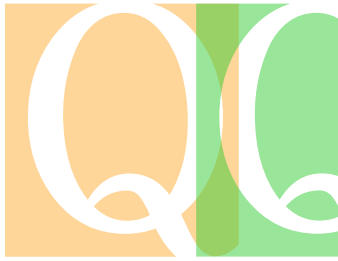


A biannual newsletter filled with news, trends and updates in the field of organic food quality & health. Conveying opinions of researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders in the field.

**FQH ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER (SUMMER 2025)**



THE ORGANIC Food Quality & HEALTH NEWSLETTER



ORGANIC QUALITY FOOD • HEALTHY LIVING

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK
*Welcome to the Summer 2025
edition of the FQH Association
Newsletter. In this issue, we
bring you updates...*
P. 3

MESSAGE FROM THE
CHAIRWOMAN
*Dear Members and Friends of
the FQH Association, It is with
great pleasure that I welcome
you to the Spring 2025 edition
of our newsletter..*
P. 3

BIOFACH 2025 HIGHLIGHTS
*BIOFACH, the world's leading
trade fair for organic food, is a
cornerstone event for the FQH
Association. This section...*
P. 4

FQH GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
NEW LEADERSHIP AND
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
*The FQH Association held its
annual General Assembly
during BIOFACH ...*
P. 8





Table of Contents

Editorial & Leadership	Page 3
BIOFACH 2025 Highlights	Page 4
Speakers Highlights @ BIOFACH	Page 5
Crossword Puzzle	Page 7
FQH General Assembly	Page 8
Celebrating Innovation (BioThesis Prize)	Page 9
Research Highlights	Page 11
FQH Seminar Highlights	Page 14
Upcoming Events	Page 15
FQH Initiatives and Partners	Page 17
Closing Thoughts	Page 20



Editorial & Leadership

From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of the FQH Association Newsletter. In this issue, we bring you updates on our recent activities, upcoming events, and the latest research from our community.

As the organic sector continues to evolve and grow, FQH remains committed to advancing scientifically sound research that reshapes our understanding of food and its impact on health and sustainability. This newsletter highlights our ongoing work and the vibrant community that makes it possible.

We hope you find the content informative and inspiring. As always, we welcome your feedback and contributions for future editions.

Happy reading!

The FQH Editorial Team



Prof. Carola Strassner

Message from the Chairwoman

Dear Members and Friends of the FQH Association,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Summer 2025 edition of our newsletter. As we navigate through a period of significant transformation in our food systems, the role of research in organic food quality and health has never been more critical.

The past months have been remarkably productive for our association. From our vibrant presence at BIOFACH 2025 to the successful seminars and workshops we've hosted, FQH continues to foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration across the organic sector. I am particularly encouraged by the growing interest in our work from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers alike.

Our recent General Assembly marked an important milestone as we welcomed new board members and fostered collaboration with our partners, expanding our network and strengthening our community's capacity to address complex research questions.

Looking ahead, we have set ambitious strategic priorities that will guide our work in 2025-2026. We are committed to expanding research collaborations, enhancing knowledge dissemination, advancing evidence-based policy advocacy, strengthening the scientific evidence base, bridging research and practice, and increasing public engagement. These priorities reflect our evolution as an organization and our dedication to advancing understanding of organic food systems and their relationship to human and environmental health.

I invite you all to actively participate in our upcoming events and initiatives. Your expertise, insights, and engagement are invaluable as we work together to build food systems that nourish people and the planet.

With warm regards,

Prof. Dr. Carola Strassner, MBA

Chairwoman, FQH Association



BIOFACH 2025 Highlights

BIOFACH, the world's leading trade fair for organic food, is a cornerstone event for the FQH Association. This section highlights our participation and key insights from this important gathering of the organic community.

Reflections on BIOFACH 2025: Celebrating Our Organic Community

As we look back on our experience at BIOFACH 2025, the world's leading trade fair for organic food, we are filled with gratitude and inspiration. The event was truly inspiring, bringing together the global organic community in a powerful demonstration of our shared purpose and collective vision for a more sustainable food future.

A Global Gathering of Unprecedented Scale (General information on BIOFACH)

The sheer scale of BIOFACH 2025 was impressive, with approximately 2,300 exhibiting companies from 94 countries showcasing the remarkable diversity and innovative strength of the organic sector.

This diversity reflects the growing maturity and reach of the organic movement, which continues to expand its presence in markets worldwide while maintaining its core values of health, ecology, fairness, and care.

Meaningful Connections Across the Organic Ecosystem (Connections made in BIOFACH)

For the FQH Association, BIOFACH 2025 provided an invaluable opportunity to forge and strengthen

connections with researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from across the organic ecosystem. These interactions ranged from in-depth discussions about ongoing research projects to exploratory conversations about potential collaborations and partnerships.

We were particularly encouraged by the growing interest in evidence-based approaches to understanding the relationships between organic production methods, food quality, and health outcomes.

Our Workshop on Organic Food and Human Health (BIOFACH Workshop)

A highlight of our participation at BIOFACH 2025 was our workshop on "Organic Food and Human Health," which brought together researchers, practitioners, and interested stakeholders for insightful exchanges on the latest research exploring how organic food impacts consumer health.

The fantastic turnout and energetic discussions demonstrated strong interest in this topic across the organic community. Presentations from Dr. Jasmin Peschke, Dr. Thomas van Elsen, PhD candidate Lisa Rahier, and Prof. Ewa Rembialska sparked thoughtful conversations about the multifaceted relationships between organic production, food quality, and human wellbeing. These discussions reinforced the importance of FQH's mission to advance scientifically sound research that reshapes our understanding of food and its impact on health and sustainability.

Continue on Page 5



Speakers highlights @ BIOFACH

BIOFACH 2025 Insights: Dr. Jasmin Peschke on Food Systems Transformation



Dr. Jamin Peschke presenting at FQH workshop, BIOFACH 2025

At BIOFACH 2025, our FQH workshop was enriched by Dr. Jasmin Peschke's engaging presentation, which offered fresh insights into the future of our food systems. Drawing on her extensive experience in her work at the Nutrition Department, Goetheanum, Dr. Peschke highlighted the critical intersection of organic production, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture, presenting a vision that goes beyond conventional approaches to food system transformation.

