

By Denmark

WHITE PAPERS

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ORGANIC

A VISION AND A MINDSET
IN THE DANISH FOOD CLUSTER

INSIDE THIS WHITE PAPER:

- An organic revolution powered by cooperation
- Scaling up production in an innovative universe
- State checks and labels are the consumers' guarantee



Solutions of tomorrow
By Denmark

Organic

A vision and a mindset in the Danish food cluster
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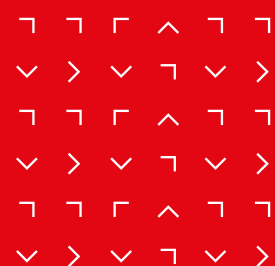
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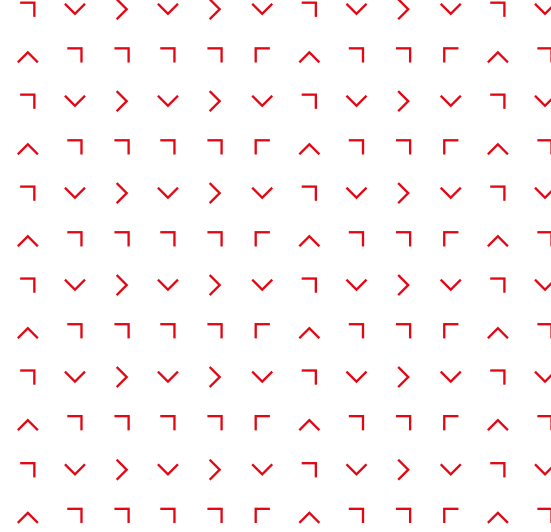
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



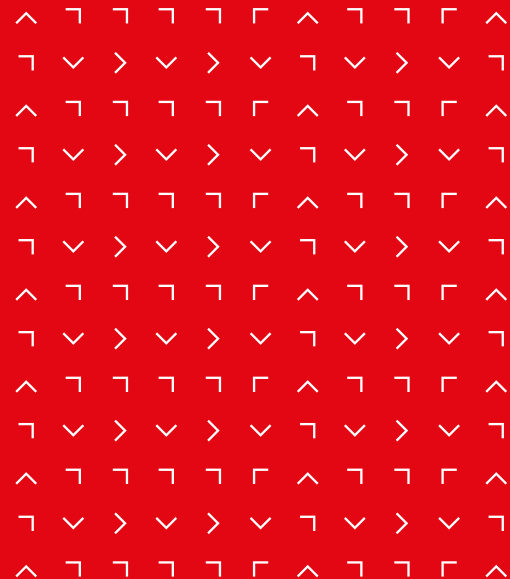
At a time when organic food products are increasingly in demand, Danish strengths within the organic food sector have come into their own. Around the world, Denmark has earned a reputation as the leading nation for organic food production and know-how.

This white paper provides insights into the organic vision that started with a handful of dairy farmers and rapidly gained the support of a nation. Over three decades, the Danish government has created the optimum conditions for nurturing organic innovation and growth. Today, organic food products in Denmark have a bigger share of the retail market than anywhere else in the world, including sales in online stores.

Strong and trusting collaboration across the public and private sector has provided a solid foundation for this growth adventure. Legislation, regular controls and organic labels set the standards that food producers take pride in attaining.

Strong and trusting collaboration across the public and private sector has provided a solid foundation for the organic adventure

The organic mindset is at the root of the high consumer trust in Danish organic foods – and is among the guiding principles of New Nordic Cuisine. Altogether, that makes Denmark a strong base for international organic growth.



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Supporting the SDGs

– how does Denmark contribute?

The UN's 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) have become an important topic for companies, organisations and stakeholders within the Danish food cluster. Organic farming and production are one way to support the SDGs.

Many have pinpointed how they actively support the goals. At national level, we see the SDGs as a guiding light for establishing best food production practices, prioritising research and development efforts and identifying innovation targets that will drive us towards a sustainable future.

FOREWORD



Danish organic food and know-how are in high demand around the globe. The organic growth adventure in Denmark tells a story of a business culture of cooperation and a political willingness to take the lead.

Denmark is a country with high aspirations for organic production and the Danish government has ambitions for the organic area to account for 21% of Danish agricultural land, and to support further developments in the demand for organic products, consumption and exports. High ambitions and a long tradition of organic production have resulted in Denmark being the country in the world where organic food has the largest market share.

Denmark was the first country in the world to get its own organic law. It happened in 1987 and in 1990 Denmark got its national organic label the "Ø-label". By doing so, Denmark provided the conditions that have turned an organic mind-set into a thriving business area, which is both trusted and well-known for its high standards of food safety, traceability, quality and sustainability. Three decades after the organic movement took off, Danish organic food and know-how are in high demand around the globe.

One of the reasons for the Danish organic success is that it has always been a common political priority. Another reason is a long and trust-based cooperation between agricultural organisations, retailers, the food industry, research institutions and the public sector. This cooperation provides a great foundation for growth of the organic sector, both in Denmark and in the export markets. In 2023 around 12 percent of total food retail sales were organic. This is one of the highest retail shares in the world, and today the national organic "Ø-label" is recognised by nearly all of the Danish consumers.

Danish organic food and know-how are in high demand around the globe

There is also a growing demand for organic food when the Danes eat out. In response, Danish authorities in 2009 introduced an organic labelling scheme for professional

kitchens in the public and private sector, which shows the percentage of organic products used in the kitchens. The Organic Cuisine label comes in Gold (90-100% organic), in Silver (60-90% organic) and in Bronze (30-60% organic) Today more than 3.000 professional kitchens in Denmark such as restaurants, hotels and canteens have the official Danish Organic Cuisine

This white paper explores and provides insight into the mindset, the conditions and the value chain behind the success of organic farming and production in Denmark – the strengths that have made our nation an organic frontrunner.

I hope you will find the white paper informative and inspiring.



Jacob Jensen

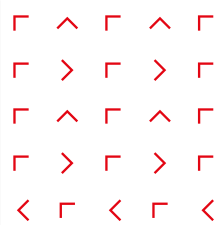
Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries



CHAPTER 1

AN ORGANIC REVOLUTION POWERED BY COOPERATION

THE CROSS-SECTOR COMMITMENT
TO A COMMON JOURNEY



From producers to researchers, organisations and national policy-makers, strong cross-sector support has characterised Denmark's organic movement since the beginning – and driven its success.

Visitors to Denmark are often struck by the degree of interaction between organic farmers, food companies, organisations and the government. It is collaboration of this kind that underpins the Danish food cluster – and not least the growth of a strong organic sector.

Stakeholders from across the value chain, from farmer to consumer, have all helped to develop a market-driven sector where nature, animal welfare and sustainability are prime considerations. A strong research focus has contributed to this development. Through the collaborative meeting of minds, many mutual interests and challenges are uncovered and the wheels of innovation set in motion.

Back in 1987, Denmark became the first country in the world to introduce regulations for organic production

Government policy with an impact

Danish government policy has made a huge impact on the organic movement from the beginning. Back in 1987, Denmark became the first country in the world to introduce regulations for organic production, based on the agricultural and food legislation already in place. At the same time, the government introduced a range of subsidies aimed at motivating Danish farmers to make the switch to organic farming.

Today, organic production is an integrated part of the Danish food industry, which is known around the world for its high standards of food safety, traceability, quality and sustainability.

A movement driven by many

Organic food production in Denmark is driven by innovative companies – international as well as national. All with strong organic credentials and a focus on innovation. Just as the farmer-owned cooperative movement played a major role in the development of Danish agriculture from 1882, it has also catalysed progress within organic production.

