

GMO-free Europe Conference
Brussels, 5th of September 2012

Good food at risk

GMO approvals threaten to damage quality food markets

Paul Holmbeck, Director of Organic Denmark,
IFOAM EU Group

GMOs enhance what is not working in agriculture



- Monocultures
- Dependence on chemical inputs*
- „superweeds“
- Patent rights/less freedom for farmers
- **Effects on „non-target-organisms“ in nature (e.g. butterflies)**
- Unclear long term health effects

Organic farming provides

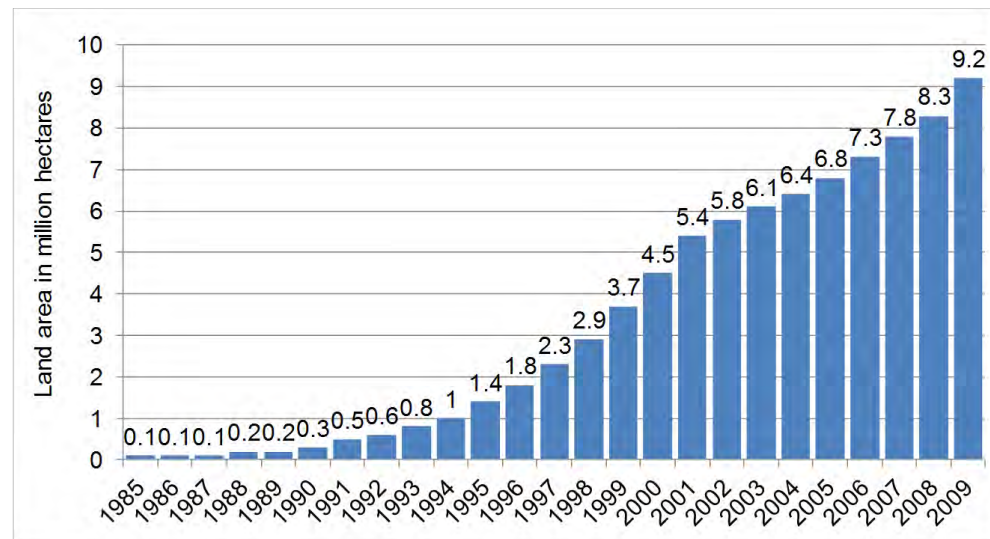
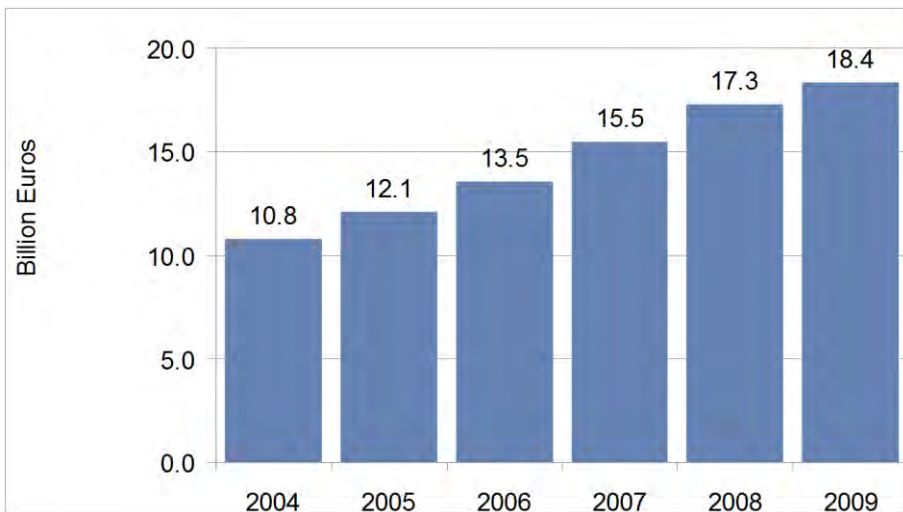
- A **system approach** towards sustainability
- Strict rules that reduce **inputs**
- EU wide **certified model**
- laboratory for food systems of the future
- Higher yields/ local control in global south
- Good food, good jobs
- Healthy environment



Organic food and farming needs to be protected from any form of contamination with GMOs

The Organic sector in the EU and Europe

- 9.2 Mio ha certified organic in Europe
- Organic sales in Europe ca. 20 Billion € in 2010
- Growing market despite economic crisis



Graphs: Organic market and organic land area in Europe

Sources : EU Commission (2010) and data Compiled by FiBL, AMI and ORC 2011, based on national sources (2011)

Quality food -- an EU goal – is threatened by GMOs

“There is growing competition for both agricultural commodities and value-added products. Faced with these new commercial challenges, **the EU farmers’ most potent weapon is ‘quality’.**”

