



Latest Developments on Organic Seed and Organic Plant breeding

1) Meeting of experts "Biodynamic agriculture and hybrid varieties - a step to solving a dilemma"

Demeter International and the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland have installed a working group of experts to discuss organic hybrids and whether they can receive a Demeter label. What is the impact of organic hybrid seeds on life forces, economy of small-scale farming, and the fact that they are not reproducible like open- and self-pollinated seeds?

Lebende Samen applied to attend but the meeting is cancelled due to Corona Virus restrictions. Lebende Samen is not sure that organic hybrids are the really main topic today. We believe it is the question which has been overcome. In nature hybrids can happen by "accident". Today really relevant is the question what happens with the labelling duty of products which are generated by using Crisper Cas tools. Under the current EU directives these products, seeds or plants, have to be labelled as GMO. Dow Chemical daughter company owns the license which is given only to certain companies accepted by Dow. The industry is strongly lobbying to change the EU directives to avoid the labelling of the usage of Crisper Cas methods.

If this will come it will be not easy to identify seeds with or without usage of Crisper Cas tools to be created. It is much research necessary to find out whether there are methods to identify seeds whether the seeds have an history of usage of Crisper Cas tools or not. The top 10 seeds companies have already the knowledge to use these tools efficiently. They will be accepted by Dow to receive a license and they can effort it. What are the consequences biologically, economically and spiritually if nobody can prove the genesis of the seeds or if one can? Do we need to change the organic labelling into trust labelling that the farmer promise not to use Crisper Cas or similar methods and he is only using seeds which are not influenced by that technology?

Will Demeter label accept seeds generated by the use of Crisper Cas methods and if not how to secure the information if there is no labelling duty anymore? Is Crisper Cas a way to dominate in seed breeding technology instead of life forces? One interesting fact have been shown by the HOPI native Americans, who have developed their maize varieties over centuries by using spiritual forces of music and dancing.

The meeting was planned for 19 -21 March. However, it was canceled due to the corona virus. We will keep you posted about any results of the working group.

2) The Corona Virus and organic seeds

These current times are challenging. On the one side we are facing emergency status of states and a corona virus, which we not really know. It will be not the last virus which will attack humanity.

These times are also times to reflect, rethink and to create opportunities. Following the news, it is clear that nutrition is always key in times of crises. In times of health crises, it is crucial to control the food value chain and to check each element of supply on health issues. Organic production from the start, means from organic seeds is already a big quality check and integrates often local production. Food sovereignty becomes again more important and to secure healthy seeds is a corner stone. In a global world it is more important to share knowledge and produce more local. This will result in lower cost of organic food globally.

Food store will stay open in the time of emergency and people will go there to buy food and they could buy seeds for their urban gardening. Now it is the time where people will do more at home. They can use the time for gardening, cooking and to use aromatics for health. More and more people are now in the mood to engage in producing more fresh food at home and to be conscious in healthy food. Your chain could now combine organic food with organic seeds. We will start a campaign:

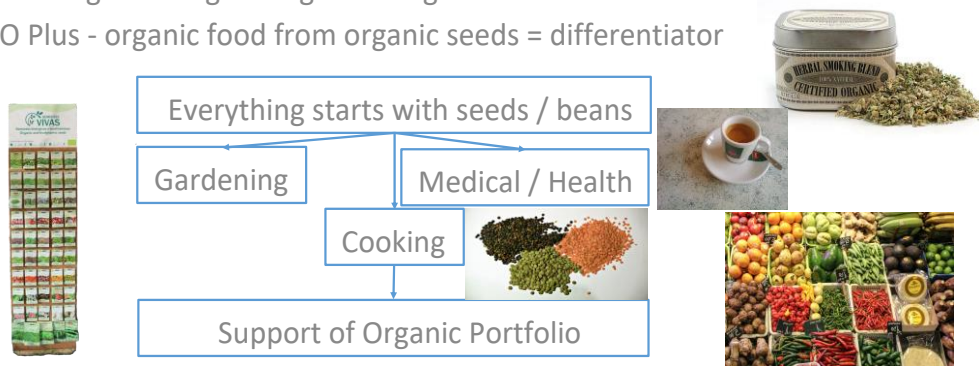
How can we generate more vitality and resistance against virus or other diseases? Let us behave and act to strengthening our vitality, health and power of life in the community and society. We recommend:

