



European research meets organic food processing at eye level

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Who are we?



- Association of organic food processors (AöL)
- Over 100 members from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Netherlands (mainly german speaking areas)
- AöL has been working as an association of organic food processors since 2002 for
 - the development of the European organic regulation
 - promotion of an awareness of the value of food products
 - process quality of organic food





Our Experiences



- Capacities for research are small (especially in companies), as we are (still) a small sector with mainly SMEs and smaller associations → using capacities Europe-wide is beneficial
- Cooperation with companies and research institutions from different countries bring important impulses due to cultural differences in general, different trends etc.
- We have an european regulation and an european market, good to find european solutions for problems and questions



Research topics



- Special topics and questions which are coming mainly from the organic sector, due to the legal requirements or requirements of organic associations and labellers and history of organic farming and food → examples:
 - Process quality (e.g. careful processing)
 - Technological questions (e.g. baking without technical enzymes)
 - Sustainability questions (e.g. packaging, resource consumption)
 - Understanding and definition of terms like f.e. careful processing
- Many research topics are interesting for conventional and organic companies



Example ProOrg



– 2018-2021:

Project „Code of Practice for organic food processing” - ProOrg

– Organic regulation is still lacking standards for processing of organic food (apart from the positive list of additives and technological aids)

– Project wants to develop a flexible and practicable code of practice

➤ Provide strategies and tools to make best choice for careful processing methods and formulations

➤ Taking into account: organic principles, high food quality, low environmental impacts, high degree of consumer acceptance



Problems still to tackle



- Industry is hesitant to apply to research calls
- Procedure is still too complex, still high administrative effort needed – for SMEs not manageable
- Companies still have limited access to research calls
- Research institutes and companies have different interests and a different „world of thought“
- „It takes too long“ – from the beginning of application to the end of the project usually takes several years
 - problem/topic might no longer be relevant
 - SME has to bind resources for several years, not always easy to do so

Some ideas

- More participation from SMEs already in the planning period
- Adapt the administrative procedures to the needs of SMEs
- More solution oriented and short term research projects
- Develop a communications / meeting platform for researchers and companies