Beyond Nutrition: A Holistic Vision for Food Systems

Dr. Peschke's session underscored the complex challenges facing us today—from malnutrition and environmental degradation to the pressing need for holistic and innovative approaches in food production and consumption. What set her presentation apart was its emphasis on dimensions often overlooked in technical discussions about food systems: the cultural, spiritual, and relational aspects of how we grow, prepare, and consume food.

As head of Nutrition department at the Goetheanum, Dr. Peschke brings a unique perspective that bridges scientific rigour with a deep appreciation for the qualitative aspects of food. Her work consistently promotes the development of individual nutritional expertise while linking all elements in a dynamic food system "from the field to the plate."

Spiritual and Cultural Transformation as Catalysts for Change

A key takeaway from Dr. Peschke's talk was her call for a spiritual and cultural transformation as a catalyst for sustainable development of the food system. "For this," she explained, "we need a training of skills and connectedness to the surrounding world and the social sphere."

This transformation, according to Dr. Peschke, involves

Speakers Highlights @ BIOFACH Contd.

cultivating essential skills such as mindfulness and sensory awareness through practices like:

- **Mindful Eating:** Developing full attention to the experience of consuming food
- **Sensory Tasting:** Engaging all senses in appreciating food qualities
- **Aroma Painting:** Translating olfactory experiences into visual expression
- **Meditation:** Cultivating inner awareness that extends to food relationships

These practices may seem simple, but Dr. Peschke presented compelling evidence for their transformative potential. By training ourselves to be more connected to our surroundings and to each other, we can foster a deeper relationship with the food we produce and consume, ultimately leading to more sustainable choices and systems.

Bridging Traditional Wisdom and Modern Challenges

This transformative vision invites all stakeholders in the food supply chain to rethink their approach and embrace a more interconnected and compassionate model of development. At FQH, we are committed to facilitating these conversations and supporting initiatives that bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern challenges.

Dr. Peschke's contribution to the BIOFACH 2025 workshop exemplifies the kind of interdisciplinary dialogue that is essential for addressing the complex challenges facing our food systems. By bringing together perspectives from nutrition science, organic agriculture, and cultural-spiritual traditions, we can develop more holistic and effective approaches to sustainability.

Looking Forward

Let's continue to explore how cultural and spiritual shifts can redefine our approach to sustainability, ensuring that our food systems remain resilient and equitable for generations to come. Dr. Peschke's insights remind us that we must nurture the human capacity for consciousness, care, and connection to solve our food system's challenges

For more information about Dr. Jasmin Peschke's work, visit the Nutrition Department at the Section for Agriculture website: <https://www.sektion-landwirtschaft.org/en/nutrition>

Organic food processing from a consumer perspective

PhD candidate Lisa M. Rahier from the FQH Community, delivered a compelling presentation on her cutting-edge research examining organic food processing through the critical lens of consumer perspectives. Her research explored how traditional views of "low processing" are evolving in the organic sector. Processors emphasize minimal thermal stress, low environmental impact, and natural product variations, while consumers increasingly demand transparency and sustainability throughout the entire food chain. Through qualitative studies, including online focus groups with frequent organic shoppers, Lisa's work shed light on information asymmetry and its impact on consumer expectations regarding product quality. This session reinforced the need to align organic processing practices with strict regulatory standards and to communicate these methods effectively, fostering trust and driving sustainable consumption.

From Technical Innovation to Effective Communication

Consumers today value more than just minimal processing; They expect organic food products to be processed with a genuine commitment to environmental sustainability. The study reveals that while technical processing innovations are important, clear and transparent communication about how these methods support eco-friendly practices and preserve natural variations in the final product is crucial.



Lisa M. Rahier presenting at FQH workshop, BIOFACH 2025

Continue on Page 7

THE FQH WILL BE HOSTING A SYMPOSIUM AT IUNS-ICN 2025 IN PARIS

FQH
Organic Food Quality & Health



Speakers Highlights @ BIOFACH Contd.

This calls on industry stakeholders to bridge the gap between processing practices and consumer expectations, ensuring that the entire organic food chain, from raw material to final product—reflects the principles of sustainability and quality that today's consumers demand.

Research Context and Methodology

Rahier's presentation was based on her doctoral research, which includes published work on "Using a conceptual model to describe organic food process quality: the perspective of consumers." Her study is associated with the ProOrg project and was co-authored with Prof. Carola Strassner and Prof. Christian Herzig.

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative focus groups with quantitative surveys to develop a comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions. This methodological rigour lent weight to her findings and recommendations.

Looking Forward

The insights from Rahier's research point to several important directions for the organic processing sector:

- Development of processing technologies that minimize environmental impact while preserving natural product characteristics
- Creation of more transparent communication tools that help consumers understand processing methods
- Establishment of industry standards that address both technical and communication aspects of organic processing
- Investment in consumer education about the relationship between processing methods and product quality

As we move forward in our work at FQH, we will continue to create spaces for these important conversations, recognizing that true sustainability emerges from the integration of scientific knowledge, innovations, effective communication, practical wisdom, and spiritual-cultural awareness.

Be part of the change. Support FQH's mission to advance scientifically sound research and reshape perceptions of food and its impact on health. Learn more about membership and how you can contribute at <https://www.fqhresearch.org/membership/become-a-member.html>

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Food Quality and Health

I	T	L	I	S	T	E	R	I	A	H	S	L	R
H	E	H	S	A	W	L	C	E	C	C	E	A	M
A	M	N	P	F	E	A	G	A	A	A	P	I	T
N	P	P	E	B	R	D	I	R	T	E	A	R	R
D	E	S	A	G	E	E	I	C	R	L	R	E	C
S	R	L	R	R	L	T	E	R	I	B	A	T	L
P	A	S	T	E	U	R	I	Z	E	I	T	C	E
E	T	L	P	E	S	T	I	C	I	D	E	A	A
L	U	S	T	O	R	A	G	E	E	N	H	B	N
A	R	C	H	I	L	L	N	E	S	S	G	E	N
Y	E	X	P	I	R	A	T	I	O	N	R	T	P
S	A	N	I	T	I	Z	E	E	R	K	O	O	C
N	L	R	E	F	R	I	G	E	R	A	T	E	A
E	T	I	S	A	R	A	P	S	A	F	E	T	Y

LABEL
BLEACH
DIRT
SANITIZE
FREEZING
PASTEURIZE
ILLNESS
PARASITE
EXPIRATION
CLEAN
BACTERIA
REFRIGERATE
SEPARATE
TEMPERATURE
WASH
SAFETY
LISTERIA
STORAGE
COOK
PESTICIDE
HANDS
CHILL

Become Part of a Global Movement for Food Quality and Health!

