



AN AGRO-ECOLOGICAL
PROJECT
FOR FRANCE

THE ORGANIC AMBITION 2017 PROGRAMME

MAY 2013





Stéphane Le Foll
Minister of Agriculture,
Agrifood and Forestry.

Organic farming : key advantages to be encouraged

«Organic farming and its products represent a dynamic and buoyant sector of the economy, one that has doubled in size over the last five years. It is also an industry that creates jobs across the country as a whole, with an average of 50% more jobs on organic holdings than is generally the case on French farms.

It is an environmentally friendly method of production with high standards for animal welfare, one that contributes to the preservation of water quality, the maintenance of soil fertility and the conservation, restoration, reinforcement and leveraging of biodiversity, all of which are major issues for agriculture both today and tomorrow.

Reflecting the diversity of French agriculture, organic farming contributes to the development of the regions. It offers concrete possibilities for closer societal ties between farmers, agrifood industry actors, citizens and consumers.

It is based on human scale enterprises which, as far back as we can go, have developed products that are innovative and which help strengthen the territorial coverage.

The foundations of organic farming have been translated into strict rules about production methods and controls that provide guarantees both to consumers and all operators in the sector.

However, at every stage in supply chains there are cultural, technical and economic barriers to the development of organic farming that need to be removed if supply and demand are to develop as harmoniously as possible. In a context in which dietary criteria are changing, especially with the growing interest in local products and nutritional quality, the importance of organic farming as a pioneer in these domains deserves ever-greater recognition.

The development of consumption of organic products will inspire greater confidence in farmers and other market operators and I welcome their commitment.

It is the core task of this programme to confront those challenges and inject new energy into the development and structuring of the organic sector.

A driving role in the agro-ecological project for France


The approach to agronomics and systemic practice adopted by organic farming gives it a fully deserved role in the agro-ecological project. Organic farming offers a major, ground-breaking way forward and it must play a driving role for dissemination into the other forms of agriculture. The *Organic Ambition 2017* programme must therefore contribute to the development not only of organic farming, but also of transfers of the expertise and techniques of organic farming to other production models.


Agro-ecology can also make a contribution to organic farming practice (by assimilating the approaches and techniques of soil conservation or agro-forestry for example). »»








THE ORGANIC AMBITION 2017 PROGRAMME :


 An overall objective for the doubling of the percentage of organically farmed land by the end of 2017 alongside an ambitious target for the development of consumption.

 Renewed impetus for balanced development and structuring of all sectors with the aim of mobilising not only the actors in production, processing and marketing but also the general public.

 A programme that has been designed in close cooperation with all concerned actors, and results from a dynamic generated by central and regional government.

 Implementation of a new form of governance that reflects the commitment to developing organic farming in France of those involved at both regional and national levels.

 A holistic programme of action totally aligned with the agro-ecological project for France – *Agriculture: producing differently.*

 This document contains a presentation of a range of concrete actions. A complete and detailed programme will be produced by the end of July 2013.

AXIS N°1 DEVELOPING PRODUCTION

***Encouraging, supporting, assisting,
maintaining***

🕒 *A system of aid that is more stable, easier to understand and which offers more incentives over the whole programme period, with the ultimate goal of ensuring farm viability*

- ▶ Making support for organic conversion and maintenance part of the second pillar of CAP, using dedicated devices articulated with the agri-environment-climate measures (AECM). The Minister of Agriculture is committed to providing a minimum of €160 million a year on average over the period 2014-2020 (funds from Europe and the Ministry) to finance both schemes.
- ▶ Ensuring progressive AECM implementation whereby systems adopting organic techniques receive higher remuneration than less comprehensive environmental approaches.



- ▶ Increasing or ensuring priority allocation of second-pillar investment support where this is going to programmes falling within the scope of the agro-ecological project, and especially organic programmes.
- ▶ Maintaining of the tax credit.
- ▶ Developing an appropriate financial structure for organic producers in conjunction with all financial actors, including those in the solidarity economy (e.g. guarantee funds, subsidised loans).

🕒 Development of organic farming in geographical areas with water-related issues

- ▶ Mobilising, notably with assistance from the water agencies, water management syndicates and local government, a set of support schemes for sites identified as having water quality issues, in order for agricultural production in those areas to move towards prioritisation of organic methods complementing other farming systems conducive to water quality.
- ▶ In those areas, having funding water agencies on agri-environment measures, in addition to leading and structuring the sector within the framework of the 10th Water Agency Programme for 2013-2018 (a program that plans doubling, compared with the 9th Programme, the sums devoted to combating diffuse water pollution from agriculture).

🕒 Tools to ensure that organically farmed land stays organic and to facilitate access to land for organic producers.

🕒 More assistance for the entry of new farmers into the industry.

🕒 More effective and more consistent tools for organic production advice and development.

- ▶ Ensuring the availability of a reception forum for advice and support covering a range of aspects: agronomic, systemic, economic and commercial, taking as a basis existing initiatives in the form of “conversion clusters”, for example.
- ▶ Ensuring greater coherence between the various advice and support networks.



AXIS N°2

STRUCTURING THE SECTORS

Supporting sectors to ensure balanced development of organic farming

🌱 *A preferential sector approach*

- ▶ Continuing the structural organisation of sectors (e.g. collecting, processing resources) with an emphasis on the development of sectors with greatest needs, notably in responding to demand that is not being met.
- ▶ Two priorities have already been identified at national level:
 - short-term prioritisation (2013 and 2014 at least) of two major field crop projects ;
 - prioritisation of the development of oil and protein crops over the duration of the plan with a view to independence for supply of protein crops for human and animal consumption, in conjunction with the plant protein plan.
- ▶ Complementary or specific regional priorities will be identified, and a response will be defined to these in light of the situation at national level.