The organic revolution began in the cooperative dairies. While some of the largest cooperative dairies have focused on a mix of conventional and organic dairy products, others have based their business exclusively on innovative organic dairy products for consumers at home and abroad. As a result, Denmark is now the home of the world's largest organic dairy, Arla, and several other Danish dairies rank among the leaders in major organic export markets. In China, for example, dairy products from Denmark were among the first organic imports to be approved due to the high trust in Danish food production.

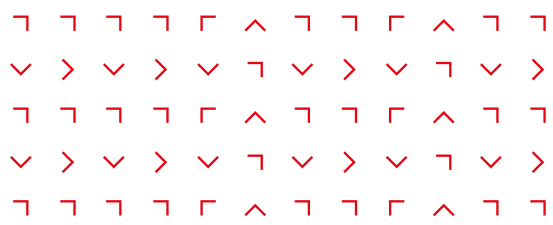
Organic produce in global markets

Danish companies are also active in the global market for organic meat, eggs, grain and vegetables, such as potatoes, root vegetables and lettuce. Here Danish farmers have expanded their production and, today, raise organic poultry, beef and pork for consumers in Europe and Asia. Friland, for example – Europe's largest organic meat company – sends 46% of its exports to Germany. And Danish eggs are particularly popular in the Middle East.

In recent years, a growing number of companies have entered the market for organic food and beverage products. The fruits of their successful efforts are clearly visible in Danish stores and supermarkets – and in export markets near and far.



Photo: Det Grønne Museum and Rasmus Christiansen



FROM ORGANIC NICHE TO DAIRY MAINSTREAM



Organic milk holds a major share of the Danish market and is supplied by several organic dairies

Organic milk held less than a 1% share of the Danish market in 1988, when eight farmers came together and founded Thise dairy. In those days, organic food production was seen as less efficient, expensive and very much niche.

So few were surprised when sales of the first organic products from the dairy cooperative were weak. But the dairy was determined not to give up.

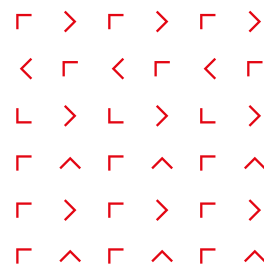
The perseverance paid off. In 1993, the Danish cooperative retail chain COOP placed a big order at Thise dairy. Almost from one day to the next, organic milk became widely available to consumers all over the country.

The organic market has grown considerably since, and so has Thise's business. These days, the dairy is one of the largest organic companies in Denmark, with more than 300 products and over 290 employees. More than 30% of production is exported.

Organic milk now holds a major share of the Danish market and is supplied by several organic dairies.

Case by Thise

THE ORGANIC ROUNDTABLE – WHERE BEST PRACTICES ARE MADE



Denmark's Organic Food Advisory Council was established in 1987 to develop the organic sector in the best possible way. That same year, Denmark introduced the world's first regulation for organic food production.

Since then, stakeholders representing organic agriculture and food production, retailers, consumers, researchers, nature conservation, control systems and the Danish government have worked together to develop good organic practices in all parts of the supply chain.

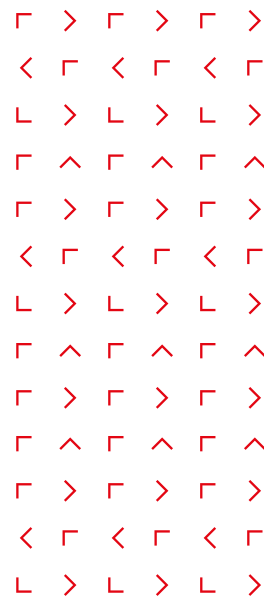
The council fostered the first ambitious national organic action plan in 1995, followed by new dynamic plans over the years. No matter which government is in power, the plans always have strong political support.

After more than 30 years, the renowned collaborative model of the Danish approach – characterised by dialogue, a bottom-up strategy, and consensus – continue to prevail among the wide range of organic stakeholders around the table. In 2021, the organisation Organic Denmark was honoured with IFOAM's One World Award for its contributions to a strong organic policy, consumer trust, and partnerships, including with the retail sector.



In 2021, Organic Denmark received IFOAM's One World Award 2021 for contributing to a strong organic policy, consumer trust, and partnerships with, among others, the retail sector

Case by Denmark

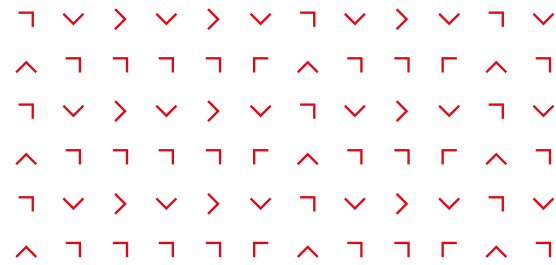


A green tractor is pulling a red harrow in a green field. In the background, a large wind turbine stands against a clear blue sky. The tractor has a driver visible in the cab. The harrow has several rows of metal tines. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

CHAPTER 2

SUSTAINABLE AMBITIONS START ON THE FARM

DANISH ORGANIC FARMERS TAKE PRIDE
IN BEING THE BEST



Soil protection, animal welfare and initiatives to minimise environmental impact are fundamental focus areas of organic primary production. The efforts to improve are tireless.

Today, 11.7% of Danish farmers are organic producers. Many are highly specialised, focusing on the production of vegetables, cattle, pigs or poultry. Others produce a diverse range of products for direct sale to consumers through farm shops, online stores or in partnership with local retailers.

The organic farmers' priority is to develop and improve their products and yields by sustainable means

The organic farmland vary greatly in size. However, each farm is guided by organic rules for producing good raw materials with utmost consideration for the environment, biodiversity and animal welfare. Efficiency and sustainability go hand in hand.

Most Danish organic farmers receive three to five years of specialist agricultural training. Supported by a large pool of advisers

and researchers, they ensure a high level of professionalism and quality in the production of organic raw materials.

Sustainability high on the agenda

The organic farmers' priority is to develop and improve their products and yields by sustainable means - where the UN sustainable development goals are high on the agenda. These goals are driven by the organic farmers associations and go beyond the requirements of EU regulations for organic production.

To ensure the sustainability of their operations, farmers - both conventional and organic - can choose to follow the RISE (Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation) model. In this way, farmers can do even more to improve their performance within ten areas: biodiversity, energy and climate, water use, nutrient flow, animal welfare, soil fertility, management, economy, life quality and labour conditions.

Continuous improvement through voluntary standards

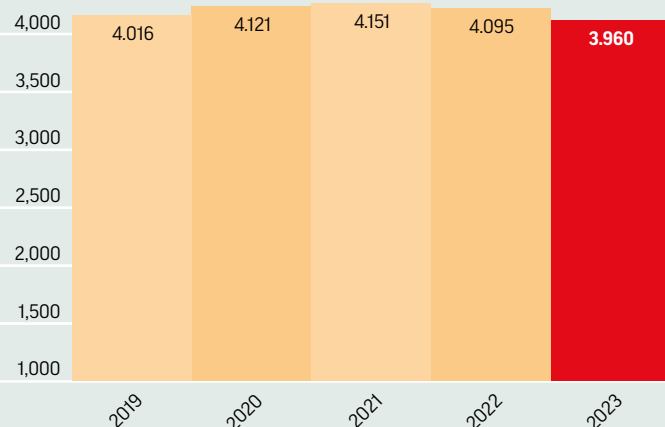
As consumer demands go up and new knowledge and technology become available, the organic sector focuses on continuously optimising its production techniques.