- Take care of good and diverse food and eat healthy,
- Keep your body fit, walk in nature, do gardening and get enough sleep,
- Use healthy seeds and grow healthy plants for yourself and your community,
- Take care of the soil, using organic matter and topsoil,
- Cook a chicken brew from home chicken or eat strong vegetable soup with ginger, curcuma, onion and garlic

Everything starts with seeds:

- **Customers of organic products take care of:**
- Nature, Environment/Sustainability, Health and healthy food
- Want to be involved, Holistic approach, Worried about climat
- **Opportunities:**
- Knowledge Sharing through training & education & involvement
- BIO Plus - organic food from organic seeds = differentiator

Lebende Samen -
Living Seeds e.V.



We are happy to support joint campaigns

- From seeds to gardening
- From seeds to fresh to cooking
- From seeds to aromatics and health
- By online seminars

3) Innovative Project in Idanha- a - Nova in Portugal: Centre of Applied Science for Organic Farming and Organic Plant Breeding

[Living Seeds - Sementes Vivas](#) signed jointly with University of Coimbra, Politechnic Institute of Castelo Branco, FIBL Switzerland, INIAV, the Municipality of Idanha the creation of a Centre of Applied Science for Organic Farming and Organic Plant Breeding. The innovation is, that the new research institute will be located the middle of 500ha organic land and multiple organic projects instead of being located in cities. This is great development for the rural area in Portugal as the project aims to be the promoter of education and research on organic farming resulting from the joint work between the farmers/producers and the Centre's research team. The aim is to create synergies that shorten the distance between scientific knowledge and field work. More information can be found [here](#).

4) Research booklet 'The State of Organic Seed in Europe' (published November 2019)

Information collected through research of the LIVESEED project in order to shed light on the actual situation of organic seed use in Europe. It addresses topics such as the use of the databases in the EU, development of the seed market the last years, what are the factors which encourage or discourage farmers to use organic seed, how can organic plant breeding contribute to 100% organic seed use? Great source of information, the booklet can be downloaded for free [here](#).

5) Postgraduate course 'Participatory Plant Breeding & Resilient Seed Systems'

Sunday 16 – Friday 21 August 2020

Conference Centre De Werelt, Lunteren, the Netherlands

Training in participatory breeding and seed system concepts, issues and approaches will support engaged professionals and graduate students to contribute to resilient seed system development. This course serves professionals who seek longer-term solutions for sustainable, agro-ecological agriculture and answers to the question: How can food systems be moved forward in the South and the North? Registration and more information: <https://bit.ly/2Vhbq6S>

6) International year of Plant Health 2020

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The year is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, and boost economic development. You can find more information [here](#) on how you can participate on raising awareness for this topic.

International News

7) Organic Seed Growers Conference, Corvallis, USA

The conference has already taken place on 12- 15 February. It is the largest event focused on organic seed in North America, bringing together different stakeholders concerning organic seed from across the U.S. and around the world. Very interesting topics were discussed such as cannabis breeding seed production, Seed Economics: Balancing Passion and Profitability in Seed growing, landraces, cauliflower and wheat organic plant breeding projects. In the following link you can download the proceedings for your information: <https://bit.ly/2SY74Qs>

8) SeedLinked, US (on-line platform)

SeedLinked is an online platform that seeks to connect farmers and gardeners with information on varieties from other growers. SeedLinked is available to anyone, from plant breeders to commercial growers to home gardeners, in an effort to increase the amount and quality of information available on variety performance in different regions. It is particularly useful to facilitate participatory trials with real-time information shared among users. UW Madison and SeedLinked are collaborating to develop and beta test the platform through a joint USDA Small Business Innovation Grant. More information: <https://www.seedlinked.com/>

In the EU, the situation is different. Regarding organic seeds, each Member State has its own database with the availability, cultivar, amount, producer of organic seeds for each cultivating season. In case that organic seed is not available, there are exceptions to the current organic regulation therefore the farmer can use conventional seeds. The exemptions to the rules are subject to change when the new EU Regulation 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products comes into force (from 1st January 2021) and will repeal Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2000.

Regarding the availability of conventional seeds in Europe, the private companies are responsible for the supply chain.