

Organic Knowledge Network Arable



The Organic Research Centre is working in collaboration with EU partners to improve knowledge exchange among farmers, farm advisers and scientists to increase the productivity of organic arable cropping throughout Europe.

What is Organic Knowledge Network Arable?

It is widely recognised that organic agriculture enhances the resilience of soils, crops and livestock, increases agrobiodiversity, provides a range of ecosystem services and reduces negative environmental impacts. However, concerns have been raised about the productivity of organic farming due to fears of future global food insecurity and scarcity of land resources.

Scientific analysis and practitioner experience indicate that there is considerable variability of organic yields under farm conditions, particularly for arable crops. Attempts to identify solutions to this variability reveal that crop yields can be improved through widespread implementation of 'best practices'. However, knowledge about 'best practices' generated by science and experienced practitioners is often not easily available to producers and there are considerable knowledge gaps between organic farmers in different EU countries.

Organic Knowledge Network Arable (OK-Net Arable) aims to tackle these issues by supporting experience sharing and testing of available knowledge. The project is expected to generate results that will contribute to enhanced productivity and sustainability of EU organic arable cropping. OK-Net Arable is funded through Horizon 2020, the EU's largest and most ambitious research and innovation programme to date. The project began in March 2015 and will last for 3 years.

Three specific objectives

1. To create a European network of well-functioning organic arable farmer innovation groups representing the best examples of co-innovation by farmers and researchers.
2. To digest and synthesize scientific and practical knowledge about organic arable farming to identify best practices. The project will develop and test innovative practical and educational material based on this information.



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3. To create a European platform for knowledge exchange focusing specifically on organic arable, offering opportunities for farmer-to-farmer, advisor-to-advisor or researcher-to-advisor-to-farmer learning that draws on experiences from diverse contexts.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration is a central aspect of the OK-Net Arable project. Stakeholders include farmers, scientists, farm advisors, farmers' associations, educational providers and communication experts. By working with diverse actors, the project collates experiences from a range of climatic, geographical and socio-economic conditions across Europe.

What ORC does

ORC is responsible for facilitating and coordinating farmer innovation groups across 13 EU countries, including a newly formed group of UK organic arable farmers established in association with organisations including Organic Arable and OF&G. An important element of coordinating these farmer groups involves developing a common framework for identifying challenges and potential solutions. Emphasis will be placed on gathering and exchanging farmer experience and knowledge and documenting examples of successful bottom-up innovation. ORC plays an essential role in developing methods for knowledge exchange between farmer innovation groups, as well as working with these groups to test practical and educational material. This participatory approach will help to ensure that farmer recommendations inform project outcomes as well as topics for future research.

More information:

For more information about OK-Net Arable see: www.ok-net-arable.eu or <http://tinyurl.com/OK-NETArable>

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