Driven by organic farmer associations, voluntary standards for cattle and pig production, for example, aim to improve animal welfare, ethics and environmental and climate protection - standards that exceed EU regulations and which farmers and food companies support.

Ambitions are high. Organic farmers have set their sights on safeguarding a living and fertile soil, reducing the climate impact of their production, increasing resource efficiency and securing the best welfare for their animals. All to ensure a better tomorrow.



Number of organic farms in Denmark



Total organic farmland in percent of the total agricultural area:

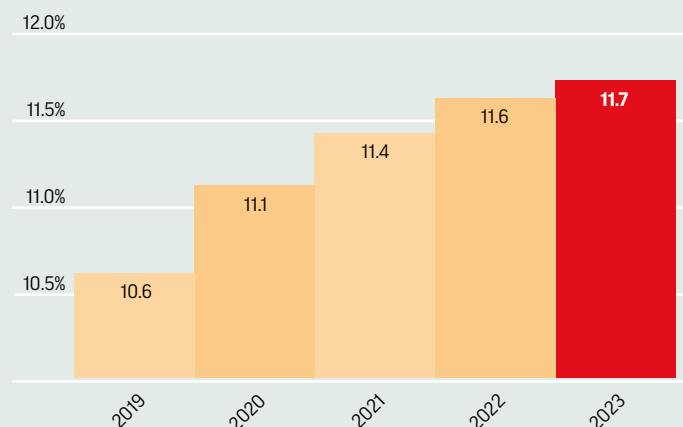




Photo: Organic Denmark

From conventional to organic production

Before products can be certified as organic, farmers must complete a two-year conversion to ensure their production is free of chemical plant protection products and synthetic fertilisers, as required by the EU. Crop rotation keeps the soil fertile and breaks weed and pest cycles, while legumes, crop residues and livestock manures add nutrients. The yield from organic plant production is typically 10% to 30% lower than conventional due to the more extensive production.



Organic beef and dairy cattle

In organic husbandry, animals must be able to express their natural behaviour. This means giving cattle access to pasture from 15 April to 1 November and ensuring freedom of movement in winter housing. Feed must be 100% organic. After calving, cows must remain with their calves for at least 24 hours. If an organic cow receives medical treatment for illness, the quarantine period for milk sales is twice that required for conventional production. This is a regulation set by the EU. In addition, as of 1 January 2019, the Danish food cluster has banned the systematic killing of calves.

Photo: Organic Denmark

Organic pig production

All organic sows in the EU must farrow in an outdoor hut and remain with their piglets until weaning. Free access to mud is essential, as it is natural behaviour for sows to wallow when hot, and feed must be 100% organic. In Denmark, some industry agreements include roughage in the feed, which benefits digestion. If treated with medicine more than once, a pig can no longer be sold as organic and must undergo a renewed conversion period. Systematic tail docking is not allowed, as is the case for all organic farms in Europe.



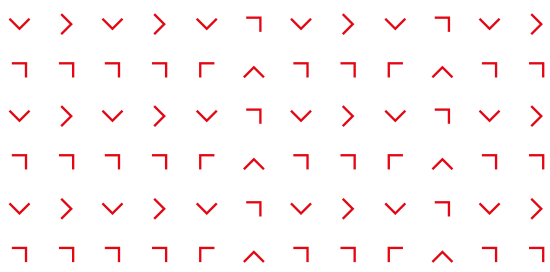
Photo: Henrik Bjerregrav

Organic eggs and poultry

Organic hens and broilers throughout the EU are required to have sufficient indoor and outdoor space, with access to perches, areas for dust bathing and scratching and organic feed. Outdoor areas must be covered with grass, trees and bushes, which can absorb the nutrients from droppings. A Danish organic broiler is about 57 to 60 days old when it reaches its slaughtering weight – compared to 35 to 38 days for a non-organic broiler. Systematic beak trimming is not permitted.



Photo: Organic Denmark



SMART TECH FOR WEED-FREE FIELDS DAY AND NIGHT



Photo: F. Poulsen Engineering APS

Chemical plant protection is a no-go for tackling weeds in organic fields. But, instead of turning to manual labour, organic farmers can thank Danish engineers for smart tools that help them keep weeds efficiently at bay.

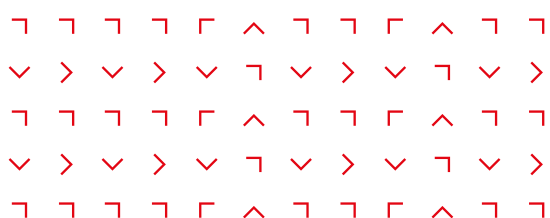
One of them is the Robovator, a weed-removing robot that is simply mounted on a GPS-controlled tractor. Fitted with special plant-detecting cameras, the device is made for precise mechanical or thermal weeding – even in the dark.

Due to its light weight, Robovator protects the soil as it goes. Weeds have never been dealt with faster or more sustainably.

Robot technology is just some of the investments that are helping to upscale certified organic production.

Case by F. Poulsen Engineering APS

Fitted with special plant-detecting cameras, the device is made for precise mechanical or thermal weeding – even in the dark



ORGANIC FARMERS SWITCH TO 100% GREEN ELECTRICITY

Organic milk from Arla is produced with electricity sourced from solar or wind energy

Danish agriculture took another step towards greener primary production on January 1, 2019. This was the date when 300 organic farmers from the Arla dairy cooperative switched to electricity from 100% sustainable sources. The farmers had all agreed on the initiative in an effort to reduce their carbon footprint.

Based on their decision, organic milk from Arla is now produced with electricity sourced from solar or wind energy. It has also been written into Arla's contract with

organic farmers that they must have a green electricity certificate that covers the farm's annual consumption.

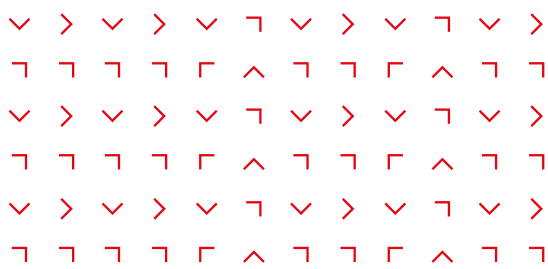
The certificates are purchased from a power company that can guarantee a year's supply of green electricity to each farm.

This is just one example of how the Danish food cluster continues to rethink ways of producing food with consideration for the environment.

Case by Arla Foods



Photo: Organic Denmark



DANISH KNOW-HOW SUPPORTS ORGANIC FARMING IN EASTERN AFRICA



Thousands of East African farmers and their families are benefiting from Danish organic farming expertise, thanks to a knowledge-sharing initiative run by the Danish organic association, Organic Denmark.

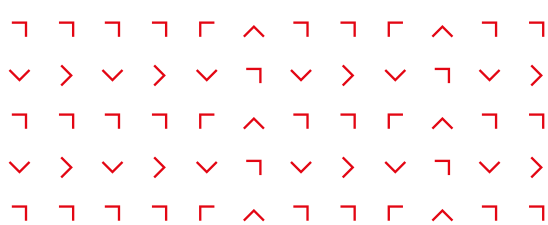
Over the years, Organic Denmark has established professional communities known as Farmer Family Learning Groups (FFLG) in partnership with local farming associations.

FFLGs are a proven way to support and strengthen organic agriculture in farming communities that face challenges such as climate change, food insecurity and unemployment. In this way, they contribute to several of the UN sustainable development goals.

