

Research Institute of Organic Agriculture Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau Institut de recherche de l'agriculture biologique













Network 'Research on Organic Vegetable Production' in Germany

Bettina Billmann (bettina.billmann@fibl.org)

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'

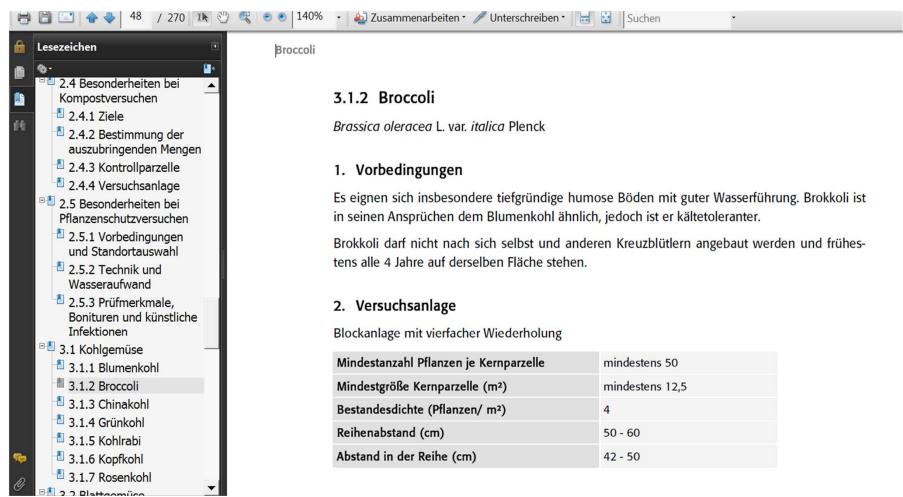


- > Main result of the subproject is the manual 'Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Trials on Organic Vegetable Growing '
 (Handbuch 'Planung, Anlage und Auswertung von Versuchen im ökologischen Gemüsebau')
- > The Manual provides basic guidelines to establish and standardize field trials resp. their results
- It was published as printversion and is now available at the project homepage <u>www.biogemuesebau.net</u>



Project Results 'Guidelines'







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 <u>www.hortigate.de</u> 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





Project Results 'Workshops'



- 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 focussed presentation of research results was part of the workshops



Project Results '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 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 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 <u>www.biogemuesebau.net</u>





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

