

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 2026)**



THE ORGANIC Food Quality & HEALTH NEWSLETTER



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Editorial & Leadership

From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the Summer 2026 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 2026 edition of the FQH Newsletter. As we move further into 2026, the momentum of our community continues to grow — driven by rigorous research, vibrant exchange, and a shared commitment to advancing organic food systems for human and planetary health.

This edition reflects the breadth of our activities since the beginning of the year. Our presence at BIOFACH 2026 in Nuremberg was a particular highlight: the FQH workshop brought together early-career researchers and established scientists to discuss the future of organic food systems research, and the launch of the Global Organic Food Systems Observatories (GOFSO) concept generated considerable interest and engagement from participants across the globe.

The FQH Seminar Series has once again proven to be a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, with sessions spanning topics from regenerative agriculture and consumer behaviour to biodynamic farming and organic food research hotspots. I am continually inspired by the quality and diversity of contributions from our members and invited speakers.

Looking ahead, several important events on our calendar, including the continuation of our seminar series, the Organic Innovation Days in Brussels and much more — offer further opportunities to connect, collaborate, and advance evidence-based action.

I extend my warm gratitude to all members, partners, and contributors who make FQH such a dynamic and purposeful community. I look forward to continuing this journey together. With warm regards,

Prof. Dr. Carola Strassner, MBA

Chairwoman, FQH Association



BIOFACH 2026 Highlights

GOFSO at BIOFACH 2026 — A Shared Vision for Organic Food Systems

At the BIOFACH 2026 Science Forum, FQH was proud to host the session "Bold Vision: A Global Network of Observatories for Organic Food Systems." The session introduced an emerging concept that has been gathering momentum within the FQH community over recent months: the Global Observatories on Organic Food Systems, or GOFSO — a coordinated international initiative to monitor, research, and support organic food systems as living laboratories for broader food system transformation.

Why This Matters Now

Food systems are among the major drivers of biodiversity loss, soil degradation, and pressure on ecosystems worldwide. At the same time, they remain one of our most powerful levers for change. Across Europe and beyond, regions, cities, and civil society organisations are increasingly working towards more sustainable and healthier food systems. What is still missing is an integrated way to understand what actually works, how these transitions unfold over time, and what effects emerge across ecological, social, economic, and health domains.

Organic food systems offer a concrete, practice-based starting point for this transition. They already demonstrate how food production, health, biodiversity, economy, and community can be meaningfully interconnected. However, there is currently no structural way to monitor, compare, and strengthen this broader



Participants engaging during the GOFSO initiative presentation. BIOFACH 2026.

food system transition at the regional level — and this is the gap GOFSO aims to fill, by making food system transformation measurable, comparable, and actionable.

A Session Structured Around the GOFSO Core Domains

The BIOFACH 2026 session was introduced by Prof. Dr. Carola Strassner and structured around the five interconnected domains at the heart of the GOFSO framework:

- Prof. Dr. Ewa Rembiałkowska presented on Ecological Sustainability
- Dr. Marja van Vliet explored Socio-economic Wellbeing
- Prof. Dr. Susanne Gjedsted Bügel addressed Health & Nutrition

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BIOFACH 2026 Highlights *contd.*

- Jostein Hertwig focused on Governance & Participation
- Dr. Machteld Huber addressed community health and GOFSO's link to the FQH Association

Together, the speakers illustrated how coordinated, long-term monitoring across these domains can strengthen the contribution of organic food systems to the Great Food Transformation — and how organic regions already operating today can serve as real-world testbeds for this kind of integrated observation.

What GOFSO Does

At its core, GOFSO develops an international network of regional observatories in which food system transformation is monitored, researched, and supported — using organic food systems as existing, real-world examples of integrated system change. Each observatory is embedded within a university or knowledge institution and developed in close collaboration with regional governments and municipalities, farmers, cooperatives and food entrepreneurs, civil society organisations, and citizens and local networks. Rather than focusing on isolated indicators, GOFSO looks at the functioning of the food system as a whole.

The Pilot Phase

GOFSO plans to enter a three-year pilot phase built around five interlinked steps: developing a shared framework of indicators across biodiversity and environment, health and nutrition, economy and livelihoods, social participation, and governance and collaboration; connecting three to five regional observatories — building on established networks such as Münsterland (Germany) and Cilento (Italy), alongside emerging initiatives such as Mooi Maasvallei(NL); generating integrated insights through comparative analyses and case studies; developing practical tools including dashboards, policy recommendations, and stakeholder dialogues; and laying the groundwork for a scalable international network through shared governance and data agreements.

The observatories will function both as monitoring hubs, gathering data and analysis, and as learning environments for dialogue, co-creation, and practice development. True Cost Accounting will be used throughout to make the hidden societal costs and benefits of food systems visible.

A Lively Exchange and an Open Invitation

The exchange with participants at BIOFACH 2026 underscored the importance of international collaboration, shared indicators, and building a global observatory network grounded in real-world practice. We sincerely thank our speakers and everyone who joined the discussion — and look forward to seeing how this concept develops over the coming years.