Collaboration with the farmers is initially facilitated by specially trained staff. Once in place, the farmer/advisor relationship becomes a long-term, everyday multi-stakeholder interaction.

FFLGs are a proven way to support and strengthen organic agriculture in farming communities that face challenges such as climate change

Case by Organic Denmark



ORGANIC SEASON FEED GIVES ALL-ROUND BENEFITS

The summer months bring free-range organic sows an extra source of nutrition when protein-rich clover grass shoots up in the fields. And while that is heartily enjoyed by the pigs, it can be an expensive luxury for farmers and the environment.

The reason is that the standard feed, which the animals receive all year round, contains enough protein to keep the sows fit and healthy. With the supplement of protein from clover grass in the summer, the sows eat more protein than they can utilise. The unutilised protein then ends up as nitrogen in their manure, which is bad for the environment.

Now, the Danish feed company DLG – the largest farm supply company in Europe – has taken the challenge in hand and developed seasonal feed with a lower protein content for the summer period, where the sows get extra protein from clover grass.

That secures a better outcome for the sows, the environment and the farmer's budget.

Case by DLG



Photo: DLG



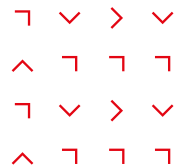
DLG has developed seasonal feed which takes the sows' need for protein during the year into account

A man wearing a white lab coat and a hairnet is working on a conveyor belt in a factory. He is packaging OKO milk cartons. The cartons are brown and white with the OKO logo and the word 'MÆLK' on them. The background shows industrial machinery and pipes.

CHAPTER 3

SCALING UP PRODUCTION IN AN INNOVATIVE UNIVERSE

A RELIABLE BRAND CREATES STRONG CONSUMER TRUST



Denmark has the best developed organic market in the world. Consumers have high trust in foods produced with an organic mindset and a flair for innovation.

Danish consumers buy more organic food products per capita than consumers anywhere else in the world. Organic food sales are also rising rapidly in hotels and restaurants, canteens, institutions and hospitals. Whether Danes eat at home, at work, on the go or in restaurants, organic food choices matter. This explains why organic food has a larger market share in Denmark than in any other country.

Danish organic food industry has made innovation one of its key virtues

The achievement is all due to the organic mindset of a growing number of Danish producers and retailers and their ability to earn consumer trust and meet demanding expectations. Not just to deliver an organic product, but also to create new and exciting innovations.

Staying authentic with minimum additives

In the production of organic food, manufacturers must follow strict guidelines for the raw materials and processes they may use. The emphasis is on organic ingredients and minimum use of additives. Only food additives on the EU positive list for organic products are allowed – around 13.5% of the 390 additives approved by the EU overall. Artificial colorants, artificial flavourings and sweeteners are not permitted, along with raw materials that are genetically modified or which have been subject to irradiation. Furthermore the use of nitrite is not approved by the Danish authorities in organic production.

Mild processing and careful documentation

With regard to processing, manufacturers employ the mildest possible techniques to maintain the intrinsic natural quality of organic produce. This is why most Danish organic milk, for example, is not homogenised.

While some companies focus exclusively on organic production, others produce a mix of organic and conventional products and must

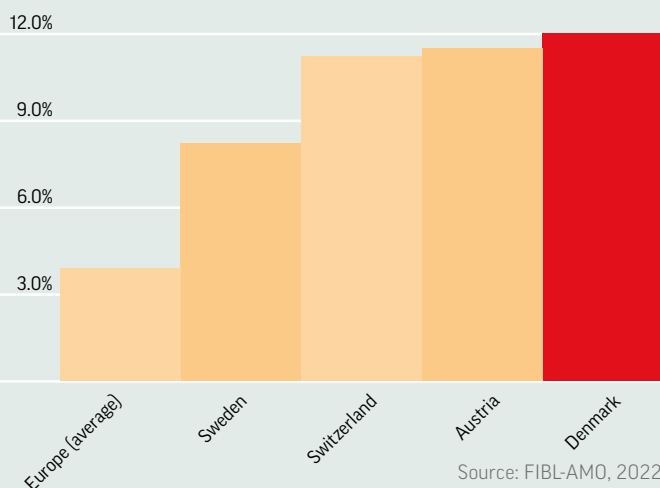
follow strict procedures to maintain the integrity of their organic range. At all times, companies must be able to document their actions to the authorities.

Most sales through mainstream outlets

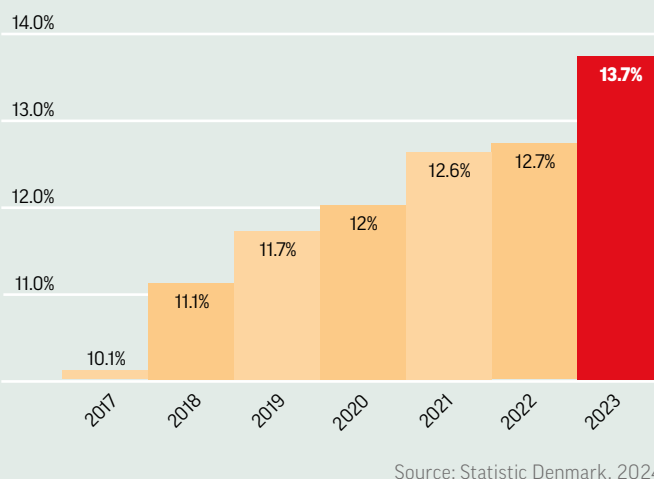
Today, organic food products are widely available in Danish retail and foodservice. Wholesalers have a well-assorted range of organic products and, in recent years, organic sales to the foodservice sector have grown significantly for many years. The vast majority of organic sales, however, takes place through retailers and online trading – with convenient meal boxes becoming more and more popular among busy families.

The organic sector has risen to popularity in an era where consumers increasingly demand more convenience. Its success reflects a fine-tuned ability to develop new organic products that meet this need, often against tough competition from conventional food producers. Through understanding and accommodating changing consumer requirements, the Danish organic food industry has made innovation one of its key virtues.

Organic market share in retail



Organic share of sales to foodservice



HELPING PATIENTS RECOVER WITH ICE CREAM ON PRESCRIPTION



Photo: Skee Ismejeri

A small appetite can be a barrier to recovery when people are ill or simply have trouble eating as they get older. In Denmark, doctors can prescribe special nutrition to boost patients' strength. Organic ice cream from Skee Is is one available option.

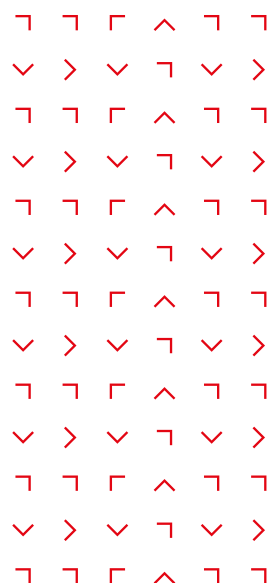
With just three members of staff, the small ice cream company produces a protein-rich ice cream that makes an important difference to elderly or ill people at risk of under-nutrition.

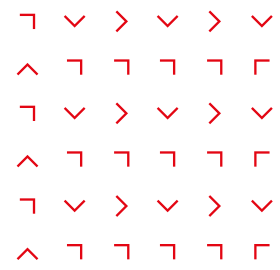
Doctors can prescribe special nutrition to boost patients' strength. Organic ice cream from Skee Is is one available option

The Danish Health Authority approved the ice cream products in 2014, making them the first in Denmark to be available on prescription.

