

OGH Symposium Workshop Report: Market and Quality

4 presentations covering market demands, the multi-functionality of agriculture, short chain market evolution, and food safety.

Market Demands: reviewed market position from EOSTA point of view and covered developments in packaging and promotion among other topics.

Issues: demand is higher than supply; there is a disconnect between the market, seed companies and the breeders; consumers need to be kept informed; there is interest in old varieties and OP varieties but who pays.

Needs: more varieties and more seed; evaluate production of berries and exotic crops in greenhouses.

Short chain market evolution: presented an overview of a range of innovative short chain market solutions as practiced in Flanders, Belgium.

Issues: much more complex and variable in systems terms; high labour demand; distribution solutions vary

Needs: evaluation of customer satisfaction and waste minimisation

Multi-functionality of Agriculture: agriculture produces commodity outputs that are marketable and non-commodity outputs that are non-marketable (not remunerated). Organic horticulture (including greenhouse horticulture) addresses consumer demands for both products and services.

Issues: remuneration for non-commodity outputs; recognition of the social value of organic (greenhouse) horticulture; communication of social value to improve competitive advantage

Needs: evaluation of non-marketable outputs; development of coherent model of multi-functionality that leads to the identification of the Total Quality Value of organic horticultural products.

Food Safety in the organic supply chain: a review of potential hazards at different stages of the organic food chain including fertility sources, irrigation water, manual handling, worker health and hygiene, etc.

Issues: risk assessments; impacts of biological activity; reduced use of copper; manure application windows

Needs: increased awareness of the potential problems; implementation of HACCP, GlobalGAP, etc.; crop management techniques to reduce risk.

Roger Hitchings, 11 April 2016