Speakers at the GOFSO session during BIOFACH 2026

Are you working on a regional food initiative, or interested in contributing to or partnering within the GOFSO initiative? We welcome further conversation — please reach out to us via secretary@fqhresearch.org.

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



Speakers highlights @ BIOFACH

Young Organic Researchers: From PhDs to Professions – What Happens to Organic? BIOFACH 2026

Lilliana Stefanovic for moderating the session with professionalism and warmth, fostering an open and engaging discussion.

Beyond presenting their research, the speakers reflected on their individual journeys in organic agriculture. A key theme that emerged was how working in the organic sector not only shapes professional trajectories but also influences broader worldviews. The openness, collaboration, and strong sense of community within the organic sector were highlighted as defining characteristics.

The discussion further explored how organic principles continue to guide professional choices, even in roles that extend beyond the sector itself. The session concluded with a stimulating exchange on the GOFISO initiative, where speakers offered constructive reflections and forward-looking ideas on how the initiative could be further developed.

Thank you to everyone who joined us at BIOFACH 2026. We look forward to continuing these important conversations through the FQH community.



Photo: Speakers at the Young Organic Researchers Session. BIOFACH 2026.

FQH was also pleased to host an inspiring session at BIOFACH 2026 that brought together valuable perspectives from across the organic sector, spotlighting the journeys and insights of early-career researchers.

Sincere thanks go to the speakers — Lisa M. Rahier, Rita Góralska-Walczak, and Lea Matthiessen — for their thoughtful and engaging presentations, and to Dr.



Cross-section of participants at the Young Organic Researchers. BIOFACH 2026.

FQH General Assembly

The FQH community came together once again at BIOFACH 2026 in Nuremberg for the annual General Assembly, held in Room Helsinki at NCC Ost. It was a wonderful occasion to reconnect in person, exchange ideas, and reflect on the progress of our growing international research community.

Key Agenda Items

- Review of 2025 activities — including the FQH monthly seminar series, participation at IUNS-ICN 2025 in Paris, and BIOFACH 2025 in Nuremberg

Prof. Dr. Carola Strassner, Chair of FQH, and all members who participated and contributed to the discussions. Moments like these remind us that progress in sustainable food systems is driven by strong networks, open dialogue, and collaboration across disciplines and borders.

Take a look at some highlights from the meeting below. We look forward to continuing this momentum throughout 2026 and to further strengthening the community.



Members of the FQH during the annual general assembly held during the BIOFACH 2026.

- Financial review: a transparent presentation of accounts and the approval of the 2026 budget
- Member presentations on emerging research projects and new collaborative opportunities
- Agreement on clear strategic priorities to guide FQH's work through the remainder of 2026

Hearing directly from members about their research and potential collaborations was, as always, one of the most energising parts of the meeting. We would like to thank



Members of the FQH during the annual general assembly held during the BIOFACH 2026.

Celebrating Innovation: BioThesis 2026 Awards

During BIOFACH 2026 in Nürnberg, the BioThesis Forschungspreis honoured outstanding Bachelor's and Master's theses contributing innovative scientific insights and practical solutions for sustainable organic food systems. This year's awards placed particular emphasis on the human dimension of agriculture — health, education, and well-being across the value chain. Prof. Dr. Carola Strassner, Chairwoman of FQH, participated as a member of the award panel.

Best Master's Thesis

Julia Dahl (Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde) was awarded for her thesis "Der Mensch im System Landwirtschaft – Der Beitrag der Selbstfürsorge zum Erhalt der psychischen Gesundheit." Her research highlights the importance of self-care as a key component of sustainable agriculture, demonstrating how both personal and organisational changes can support the long-term mental health of farm managers.

Best Bachelor's Thesis

Annika Ortmann (Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf) received the award for her thesis "Bio-Lebensmittel-Themen in der Meisterausbildung des Bäcker- und Fleischerhandwerks in Bayern." The study examined how organic food topics are integrated into vocational master training programmes in Bavaria, identifying educator attitudes, examination requirements, and structural conditions as key factors influencing implementation.

The nominated theses further demonstrated the breadth of current organic research, covering topics such as community supported agriculture, composting innovations, animal welfare, and agroforestry systems. Collectively, the BioThesis 2026 awards underscored that sustainability extends beyond environmental metrics to encompass education, social responsibility, and the well-being of all who shape our food systems.

Call for Applications: BioThesis 2027

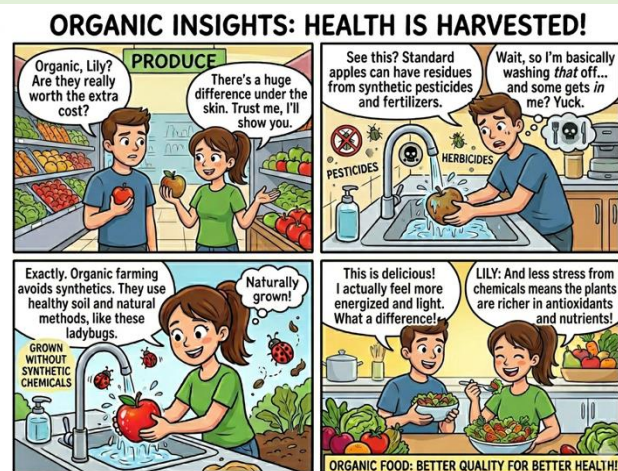
Applications are now open for BioThesis 2027, recognising outstanding Bachelor's and Master's theses related to the organic food sector (Bio-Lebensmittelbranche). Eligible theses completed in 2025 or 2026 may address topics across agricultural production, processing, marketing, consumption, sustainability, and policy frameworks.