All the company's ice cream products are made with organic, Fairtrade ingredients and are free of additives. Skee Is also exports to Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland.

Case by Skee Is





THE LOVE OF THE GERMANS FOR FRILAND ORGANIC HAM

The story of Friland started in 1992 with a group of farmers who wanted to create an organic alternative to intensive pig production. The piglets were to be born in huts on free range pasture and raised with a strong focus on animal welfare and consideration for the pigs' natural behaviour.

From early on, Friland cooperated with Animal Protection Denmark to develop the best framework for organic farming and conduct an annual audit of each farm. This is why, for over two decades now, all product labels have carried the statement 'Recommended by Animal Protection Denmark'.

Today, Friland is Europe's biggest organic meat company where responsibility, integrity and safety are still the driving values.

Friland's organic pigs are exported all over the world. However, the population of one European country of conscious consumers has a particular fondness for them – and that's Germany, where Friland sends 46% of its exports

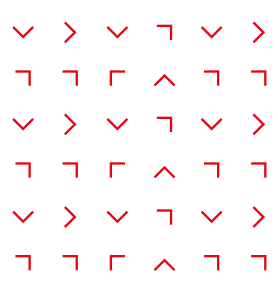
The ham is especially popular among German consumers because of the high, state-controlled organic standard, the professionalism of the farmers and the reliable, uniform quality deliveries.

Case by Friland

From early on, Friland cooperated with Animal Protection Denmark to develop the best framework for organic farming and conduct an annual audit of each farm



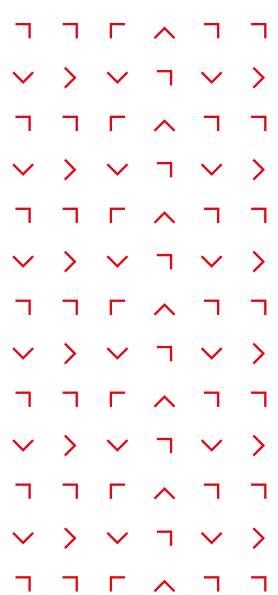
Photo: Friland



BRINGING ORGANIC THINKING TO CHARCUTERIE



Photo: Hanegal



A key innovation includes a plant-based pâté as an organic alternative to Denmark's much loved liver pâté

A cornerstone of Danish culinary heritage, smørrebrød, the iconic open-faced sandwich served on rye bread, remains a beloved tradition. With 64% of adult Danes enjoying smørrebrød daily, the demand for high-quality charcuterie, pâtés, and other toppings remains strong in Danish food culture.

Recognising an organic and versatile demand for charcuterie products, Hanegal has taken an innovative step by developing plant-based cold cuts. Today, this Danish organic food producer leads the transition towards sustainable alternatives, aiming for 30% of its production to be plant-based by 2030. Unlike many plant-based products that rely on additives and artificial flavour enhancers, Hanegal is committed to clean-label, organic alternatives that meet growing consumer demand for natural, high-quality food.

A standout addition to Hanegal's range is its plant-based pâté, offering an organic twist on Denmark's cherished liver pâté—a traditional smørrebrød topping. Made from organic ingredients, this innovative offering underscores Hanegal's dedication to producing clean-label, organic and additive-free products.

Case by Hanegal

ORGANIC INNOVATION AT THE JUNCTION OF LAND AND SEA

Denmark is a global leader in organic food production, driven by innovation and strong consumer trust in organic principles. As demand for sustainable food options grows, Danish companies are increasingly focusing on innovative product development that uphold the high standards of organic production.

Danæg, a Danish cooperative founded in 1895, continues to embrace the spirit of collaboration to drive food innovation. When its R&D department began developing organic mayonnaises, the company partnered with the Danish seaweed startup Nordisk Tang to create a product that merges the best of land and sea.

This collaboration has resulted in a line of organic mayonnaises made with 18% organic Danish egg yolks combined with nutritious seaweed harvested along Nordic coasts. Seaweed, known for its positive impact on marine ecosystems, is also packed with minerals, amino acids, dietary fiber, and vitamins. The combination enhances the mayonnaise's texture while delivering a fresh and slightly salty taste.

Danæg's product line exemplifies how partnerships can drive sustainable food innovation. By working with local, forward-thinking companies like Nordisk Tang, Danæg is strengthening Denmark's position as a pioneer in organic and sustainable food production. With a commitment to future collaborations, the company continues to explore innovative ways to bring sustainable and high-quality organic products to market.

Danæg's product line exemplifies how partnerships can drive sustainable food innovation

Case by Danæg

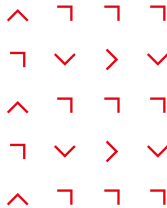


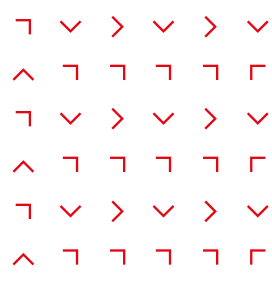
Photo: Danæg



CHAPTER 4

STATE CHECKS AND LABELS ARE THE CONSUMERS' GUARANTEE

COMPLIANCE WITH EU REGULATIONS - AND WAY BEYOND



The Danish government passed the world's first organic legislation in 1987. This was when the first state-controlled organic label - the 'Ø-label' - was introduced.

Farm-to-fork checks and inspections are key to the high consumer trust in Danish organic products

Denmark was the first country in the world to introduce a state-run programme for organic control. That was in 1987, and today it is still the consumers' guarantee that all stakeholders from farm to fork comply with organic regulations. All organic farms, suppliers and organic food companies are subject to government inspections at least once a year as an add-on to other regulatory inspections.

Organic farmers and companies also welcome farm-to-fork checks and inspections, which help maintain the credibility of organic production. This is key to the high consumer trust in Danish organic products.

High consumer trust in organic labels

Organic products sold in Denmark are often labelled with both the EU's green leaf logo and the Danish red 'Ø'. Created in 1987, the state-controlled 'Ø-label' confirms that the Danish authorities have ensured compliance with organic regulations. Almost all Danish consumers are familiar with the national label and the state control behind. Such labels play an important role in maintaining a high level of consumer trust in organic food.

This ensures that organic food is produced in compliance with the EU's organic regulations.

In addition to living up to organic regulations, organic farmers and feed and food companies must comply with the legislation that applies to food production in general - in respect of the environment, nature, animal welfare, traceability, hygiene and food safety.

As demand for organic food has gone up, Danish consumers have shown increasing interest in the organic farms that produce it. One day of the year stands out in particular - Organic Day, when organic cows leave their winter barn and return to grass pastures. Public participation in this annual event continues to rise.

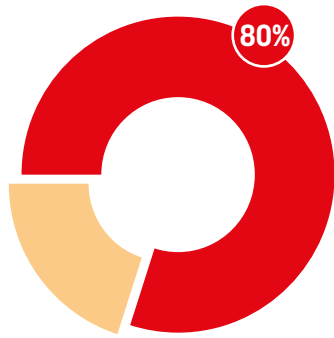
Earning consumer trust is a long-term effort with a strong focus on compliance with organic regulations. One example of this is the random cross-checks regularly practiced by the authorities. This ensures, that company records concerning purchases of organic raw materials are consistent with supplier sales records.



