

## PRESS RELEASE

September 2022

### STADTLANDBIO 2022:

#### Reducing carbon emissions with sustainable agricultural and foodstuff practices

- In parallel with the BIOFACH Summer Edition 2022, the STADTLANDBIO Congress focused on opportunities at a municipal level for climate protection
- Make a note now: STADTLANDBIO 2023 on February 15 and 16 on the theme "Sovereign. Regional. Organic."

About a third of all greenhouse gases in Germany come from the agricultural and foodstuff sector. Every year it becomes clearer that agriculture in particular is affected by the consequences of climate change, such as prolonged periods of heat and dryness. At the same time, however, it is often insufficiently appreciated that the way our foodstuffs are produced can serve as an important lever for improved climate protection. That not only applies at a national and federal state level, but also at a municipal level. At the STADTLANDBIO Congress on 27-28 July 2022, therefore, the focus – onsite and online – was on how cities, municipalities and rural districts can reduce their carbon emissions with sustainable agricultural and foodstuff practices. More than 80 representatives from the worlds of policy-making, administration, science, business, agricultural operations and professional associations discussed this question on the two days of the Congress, held in parallel with BIOFACH, the World's Leading Trade Fair for Organic Food, in line with the theme of "Organic.Food.Agriculture – Opportunities for municipal climate protection".

"The Congress brought together players from numerous fields covering all aspects of municipal climate protection and provided opportunities for everyone to be heard," says Nina Faiss, Regional Manager of Bio-Musterregion Hohenlohe (Hohenlohe Model Organic Region). "With young

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start-ups, in particular, you notice that they are looking for, and need, this direct interaction.”

“Climate-friendly consumption is becoming increasingly important for consumers,” confirms Uwe Zwick, of the Höhenkirchen-Siegersbrunn Business Promotion Department. “To ensure more happens at a municipal level, it’s important to network those in charge with congresses such as STADTLANDBIO. This year’s event was the first time since the pandemic that we’ve been lucky enough to do so in person, as well as having the space for informal discussions.”

### **Farmland offers major potential for climate protection**

The presentations and workshops at the Congress confirmed once again that there are no simple answers to complex problems such as the climate crisis. Although avoiding the use of pesticides and artificial fertilizers makes organic agriculture more climate-friendly on the surface, the effect is lessened at a product level by the lower yields. But organic scores in addition with benefits to the common good and the environment, such as water protection and encouragement of biodiversity, which highlights the fact that the approach of considering climate impacts in isolation is too short-sighted. Municipal authorities can practise active climate protection in agriculture through activities such as **protecting marshlands, implementing agroforestry systems and humification**. There are already a number of good practical examples relating to agroforestry and humification, although science needs to put more effort into dealing with these, observes Dr Werner Ebert of Biometropole Nürnberg (Organic Metropolis Nuremberg). Joachim Böttcher, Chair of the Stiftung Lebensraum (Habitat Foundation), also stresses the importance of the soil to the climate: “Soil protection is climate protection – but we don’t have a lot of time left to transform our agriculture. That’s why we should focus not only on organic businesses but also get conventional farmers on board with us.”

### **Fewer animal products in group catering**

Potentials for climate protection at a municipal level can, however, also be found in group catering for day-care centres, schools and canteens, not only in farmland. “There has been a definite increase in interest in climate-friendly nutrition,” comments Ursula Trentinaglia, agricultural ambassador, course

leader, adviser and home economics manager. “At the Congress I’ve learned of a number of canteens – in Berlin, Munich and Osnabrück, for example – which are genuine trailblazers. And that’s inspirational!”

Although there are now many calculation models available to determine the carbon footprint of individual foodstuffs and meals, the basic formula for improved climate protection on the plate is as simple as can be: **Offer fewer animal and more plant-based products – and throw less away.** To make this happen, good role models and more educational opportunities are essential: on climate-friendly cooking for chefs, and also for children and young people to help them understand the impacts of the food they eat. But: “In many schools and kindergartens, nutritional education is not yet compulsory, but happens only when individuals show commitment,” observes Tina Andres, Chair of the Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (German Federation of the Organic Food Industry, BÖLW).

## **Making the most of regional potentials**

It is self-evident that regional foodstuffs are better for the climate, given the shorter transport distances involved. A system of **efficient regional logistics** is essential, however, to ensure this positive effect is not wasted. In cities, urban agriculture can draw on existing logistical structures relatively easily. But in rural areas, the situation is often different. The Congress showed that although a number of cooperatives and initiatives are already in place, in many locations they are still in their infancy. To reduce the incidence of empty runs and insufficient capacity utilization, it is important to learn from the major logistics firms – since efficiency is their strength. However, a study at youth hostels in Bavaria showed that transport makes up only a relatively small proportion of the greenhouse gas balance in the catering industry. The method of production plays a far greater role.

“The Congress once again emphasised that voluntary commitment alone is not enough when it comes to climate protection on the farm. When leasing areas of land out, municipal authorities should, for example, include requirements for more humification,” says Franziska Distler, of the Environment and Health Unit of the Öko-Modellregion Nürnberg.

Once again, an important take-home from the STADTLANDBIO congress was "The more organic, the better – for municipalities, states, the country, and beyond".

### **Congress focus 2023: Sovereign.Regional.Organic**

STADTLANDBIO will next take place on February 15 and 16, 2023 on the theme "Sovereign. Regional. Organic. - How municipalities can crisis-proof agriculture and food." In the face of rising food prices and supply shortages, as well as increasingly complex food security, the congress will focus on food security and food sovereignty. Questions will be answered about the importance of organic and regional produce, as well as what cities, municipalities and counties can do to ensure the supply of high-quality food in the short and long term without being too dependent on political and world market risks. Registration for the congress and the detailed program will be available in the fall at [www.stadtlandbio.de](http://www.stadtlandbio.de).

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sowie [www.vivaness.de/press](http://www.vivaness.de/press)

## Summary of viewpoints from delegates at the STADTLANDBIO 2022 Congress

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**Nina Faiss, Regional Manager of the Bio-Musterregion Hohenlohe (Hohenlohe Model Organic Region)**

*“Climate-friendly consumption is becoming increasingly important for consumers. To ensure more happens at a municipal level, it’s important to network those in charge with congresses such as STADTLANDBIO. This year’s event was the first time since the pandemic that we’ve been lucky enough to do so in person, as well as having the space for informal discussions.”*

**Uwe Zwick, Höhenkirchen-Siegertsbrunn Business Promotion Department**

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**Franziska Distler, Environment and Health Unit of the Öko-Modellregion Nürnberg (Nuremberg Organic Model Region)**