

Organic farming for biodiversity

The initiative with a result-based approach is targeting organic farmers. The farms have the possibility to select the measures that fit best for them to foster wild flora and fauna. A certification scheme qualifies them for selling their organic products in retail with premium price.



Summary

The initiative called "Farming for species diversity (Landwirtschaft für Artenvielfalt)" aims to increase the diversity of wild flora and fauna on organic farms. A result-oriented approach with participation of the value chain is pursued. The WWF Germany and Biopark, a federation of organic farming, have started the initiative together with the retailer EDEKA in 2012 in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, now extended to other regions. A new standard going beyond the requirements for the organic certification has been developed with scientific support. The nature protection certification is based on a broad range of over 100 measures. Its central element is a catalogue of measures with credits allocated to each of them. Together with a specialised nature protection advisor, the participating farmers choose the measures that are the most suitable and can be best integrated into their agricultural production. Factsheets provide detailed information on the implementation of the measures, suitable locations and potential indicator species. The whole farm with all its land and the surrounding landscape elements is eligible. If the farmer reaches a threshold of credit points, he gets a supplement for selected products (initially meat products and potatoes, now also apples processed as juice and cereals). The farmer is compensated for his nature protection efforts through the higher priced premium organic product sold with a particular label. The consumers actively support species diversity by purchasing these products.



RESULT-BASED



Species diversity: indicator species and habitats

VALUE CHAIN



Organic farmer – organic farming federation – retailer – consumer

PUBLIC GOODS



Biodiversity

Further PGs



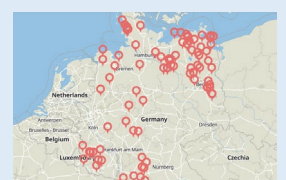
Product quality



Rural viability and vitality

LOCATION

GERMANY



The core area of the project is situated in northeast of Germany, expanding to other parts. In 2022 farms located in 11 German Laender participate.

Objectives

- Increase of the diversity of wild flora and fauna in agricultural landscapes
- Establish a nature protection certificate for organic farms
- Improve the market opportunities for selected organic products



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Problem statement

The starting point for this project was the observed decrease of the biological diversity on farmland and in agriculture landscapes. In principle organic farming provides an excellent basis for a high species diversity of wild animals and plants. But also in organic farming the increasing economic pressure leads to intensification and this goes along with negative effects on species diversity.

Data and Facts

Participation: 170 farmers, 4 federations of organic farming (BIOPARK, Bioland, Naturland, Demeter), the retailer EDEKA, starting with EDEKA North. The organic farmers cultivate approximately 52.000 hectare (May 2022).

Further participation: WWF Germany as project lead; scientific support and realisation by the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF).

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CONTRACT

Verbal agreement between the organic farming federation and the participating farmer (involvement of a nature protection advisor)

Guaranteed purchase for selected products, written



Payment:

Farmers get a premium through EDEKA commercialisation; nature protection advice free of charge

Project financing:

Pilot project based on a partnership contract between WWF Germany and the EDEKA headquarter

Duration of contract:

For farmers without end date

Start: 2012

End: ongoing

Nature protection certification

- Organic farm
- Individual choice from a catalogue of nature protection measures
- Certification if a minimum number of credits at farm level has been achieved
- Cropland, grassland, horticulture land and landscape elements are eligible for the credits

Participation in the nature protection module:

1. Advice: The nature protection advisor assesses the farm and identifies which wild species are present. Existing nature deficits are discussed and solutions are elaborated. He agrees with the farmer which measures are suitable on which fields or neighbouring areas.
2. Catalogue of measures: Farmer can choose from more than 100 nature protection measures for arable land, grassland and landscape elements. A credit point system provides information about the effectiveness of each measure in protecting or promoting species and habitats.
3. Implementation: The farmer implements the selected measures on his farm. Knowledge is gained thanks to the long-term collaboration between the advisor and the farmer, allowing a continuous optimisation of the measures themselves as well as the overall farm management.



Controls / monitoring: The participating farms are controlled annually if they have successfully implemented the chosen measures on their farm. Currently the nature protection advisors are controlling if the necessary credit points are obtained and certify the organic farms. In future it is foreseen to have the mandatory controls for organic farming back-to-back with the nature protection certification. There are monitoring and evaluation schemes for wild herbs on agricultural fields, the whinchat bird as well as skylark, for butterflies, amphibians and grassland vegetation. The evolution of the populations is assessed on selected farms to check if the implemented measures bring the expected benefits.

Conditions of participation: The participating farms have to obtain the threshold of 120 credit points / 100 ha by implementing nature protection measures chosen after an in-depth advice. The products from those organic farms can be sold as premium product (mainly meat and since 2022 apples). Consumers can recognize these products thanks to the logo of 'farming for species diversity' alongside with the WWF logo. In addition, the products are labelled with one of the logos from the participating organic farming federations. Since 2015 organic farms from Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony-Anhalt are eligible to participate beside farms from Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. In 2018 also farms from Baden-Wuerttemberg joined the initiative and now farmers from eleven German Laender are participating.

Risks / uncertainties for participants: A minimum of credit points has to be obtained on a yearly basis through measure implementation to be able to benefit from the premium price for the selected products. In addition, supply contracts with EDEKA are required for privileged market access. In return the retailer ensures constant reliable prices for the products sold.

Contract features combination: The participating farmers are eligible to get EU-cofunded support for organic farming.

Framework conditions

Landscape and climate: Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (M-V), where the core area of the project is situated, is located in the northeast of Germany with a cool moderate climate. The coastal areas are under the maritime influence of the Baltic Sea. The annual precipitation is around 600 mm. It is the most sparsely populated state in Germany. The state is rich in water bodies and has three national parks as well as numerous nature protection areas, together they cover 6.2% of the territory. The land use is characterized by large-scale farming.

Farm system: The initiative focuses on organic farming. Organic farming takes place in M-V on 14% of the agricultural area. This makes M-V the number one in Germany. Most of the time the organic farms cultivate land of lower soil quality, have significantly more grassland and a higher percentage of extensive livestock. The farms participating in the initiative differ regarding location, farming structure, and farming practices.

Information / contact:

<https://www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de>



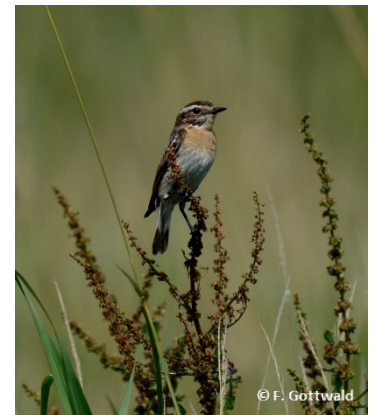
SUCCESSFUL CONTRACT SOLUTION



The initiative 'farming for species diversity' shows how organic farms can successfully implement nature protection on their farm land. The nature protection module used to reward achievements in nature conservation has proved its worth. This is also reflected in the number of participants which has increased fifteenfold since the initiative started with eleven farms in 2012. The transferability into other regions could be demonstrated with its enlargement, where suitable measures have been added or modified according to regional needs. The ecological monitoring showed significant improvements for selected indicator species, for example the breeding success of the whinchat increased significantly.

Reasons for success:

- Close collaboration between nature protection advisor and organic farmers
- Nature protection measures can be integrated into the farming activities
- Project logo on the products enables consumers to recognize the products with nature protection benefits
- All participating farms can be found on the EDEKA- and the project homepage through a tracking code placed on the product



SWOT analysis