Join the FQH Association and connect with a dynamic international network committed to advancing research in organic food quality and health. We offer:

- Individual Membership
- Institutional Membership for universities and research institutes
- Supporting Membership for companies and organizations

Ready to get involved? Complete the membership form on our [website](#) or reach out to any member of our Board. We look forward to welcoming you to our community!

FQH Membership Fees

Based on Human Development Index (HDI) of your country

Individual Membership Fees (in Euros)

	Very High HDI	High HDI	Medium HDI	Low HDI
	>0.80	0.70 – 0.79	0.55 – 0.69	<0.55
Standard	80 €	40 €	20 €	10 €
PhD / MSc. Students	40 €	20 €	10 €	5 €
Retirees / Unemployed	40 €	20 €	10 €	5 €

Institutional
Universities, Research Institutes
1,000 €

Support
Companies, Organizations
1,000 €

Note: Individual membership fees are based on the Human Development Index (HDI) of your country of residence

FQH General Assembly: New Leadership and Strategic Directions

The FQH Association held its annual General Assembly during BIOFACH 2025, marking a significant moment in our organization's evolution with the election of new board members, the welcoming of additional institutional partners, and the establishment of strategic priorities that will guide our work in the coming year.

Leadership Transition and Growth

At the General Assembly, the FQH elected a new board, we are particularly pleased to welcome our new Treasurer, Marja van Vliet, reinforcing our commitment to robust financial stewardship.

food production, processing, quality, and health outcomes. These collaborations will emphasize:

- Cross-disciplinary approaches that integrate expertise from agriculture, food science, nutrition, medicine, and social sciences
- International cooperation that captures regional diversity in organic food systems
- Innovative methodologies that address the complex relationships between production practices, food quality, and health impacts.



Members of the FQH during the annual general assembly held during the BIOFACH 2025.

Strategic Priorities for 2025-2026

Looking ahead, the General Assembly outlined several strategic priorities that will guide FQH's activities in 2025-2026:

1. Expanding Research Collaborations

We will actively pursue new research partnerships that bring together diverse disciplines and methodologies to address critical questions at the intersection of organic

2. Enhancing Knowledge Dissemination

Recognizing that research impact depends on effective communication, we will strengthen our knowledge dissemination strategies to ensure that findings reach diverse audiences, including:

- Researchers across relevant disciplines
- Organic producers, processors, and retailers

FQH General Assembly: New Leadership and Strategic Directions *Contd.*

- Healthcare practitioners and nutritionists
- Policymakers and regulators
- Consumers and civil society organizations

This will be ensured through our monthly seminar series, developing accessible research summaries, as well as sharing knowledge through our digital platforms.



FQH and TPOrganics at Biofach 2025.

3. Advancing Policy Advocacy

FQH will take a more active role in policy advocacy, ensuring that scientific evidence on organic food quality and health informs regulatory frameworks and public policies. Our approach will:

- Identify key policy opportunities where FQH's expertise can make meaningful contributions.
- Build strategic alliances with partners and supporting organizations to amplify our impact.
- Engage directly with policymakers through targeted communications and events.

4. Strengthening the Scientific Evidence Base

We remain committed to strengthening the scientific foundation for understanding relationships between organic production practices, food quality, and human health. Priority research areas include:

- Long-term studies on health outcomes associated with organic food consumption.
- Innovative methods for assessing food quality beyond conventional parameters.
- Processing technologies that preserve the distinctive qualities of organic foods.
- Socioeconomic factors influencing access to and consumption of organic foods.

5. Bridging Research and Practice

FQH will intensify efforts to bridge the gap between research and practice, ensuring that scientific insights translate into practical applications for producers, processors, retailers, and consumers. This will involve:

- Developing practical tools and guidelines based on research findings.
- Creating forums for dialogue between researchers and practitioners.
- Documenting and sharing best practices from across the organic sector.
- Supporting pilot projects that test research-based innovations in real-world settings.

6. Increasing Public Engagement

Recognizing the importance of public understanding and support for organic food systems, FQH will expand its public engagement activities through:

- Accessible communications about the science of organic food quality and health.
- Participation in public events and media opportunities.
- Collaboration with educational institutions and consumer organizations.
- Development of resources that help consumers make informed choices.

A Foundation for Future Impact

These strategic priorities build on FQH's established foundation as a non-profit network of institutional and individual research members focused on organic post-farmgate issues. They reflect our evolution from our founding in 2003 to our current position as a key voice in advancing understanding of organic food quality and its relationship to human and environmental health.

The priorities also align with themes explored at our recent **conference in Copenhagen (November 2024), "Organic food for a sustainable future,"** which



FQH members at the Organic food for a sustainable future conference in Copenhagen.

FQH General Assembly: New Leadership and Strategic Directions *Contd.*

emphasized dialogue, cooperation, and action toward building sustainable food systems (*see recap of the conference at [Copenhagen 2024](#)*)

Join Our Journey

The energy and inspiration of BIOFACH 2025 will fuel our work in the coming year as we pursue our strategic priorities and strengthen our contributions to the organic movement. As we embark on this next phase of FQH's development, we invite researchers, institutions, and supporters to join our efforts. Whether through formal membership, research collaboration, or participation in our events and initiatives, there are many ways to contribute to advancing knowledge about organic food quality and health.

For more information about membership or opportunities for engagement, please visit our [website](#) or contact our secretariat at secretary@fqhresearch.org.

Gratitude and Looking Forward

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated in our workshop or engaged with us throughout BIOFACH 2025. Your interest, questions, and insights enrich our work and strengthen our community.

Special thanks to our members, partners, and supporters whose commitment makes our research and knowledge dissemination possible. The organic community's collaborative spirit was palpable throughout the event, reminding us that our greatest strength lies in working together toward shared goals.

