

# ORGANIC FARMING

## From the market niche to a regional development potential

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### Two research areas

#### LIEZEN Grassland

At present: 30% organic  
farms in the region

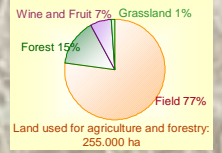
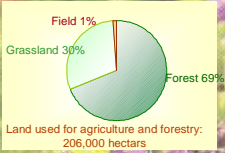
#### WEINVIERTEL Crop farming region

At present: 1% organic farms  
in the region

### Agricultural trends in conventional farming

By the increase of the milk yield more feed concentrate (e.g. grain) is fed  
Certain alpine pastures and grassland areas excluded from production  
- leading to a changing landscape

Through increasing specialization agriculture areas increase in size and animal husbandry becomes more intense  
This leads to a reduction of biodiversity, soil compaction, nitrate and phosphorus load of waters



### production engineering

- How does crop production change?
- What is the effect of the conversion on animal husbandry?
- What is the effect of the conversion on the environment?

- ✓ Lower yields and more varied crop rotations
- ✓ Animal husbandry and feeding take place more species appropriate
- ✓ Lowering of nitrogen surplus and avoidance of phosphorus surplus, leads to less nitrate in the groundwater and less eutrophication of rivers and lakes

### regional economy

- What value does organic agriculture have for regional development?
- How does the creation of a chain of economic added value change by a conversion to organic farming on a large scale?
- Is there a positive effect on health tourism, catering industry and cultural activities?

- ✓ Strengthening the carrying capacity of the rural area
- ✓ Encouraging regional marketing and co-operation in the region
- ✓ Protecting and maintaining competitive ability and employment in future markets

### farm economics

- What modifications would be necessary in context of a conversion to organic farming?
- What effects would a conversion to organic farming to animal husbandry and land allocation have?
- How would agricultural income change?
- ✓ In organic farming there is larger variety of livestock husbandry and crops
- ✓ The extent of modifications in the operational organization depends on the degree of specialisation
- ✓ Due to present outline conditions (markets, prices, promotions) a higher income cannot be expected for every farm

## On the way to a regional conversion to organic farming

### Obstacles

- ✗ Fastidious **production engineering**: higher dependency on natural yield fluctuations, smaller correction options, higher expenditure of work
- ✗ Insufficient **marketing structure** for organic products
- ✗ **Limited knowledge of both consumers and farmers** about the different production methods (ideas, potentials, effect on animals and environment)
- ✗ Farmers mainly understand themselves as raw material producers for anonymous markets
- ✗ Certain **skepticism** in relation to the organic agriculture with associations, processors and regional politicians
- ✗ Co-operation potentials are not used

### Effects

- ✓ Reduced surplus and lower **energy** application, conservation of the scarce phosphorus supplies
- ✓ Less conflict between agriculture and **nature protection**
- ✓ **GMO-free** farming
- ✓ **Multi-functional** agriculture (production and sales of regional food, landscapes in regional typical varieties, environmental protection, regenerative raw materials etc.)
- ✓ **Sustainability** through system-dependent circular flow economy
- ✓ **Variety and identification** by regional-differentiated product quality
- ✓ Impulse for sector-spreading co-operation and integrative **regional development**

### Organic farming is based on system thinking

### biodiversity - nature conservation

- What does a conversion mean for the development of a species-rich and landscape-type specific biotope diversity?
- What is the role of the promotion of beneficial organisms?
- How can guidelines for organic farming and guiding-principles for nature conservation be optimally integrated?
- ✓ More wild species with high number of individuals in the agricultural areas and broader spectrum of biotope-types which depend on a certain level of use
- ✓ Small structures such as field margins and hedges are important for pest control
- ✓ Further development of organic-farming guidelines for biodiversity protection

- What do the regional participants think about conversion?
- What factors promote and discourage conversion to organic farming?
- What factors determine the choice of the type (conventional or organic) of farming?

- ✓ A conversion of all farms in a region is considered unrealistic - due to conflicting interests
- ✓ Women more likely do support a conversion
- ✓ Not every consumer is prepared to pay a premium
- ✓ Economic considerations, subjective perceptions and non-standard value attitudes determine the conversion decision

- What effects does organic agriculture have on the produce in terms of biocide-, hormone- or antibiotic-residues or BSE?
- Is a redefinition of the term "quality" necessary?
- Is food safety affected?

- ✓ Lower-risk produce due to strict government regulation and inspections as well as largely closed circulation of materials
- ✓ Inclusion of the dynamics of product emergence and effect (process quality), instead of fixed view of final product
- ✓ Higher transparency of production and processing methods by recordings

### rural sociology

### food quality



### project management:

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