

How to improve organic seed availability in Bulgaria

Problems

In Bulgaria, organic producers are obliged to use organic seeds and seedlings, in accordance with Regulation 834/2007. In reality, most organic farmers use untreated conventional seeds after a derogation granted by the control body. For many crops (cereals, vegetables), organic farmers declare that they use their own farm saved seeds. There is no official data on the quantity and quality of farm saved seeds.

Solutions

The National organic seed database has been undergoing software upgrades and changes throughout the year. However, currently (as of 5th April 2020) the database is still an Excel sheet and contains only two suppliers.

Some local seed companies and research institutes hesitate to start production of organic seeds. They are afraid not being able to fulfil organic standards. Literature and practical information/advice on this topic in Bulgarian language could improve this situation.

Farm saved seeds most often are used by vegetable and cereals growers. It is necessary to help farmers with information and advice for better seed quality.

Practical recommendations

- All stakeholders must continue pressure in order to achieve a functional national organic seed database.
- Bioselena, together with Bulgarian partner institutes*, engaged in LIVESEED project, should translate into Bulgarian and disseminate the outcomes of the project (practical information/research outcomes/videos) among stakeholders, especially seed companies and farmers.
- Bioselena together with Bulgarian partner institutes*, should produce more educational material and organise educational events for farmers.

*Maritsa Vegetable Crops Research Institute; Agricultural University – Plovdiv, Biosem Bulgaria Ltd, Opora Zaden Ltd.

Further information

1. [Website with information](#) and literature about organic seed production
2. [Practice videos on organic seeds production](#) (2018-2020)
3. [Guide for the production of organic pea seeds](#) (2020)

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LIVESEED: Boosting organic seed and plant breeding across Europe. LIVESEED is based on the concept that cultivars adapted to organic systems are key for realising the full potential of organic agriculture in Europe. Research project 2017-2021.

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