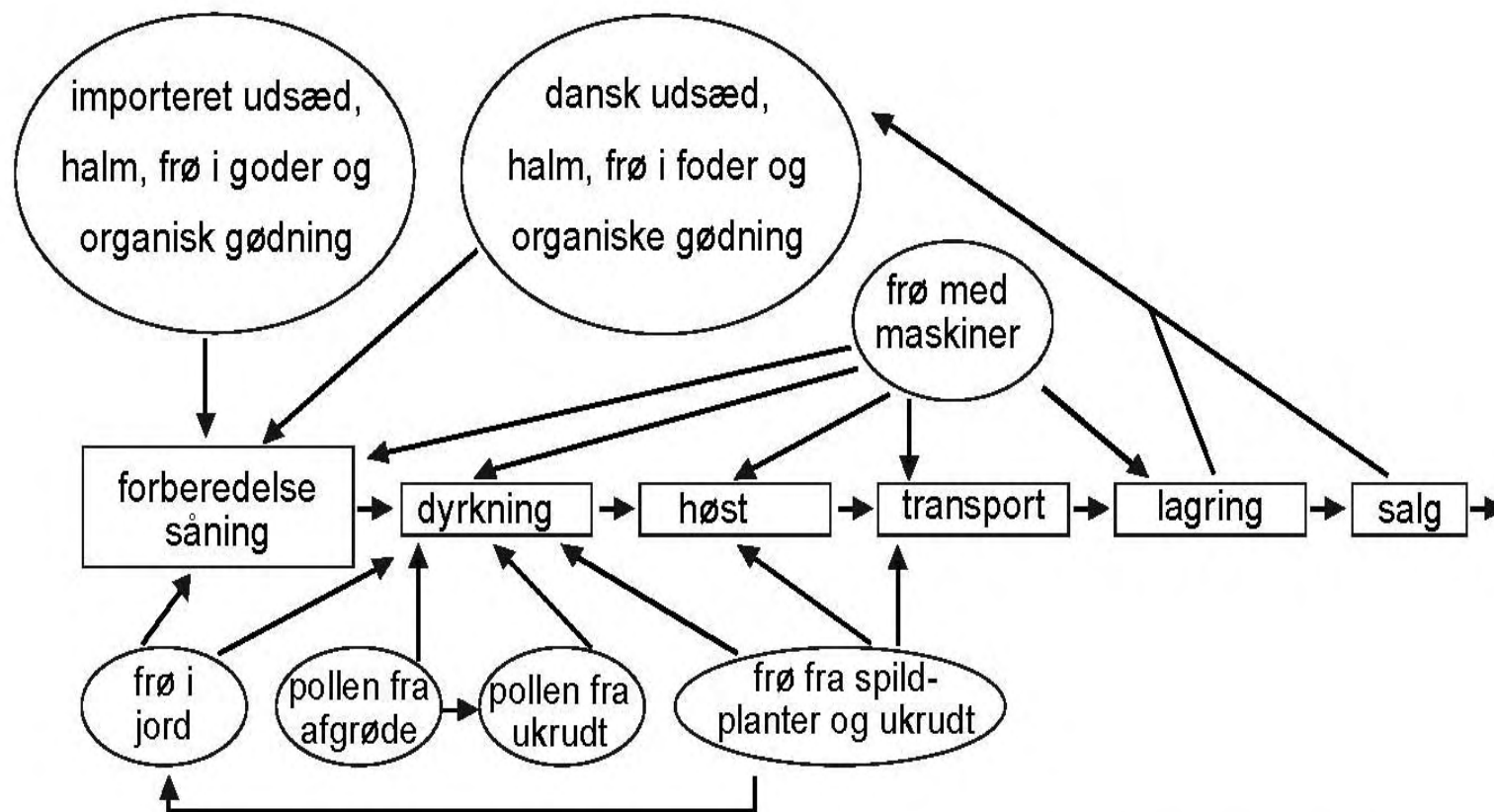
Green Paper of 15 October 2008 on agricultural product quality (COM (2008) 641)

GMOs cause extra costs for sustainable food systems

GMOs **segregation and traceability** costs are estimated for non-GMO soybean and maize at **\$100 million** per year worldwide

International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council

GMO: many routes into organic food production



Fra "Rapport fra udredningsgruppen vedrørende Sameksistens mellem genetisk modificerede, konventionelle og økologiske afgrøder".
Karl Tolstrup et al, august 2003.

Costs arise from.....

1. Segregation to prevent contamination through
 - Seed
 - Cross-pollination and volunteers
 - Common use of machinery and facilities (farm, transport, storage, processing)
2. Tracing contamination
 - Sampling
 - Laboratory analysis
3. Actual contamination
 - Loss of organic certificate
 - Price loss of affected lot
 - Loss of reputation and trust
 - Long term effects on marketability of products



© BLE

Policy needs to tackle risks

No GMO authorisation without:

- Assessment of **socio-economic risks and impacts** for **the non-GMO sector, including the organic food sector as a whole.**
- Application of **precautionary principle**, also regarding societal costs
- **EU wide liability** system that ensures that all costs caused by GMOs are covered by GMO companies
- **EU wide legally binding rules** that guarantee quality food and farming to stay GMO free
 - GMO free seed
 - Isolation distances
 - Rules for farming, transport, processing



Good food at risk

GMOs

We won't grow them.

We don't need them.

We can't sell them.

Still: Our efforts. Our farms. Our foods are at risk.

And for what?

A technology that offers no new solutions , creates new problems and which consumers don't want.

Thanks for listening!

IFOAM
EU GROUP



© BLE

Contact:

IFOAM EU Group
Rue du Commerce 124
BE - 1000 Brussels

Phone: +32 2 280 12 23
E-Mail: info@ifoam-eu.org

Organic Denmark

OrganicDenmark.dk
Okologi.dk