As we look ahead to BIOFACH 2026, scheduled for February 10-13 at the Nuremberg Exhibition Centre, we remain committed to advancing research and knowledge that supports the continued development of organic food systems. We look forward to reconnecting with many of you there and sharing the progress of our collective work.

Call for Applications: BioThesis 2026

Have you written a bachelor's or master's thesis on organic food in 2024 or 2025? Submit it to BioThesis 2026 for a chance to gain recognition, win prizes, connect with industry leaders at BIOFACH 2026, and receive a unique trophy! Open to topics across production, processing, marketing, or sustainability in the organic sector.

Apply by October 15, 2025 at
biothesis.org/teilnahme

Celebrating Innovation in Organic Research BioThesis Research Prize Ceremony



Prof. Carola Strassner presenting at the BioThesis Research Prize Ceremony.

The BioThesis Research Prize Ceremony was a standout moment at BIOFACH 2025, where representatives of FQH/OFSP joined in celebrating pioneering studies and innovative projects.

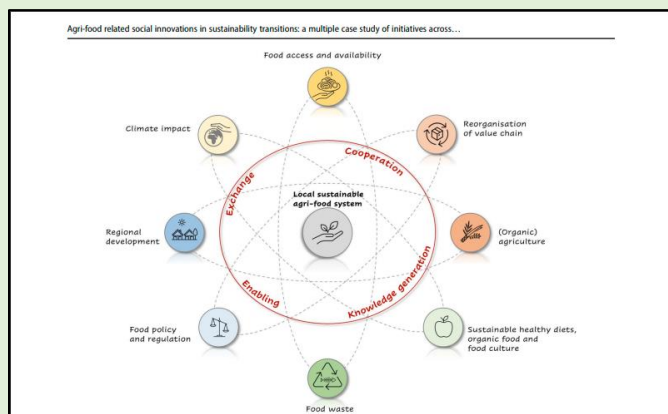
Achievements:

- Awarding and recognizing research that underscores the pivotal role of organic food and sustainability in transforming our food systems.
- Applauding the vision and hard work of all the winners who are driving meaningful change.



Research Highlights

The FQH community continues to produce groundbreaking research that advances our understanding of organic food quality and its relationship to health and sustainability. This section features recent publications and research initiatives from our members.



Agri-food Related Social Innovations in Sustainability Transitions
Elsner et al., *Agriculture and Human Values* (2025),
DOI:10.1007/s10460-025-10742-z.

Overview

Elsner and colleagues investigated how social innovations (SI) drive transitions toward sustainable agri-food systems across five territories in Europe (Denmark, Germany, Italy, Poland) and Northern Africa (Morocco). Through 22 semi-structured interviews with 17 initiatives, from urban food-sharing networks to rural bio-district alliances. The study adapts a typology of SI originally developed for energy transitions and tailors it to the complexities of food systems.

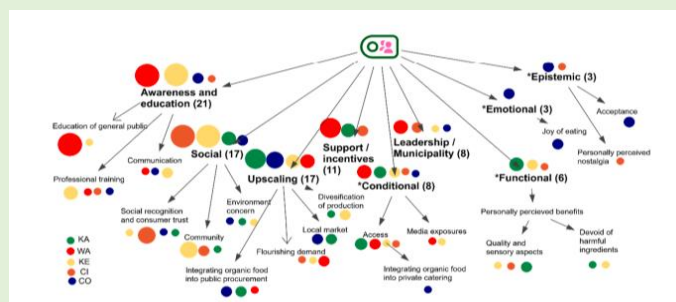
Key Points

- **Four Core Interaction Processes:** Initiatives enact innovations via cooperation, sharing, enabling, and knowledge generation—social processes that reshape how stakeholders work, learn, and govern.
- **Anchoring Mechanisms:** New practices are embedded (“anchored”) through networks, materials, and institutions, ensuring innovations persist and scale within existing food-system structures.
- **Multi-Dimensional Innovations:** Activities span six agri-food domains (e.g., production, distribution, consumption, governance), illustrating that transformative change requires interventions across the system, not just isolated niches.
- **Enabling Role of Local Governance:** Local political actors—municipalities, regional agencies—often facilitate SI by adapting policies and providing resources attuned to community needs.
- **Barriers & Drivers:** Common barriers include limited funding and professional capacity; key drivers encompass strong community engagement, clear value framing, and policy incentives.

Implications for Sustainable Food Systems

1. **Embed SI in Policy Frameworks:** FQH can advocate for embedding the four interaction processes into local and national policies—e.g., funding programs that specifically support cooperation platforms or knowledge-sharing hubs.
2. **Strengthen Networks & Bio-Districts:** By facilitating cross-initiative networks and bio-district partnerships, FQH can help anchor innovations in both urban and rural contexts.
3. **Leverage Local Actors:** Engagement with municipal and regional bodies ensures that SI align with place-based needs and receive timely policy support.
4. **Holistic System Interventions:** Sustainable transformation requires multi-domain action—FQH projects should integrate production, distribution, and consumption innovations rather than focus solely on one area.
5. **Capacity Building & Storytelling:** Investing in training, workshops, and compelling narratives will amplify knowledge-generation processes and overcome resource barriers.

This study highlights that nurturing social relations through cooperation, sharing, enabling, and learning. It is as critical as technological fixes for achieving resilient, equitable, and health-promoting food systems.



Entry Points, Barriers, and Drivers of Transformation Toward Sustainable Organic Food Systems in Five Case Territories in Europe and North Africa. Góralaska-Walczak et al., *Nutrients* 2025, 17(3), 445

Overview

Góralaska-Walczak and colleagues in this mixed methods study examines how organic initiatives in five distinct territories—Warsaw (Poland), North Hesse (Germany), Cilento bio district (Italy), Kenitra Province (Morocco), and Copenhagen (Denmark)—can catalyze a shift toward resilient and sustainable food systems. By combining household surveys with semi structured interviews, the authors identify common challenges and enabling factors across urban, rural, and bio district contexts.

Key Points

Shared Barriers: Across all territories, the organic sector faces an undeveloped market, regulatory and budgetary constraints, and a lack of consumer and

Research Highlights Contd.

stakeholder awareness.

- **Common Drivers:** Positive momentum stems from education and awareness campaigns, strong community support, and financial or policy incentives that lower the threshold for organic adoption.
- **Leverage Entry Points:** Drawing on systems theory, the study highlights critical interventions, ranging from top-down promotion and tailored nudging mechanisms, to localized traditional framing and negative feedback loops, that can trigger deeper systemic change.