Prizes: Up to €2,000 (Bachelor's) and €3,000 (Master's), plus visibility at BIOFACH and networking with leading academics and practitioners.

More information: <https://blq-bio-beratung.de/biothesis/>



Winners and jury at the BioThesis 2026. Photo: BioThesis 2026 award ceremony, BIOFACH 2026, Nuremberg



BIOTHESIS 2027

Jetzt Bewerben!

Einsendeschluss: 15.10.2026

Bis zu 3.000 € gewinnen

Forschung trifft Zukunft

Preis für nachhaltige Abschlussarbeiten entlang der Bio-Lebensmittel-Wertschöpfungskette



Research Highlights

Research Project: Updating Latvia's Agricultural Marginal Abatement Cost Curves (MACC) for the Transition Towards Decarbonisation

Inga Megne, doctoral student at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, is involved in the ongoing research project “Updating Latvia's Agricultural Marginal Abatement Cost Curves (MACC) for the Transition Towards Decarbonisation”, together with Dr. Dina Popluga, Dr. Kaspars Naglis-Liepa, and Dr. Arnis Lēnerts. The project is implemented at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies with support from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia.

The project focuses on climate-friendly and low-emission agricultural development in Latvia by analysing greenhouse gas and ammonia emission reduction measures, ecosystem services, and the broader environmental and social benefits of sustainable farming practices. Particular attention is given to resilient agricultural systems, biodiversity, and nature-based approaches that support the long-term sustainability of food systems.

Current activities also examine farmers' readiness to engage in emerging nature credit systems and the role of policy instruments in supporting environmentally responsible agricultural development in Latvia and the European Union.



Research team meeting on agricultural decarbonisation and sustainable farming systems. Photo courtesy of Inga Megne

Biodynamic Agriculture, Nutrition and Human Development

by Andreas Attila de Wolinsk Miklós

A new book by Prof. Dr. Andreas Attila de Wolinsk Miklós explores the relationship between biodynamic agricul-

ture, food quality, and human development, drawing on more than two decades of academic work and hands-on farming experience. The author — an agronomist and soil scientist with a PhD in Earth Sciences from the University of Paris VI, former professor at the University of São Paulo, and long-standing member of the Organic Food Systems Program (OFSP) of FAO/UNEP — brings together perspectives from soil science, anthroposophy, and practical farm management.

Framing the Problem

The book opens with a broad diagnosis of interconnected pressures on both the natural world and the social fabric: degradation of soil, water, air, and climate on one hand, and the fragmentation of cultural, scientific, and economic life on the other. Drawing on the anthroposophical framework developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), the author argues that these phenomena are linked through the way food is produced and consumed — and that restoring the vitality of food may be a meaningful lever for addressing both ecological and social challenges.

The São Francisco da Vereda Farm: A Twelve-Year Case Study

The core of the book is a detailed account of a twelve-year practical experiment (2000–2012) conducted on the author's own 250-hectare property, São Francisco da Vereda Farm, in Brazil. The project set out to test the economic viability of biodynamic agriculture at a medium commercial scale, centred on 30 hectares of irrigated bananas producing between 42 and 56 tonnes per month.

The results were notable from a market perspective: Demeter-certified bananas from the farm became the top-selling item, by financial volume, among more than 500 organic products at one of São Paulo's largest supermarket chains. The author attributes this success to strong customer loyalty, driven by the fruit's longer shelf life, lower spoilage, and superior taste, colour, and aroma compared with conventionally grown bananas — outcomes the author links to the biodynamic preparations (horn manure and horn silica) used to manage soil fertility and plant growth.

A Broader Vision

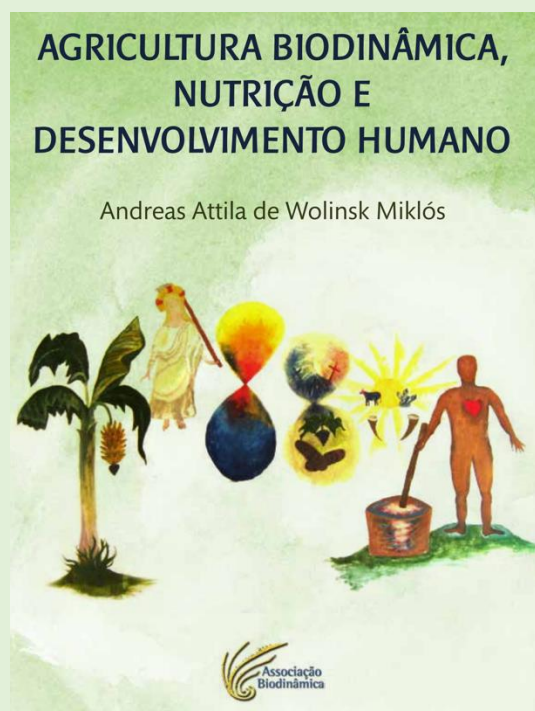
Beyond the agronomic and commercial findings, the book situates this case study within a wider reflection on food, ecology, and human development — proposing that biodynamic methods can increase vitality in both food and the surrounding ecosystem, with implications for how agriculture might contribute to broader social and ecological renewal.

