

PRESS RELEASE

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Discussion of farm-to-fork strategy at STADTLANDBIO digital congress

- **Congress impressed more than 250 participants**
- **Presentations, discussion panels and workshops put the spotlight on farm-to-fork strategy**

The first online-only STADTLANDBIO 2021 DIGITAL congress took place on 18 February alongside the virtual edition of the World's Leading Trade Fair for Organic Food and International Trade Fair for Natural and Organic Personal Care, the BIOFACH / VIVANESS 2021 eSPECIAL. This year, STADTLANDBIO focused on the EU's farm-to-fork nutrition strategy, whose aim is a sustainable EU agricultural system to produce food that is "greener and healthier". For example, the proportion of organic farming in the EU is also to be increased to 25 percent by 2030. The STADTLANDBIO Congress brought together more than 250 delegates including representatives of the EU, the German government, states and local authorities. In various presentations, discussion panels and workshops, they discussed the opportunities and benefits of the farm-to-fork strategy for cities as well as local and county councils and looked at how the EU and municipalities could better coordinate their efforts.

"STADTLANDBIO 2021 DIGITAL was a resounding success. We are extremely pleased that so many representatives from local, state and federal government and the EU took part in the annual STADTLANDBIO Congress, which is held in high regard by the sector. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all participants once again. The significant interest in the event and large attendance shows how relevant these issues are. With

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STADTLANDBIO 2021 DIGITAL we created the best possible alternative in these exceptional times, as participant feedback confirmed,” says Danila Brunner, Exhibition Director for BIOFACH and VIVANESS and STADTLANDBIO.

Participants impressed by congress programme

“Regional food is part of our identity, which is why the question of how the diversity of the agri-food industry in the regions can be maintained and made more sustainable was the key topic at the STADTLANDBIO Congress. In this context, shorter supply chains, better income for farmers and more appreciation of how food is produced are crucial factors. I am delighted that the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region had the honour of co-organising the congress for the first time. Because of the congress theme focusing on the EU farm-to-fork strategy and the concurrent spring conference of METREX, the network of European metropolitan regions, the programme and attendees had a stronger than ever European focus, and the response was exceptionally good,” says Dr Christa Standecker, Managing Director, Nuremberg Metropolitan Region.

“The discussion with representatives of the EU and the German government has shown that town and district councils are important players and partners for the shift to a sustainable agri-food industry. The farm-to-fork strategy offers a great opportunity to combine the measures taken at grass roots level, i.e., in towns and districts, with the EU level so that they create valuable synergies. The Organic Cities Network Europe sees itself as the ideal partner to give EU agricultural policy a regional basis and connect urban and rural areas,” explains Dr Werner Ebert, Department of Environment and Health, City of Nuremberg.

The congress programme was wide-ranging and featured keynote addresses, panel discussions and workshops on the farm-to-fork strategy. However, the event also explored other strategies such as the European Green Deal, which is pursuing the goal of a sustainable EU economy,

especially in respect of climate and environmental policy challenges. The various formats presented case studies, research programmes and other projects by regional initiatives, organic cities and model regions from throughout Europe.

Positive examples underpin importance of farm-to-fork strategy

Cities, districts and regions are important players and make a substantial contribution to a sustainable agri-food industry, as several positive examples show. The proportion of organic food served in kindergartens in Nuremberg is currently around 75 percent and is set to be increased in the next few years. This is only possible because as an “organic metropolis”, Nuremberg systematically supports organic food production, for example through the “ReProLa” (Regional Product-specific Land Management) project that is being implemented thanks to collaboration between Nuremberg and the state of Bavaria and addresses the production and marketing of regional produce. The focus is on sustainable land use and the regional production and value creation of food. This is intended to raise awareness about organic food and the opportunities offered by organic farming. There are similar projects in many other regions, for example, a project to systematically promote regional food in the metropolitan region of Lyon. This project is intended above all to also appeal to low-income families and make them aware that eating regional produce and healthy food is not necessarily expensive.

In the panel discussion on the EU’s farm-to-fork nutrition strategy and what it means for municipalities and regions, experts from various sectors discussed and explained the main congress topic from a range of perspectives. Here too, the spotlight was on the question of how towns and local authorities can advance a sustainable and regional food sector. The panel also looked at the role of BMBF funding (German Federal Ministry for Education and Research) within the scope of FONA (research for sustainability strategy), especially via the urban-rural funding programme “Stadt-Land-Plus”. Stadt-Land-Plus is about developing innovative solutions

for sustainable agriculture and value creation and looks at how the transfer of competencies can be managed so that urban and rural areas benefit from one another.

The closing session on the topic “Healthy soil – healthy people – setting the course for the future despite the coronavirus pandemic”, summed it all up again neatly: People and the environment are mutually dependent and form a symbiosis. We can therefore only co-exist healthily, i.e., healthy soil and/or healthy nutrition are the foundation for a healthy environment and the health of all of us. In this context, the key issues are species diversity, climate protection, and a balanced ecosystem. Many small networks are already working at grass roots level on fantastic projects and are cooperating with one another at national and international level. Cities and municipalities need to champion soil conservation and regional value creation. This can be done for example by imposing certain conditions on land use like banning pesticides, but also through knowledge dissemination and awareness-raising among the population. Because every individual can do their part, through the way they shop and eat and by adopting a conscious lifestyle.

Workshops presented projects on the farm-to-fork strategy

The five workshops covered a wide range of topics and introduced participants to various European projects addressing the farm-to-fork strategy. The topics discussed included regional value creation, nutrition strategies, economic and ecological interdependencies between urban and rural areas, and the options open to municipalities to shape regional nutrition based on specific examples.

METREX conference made its first appearance at STADTLANDBIO

Another highlight was the METREX conference (Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas), which dealt with metropolitan landscapes and the importance of agriculture and food. METREX is a network consisting of 50 European metropolitan regions that serves as a platform for knowledge-sharing. The experiences of its European representatives were a valuable

addition to STADTLANDBIO. Due to its strong European focus, the meeting was held in two languages for the first time.

The METREX event focused on the cultivation of food and its processing in metropolitan regions. It looked at the mode and scope of food cultivation in metropolitan regions and what economic significance this has.

For the entire 2021 congress programme please go to:
www.stadtlandbio.de

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