

Training young professionals for the job in the organic sector – a success story from Germany

Summary

The trainee program for the organic sector was initiated in the wake of the German federal program of organic farming, which aimed at raising the area of organically farmed land in Germany. To cope with this aim, more well-trained organic advisers were needed. the trainee program was set up to qualify them. Nowadays, the program is open for trainees from the whole sector, which gain an understanding and a network of the whole organic food chain. Each year, 25 trainees from enterprises and organizations all across Germany are qualified within the program.

Innovative Points

The case is a unique example for the power of participatory approaches within a sector. On company alone would be too small to set up an own trainee program, but the collaboration within the sector allows to qualify young professionals according to the demands on the job. On top of that, it helps to strengthen networking within the sector.

Drivers

At the beginning, the Ministry for Agriculture was a big driver, as it funded the Federal Program for Organic Farming, which gives the co-funding for the program. The organic companies in Germany are the second driver: they co-fund the other part of the program and they demanded for the opening of the program for the whole sector. Moreover, the consumers are a driver as well: the rising demand for organic products pushes the organic sector and thus creates a demand for new and highly qualified employees.

Activities and results

- The program aims at qualifying young professionals for working in the organic sector and thus to provide companies with highly qualified (regarding soft skills and knowledge about the organic sector) staff.
- The program is co.-funded by the German federal program of organic farming and by the participating companies.
- Since the first steps in 2002, 325 trainees were qualified within the program.
- Many companies participate yearly or at least more than once.
- Continuous feedback from trainees and companies is use to develop the program.