While the philosophical framework draws on

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Research Highlights *contd.*

Biodynamic Agriculture, Nutrition and Human Development *contd.*



anthroposophical thought that may be unfamiliar to readers from conventional scientific backgrounds, the practical case study offers a documented example of long-term biodynamic management at commercial scale, with measurable outcomes in yield, product quality, and market performance — of interest to researchers and practitioners examining the relationship between farming practices and food quality.

The book is published in Portuguese. Readers interested in obtaining a copy or learning more about the author's work may contact FQH at secretary@fqhresearch.org, or consult the author's academic profile via the Lattes Curriculum (CNPq): <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8111607035359786>

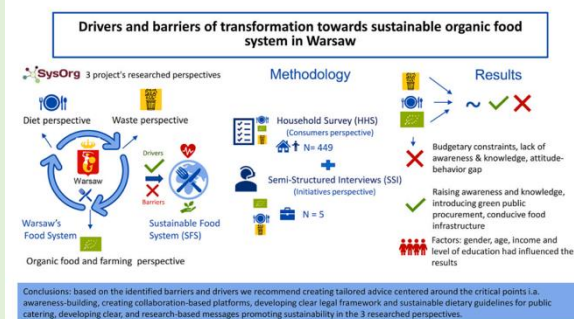
Drivers and Barriers of Transformation Towards a Sustainable Food System in Warsaw

By Góral ska-Walczak et al., *Journal of Cleaner Production* 563 (2026) 148419

Despite the growing body of research on sustainable food systems (SFSs), empirical and locally grounded studies examining the drivers and barriers of urban food system transformation in Central and Eastern European cities remain limited. This study addresses that gap by identifying the drivers and barriers to a sustainable food

system (SFS) in Warsaw from the perspectives of households and transition initiatives, following the SysOrg project framework.

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



Data were collected using a mixed-methods approach, combining a household survey (N = 449) and semi-structured interviews with local initiatives (N = 5), across three key dimensions: sustainable and healthy diets, organic food and farming, and food waste reduction.

The results indicate that all three domains share common barriers, including budgetary constraints, limited awareness and knowledge, insufficient institutional support, and data gaps. Price emerged as the primary barrier across all three domains — with 36% of respondents citing cost as a reason not to adopt more sustainable diets, and 79% identifying it as the main reason for not purchasing organic food. Additional barriers included the attitude-behaviour gap, lack of clear labelling, limited availability of organic products, regulatory constraints, and lack of social norms around food waste reduction.

Key drivers identified include awareness-raising and education, improved availability and food infrastructure, and policy support — particularly green public procurement at the municipal level. Sociodemographic factors including gender, age, income, and education significantly influenced perceptions and behaviours across all three domains.

The findings highlight the strong interconnectedness of the three perspectives and identify critical leverage points for sustainable transformation. The study provides actionable insights for policymakers, municipalities, and local initiatives in Warsaw, and serves as a reference resource for other European cities, particularly those within the Visegrad Group engaged in the development of urban food policies in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959652626009601>

FQH Seminar Highlights

Seminar Series Highlights

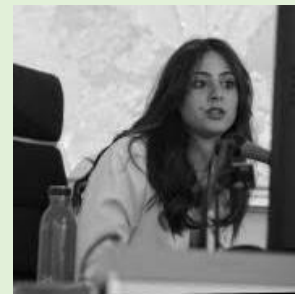
The FQH Seminar Series continued into 2026 with a rich and varied programme of monthly online sessions, bringing together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from across the organic food and agriculture community. Below is an overview of the seminars held in the first half of 2026.



32nd FQH Seminar January 2026: Visualising Organic Food Research Hotspots" WINN-ORGANIC-Widening Innovation for Organic Food by Ivana Cavoski, Coordinator and Innovation Lead, Horizon Europe project WINN-ORGANIC. This opening seminar of the 2026

Photo courtesy of Ivana Cavoski/WINN-ORGANIC, 2026

series explored how innovation hubs across Europe are supporting sustainable transformation in organic food and farming systems, addressing challenges in processing, supply chains, and consumer demand.



33rd FQH Seminar February 2026: Bridging Knowledge and Practice: How Advisory Services Shape Organic Farming by Roberta Milardo, PhD Researcher in Agricultural Economics and Rural Appraisal, University of Bologna. Advisory services play a vital role in

Photo courtesy of Roberta Milardo/University of Bologna, 2026

connecting scientific research with on-farm practice in organic agriculture. This seminar explored how advisory systems operate in different national contexts — drawing on comparative work across Italy, Sweden, and Chile — highlighting both structural challenges and context-specific strengths. By integrating economic, political, and social perspectives, the session offered valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers working to strengthen sustainable and innovation-oriented organic farming systems.



