

Report of workshop on “Resilience and sustainability in OGH”

Workshop was organized on 11th April 2016 from 16.45 to 17.45 and was moderated by Jerome Lambion. Some answers to the questions which were addressed in this workshop **“What is the role of crop rotation and biodiversity to ensure stable and resilient production in OGH? How to promote sustainability?”** have been answered in the presentations of Ulrich Schmutz “State of sustainability in OGH and what still to be done?”, Francis Rayns (both from University of Coventry CAWR, UK) “Role of crop rotation and biodiversity for resilient OGH growing systems” and video film of practical example of promotion of resilience and sustainability at Tolhurst Organic Farm done by organic grower Iain Tolhurst who is following private organic vegan standard as additional to general organic farming practice. Use of only legume crops in crop rotation, plants for green manure and compost from plant based material without any animal based fertilizers satisfy plant needs also in OGH production.

Issues

Issues being discussed were four main sustainability gaps: weeds, pests and diseases, and fertility management and need for introduction of participatory plant breeding where also consumers aspect should be involved. Agriculture is phasing out all fossil fuel and in UK also peat. Increasing diversity and resilience is needed.

Beside the problem of often restricted crop rotation in GH the role of green manure crops and plants growing to attract beneficial insects was discussed stressing that whole site should be considered and not just inside of GH structure. Concerning to the intercrops question of light competition to the cash crop was stressed and also in the case of growing green manure plants with short vegetation period competition for water can cause some problems. Question about weeds seems to be settled in OGH production, but on open field organic vegetable production it could be severe problem.

As traditional agriculture has a lot of knowledge in organic open field vegetable production (especially in terms of intercropping) it could be taken into account to solve some knowledge gaps in GH production.

Because there is a complexity of the systems and also differences among farmers further research is needed. As also organic is never perfect it needs to improve sustainability and resilience continuously. Using short supply chains and community supported agriculture could increase social and health outputs as part of public goods of organic production system.

Reporter:

Martina Bavec/11th April 2016