Implications for Sustainable Food Systems

1. **Policy Realignment:** Governments should integrate organic criteria into subsidies and procurement standards, using the identified entry points to design region specific incentive schemes.
2. **Capacity Building:** Targeted training and awareness programs—coupled with rapid information dissemination—can overcome knowledge barriers and empower both producers and consumers.
3. **Community Led Models:** Strengthening local organic communities and bio district networks creates social momentum and embeds organic principles within cultural traditions.
4. **Systems Level Feedback:** Employing negative feedback mechanisms (e.g., public reporting on non-organic externalities) can shift market signals toward more sustainable choices.
5. **Scalable Pilots:** FQH and partners can deploy mixed methods evaluations in new territories, adapting the SysOrg entry points to diverse socio ecological contexts and tracking long term impacts on diet quality, ecosystem health, and rural livelihoods.

By distilling barriers, drivers, and leverage points across heterogeneous case studies, this paper provides a roadmap for orchestrated interventions that align organic value chains with environmental integrity, social equity, and economic viability—cornerstones of FQH's vision for a healthier, more sustainable food future.

Overview

The concept of True Cost Accounting (TCA) sheds light on the full societal and environmental expenses of our food systems beyond retail prices. In a recent review of roughly 50 scientific papers Jostein and colleagues synthesizes evidence that hidden health, climate, and biodiversity costs of conventional agriculture amount to USD 12–19 trillion annually, exceeding, for instance, the GDP of the European Union. By monetizing impacts such as healthcare burdens, greenhouse gas management, and ecosystem restoration, TCA serves as a powerful tool for policymakers, businesses, and consumers to make more informed choices. This executive summary particularly highlights how organic agriculture can dramatically reduce these hidden costs and pave the way toward sustainable, health promoting food systems.

Key Points

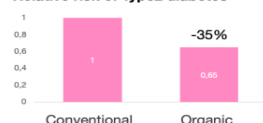
- **Dietary Shifts Deliver Dual Benefits:** Adopting diets richer in plant-based foods while reducing refined sugars, fats, and meat correlates with lower healthcare expenses and greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., Mediterranean, pescetarian, vegetarian diets).
- **Organic Consumption Lowers Health Risks:** Large cohort studies (e.g., the French BioNutrinet Santé project) report that frequent organic food consumers experience significantly reduced odds of overweight/obesity (23–31%), metabolic syndrome (31%), type II diabetes (35%), and certain cancers (25%).
- **Fewer Agrochemical Residues:** Meta analyses reveal that organic products contain markedly lower pesticide residues, translating into lower human exposure and associated health hazards.
- **Climate and Biodiversity Gains:** Long term trials (e.g., FiBL's 45-year DOK study) show that organic/biodynamic systems can emit up to 60 % fewer greenhouse gases and harbor greater soil biodiversity compared to conventional monocultures.
- **Role of Bio Districts:** Place based networks ("Bio districts") are critical for co designing and implementing organic driven transformations in farming, food culture, and rural livelihoods—bridging research, policy, and practice.

Implications for Sustainable Food Systems

1. **Policy Integration of TCA:** Embedding true cost metrics into agricultural and trade policies can realign subsidies, taxes, and procurement standards toward practices that internalize externalities—thereby incentivizing organic and regenerative approaches.
2. **Market and Consumer Signals:** Transparent TCA data empower retailers and consumers to value food choices holistically, potentially influencing purchasing patterns and encouraging industry shifts to lower cost, higher quality production methods.

Relationships between nutrition and Type2 diabetes

Relative risk of Type2 diabetes



Parameters

- n = 32 800
- 76% women, mean age 53 years
- 4 year mean follow-up
- Organic food consumption refers to a mean of 56 %
- 293 incident cases identified

Relationships between nutrition and cancer (all types)

Relative risk of cancer



Parameters

- n = 70 192
- 78% women, mean age 44 years without known cancer at inclusion
- 4.6 year mean follow-up
- Organic food consumption refers to a mean of 75 %
- Lymphoma (-76%) (-86%)

Research Highlights *Contd.*

to lower cost, higher quality production methods.

3. Research and Pilot Initiatives: FQH and partners can spearhead pilot projects in bio districts to test TCA frameworks in diverse contexts, generating localized evidence and scalable models for broader adoption.
4. Education and Outreach: Disseminating TCA findings through workshops, policy briefs, and multimedia campaigns will build awareness among stakeholders, creating momentum for sustainable diets and strengthening public support for organic transitions.
5. Cross Sector Collaboration: Effective reduction of hidden food costs requires collaboration across health, environment, agriculture, and finance sectors. FQH's network is well placed to convene multi stakeholder dialogues that translate TCA insights into coordinated action.



OrganicFQH >> Home

The International Research Association for Organic Food Quality and Health (FQH)

Cookie policy The International Research Association for Organic Food Quality and Health (FQH) is a non-profit network of institutional and individual research members meeting across all issues concerning organic post farmgate. Interested?

Visit one of our *activities*, for example our Seminar Series, have a look at our *initiatives*, or consider becoming a *member*.

You are welcome!



ACTIVITIES



MEMBERSHIP

Our new Seminar Series

All interested guests are welcome. Please register for the zoom link at [shb\(at\)nexs.ku.dk](mailto:shb(at)nexs.ku.dk)

28th Seminar: May 16th, from 9 am to 10 am CET (online)

Dipl.-Ing. Kirsten Buchecker, Hochschule Bremerhaven, Germany

± Sugar reformulation in German organic fruit yoghurt - (43 kB)

SEMINARS

FQH Seminar Highlights

Seminar Series Highlights



28th FQH Seminar May 16th 2025: “Sugar Reformulation in German Organic Fruit Yoghurts”
Dipl.-Ing. Kirsten Buchecker from Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences presented key findings from the ReformBIO pro-

Photo courtesy of Kirsten Buchecker/ Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences, 2025

ject, funded by the German Federal Organic Farming Programme with an aim to achieve a 30 % sugar reduction and Nutri Score A in organic fruit yoghurts.

With 30 years of experience in food technology, sensory science, and children’s health, Kirsten discussed the technical and sensory challenges overcome in this product group.



