

## Ecropolis: sensory properties of organic food

### Organic Sensory Information System (OSIS): Documentation of sensory properties through testing and consumer research for the organic industry (Ecropolis)

Distributors and promoters of organic food claim superior tastes for their products compared to the conventional alternative. This argument however is still subject to a hard debate and thus deserves more scientific evidence. Since repurchases are dependent on the overall liking of a product, and sensory experiences may have an important impact, knowledge about these dimensions is crucial for producers and marketers of organic food to offer products which meet consumer expectations.

The main purpose of this project therefore is to develop the first Organic Sensory Information System (OSIS), a multilingual and centrally based data folder for data deposition along with an interface scheme that serves as a basis for data exchange to the benefit of the organic food market (organic associations, producer, processors, retailer, wholesaler as well as consumers).

To this aim, a multidisciplinary and international research approach is necessary which comprises sensory and consumer research linked with standards requirements in different European countries. The extendable data folder will contain descriptions of sensory properties of specific products from six product categories as well as information about underlying production methods which explain the sensory differences between organic and conventional as well as consumer and expectations.

The comprehensive sensory evaluations will also result in a preference mapping of sensory quality. The impact of EU legislation and standards of organic farming associations, which define production methods and ingredients, will also be elaborated for OSIS. Qualitative and quantitative consumer research is carried out to develop segment-specific marketing strategies based on OSIS for all stakeholders involved. Comprehensive dissemination and training activities, including the preparation of training materials for all stakeholder groups involved as well as for sale staff, will ensure the broad information of the organic food market.

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