Network 'Research on Organic Vegetable Production' in Germany

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Main Goals of the Project

➢ Improvement of information flow between researchers, advisory services and growers

➢ More efficiency of human and technical research resources by better coordination and standardization of research activities
Key Data of the Project

▷ Project funding
  *Federal Programme Organic Farming (BÖL)* by German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection

▷ Project term
  1. Period    July 2004 until March 2007
  2. Period    October 2007 until November 2009
Key Data of the Project

› Project management team

3 Representatives from research institutions
2 Extension workers
2 Growers
2 Members of FiBL staff
Problems at Project Start

- No overview of current and already accomplished trials
- No overview of the involved institutions
- No basis for collective trials
- Test results are published only incompletely, irregularly, or only on federal states level
- Communication between researchers, advisory services and growers is rather coincidental and mainly limited to the level of federal states
Structure of the Project

Resulting from the problems five subprojects with different terms were established

- Guidelines
- Trial Overview
- Networking
- Workshops
- Information Flow
Project Results 'Guidelines'

- Main result of the subproject is the manual 'Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Trials on Organic Vegetable Growing'
  \((\text{Handbuch 'Planung, Anlage und Auswertung von Versuchen im ökologischen Gemüsebau'})\)

- The Manual provides basic guidelines to establish and standardize field trials resp. their results

- It was published as printversion and is now available at the project homepage www.biogemuesebau.net
3.1.2 Broccoli

*Brassica oleracea* L. var. *italica* Plenck

1. Vorbedingungen

Es eignen sich insbesondere tiefgründige humose Böden mit guter Wasserversorgung. Brokkoli ist in seinen Ansprüchen dem Blumenkohl ähnlich, jedoch ist er kälteempfindlicher.

Brokkoli darf nicht nach sich selbst und anderen Kreuzblütler angebaut werden und frühestens alle 4 Jahre auf derselben Fläche stehen.

2. Versuchsanlage

Blockanlage mit vierfacher Wiederholung

| Mindestanzahl Pflanzen je Kernparzelle | mindestens 50 |
| Mindestgröße Kernparzelle (m²) | mindestens 12,5 |
| Bestandesdichte (Pflanzen/ m²) | 4 |
| Reihenabstand (cm) | 50 - 60 |
| Abstand in der Reihe (cm) | 42 - 50 |
Project Results 'Trial Overview'

In the subproject an extensive overview on trials and their results in Germany and Switzerland has been compiled.

The Excel file includes the period from 1994 until 2004 and is accessible via the project homepage www.biogemuesebau.net
Project Results 'Trial Overview'

Trials from 2005 on are listed in the German horticultural database www.hortigate.de and a private database for advisory services where they can be found via the project homepage.
Project Results 'Networking'

A survey of existing research institutions showed in 2009

- 14 institutions in Germany
- 1 institution in Switzerland
- 2 institutions in Austria

In Germany
- About 16 hectares arable land
- About 6500 m² greenhouse area
- About 13 scientists and 20 technicians (part time)
Project Results 'Networking'

Via the tool 'Focus Teams' the setup of trials with identic or similar approaches can be adjusted and results can be compared.

For each focus team a responsible researcher has to organize the coordination.

At the end of the project 3 focus teams for different crops (tomatoes, sweet pepper, corn salad) and 4 focus teams for growth aspects (fertilization, weed control, plant protection, varieties) were established.
Project Results 'Networking'

- An internet tool based on the open source learning system OLAT has been established.
- It is comparable to an intranet and provides room for discussions with support of visualization, archival storage of documents and project management.
Six workshops have been accomplished to establish networking and information exchange among researchers internally resp. between researchers and extension workers.

Especially the work of the focus teams and their focused presentation of research results was part of the workshops.
At the end of the project the 1. International Workshop 'Research on Organic Vegetable Production' took place in Cologne, Germany.
Project Results 'Information Flow'

- Via project homepage [www.biogemuesebau.net](http://www.biogemuesebau.net), organic growers have access to research reports.
- During the project duration researchers had a journalists support for compilation of research results at their disposal.
- The articles were published via [www.orgprints.org](http://www.orgprints.org) and the journal 'ÖKOmenischer Gärtnerrundbrief' (Organic Gardeners Newsletter) published by the German association of advisors.
Project results 'Information Flow'

All tools and information were put together at the new homepage www.biogemuesebau.net
Actual Situation in 2009

- After the five year term of the project, all instruments created during the two project periods could be given back into the hands of stakeholders from research and advisory services.

- The total coordination of the network was taken over by the Chamber of Agriculture North-Rhine/Westphalia.
Lessons Learned

Essential requirements for network projects are

 › Common purposes
 › Teamwork and conflict management skills
 › Similar usage patterns of tools, resources and information channels
 › Similar technological knowledge
 › TIME
Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed.

Francis Bacon