27th FQH Seminar April 25th 2025: “Water-Food Policy Integration” Associate Professor Audrey Vincent (ISARA, Lyon). Audrey is an expert in organic agriculture. She holds an MSc from Wageningen University and a PhD from Université Lumière Lyon 2. Her research, which bridges water management, biodiversity preservation, & local development, offers valuable insights into how

Photo courtesy of Audrey Vincent/ISARA Lyon, 2025

aligning water and food policies can foster sustainable transformations in agri-food systems. During her presentation, Audrey shared how local initiatives such as the organic action plan implemented in one of Paris’ water catchment areas are using innovative policy tools to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable farming practices.



26th FQH Seminar, March 21st 2025: Italian Biodistricts & Tunisian Bioterritoires by Dr. Patrizia Pugliese explored “Exchange & Cooperation between Italian Biodistricts and Tunisian Bioterritoires”, a deep dive into good practices, lessons learned, and prospects in sustainable agroecological transitions. Dr. Patrizia Pugliese from CIHEAM

Photo: Universität Kassel Forschung web page, 2025

Bari Italy, with over 25 years of experience in sustainable rural development, organic agriculture, and inclusive value chain innovation. She shared insights on how co-constructing biodistricts, by mapping local values, resources, and needs. It can unlock a territory’s potential for sustainable development.



Photo courtesy of Dominika Srednicka - Tober / Warsaw University of Life Sciences, 2025.

“Diet and food type affect urinary pesticide residue excretion profiles in healthy individuals: results of a randomized controlled dietary intervention trial”.

25th FQH Seminar February 21st 2025: “Diet and food type affect urinary Pesticide Residue Excretion Profiles in healthy Individuals: results of a randomized controlled dietary intervention trial”
Dominika delivered a session on exploring results from the study

Key Insights from the Study:

1. Organic food consumption reduces pesticide residue excretion by over 90%
2. Switching to a Mediterranean diet increases pesticide exposure, unless organic food is consumed
3. The findings highlight the health benefits of organic food choices



Photo courtesy of Jostein Hertwig/ Beras Int., 2025.

24th FQH Seminar January 17th: “TCA and potential positive contributions from organics to reduce hidden costs of health, climate and biodiversity” Jostein Hertwig delivered an enlightening session exploring True Cost Accounting (TCA), a ground-

breaking approach to uncovering the hidden environmental, social, and health costs of food production. Backed by research from a leading global institution, this discussion will highlight how dietary shifts, and organic farming can significantly reduce these costs while promoting sustainability. Discover actionable insights and the science driving the next phase of organic food and farming, an essential conversation for Researchers, policymakers, businesses, and conscious consumers alike!

Upcoming Events

FQH Seminars 2025

1. "Is organic food consumption associated with the risk of developing non-communicable diseases?"
Presenter: **Julie Louise Munk Andersen** from Danish Cancer Institute
Date: 19 September 2025
2. "From Livestock to Fellow Creature: Evaluating Multifunctional Animal Husbandry and Its Benefits for Humans, Animals, and the Environment"
Presenter: **Alexander Greiner**
Date: 17 October 2025
3. **Brigitte Jorgensen**
Seminar date: 21 November 2025
Title to be confirmed.



23rd International Congress of Nutrition (IUNS-ICN 2025) Sustainable Food for Global Health on 24-29 August 2025 at the Palais des Congrès, Paris, France.

Why Attend?

Hosted under the high patronage of the French President and the Académie Nationale de Médecine, ICN 2025 will convene thousands of global experts to discuss how sustainable food systems can advance human and planetary health. With themes such as climate-smart nutrition, food environments, life-course approaches, and non-communicable disease prevention, the congress aligns directly with FQH's mission to promote integrative, safe, and health-enhancing food systems.

FQH Mini-Symposium

Date: Wednesday, 27 August 2025
Time: 8:00-9:30 AM
Venue: Room 341

Join FQH's dedicated 90-minute workshop exploring the frontiers of food quality, integrity, and holistic assessment within nutrition-sensitive food systems. The session will feature expert presentations, case studies,

and a moderated dialogue on how to evaluate and enhance food quality beyond nutrient profiles—through ecological, ethical, and sensory dimensions. This is a unique opportunity to engage with our network and contribute to shaping future research and policy agendas.

What You'll Gain:

- High-level Scientific Insights: Stay at the forefront of global nutrition and sustainable food policy.
- Networking: Connect with 2,000+ nutrition experts, policymakers, and innovators from around the world.
- Practical Frameworks: Gain tools and models for designing and evaluating quality-driven food system interventions.

Call for Participation: 2nd African Organic Research Conference (AFROREC)



The 2nd African Organic Research Conference (AFROREC) will be held from 24-25 November 2025 in Egypt, hosted by SEKEM, Heliopolis University, and the Egyptian Biodynamic Association. Under the theme "Strengthening Organic and Agroecological Farming in Africa through Innovative Research", this hybrid event will bring together researchers, farmers, policymakers, manufacturers, and other stakeholders from across Africa and beyond.

AFROREC offers a vital platform to share research innovations, validate solutions, and foster collaboration to advance organic and agroecological farming in Africa. Participants can engage through scientific presentations, exhibitions, and interactive dialogue sessions. The conference will also feature the General Assembly of NOARA.

We invite researchers, practitioners, and organizations to submit papers, success stories, and to register for participation or exhibition. For more information on registration, abstract submission, and sponsorship opportunities, please visit: www.noara.bio

Upcoming Events Contd.

KONFERENZ

TOWARDS NEW FOOD SYSTEMS

Ernährungs- und Lebensmittelsysteme neu gedacht

28.–30.10.2025 • BERLIN



NewFoodSystems Conference 2025

“Towards New Food Systems – Ernährungs- und Lebensmittelsysteme neu gedacht” on 28–30 October 2025 at the Leonardo Royal Hotel, Berlin–Alexanderplatz, Germany.

Why Attend?

As the closing symposium of the BMBF funded NewFoodSystems Innovation Space, this conference delves into tomorrow’s food and nutrition systems. Interdisciplinary panels on circular value chains, digitalization in food production, and consumer driven quality standards directly advance FQH’s objectives of integrating food system innovation with health and safety criteria.

