

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

## First International Conference on **ORGANIC FOOD QUALITY AND HEALTH RESEARCH**

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Jana Pulkrabová, Monika Tomaniová, Johannes Kahl and Jana Hajšlová  
Editors

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## H-4

**MARKET NEEDS FOR SENSORY PROPERTIES ALONG THE ORGANIC FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN IN EUROPE**

**M. Maciejczak<sup>1\*</sup>, S. Żakowska-Biemans<sup>2</sup>, A. Spiller<sup>3</sup>, T. Obermowe<sup>3</sup>, R. van Veggel<sup>4</sup>, D. Asioli<sup>5</sup>, M. Canavari<sup>5</sup>, H. Stolz<sup>6</sup>, L. Baumgart<sup>6</sup>, C. Frissur<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Warsaw University of Life Sciences-SGGW, Faculty of Economic Sciences (WULS), Warsaw, Poland

<sup>2</sup> Warsaw University of Life Sciences- SGGW, Faculty of Human Nutrition and Consumer Sciences, (WULS), Warsaw, Poland

<sup>3</sup> University of Göttingen, Institute of Agricultural Economics, (UGOE), Göttingen, Germany

<sup>4</sup> Wageningen University&Research, Centre for Innovative Consumer Studies, (WUR), Wageningen, The Netherlands

<sup>5</sup> University of Bologna, Department of Agricultural Economics and Engineering (UNIBO), Bologna, Italy

<sup>6</sup> Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, (FiBL), Frick, Switzerland

<sup>7</sup> Synabio, Paris, France

\* Email: mariusz@maciejczak.pl; Tel. +48 22 5934235

The main aim of this paper is to investigate the needs of supply chain actors for consumer-relevant information with regard to the sensory quality of organic food products. It is also aimed at investigating the experiences of relevant organic supply chain actors concerning the consumer preferences with regard to sensory properties of organic products. The research method is based on the exploratory approach: using a semi-structured interview schedule 71 telephone interviews were administered to stakeholders in 6 European countries. The respondents have been selected in different tiers of the organic supply chain. Then, the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the semantic methodology of Keywords.

For the researched stakeholders, together with other intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting the perception of food quality, sensory characteristics of organic products are very important and play either a primary or a secondary role in the selection process. The results show that organic supply chain actors mostly describe the sensory quality of organic foods as superior comparing to conventional food products. However, in some cases the sensory attributes of organic products are indicated as inferior. According to interviewees sensory-related issues of organic food is expected to increase in importance in the future. They also agreed that there is a lack of direct communication of sensory characteristics of organic food to consumers. In addition, respondents argue that consumers are willing to pay up for organic products due to the perception of a higher quality, which often might also include superior sensory characteristics (e.g. better taste). However sensory attributes are rarely included into the marketing strategies of organic supply chain members. Thus only more aware actors, those who do execute the sensory analysis on their products, try to use sensory attributes in applied marketing strategies. On other hand, there is a high interest to increase the use of information about sensory characteristics of organic products among supply chain actors.

We argue that sensory analysis of organic products should be used to further develop the sensory quality of organic products. Information about sensory characteristics of organic products should be communicated to consumers to influence their perception of organic food and to become a prerequisite of competition in the organic sector.

**Keywords:** organic products, sensory characteristics, marketing strategies

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