🌱 *Tools for structuring sectors and funding the most appropriate projects*

- ▶ Reinforcing the Fonds Avenir Bio managed by the Agence Bio. The Minister of Agriculture is committed to providing €4 million every year out of the Ministry budget to support this fund.
- ▶ Granting loans, through the French Public Investment Bank (BPI France), to certain enterprises, including agricultural cooperatives, to finance structurally significant investments in storage, processing and marketing.
- ▶ Coordinating and optimising the various sources of funding (central and regional government, EU funds, private operators, among others) for investment and structural projects in the organic sector.
- ▶ Developing contractual arrangements to match supply with demand, notably targeting social and environmental innovation.



Better information on markets

- ▶ Developing and improving interconnection of national and regional monitoring bodies for production, processing and consumption in terms of information exchange and dissemination.
- ▶ Acquiring more comprehensive information on prices at different stages in the supply chains, taking into account the diversity of distribution channels, particularly specialised stores, and the role of each in structuring the sector, making use of the work done by the *Agence Bio*.



AXIS N°3

DEVELOPING CONSUMPTION - WINNING NEW MARKETS

*Promoting organic farm products
and reaching new consumers*

🕒 Intensified communication

▶ Implementing new multi-partner communication and information programmes coordinated by *Agence Bio*

🕒 Information to a young audience

▶ Raising the awareness of schoolchildren, their parents and their teachers in conjunction with Ministry of Education programmes: gardening, visits to organic farms, taste education classes, school activities, etc.



🕒 A shared goal to develop consumption of organic products in out-of-home catering (OHC) contexts, notably by putting in place the resources to achieve the target of 20% organic in public catering facilities.

▶ This target, now reaffirmed, is part of the overall dynamic for the development of local, high-quality products in the OHC setting.

🕒 Support for the development of exports

▶ Inclusion of organic farming in the influencing strategy and the agrifood export orientation plan.

AXIS N°4

REINFORCING RESEARCH, ITS COORDINATION AND DISSEMINATION OF ITS RESULTS

Strengthening research & development programmes for and by organic farming

🕒 Research activities specific to organic farming

- ▶ Defining collectively priorities and ensuring that they are taken into account by means of an annual meeting of the *Organic Ambition 2017* programme Steering Committee.
- ▶ Involving more systematically producers, development organisations, downstream sector players and teachers in research project design.

- ▶ Consolidating the resources dedicated to organic projects in agricultural and rural development programming (CASDAR) for 2014-2020 and implementation of a programme of action with a horizontal thematic dedicated to organic farming.

🕒 Development of synergy and mutual complementarity between activities specific to organic farming and those relating to other types of production

- ▶ Including research topics within a wider context extending beyond organic farming (soil, for example).
- ▶ Encouraging development activities conducive to the exchange and transfer of techniques and expertise between organic farming and other approaches to production.

🕒 More effective dissemination and wider sharing of research results



AXIS N°5 TRAINING FOR AGRICULTURE AND AGRIFOOD ACTORS

Strengthening the place of organic farming in training

🔄 *Better integration of the specific features of organic in agricultural vocational education*

▶ Continuing the integration of organic farming in the reference criteria for vocational qualifications currently being, or soon to be, overhauled, making it one of the goals of the Agriculture: Producing differently programme.

▶ strengthening the link between agricultural teaching and organic sector networks (internships, contributions by practitioners to training courses, visits).

▶ Continuing the development of agro-ecological systems, especially organic, on farms run by agricultural teaching establishments.



🔄 *A diversified offering of organic farming training in advanced and/or specialist courses*

🔄 *More numerous, higher-profile continuous education options for organic farmers*

AGRICULTURES
PRODUISONS
🔄 AUTREMENT

AXIS N°6 ADAPTING THE REGULATIONS

*Devoting maximum effort
to designing regulations conducive
to the development of organic farming*

🔄 *More consideration for the specific features of organic farming in general regulations*


- ▶ Exploring every avenue providing organic farming easier access to suitable plant protection products, fertilising materials, seeds and livestock breeds.
- ▶ Developing tools to support organic sector actors in implementing general regulations.




🔄 *Improvements in regulations specific to organic farming*

- ▶ Participating actively in the process of revision of the European regulation that has recently begun in order to ensure that it provides leverage for the development of organic farming while at the same time maintaining the high standards that make for strong guarantees for both consumers and all industry operators.
- ▶ Development of support resources at national level (guidelines, guide to farm inputs, etc.).

DRIVING AND MONITORING THE PROGRAMME

 *At regional level, a consultation and coordination body bringing together all concerned actors (upstream and downstream) will be set up under the joint leadership of central and regional government.*

 *At national level, a steering committee will monitor the programme and its coherence with action taken by regional government and the future European action plan. A dashboard will provide references for monitoring the programme.*

 *The Agence Bio will be reenforced in its role as a channel for communication, information and leadership, as well as an observatory for organic farming throughout the chain from producer to consumer, and its contribution to structuring sectors and developing markets and collective dynamics both upstream and downstream.*



“It is our ambition to put in place a holistic process for the development of organic farming.

This means increasing production and ensuring that its products can be processed, marketed and, ultimately, purchased.

This is very much the core goal of the Organic Ambition 2017 programme, which is not limited to increasing the area of organically farmed land.”

Stéphane Le Foll, Minister of Agriculture, Agrifood and Forestry.
National annual organic farming conference (Assises de la bio), 12 October 2012.



TO FIND OUT MORE, GO TO: WWW.AGRICULTURE.GOUV.FR • WWW.AGENCEBIO.ORG