What You’ll Gain:

- Innovator Showcases: Discover pilot projects in urban agriculture, precision fermentation, and functional foods.
- Policy Dialogues: Engage with regulators and industry on aligning innovation with nutritional guidelines.
- Strategic Foresight: Co develop scenarios for resilient, health promoting food systems.

Organic Summit 2025

“How to achieve 25% organic production and consumption in the EU by 2030” on 18–19 August 2025 at the Danish Architecture Center, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Why Attend?

As a flagship event of Denmark’s EU Presidency, this summit unites European policymakers, farmers, industry leaders, and researchers to strategize the future of organic food systems. Through collaborative panels on policy, market development, and innovation, the event propels the EU’s 25% organic target into actionable pathways, advancing shared goals in climate, health, and sustainability.

What You’ll Gain:

- Policy Panels: Explore how reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), public procurement, and subsidies can unlock rapid organic expansion.
- Best Practice Insights: Discover successful initiatives in farm conversion, organic retail strategy, and organic food service—including Denmark’s 15% retail share and pioneering Organic Cuisine Label.
- Strategic Commitments: Co-develop and endorse a joint summit declaration to accelerate organic transformation across all EU member states.

FQH Initiatives and Partners



ORGANIC FOOD SYSTEM PROGRAMME

Together with IFOAM Organics Int. and Beras Int., FQH initiated the Organic Food System Programme, OFSP (www.organicfoodsystem.net). FQH board members are coordinators of OFSP. The OFSP is a programme on taking and further developing the organic food system as a pilot model and living laboratory for sustainable food systems. We use the organic food system as a model to understand drivers of sustainable food consumption and to link this to real-world examples of sustainable production and consumption. It is important to understand that the OFSP will use the organic food system as a kind of window for exploration but not as the exclusive solution. Overall, the central question is: how to make food systems more sustainable? The goal of OFSP is to learn from the organic food system as a living laboratory for sustainable food systems. The programme contributes to global activities such as IFOAM Organic 3.0 and brings together initiatives and stakeholders at international, national, regional and local levels. The Sustainable Food System Programme's Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC) endorsed the OFSP as one of eight "core initiatives" of the UN-10YFP Sustainable Food System Programme!



Organic Food Systems at the TCA Summit – Rome, Italy 14-16 April 2025. Photo courtesy of David Gould /IFOAM Seeds Platform, 2025

included in the price we pay as consumers; rather they are absorbed by the public health care system, as environmental damages needing remediation, and by hardships on the livelihoods of disadvantaged citizens and their progeny. Figures stated during the summit estimated that up to 70% of the hidden costs of food arise from health problems associated with production practices, food quality and dietary patterns. Other costs are associated with negative environmental impacts. David Gould an OFSP steering committee member attended this event, and lent support to the constant thread throughout the discussions that organic and agroecological production systems are the best model for reducing negative impacts and scaling up TCA worldwide. The significance of the event being hosted by FAO was not lost on any of the 150 participants, who came from all over the world: the consensus of the Summit attendees was that FAO and its member governments need to adopt a TCA approach as a new business-as-usual. The TCA Accelerator intends to use the outputs of the Summit to develop a work agenda that aims to scale up TCA by 2030. More information about the Summit can be found on the TCA Accelerator LinkedIn feed: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/tca-accelerator>



Panel talk and participation at the International Conference "Harvest of Ideas: Organic Agriculture as a Solution to Global Challenges!", 8-9 April 2025. Photo: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lilliana-stefanovic-b319992b7/>

Dr. Lilliana Stefanovic a steering committee member of the OFSP held a speech and participated in the panel discussion as part of the session "Organics as a solution for rural development and supporting the next generation of farmers" at the International Conference "Harvest of Ideas: Organic Agriculture as a Solution to Global Challenges!" hosted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, on 8-9 April 2025. The overarching aim of the Conference was to document and disseminate the ways in which organic agricultural practices contribute to the sustainability of our land,

The True Cost Accounting Accelerator held a Summit at the FAO headquarters in Rome in April of this year. The full costs of production and consumption of food are not

FQH Initiatives and Partners *Contd.*

livestock, wildlife, water, and air, while also bolstering our economies and communities while focusing on policies that are working. This was explored through eight panel sessions with experts in the organic field from all over the world offering diverse perspectives, including those of farmers, policymakers, and researchers. The event sought to discuss strategies for better coordination of research and data sharing across countries, while also examining the successes and challenges of various policy models.

Implications for the FQH Community

For the FQH Association and our members, the “Harvest of Ideas” conference offers several important takeaways:

- **Research Integration:** The event highlighted the importance of integrating research across disciplines to address complex challenges in organic food systems.
- **Knowledge Translation:** Successful examples of translating research into practice were shared, providing models for how FQH members can increase the impact of their work.
- **Global Networking:** The international nature of the conference reinforced the value of global networks like FQH in facilitating knowledge exchange and collaboration.
- **Policy Engagement:** Discussions emphasized the critical role of supportive policy frameworks in scaling organic solutions, suggesting opportunities for FQH to engage more actively in policy advocacy.
- **Consumer Connection:** Several presentations addressed the importance of connecting organic production practices to consumer health outcomes—a core focus of FQH’s mission.

IFOAM Seed Webinar

WEBINAR



IFOAM Seed Platform is catalysing global action by coordinating a network of **individuals** and **organisations** dedicated to advancing seed and plant breeding for organic systems.

Our work promotes **genetic diversity**, defends **against GMO contamination**, and expands space for organic seed communities."

David Gould

General Secretary
IFOAM Seed Platform



On 23 April 2025, IFOAM – Organics International co-hosted a high-impact webinar with the IFOAM Seed Platform, drawing over 230 participants from across the globe to explore how seed sovereignty and farmers’ rights can be defended and advanced. In a time when restrictive policies and increasing corporate control threaten the ability of farmers to save, share, and develop seeds, this event served as a vital platform for dialogue, strategy-sharing, and collective action. Seeds are the foundation of our food systems—and protecting them means protecting biodiversity, community resilience, and future generations.

We remain committed to supporting efforts that span grassroots activism, innovative seed networks, and international advocacy—working toward a future where farmers, breeders, and communities can thrive. On 23 April 2025, we co-hosted a powerful webinar with the IFOAM Seed Platform, bringing together over 230 participants to explore how we can defend and advance seed sovereignty and farmers’ rights worldwide.