34th FQH Seminar, March 2026: Beyond the Buzz: Analyzing Actors Promoting Regenerative Agriculture in Europe. Dr. Loekie Schreefel, a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Farming Systems Ecology Group, Wageningen University & Research spoke on Regenerative agriculture as an increasingly promoted as a path-

Photo: Universität Kassel Forschung web page, 2025

way toward more sustainable food systems — but who is actually driving its rise? This seminar presented findings from a study analysing 849 actor websites and 131 farmer interviews across Germany, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Portugal. The research mapped the diverse landscape of actors involved — from farmers and NGOs to companies and governments — identifying where they are located, when they adopted regenerative practices, and the themes and practices they promote.

By examining the results through multiple lenses, the research highlighted emerging power asymmetries, the challenges of scaling regenerative approaches, and the contested role of science and policy in guiding agriculture toward safe and just planetary boundaries.



35th FQH Seminar April 2026: Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavioural Intentions of Chinese Consumers Towards Sustainable Food Consumption by Dr. Ji Lu, Associate Professor, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada. This seminar presented findings from two empirical studies

Photo courtesy of Ji Lu / Dalhousie University, 2026.

exploring the psychological factors influencing sustainable food consumption in China. The research examined how beliefs, attitudes, social influences, and market conditions shape organic food purchasing behaviour, particularly in urban contexts. The session also explored the role of traditional Chinese health beliefs in linking personal health motivations with sustainability concerns, demonstrating how culturally rooted values, social norms, and access to information can shape consumer behaviour toward more sustainable food choices.



36th FQH Seminar May 2026: Visualising Organic Food Research Hotspots by Dr. Azliyana Azizan, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia. This study mapped the structural evolution of organic food research using bibliometric

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

visualisation of 2,186 Web of Science publications from 1970 to 2025. Co-occurrence networks and thematic analyses identified four dominant research clusters: organic agriculture and sustainability; consumer

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FQH Seminar Highlights Contd.

perceptions and decision-making; economic and market perspectives; and trust-centred consumer behaviour.

The findings showed trust in certification and labelling as a decisive predictor of purchase intention, while pricing, food safety concerns, and inconsistent regulatory frameworks continue to impede adoption. Emerging themes include nutritional quality, risk perception, and digital traceability technologies — reflecting a broader shift toward transparency and safety-focused scholarship.



37th FQH Seminar June 2026:

Biodynamic Agriculture, Nutrition and Human Development by Prof. Dr. Andreas Attila de Wolinsk Miklós, Agronomist, Researcher, and Educator. Prof. Miklós brings over four decades of experience in agriculture, soil science, and human develop-

Photo courtesy of Prof. Dr. Andreas Attila de Wolinsk Miklos/

ment. He earned his PhD in Earth Sciences from the University of Paris VI and has served as Professor at the University of São Paulo. Throughout his career he has contributed to academic research, biodynamic farming practice, public policy, and international initiatives, including service with Brazil's National Technical Biosafety Council and participation in the FAO/UNEP Organic Food Systems Program.

This seminar explored the interconnected crises of climate instability, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, and soil degradation through the lens of biodynamic agriculture and human development. Drawing on Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical framework, the presentation examined the relationship between food quality, human consciousness, and sustainable agriculture, and included a case study from the São Francisco da Vereda Farm in Brazil — a twelve-year biodynamic experiment demonstrating both ecological integrity and commercial viability.