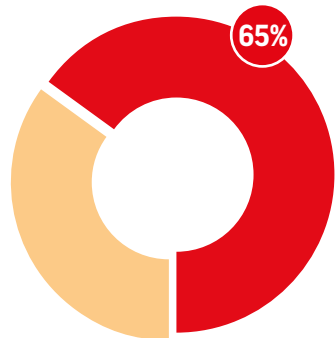
The Danish organic label



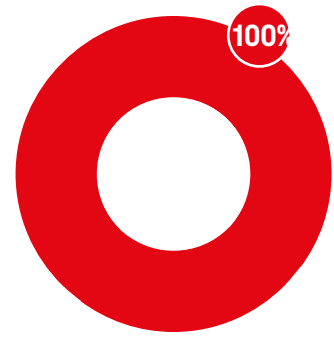
The EU organic logo



80% of Danes purchase organic products

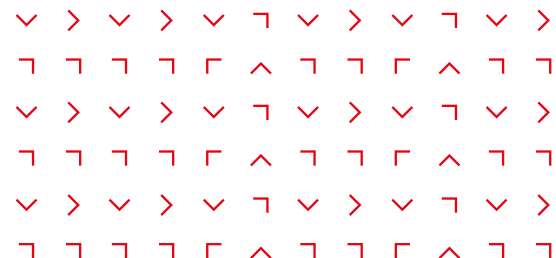


More than 65% buy organic food every week



100% recognise the Danish organic logo - the red Ø

Source: Organic Denmark, 2024



SPRING STARTS WHEN THE COWS COME OUT TO DANCE



Photo: Organic Denmark

Organic Day was held for the first time in 2005 with 10,000 visitors. Since then, more than 2 million people have visited the event.

Every year, on a special Sunday in spring, Danish families flock to the countryside. The occasion is Organic Day, when organic cows 'dance' out of the barn and on to the fresh spring grass after a long winter spent indoors.

It is not just the cows that Danes come to see. For many, this big national organic event is a celebration of spring. It is also an opportunity to experience the value of organic farming to animals and the environment at close hand.

Organic Day was held for the first time in 2005 with 10,000 visitors. Since then, more than 2 million people have visited the event.

The event is arranged by the Organic Farmers Association and is a great way to engage consumers and create a bridge between city and countryside.

Case by Organic Denmark

STRICT ORGANIC CONTROLS ENSURE FULL COMPLIANCE

Danish primary producers are renowned for their ability to produce organic products in compliance with national as well as international standards. This is also approved by the high degree of control by Danish authorities in which farmers are confirmed that their production fulfills the standards.

According to EU law, national control authorities must conduct at least one annual control visit to ensure full compliance with the rules.

State-employed inspectors carry out the organic controls, which are coordinated by a central authority to ensure uniform control throughout the country. If the authorities discover any infringements of the organic regulations, a number of actions can be taken, depending on the extent of the breach.

The organic controls have been in place since Denmark adopted its first organic laws back in 1987. They have been carried out by authorities under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture ever since.

Case by The Danish Agricultural Agency

State-employed inspectors carry out the organic controls



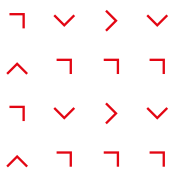
Photo: The Danish Agricultural Agency

A top-down photograph of various fresh ingredients. In the top left, a yellow ceramic tray is filled with vibrant red raspberries. To the right, a green ceramic tray holds two large, ripe apples with red and yellow skin, and a bunch of fresh green herbs with small yellow flowers. The bottom section of the image shows a green ceramic tray containing several whole hazelnuts and a pile of bright orange chanterelle mushrooms. The background is a dark blue textured fabric.

CHAPTER 5

A CULINARY JOURNEY WITH ORGANIC ROOTS

THE SUSTAINABLE MINDSET BEHIND
NEW NORDIC CUISINE



Denmark has earned international respect for its high gastronomic standards. Organic food and drink plays an important role.

New Nordic Cuisine has put Denmark on the gastronomic world map in recent years. Organic food has played an important role in the culinary journey towards international recognition.

It all began in 2004 when a group of visionary chefs joined forces to create a new Nordic food culture. The founding idea was to use natural, locally sourced and seasonal raw materials in an innovative and creative way. Since then, their manifesto has spread throughout the Danish culinary world, where many talented chefs now develop new and exciting dishes based on the philosophy of New Nordic Cuisine.

Michelin stars are the reward

These high culinary ambitions have brought rewards and an international reputation. The number of Danish restaurants that have been singled out for a coveted Michelin star has grown by leaps and bounds. Simplicity, sustainability and innovation are all part of the successful mix – along with organic raw materials, produced in Denmark.

A number of the farmers who supply raw materials to Michelin-starred restaurants are organic producers. Their special focus on animal welfare and the environment reflects the spirit of New Nordic Cuisine. As a result, many of the sublime dishes created in Denmark's prestigious restaurants have an organic source.

Organic growth within foodservice

Throughout the Danish foodservice sector, the current market share for organic purchases in foodservice is 13.7% and continuous growth is expected in the years ahead. , with further growth expected in the years ahead. Kitchens and canteens in the public sector were the initial drivers of the organic movement, which came later to hotels and restaurants. Today, hotels and canteens account for more than 60 percent of the foodservice sector's consumption of organic foods. the foodservice sector's consumption of organic food.

Kitchens and canteens in the public sector were the initial drivers of the organic movement



Photo: Food Nation

SPARKLING ORGANIC TEA IS AN INSTANT MICHELIN HIT



Photo: Copenhagen Sparkling Tea

Two Danish entrepreneurs successfully tapped into the organic and low-alcohol trends when they developed a whole new beverage category to match a restaurant dessert. The result is the beverage company Copenhagen Sparkling Tea, which after just two years on the market exports to more than 15 countries.

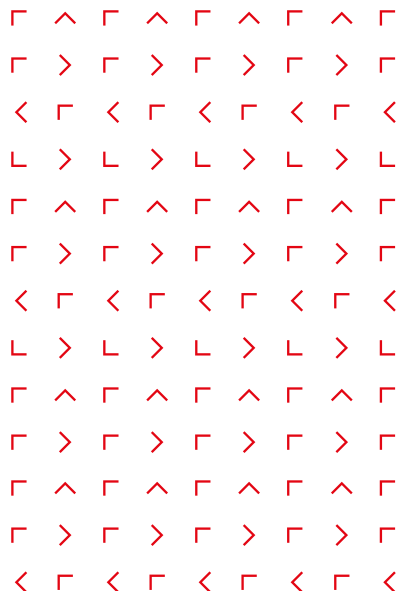
The idea came up when a Danish award-winning sommelier discovered there was no wine to complement the dessert at the restaurant where he worked. After a few experiments, he discovered an unexplored potential in various blends of tea.

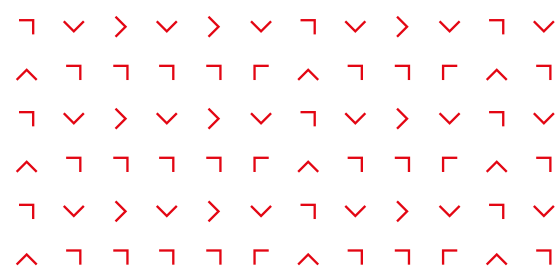
Up to 13 teas go into each bottle in the Sparkling Tea range, which quickly found its way onto the menu of several international Michelin restaurants.

The beverages have also achieved international acclaim with several awards, including Best Organic Product at both the world's largest organic fair, BIOFACH, in 2018 and the LOHAS international organic fair in Hong Kong in 2019.