Key Highlights

David Gould (IFOAM Seeds Platform) – Introduced the Platform’s mission and global network coordination

More insight: <https://www.ifoam.bio/news/protecting-seeds/preserving-futures-insights-global>



Photo: <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/news-and-events/news/transforming-food-systems-through-coherence-sustainability-and-equity>

Insights from the 5th Global Conference on Food Systems Organized by the Sustainable Food Systems Programme (SFSP), which the OFSP is a core initiative, the 5th Global Conference on Food Systems brought together global voices to confront the structural challenges undermining sustainable food systems. Key takeaways included the urgent need to tackle political and economic power imbalances, align food-related policies across sectors, and prioritize inclusive, rights-based approaches. The call to action emphasized agroecology, land access, public procurement, and accountability as central to achieving just and resilient food systems.

FQH Initiatives and Partners *Contd.*



The Global Alliance for Organic Districts (GAOD) is an international web of networks built around applied transformation on a territorial basis facilitated by local governments. Regions aiming to transition to EcoRegions or BioDistricts join to share experiences and learnings en route to sustainable organic food systems.

GAOD was founded in 2020 by the Asian Local Governments for Organic Agriculture (ALGOA), the International Network of Eco-Regions (IN.N.E.R.), Regeneration International (RI), and the League of Organic Agriculture Municipalities, Cities and Provinces of the Philippines (LOAMCP- PH). Through our initiative, the Organic Food System Programme (OFSP), FQH supports GAOD together with IFOAM-Organics International, IFOAM Asia, IFOAM EU, and the Baltic Foundation of Lithuania.

On 9 April, Jostein Hertwig, the executive Director Alliance for Organic Districts Sweden joined the event **“Biodistricts: An opportunity for rural revitalization and sustainable, organic public procurement”** which took place at the European Parliament from 9:00 to 11:00.

A bio-district is a geographical area where farmers, citizens, tourist operators, associations, and public authorities enter into an agreement for the sustainable management of local resources, based on organic production and consumption. This includes different aspects such as the development of short food chains, the establishment of organic canteens in public offices and schools. In bio-districts, the promotion of organic products is inextricably linked with the promotion of the land and its special characteristics so that it can fully realize its economic, social, and cultural potential.

During the session, IFOAM Organics Europe, the Socialist and Democrats Group, the European People's Party, and the Greens in the European Parliament brought together policymakers and experts involved in successful bio-districts to showcase how these initiatives can support European farmers and biodiversity, revitalise European rural areas and enshrine the ‘right to stay’ and inspire action toward a healthier, more sustainable food system for farmers, citizens and the whole society.

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



Co-funded by
the European Union



CIRCULAR ECONOMY
KISMET

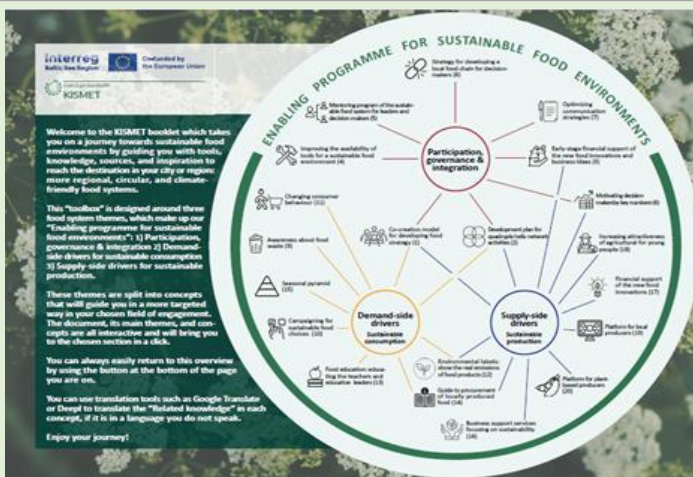
Together with Södertälje municipality Beras are the Swedish partners in the KISMET Interreg Baltic Sea Region project, Co-funded by the European Region. Lead partner is Hamburg.

With KISMET, we aim at changing our ‘destiny’ to transform the current unfavourable conditions in our urban and regional food systems and beyond. To this end, the KISMET project has gathered thirteen partner organisations, many associated organisations, and engaged various stakeholders to make food production and consumption more regional, organic, circular, regenerative, plant-rich, low-waste, energy efficient, innovative or novel – ideally, all of the above, as swiftly as possible.

Together we have developed an Enabling Programme for Sustainable Food Environments



FQH Initiatives and Partners *Contd.*



FH MÜNSTER
University of Applied Sciences

The team at the University of Applied Sciences Muenster are doing a fair amount in the field of school meal systems:

Jan 28th, they hosted the 2nd meeting of school authorities of the Muenster government district together with partners at the City of Muenster and at the provincial School Feeding Network. Fourteen municipalities with around 250 schools joined the afternoon devoted to the ins and out of building school kitchens. One of the central take-aways: Recurring round table stakeholder meetings were deemed essential to a smooth process.

In the Summer Semester, they ran a Bachelor level course on School Meal Systems and kicked-off a new international Master's level course: Transforming School Meals for Health and Nutrition.

A shout-out to IFOAM Asia, ALGOA and the organisers and presenters of the 2nd International Conference on School Meals and Public Procurement "Leave No Child Behind" held in Taipei last year, which inspired the post-graduate course. This course was offered by Dr. Lilliana Stefanovic and Prof. Carola Strassner.

The role of Beras is first of all to establish the first Biodistrict in Sweden.

Further reading:

KISMET goes to Brussels:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtkXsLPdwtA>
and our homepage <https://kismet-project.eu/>



Newly elected board of Biodistrict Sörmland. Photo courtesy of Jostein Hertwig/Beras International, 2025

◆◆◆◆◆ Closing Thoughts ◆◆◆◆◆

As we conclude this edition of the FQH Newsletter, we want to express our gratitude to all members, partners, and supporters who make our work possible. The collaborative spirit of our community is our greatest strength as we work together toward more sustainable and health-promoting food systems.

We invite you to stay connected with FQH through our [website](#), social media channels, and upcoming events. Your engagement and contributions are essential to our collective impact.

Until next time, we wish you health, inspiration, and meaningful connections in your work and life.



www.linkedin.com/company/organic-food-quality-and-health



Organic Food System



[fqh_network](#)