Practice manual will be useful for data collectors and to discuss how information exchange between data collectors could continue after the end of the OrganicDataNetwork project. During the workshop, a training session on the OrganicDataNetwork database for data collectors will take place. This will enable a range of activities to facilitate discussion and exchange between data collectors and the OrganicDataNetwork team. The outcomes of the workshop will be distributed to participants and will be available for further discussion on our web forum.

More information

OrganicDataForum:

http://www.organicdatanetwork.net/odnorganicdataforum.html

News in short

New report from the European Commission: Facts and figures on organic agriculture in the European Union



This report on the status of organic farming in Europe 201 was prepared by the Directorate General of Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission with the support of Eurostat and the OrganicDataNetwork project.

More information

http://www.organicdatanetwork.net/dw-newsdetail.html?&L=0&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=1149

German organic farmers increase revenues by 12 percent in 2012

In 2012, German organic farmers increased their sales revenues by 12 percent (to 1.53 billion euros). High prices for cereals, fruit, and vegetables and higher prices for livestock, especially for laying hens and other poultry, are the main reason for this positive development.



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More information

http://www.organicdatanetwork.net/dw-news-detail.html?&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1136

Italy: Organic agricultural land and retail sales on the rise

Data on the organic and operators are provided by the Italian Information system for organic farming SINAB, which is based data from the authorised inspection bodies operating in Italy.

More information

<u>www.organicdatanetwork.net/dw-news-</u> <u>detail.html?&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1113</u>

Spotlight on the OrganicDataNetwork: Interview with project coordinator Raffale Zanoli

Marco Schlüter of the European Union Group of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM EU Group) and Professor Raffaele Zanoli, project coordinator, discuss the OrganicDataNetwork project.

More information

http://eu.ifoam.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoameu_comm_newsletter_201307.pdf

Inventory of data collecting and publishing institutions now online

The OrganicDataNetwork report on the inventory of data collectors in Europe is now online. It constitutes deliverable 2.1 of the OrganicDataNetwork project.

Download

http://oraprints.org/23009/

Upcoming events

February 12-15, 2014:

BioFach with OrganicDataNetwork session

Location: Nürnberg, Germany
Details will be made available at the
OrganicDataNetwork website
www.organicdatanetwork.net and
www.biofach.de

May 15-16, 2014

5th meeting of the OrganicDataNetwork project

Location: Tallin, Estonia

July 10 and 11, 2014

Second Workshop of the OrganicDataNetwork project

Location: Bari, Italy October 13-15, 2014

IFOAM Organic World Congress (OWC 2014),

Location: Istanbul: Turkey

More information

on the project's and related events is available at http://www.organicdatanetwork.net/1769.html



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About the OrganicDataNetwork project

The project "Data network for better European organic market information"

(OrganicDataNetwork) aims to increase the transparency of the European organic food market through better availability of market intelligence about the sector to meet the needs of policy makers and actors involved in organic markets.

It is funded under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technologi cal Development of the European Union and runs from 2012 to 2014.

The project OrganicDataNetwork aims to meet the needs of policy makers and actors involved in Of the European organic food market through better availability of market intelligence about the sector.

Work is carried out in nine work packages:

Work package 1: Stakeholder integration and coordination centre

Work package 2: Inventory of organic market data collectors

Work package 3: Evaluation of existing methods of organic market data collection

Work package 4: Collection, handling and publication of organic market data

Work package 5: Development and test of methodologies for data quality improvement

Work package 6: Case studies on improving data quality in selected countries/region

Work package 7: Synthesis and recommendation

Work package 8: Dissemination

Work package 9: Project coordination and overall management

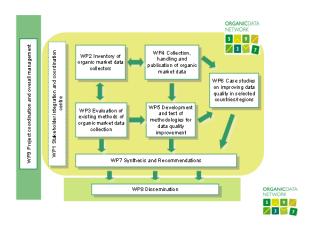


Figure: The work packages of the OrganicDatanetwork

To achieve these objectives, the OrganicDataNetwork project includes 15 partners (from 10 countries) who collect, publish and analyse such data. This partnership will closely co-operate with the European Commission, Eurostat, and statistical offices of the Member States, using existing structures for collecting and processing data on the organic market and stimulating the development of new ones by adapting existing models.

The partnership will act as a co-ordinating centre between stakeholders, and will result in a proposal for the establishment of a permanent network to achieve collaboration on statistical issues regarding the organic market.



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The project partners of the OrganicDataNetwork

The OrganicDataNetwork has 15 partners from 10 European countries. The project is coordinated by the Polytechnic University of Marche in Ancona, Italy.

- <u>Università Politecnica delle Marche (UPM)</u>, Italy
- Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Switzerland
- Organic Research Centre (ORC), UK
- <u>University of Kassel (UKS)</u>, Germany
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CULS), Czech Republic
- Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB), Italy
- Agence Bio, France
- Agricultural Market Information Company (AMI), Germany
- <u>Bio-Markt.Info</u>, Germany
- Biocop Productos Biológicos, Spain
- <u>Ecozept</u>, France
- Centre for Ecological Engineering, Estonia
- IFOAM EU Group, Belgium
- <u>IMO-CONTROL</u>, Turkey
- Soil Association, UK

Imprint

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This newsletter is available at project website at

http://www.organicdatanetwork.net/newslette r-odn.html. The newsletter is published twice per year. More information is available at the project website www.organicdatanetwork.net.

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