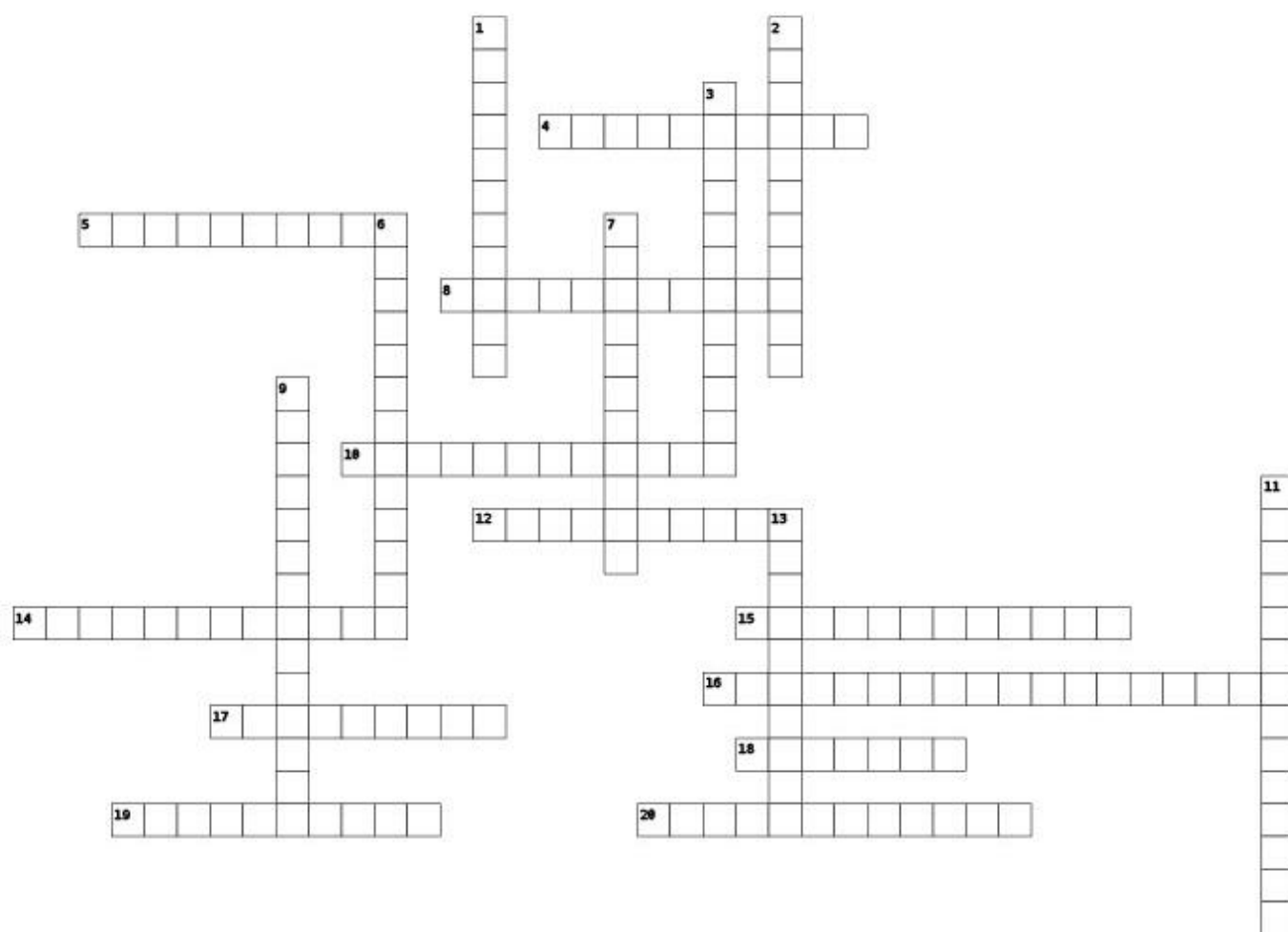
All FQH seminars are free of charge and open to interested participants.

For the full schedule visit:

<https://www.fqhresearch.org/activities/seminars.html>

Crossword Puzzle

ORGANIC FOOD QUALITY AND HEALTH



Across

4. Foods that provide tangible health benefits
5. Beneficial microbes incorporated into diets
8. Seedlings harvested after just a few days
10. Ability to fully track a product's supply chain
12. Botanicals and mushrooms used in food
14. Using microbes to breakdown materials to high value food
15. Framework on restoring soil health, water resilience, and biodiversity
16. Supply chains not contributing to deforestation
17. Technology to optimize crop health and traceability.
18. Verification standard indicating a product avoids ultra-processed ingredients
19. Overall holistic wellbeing via the gut
20. Clear certifications on how and where food is produced

Down

1. Eat predominantly plant-based but occasionally eat high-quality meat.
2. Diets and food alternatives that minimize animal products
3. Baseline requirement focused on protection and restoration of local ecosystems
6. Major environmental goal of regenerative agriculture
7. Focus on sourcing local foods
9. Focus on the concentration of beneficial vitamins, minerals, and fiber per calorie in food
11. Products that detail specific functional benefits
13. Nutrient-rich ingredients

Upcoming Events

FQH Seminar Series — Upcoming Sessions

Cyrine Ben M'rad, 18th September 2026
Kalliopi Anna (Liana) Poulia, 16th October 2026
Veronika Hansen, 20th November 2026

Full schedule:

<https://www.fqhresearch.org/activities/seminars.html>

BIOFACH 2027 — 16th to 19th February, 2027

FQH will be present at BIOFACH 2027. Stay connected through our website and social media channels for updates on the FQH workshop programme, including topics, speakers, and registration details.



Organic Innovation Days 2026
3rd–4th November 2026 | Organic House, Rue Marie-Thérèse 11, Brussels

The 2026 edition of the Organic Innovation Days — TP Organics' annual flagship event and the only EU event on organic and agroecological research and innovation — will focus on shaping the priorities for the next EU research and innovation framework programme (FP10). The event brings together researchers, policymakers, farmers, and industry stakeholders to advance the strategic direction of organic and agroecological R&I in Europe.

The event is particularly relevant for the FQH community given its alignment with GOFSO, organic food system research priorities, and FQH's growing engagement with European policy processes. FQH members are encouraged to attend and contribute to the discussions on future research priorities.