Up to 13 teas go into each bottle in the Sparkling Tea range, which quickly found its way onto the menu of several international Michelin restaurants

Case by Copenhagen Sparkling Tea





ORGANIC AND OBLIGATED FROM BEAN TO BAR

More chocolate brands are embracing organic production, but Oialla has taken it a step further. By providing a vital business opportunity for native people in the Bolivian jungle, where the beans are picked wild, the chocolate embodies a dimension of ethical production across the value chain.

Oialla produces exquisite chocolate bars that not only offer exceptional taste but also create vital opportunities for the indigenous Baures community in the Bolivian jungle.

The Danish brand, founded in 2010, sources wild Beniano cocoa beans directly from the Bolivian jungle, ensuring a unique and organic product. This close relationship with local workers is crucial for both quality and ethical production. The process provides employment, education for women, and forest management initiatives, making a significant impact on the community's livelihood.

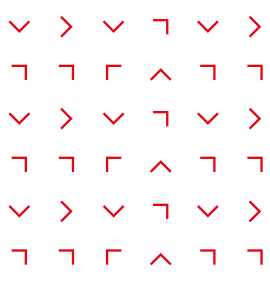
Oialla's dedication to ethical sourcing and premium quality has elevated the chocolate industry. Their organic high-end bars are sold to top Danish and international restaurants, demonstrating how ethical practices, exceptional quality, and organic can go hand in hand.



Photo: Oialla

Oialla produces exquisite chocolate bars that not only offer exceptional taste but also create vital opportunities for the indigenous Baures community in the Bolivian jungle

Case by Oialla



PROFESSIONAL KITCHENS TAKE PRIDE IN AN ORGANIC LABEL



Photo: Robin Skjoldborg

The idea is simple. Kitchens can qualify for a Bronze, Silver or Gold label depending on whether they use 30-60%, 60-90% or 90-100% organic raw materials respectively.

Once introduced, the Organic Cuisine Label quickly caught on. The scheme now numbers more than 3.500 restaurants, cafeterias, catering firms, staff canteens, nursing homes, schools, kindergartens, prisons and hospitals – causing the organic food market to grow even bigger.

In other words, organic food is accessible everywhere in Denmark and in all phases of life. Even a large public hospital has managed to attain the Gold label for 90-100% organic produce in the kitchen.

Most importantly, consumers can enjoy organic food just as much when eating out as when they are at home. And, if they are not sure where to go, they can download an app to their smartphone to find restaurants with organic food on the menu all over Denmark.

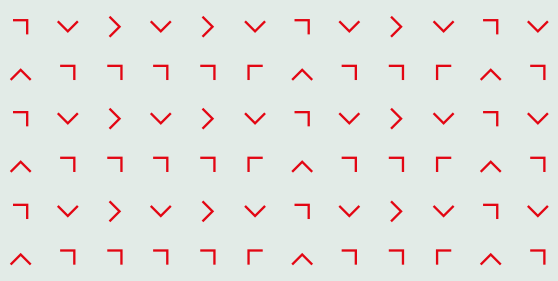
Case by The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

Kitchens can qualify for a Bronze, Silver or Gold label depending on whether they use 30-60%, 60-90% or 90-100% organic raw materials respectively

The Danish authorities have closely followed the growing consumer demand for organic food. In 2009, they decided the time had come to give consumers an organic choice when eating out – whether in a restaurant or canteen.

The solution was the Organic Cuisine Label. Launched by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, the state-controlled labelling scheme allows public and private professional kitchens to brand themselves based on how much organic produce they use.





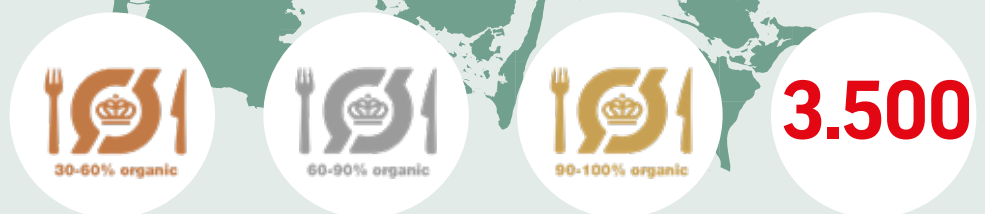
THE ORGANIC CUISINE LABELS IN DENMARK



are in public kitchens are in private kitchens are in HORECA kitchens*

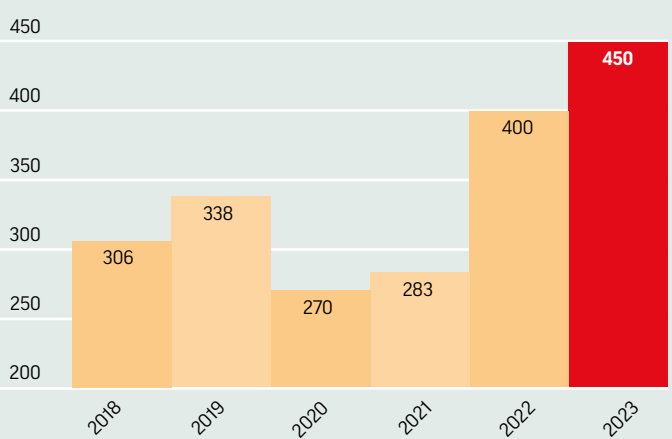


The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration offers support organic conversion to all kitchens in Denmark's 98 municipalities



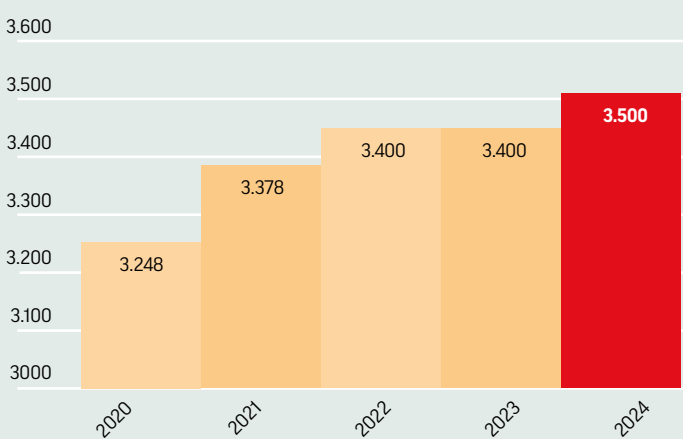
1.308 1.431 757 Organic cuisine labels, 2024

Organic sales in foodservice (million EUR)



Source: Statistics Denmark, 2024

Organic cuisine labels in Denmark



Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, 2024



CHAPTER 6

THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR ROLLING INNOVATION

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS PUT KNOWLEDGE
INTO ACTION

Organic research and innovation are a national priority. It is the reason why Danish farmers and food producers have come such a long way – and continue to improve.

Government-backed research and innovation have supported the development of Denmark's market-driven organic sector for more than two decades. Following the initial Organic Action Plan launched in 1995, the Danish Ministry of Environment and Food introduced the first national research programme for organic farming and food production just a year later – a four-year initiative involving 11 Danish research institutions.

These successful, ongoing research programmes are the foundation on which Denmark has built its international reputation as a leader in organic farming. The International Centre for Research into Organic Farming and Food Systems (ICROFS) is the coordinating research centre, collaborating with farmers, companies, universities, knowledge institutions etc.

Organic research supports the development of new solutions throughout the supply chain

Becoming a global reference

The vision of ICROFS is that organic principles should become a global reference for sustainability in agriculture and food production. For the last 20 years, ICROFS also coordinates the European research network CORE-Organic (Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming Systems).

