

## Plantum members are an essential part of organic chains

Plantum members are important producers and global exporters of organic seeds and young plants. This makes them an essential part of the organic chains. According to Eurostat, 9.9% of total European agriculture and horticulture is currently organic. The European Green Deal aims to encourage organic cultivation to 30% of the area by 2030.

Dutch companies make an important contribution to the global success of the organic sector. Among the more than 250 Dutch propagation and breeding companies that are members of Plantum, there are some that sell exclusively to organic growers. Most companies that supply organic seeds also focus on conventional growers and combine goals aimed at sustainability in the different market segments.

### SEEDS AND YOUNG PLANTS FOR ORGANIC CULTIVATION

Organic growers must use organically produced seed. Only when this is insufficiently available can they use conventionally produced, but not chemically treated, seed. All EU Member States maintain a database in which growers can check which crops have organic seeds or young plants available and where they can get them.

This makes it easier for organic growers to obtain organic starter material. This prevents companies that invest in the production of organic seeds from unnecessarily being left with unsold seeds. The intention is to abolish the exception rule that organic growers may use conventionally produced seed by 2035. Plantum supports that ambition.

### VARIETIES FOR THE ORGANIC CHAINS

To have sufficient varieties for organic cultivation, it is important that breeding is encouraged based on the specific goals of the organic sector. Plantum has therefore been supporting the Green Breeding research programme for years now. To have sufficient choice and to make progress, it is also important that varieties are available from breeding programmes that are not exclusively aimed at the organic sector. That is why Plantum advocates talking about varieties suitable for organic cultivation and not just about organic varieties.

The development of varieties for the organic sector also provides valuable information for conventional growers. After all, they too benefit from robust varieties that, for instance, require less fertiliser and plant protection products. Testing varieties under organic growing conditions helps conventional breeding to contribute to the sustainability of the entire agriculture and horticulture sector. Conversely, varieties that have not been specifically developed for organic cultivation *can* offer major advantages for organic cultivation.



Rules that impose restrictions on organic seed companies or on companies that, in addition to conventional, also produce organic seeds, can result in a drop in available starter material. Plantum advocates a clear interpretation of laws and regulations for the organic market, with as few exceptions as possible. The regulations must radiate ambition, but also be realistic and feasible.

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS - PRIVATE LABELS**

Any segmentation of the market leads to additional efforts for breeding companies and can lead to increased costs for the grower. However, individual Plantum members sometimes choose to meet additional statutory requirements for the starter material in order to focus on specific niche markets.

Sometimes, additional requirements are in place for the starter material or breeding methods, such as (specific types of) hybrids, or mutation breeding. These additional requirements are often made known via private labels that the seed supplier can then meet.