



Rules for the use of organic seed in the Netherlands

Cross visit Liveseed
September 30th
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Agenda

- Introduction Bionext
- The Dutch (organic) seed sector
- EU rules for organic seed
- The National Annex system



- Branch organisation for the Dutch organic sector
- Mission: connect the different links in the organic (food) production chain
- Aim: growth and improved sustainability of the organic sector
- Main activities: advocacy, policy, communication, 'chain projects', B to B,...



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The Dutch seed sector

- World top player in:
 - Vegetable seeds
 - Seed potatoes
 - Ornamentals like bulbs and trees
- Over 350 companies with >12.000 employees that are active in breeding, propagation and plant raising
- In 2018, seeds and young plants were exported for more than 3.1 billion euros
- More than 30% of the number of plant variety rights applications come from Dutch breeders

The Dutch organic seed sector

- Companies producing organic vegetable seed:
 - Enza/Vitalis
 - Bejo
 - Rijk Zwaan
 - De Bolster
- Breeders of organic seed potatoes:
 - Agrico (Bio Select), Den Hartigh, Meijer BV, Plantera BV, Niek Vos, Interseed Holland, HZPC Holland, Caithness Potatoes Holding B.V., Danespo, Europlant

The Dutch organic seed sector

- Branch organisation Plantum NL
 - sector group organic
- Bionext
 - theme group organic seed and breeding
 - national Annex project; organisation of annual expert group meetings
 - lobby for research and better regulation
 - Member seed expertgroup IFOAM EU
 - partner in Liveseed
 - Potato covenant

The Dutch organic seed sector

- Foundation Zaadgoed stimulates organic breeding by farmers www.Zaadgoed.nl
- Cooperation for selection and propagation of organic OP varieties De zaderij: www.zaderij.nl
- Breeding Farm owned by organic trader Odin www.debeerschehoeve.nl
- Organic breeding research:
 - Louis Bolk institute
 - Wageningen university and research centre
 - New professor in organic breeding?

Research for organic breeding

www.groeneveredeling.nl

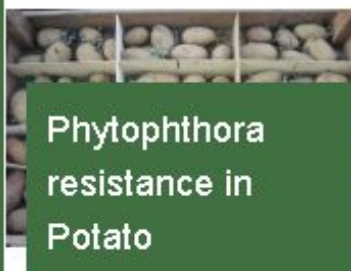
Projects

**Groene
Veredeling**

New breeds for the preservation of regular and organic cultivation.



Current projects



Phytophthora
resistance in
Potato



Thrips resistance
in leek



Resistance to
aphids in sweet
pepper



Reducing
damping-off in
spinach

breeding Robust potato varieties

- <http://louisbolk.org/bioimpuls/en/>



Aim potato covenant

100% robust organic potato varieties in the Netherlands in 2020

Upscaling production of robust organic seed potatoes, cultivation of robust varieties and sales of robust varieties

Demonstration fields



EU Rules for the use of organic seed

- The use of organic seed and vegetative propagation material is obligatory when available
- Derogation is possible if
 - No organic seed is available
 - The appropriate variety is not available
 - .. or can not be delivered on time
 - For field tests and research
 - For the conservation of varieties

EU rules for the use of organic seed

- Availability must be presented in a national seed database
- Annual report on derogations
- For crops on the EU Annex: no derogation is possible -> empty list
- Implementation: varies per member state

EU rules for the use of organic seed

- In 2021: new organic regulation
- Organic heterogeneous material
- Seed database also for seed from farms in conversion to organic.
- Database for organic animals?

The National Annex

- A National list of (sub) crops for which no derogation is possible (category 1)
- Started in 2004 in the Netherlands
- In 2019 implemented in Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, Luxembourg, Switzerland
- Increase production and use of organic seed
 - Step by step
 - Bottom up

The National Annex actors

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality: final responsibility
- The NAK tuinbouw: manager of the organic seed database (www.biodatabase.nl)
- Skal, public certifier responsible for granting derogations (authorisations)
- Bionext: project executor; organizes expert group meetings
- Farmers and seedproducers: members of the expertgroup

The National Annex preconditions

- Expertgroups for different crops:
 - cereals, foddercrops & green manure
 - vegetables and potatoes,
 - glasshouse crops
 - vegetative material
- With representatives from farmers, seed companies, certifiers and experts
- Farmers have a strong (decisive) vote
- Expertgroups give a (binding) advice to the competent authority

The National Annex preconditions

- Clear criteria to decide if a (sub)crop can be placed on this list:
 - Are the main varieties available
 - Is the assortment sufficient for different soil types, seasons and markets
 - Are there at least two seed producers
 - Can the crop be divided in subcrops

The National Annex preconditions

- The system must be flexible
- Crops can be removed from the National Annex when necessary
- Devision in subcrops/different markets
- Derogation for:
 - research/field trials
 - conservation purposes
 - new varieties -> flexibility rule

The National Annex

The flexibility rule


Farmers get a derogation for one or two growing seasons for a new variety

The flexibility rule applies when:

- a certain (sub)crop is on the Annex
- a new variety appears on the market
- There is no organic seed available(yet) from this variety
- The variety has specific desired traits
- The seedproducer is willing to produce organic seed (signed declaration)
- Mainly used for glasshouse crops

The National Annex vegetative propagating material

- Organic apple and pear growers must order their trees 1,5 year in advance
- Derogations only if:
 - the variety can not be produced in organic quality
 - Compensate the loss of new planted trees (max 5% a year)
 - Business expansion
 - Catastrophic disease

A photograph of a vast lavender field. The plants are in various stages of bloom, with some showing dense, rounded purple flower heads. A dirt path winds through the field, leading towards a line of trees and a hillside in the background. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Thank you for your attention
Any questions?