More information:

[\(https://tporganics.eu/organic-innovation-days/\)](https://tporganics.eu/organic-innovation-days/)



InnoFoodLabs Launches International Webinar Series to Strengthen Organic Food Systems Across Europe

The InnOFoodLabs project has launched a free, international webinar series bringing together practitioners and innovators working to strengthen Europe's organic food systems. Open to farmers, processors, researchers, local authorities, and anyone interested in organic food systems, the series offers practical insights at each session. A single registration grants access to all three webinars in the 2026 cycle:

Webinar 1 — 16th April 2026, 16:30–18:00 CET: "Building our Community of Practice: Organic Market Insights" [already held — recording available]

Webinar 2 — 26th May 2026, 16:30–18:00 CET: "Organic Food Processing: What Is the Common Goal of Organic Food Quality?" [already held — recording available]

Webinar 3 — 17th September 2026, 16:30–18:00 CET: "Connecting Farmers, Communities, and Markets in Organic Agriculture". Register (free): <https://www.innofoodlabs.eu/news/innofoodlabs-launches-international-webinar-series-to-strengthen-organic-food-systems-across-europe/>

BioThesis 2027 – Call for Applications!

Applications are now open for *BioThesis 2027*, a research award recognizing outstanding Bachelor's and Master's theses related to the organic food sector (*Bio-Lebensmittelbranche*). Eligible theses completed in 2025 or 2026 may address topics ranging from agricultural production and processing to marketing, consumption, sustainability, and policy frameworks. Winners will receive prizes of up to €2,000 (Bachelor's) and €3,000 (Master's), along with visibility at BIOFACH and opportunities for networking with experts from academia and practice.

More info at: <https://blq-bio-beratung.de/biothesis/>

FQH Initiatives and Partners



Together with IFOAM Organics Int. and Beras Int., FQH initiated the Organic Food System Programme, OFSP (www.organicfoodsystem.net). FQH is the legal holder of this programme. FQH board members are furthermore 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 intends to contribute 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!



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OH-FINE – a European knowledge network for organic farming – a Horizon Europe project involving partners from Poland: the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Institute of Human Nutrition and Institute of Agriculture) and the Association of Organic Agriculture named M. Górny

The transition of agriculture towards more sustainable production models is one of the key challenges facing contemporary Europe. In response to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the 'Farm to Fork' strategy, which aims to achieve a 25% share of organic farming by 2030, the OH-FINE (Organic Farming Innovations Network Europe) project was established.

The OH-FINE project addresses the gap identified in Europe between the availability of knowledge and its practical application on farms. As part of the project, a pan-European Organic Farming Learning Community (OFC) is being established to bring together farmers, advisors, researchers, and other stakeholders. Its task is not only to gather knowledge, but above all to transform it into practical solutions tailored to the diverse production conditions across Europe.

Project objectives and activities

The OH-FINE project pursues several objectives, including analysing existing organic farming practices in selected countries (including Poland), developing multidimensional knowledge models, supporting the conversion of farms to organic systems, and creating digital tools to assist farmers in their decision-making.

One of the key outcomes will be the creation of a DSS (Decision Support System) to help farmers choose optimal technological and organisational solutions. In parallel, an open digital platform will be developed, integrating training materials, research findings and examples of good practice.

The project also involves extensive advisory and educational activities: workshops, training sessions, study visits and the preparation of materials in various formats – from guides to instructional videos. All of this is aimed at enhancing farmers' skills and accelerating the implementation of innovations.

Poland as a key pilot area

Poland is one of five countries covered by the project's case studies (alongside Ireland, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Spain). Regional Knowledge Hubs (RKHs) have been established in each of these countries, responsible for local advisory, training and research activities.

In Poland, particular emphasis has been placed on developing knowledge of organic cereal production, including the study of wheat varieties, the evaluation of authorised bio-preparations for organic farming, and the implementation of innovative production technologies. These activities are carried out in collaboration with farmers participating in the research and based on real-world production conditions.

Partners from Poland and their role

Two organisations from Poland are involved in the OH-FINE project: the Warsaw University of Life Sciences

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(Institute of Human Nutrition and Institute of Agriculture) and the Organic Farming Forum Association (FRE).

SGGW is primarily responsible for the project's scientific and experimental components. The university conducts field research, develops a knowledge base on organic farming, and co-creates training tools and materials. Furthermore, in 2027, **SGGW** will organise a major project event, the Forum, a conference open to European stakeholders dedicated to organic farming. The aim is to foster a constructive discussion on optimising the development of organic farming in Poland and other countries participating in the project.

FRE plays a key role in identifying farmers' needs and in grassroots shaping of project activities. The organisation participates in surveys, works directly with farmers and supports the creation of networks between stakeholders. Its role also includes participating in the analysis of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) and actively engaging in dissemination activities. An important activity of **FRE** is coordinating individual advisory services on organic production for 21 farmers in the Mazovia Province covered by the project.

transition. In the coming years, this may translate into more organic farms, improved profitability, and greater consumer interest in high-quality organic food.

Coordinator on behalf of the Association of Organic Agriculture, M. Górny: Prof. Maria Ewa Rembiałkowska

Consumption of organic compared with conventional fruits and vegetables in relation to cancer risk: findings from the NutriNet-Santé study

Justine Berlivet, Emma Meyer, Benjamin Ales, Denis Lairon, Serge Hercberg, Mathilde Touvier, Bernard Srour, Julia Baudry, Emmanuelle Kesse-Guyot. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 123 (2026) 101284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajcut.2026.101284>



Photo courtesy of Prof. Maria Ewa Rembiałkowska

Towards the future of agriculture

OH-FINE is a project that not only addresses farmers' current needs but also sets the direction for the development of organic farming in Europe. By integrating knowledge, innovation and practice, it lays the foundations for a more resilient, competitive and sustainable agri-food sector.