Organic research supports the development of new solutions throughout the supply chain. The goal is to move the Danish or-



ganic sector towards ever greater sustainability, more climate-friendly production, increased productivity and a sound, market-driven business proposition for producers. Research topics include:

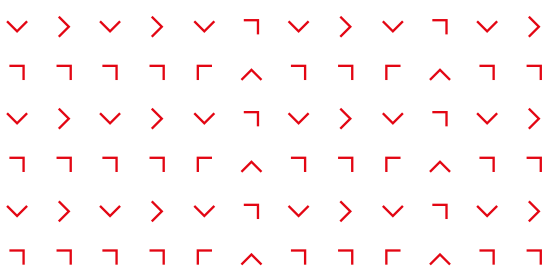
- How organic farming affects biodiversity.
- How to increase yields from organic crops.
- How to extract protein from clover grass for animal feed – and how to produce biogas from the residual product.
- How to bind more carbon in the soil.
- How to increase animal welfare in organic production.

A short route from research to application

All research activities are stakeholder-driven. Scientists, practitioners, advisers and other professionals work together to develop new opportunities that can strengthen organic production. In this way, the route from knowledge development to practical implementation is short.

Working with ICROFS, industry organisations ensure that organic research and development stay on the political agenda and continue to receive funds for solving specific challenges.

Conferences and seminars present the latest knowledge to the representatives of the international organic sector. ICROFS is also behind an international article database – Organic Eprints – which is the world's largest open archive of research in organic agriculture and food, comprising more than 30,000 publications.



NUTRITIOUS PROTEIN FROM THE JUICE OF FRESH CLOVER



Photo: SEGES Danish Agriculture + Food Council

Containing 40% protein and a good amino acid composition, it can easily replace soy cakes in pig and poultry feed

A new biorefining technique that extracts protein from green herbage promises to solve a growing challenge for organic pork and poultry producers, who are short on feed with the right amino acid composition.

The technique has been co-developed by research partners from Denmark's private and public sector. Results from feeding trials show that the protein in clover grass and alfalfa, for example, is high in nutritional value.

When extracting the protein, large amounts of freshly and finely cut green herbage are squeezed in a screw press. The juice is then transferred to an acid tank, heated and fermented using a lactic acid culture.

Concentrated protein is removed from the juice by centrifugation. Containing 40% protein and a good amino acid composition, it can easily replace soy cakes in pig and poultry feed.

Once ready for commercial launch, the green leaf protein will provide organic farmers with an efficient local source of nutrition for their livestock. Residues from production can also be used to feed cows and fuel biogas plants.

Case by SEGES

BIOGAS SOLVES FERTILISER SHORTAGE IN ORGANIC FARMING

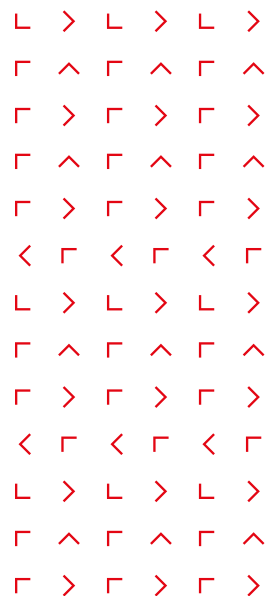
A shortage of fertilisers used to make life difficult for organic vegetable farmers who were experiencing growing international demand for their produce – until Nature Energy recognised their need and built a new biogas plant.

In agriculture, the digested biomass is known to be an effective, green fertiliser

The renewable energy is produced using biodegradable residues from Danish organic farmers and food production. And, in agriculture, the digested biomass is known to be an effective, green fertiliser.

Thanks to the biogas plant, organic vegetable farmers now have a reliable supply of biomass to fertilise their fields – a truly circular success story.

Case by Nature Energy





CHAPTER 7

ABOUT FOOD NATION

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DANISH FOOD CLUSTER
AND IT'S STRONGHOLDS AT FOOD NATION

Denmark has grown into an organic powerhouse over the last 30 years. Today, an entire industry continues to develop innovative opportunities of benefit to our home market and to business partners abroad.

In 1988, organic food producers in Denmark had a market share that was less than 1%. Three decades later, their share has grown to more than 12%.

The organic adventure all started with a vision to create a new way of producing food. That innovative, collaborative mindset has since put Denmark on the map as an organic frontrunner, where the retail sector sells more organic food than in any other country.

That innovative, collaborative mindset has since put Denmark on the map as an organic frontrunner

Food Nation Denmark

Food Nation is a non-profit partnership established by the Danish government and leading private organisations and companies. It is your gateway to information about the Danish food cluster and know-how that can accelerate the growth of international businesses through better solutions, innovative products and trusting cooperation.

The Danish food cluster encompasses everything from primary production in agriculture and the fishing industry to the food products consumers buy in stores. Companies, universities, research institutes, local and national authorities and other private and public organisations belong to the extensive, collaborative network. Together, they work hand-in-hand with international partners to maintain and improve food quality and safety along the value chain.

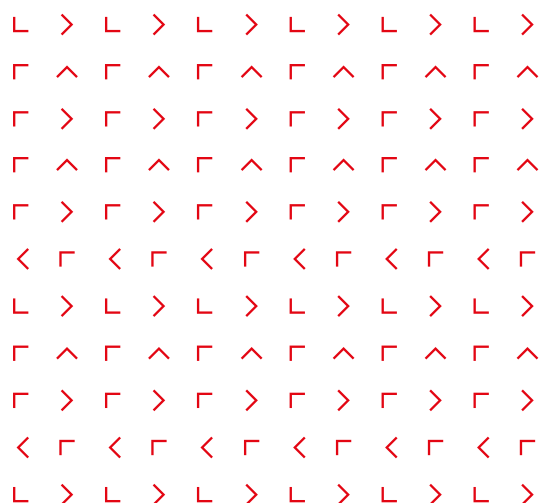
Take an interactive tour

Food Nation's Visitor Centre in central Copenhagen welcomes international delegations, providing them with an introduction to Danish capabilities in agriculture and food. An interactive installation at the centre offers visitors an up-to-date overview of the food value chain based on their individual interests. It serves as the ideal starting point before visiting Danish food producers and production facilities.

An inspiring preview is also available on Food Nation's website. Here, you can explore inspirational publications, cases, webinars,

podcasts, videos, and talks that provide insights into how Denmark contributes to the green transition. The website also features a virtual display of food value chains, where you can delve into solutions and products from Denmark's dairy, pig, and seafood sectors.

Food Nation is a great place to begin learning how Denmark supports sustainable development through collaboration. Find out more about our services, the Danish food sector, and how to arrange a visit to the Food Nation Visitor Centre at www.foodnationdenmark.com.



**INGREDIENT
INDUSTRY**

Producers of enzymes,
cultures and other ingredients

**PRIMARY
PRODUCTION**

Agriculture, fishing
& horticulture

**PROCESSING
INDUSTRY**

Producers of food,
beverages & animal feed

The Danish agrifood sector

The Danish agriculture and food sector
has a strong value chain, covering
everything from primary and processed
food production, food technology
and ingredients industry, know-how
and research to the wide range of
products available to consumers
all over the world.

**RESEARCH
& INNOVATION**

Research, education
& counselling institutions

**INNOVATIVE
TECHNOLOGY**

Producers of machines,
technology & equipment

**GASTRONOMY
& THE CONSUMER**

Retail, consumers, restaurant,
authorities, tourism & other
related industries

READ MORE

[FOODNATIONDENMARK.COM](https://www.foodnationdenmark.com)

