



Organic conversion checks: a Danish strategy for upscaling organic farming

Problem

The goal of the Danish government is to double the organic area by 2030. That requires more farmers to convert to organic and existing organic areas to stay organic.

Solution

Denmark's organic action plan promotes organic farming through upscaling and market growth. Farmers considering conversion can get a free conversion check from the Fund for Organic Farming.

Benefits

During the conversion check an experienced organic farm advisor from the Innovation Centre for Organic Farming (ICOEL) or another advisory service provider visits the farm. The consultant and the farmer go through the farm's production and sales potential of converting to organic production. Farmers can ask questions and explore development opportunities, helping them make informed decisions. The approach has proven to cause fewer re-conversions or interrupted processes.

Applicability box

Theme

Conversion to organic farming

Keywords

Organic advisory service, Farm visit, practical and economic advice

Context

This methodology can be adapted to any geographical contexts and availability of resources.

Required time

The farm visit should take around 2 hours approximately.

Practical recommendations

- The farmer **contacts** the advisory services or ICOEL to ask for a conversion check. This can also take place on the initiative of a municipality for all farms in the region.
- **Before the visit**, the farmer receives a simple questionnaire, so that the conversion advisor can prepare.
- The **advisor** has experience with the farm type (e.g., livestock, arable, vegetable). Impartiality and professionalism are key.
- The **farm visit of** approx. 2 hours includes:
 - Review of fields and stables to assess the opportunities and barriers for organic production and how to overcome them
 - Discussion of rules for organic production in general and for the specific farm type
 - Financial estimate based on the current production and potential subsidies
 - Market and sales opportunities
 - A timeline for conversion
- The advisor provides a **report** with a realistic assessment of the farm's suitability for organic farming.
- If the farmer decides to convert to organic, the advisor will guide him through the process. Conversion to organic takes around 2-3 years to be effective.



Picture 1: Conversion check farm visit to a mixed farming system. (Jakob Brandt)



Picture 2: Conversion check farm visit to a free-range swine production system (Joachim Kjeldsen)



Picture 3: Conversion check farm visit to a cattle production system (Joachim Kjeldsen)

Further information

Further reading

- Strategy for organics. Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. December 2023.
- Manual for conversion checks

Weblinks

- Check the Organic Farm Knowledge platform for more practical recommendations
- Conversion to organic: professional meetings and networks (Omlægning til økologi – faglige møder og netværk (DK))

About this practice abstract and the OrganicTargets4EU project

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