Thanks to the active participation of Polish partners, the project contributes to strengthening the national agricultural knowledge system and increasing Poland's significance in the European agricultural



Photo: Dr Denis Lairon, OFSP Steering Committee Member

Background: Regular fruits and vegetables (F&V) consumption is linked to a lower risk of certain cancers. However, F&V can contain pesticides, some of which may have carcinogenic properties. Organic foods are thought to reduce pesticide residue exposure, but the relation-

ship between organic consumption and cancer risk is inconsistent. Notably, to our knowledge, no study has explored substituting conventional with organic F&V.

Objectives: This study examined the association between substituting conventional with organic F&V and cancer risk (five sites) in the NutriNet-Santé cohort (31,000 French adults), using detailed data from a food frequency questionnaire distinguishing between conventional and organic products. Cancer cases were self-reported and then validated by clinicians during follow-up.

Methods: The organic/total F&V ratio ranged from 9% (Q1) up to 68% (Q5). Substitution of conventional F&V with organic F&V, at fixed total F&V consumption, was examined with multivariable Cox proportional hazards models per 100 g/d increment of substitution and by quintiles (Q1-Q5, using Q1 as reference with HR=1). Sensitivity analyses as well as

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marginal structural models were also implemented to improve causal inference. Adjustments for appropriate confounders were made.

Results: A total of 31,179 participants, 75% of whom were females, were included in the analyses. During follow-up {mean 7.3 y [standard deviation 3.1]}, 1718 cancer cases (284 cases of postmenopausal breast cancer) were registered / 227,660 person-years. Substituting conventional with organic F&V was associated with a lower risk of overall cancer {hazard ratio (HR) [95% confidence interval (CI)] for a 100 g/d substitution was 0.98 (0.95, 1.00)}, i.e. -2%, and a lower risk of postmenopausal breast cancer [HR (95% CI) for a 100 g/d substitution was 0.90 (0.85, 0.96)], i.e. -10%, whereas no association was detected for other cancer locations. When modeled by quintiles of substitution, an inverse association was found for postmenopausal breast cancer, HR Q5 compared with Q1 was 0.59 (95% CI: 0.41, 0.85), P-trend < 0.0, i.e. - 41%, but not for overall cancer or other locations.

When running marginal structural models and testing for additional adjustments, findings remained significant for postmenopausal breast cancer.

In the model adjusted for national census data, results showed a stronger association, with a - 7% risk of overall cancer and - 20% risk of postmenopausal breast cancer per 100 g/d increment ($P < 0.0001$).

Limitations (such as numbers of cases, genders, age, modeling, etc.) and other potential hypotheses were discussed to explain some observations.

Conclusions: In the present work, substituting conventional F&V with organic ones was associated with a reduced risk of postmenopausal breast cancer. The specific role of organic F&V compared with conventional F&V needs further investigation in other contexts. Read the full article here: https://organicfoodsystem.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/berlivet-ajcn-fl-bio_cov-ksein-sup2026-1-1.pdf

CROSS WORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

ACROSS

4. FUNCTIONAL
5. PROBIOTICS
8. MICROGREENS
10. TRACEABILITY
12. ADAPTOGENS
14. FERMENTATION
15. REGENERATIVE
16. DEFORESTATION-FREE
17. PRECISION
18. NON-UPF
19. GUT-HEALTH
20. TRANSPARENCY

DOWN

1. FLEXITARIAN
2. PLANT-BASED
3. BIODIVERSITY
6. SEQUESTRATION
7. REGIONALITY
9. NUTRIENT-DENSE
11. NEUTRACETICALS
13. SUPERFOODS

Event Highlights

Institutional Capacity and Regional Bioeconomy Challenges: 8th International Humanistic Economic Forum, Latvian Academy of Sciences, Riga, Latvia – 6 March 2026

At the 8th International Humanistic Economic Forum, Inga Megne a member of FQH (Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies), together with Baiba Rivža and Kaspars Naglis-Liepa, presented research on institutional capacity and regional bioeconomy challenges.

The presentation explored why regions with similar natural resources often achieve different development outcomes. Particular attention was given to the role of governance quality, policy coordination, and institutional capacity in supporting sustainable regional development and resilient organic food systems.

Drawing on empirical analysis from Latvia, the discussion highlighted that successful bioeconomy and organic system transitions depend not only on resource availability, but also on the ability of institutions to coordinate stakeholders and balance ecological and economic priorities.

More information about the forum is available at [International Humanistic Economic Forum](https://www.ihforum.lv/)



Presentation on governance, bioeconomy and resilient organic food systems at the 8th International Humanistic Economic Forum, Riga, Latvia. Photo courtesy of Inga Megne



◆◆◆◆◆ *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.

