

APPLIED RESEARCH – DIALOGUE BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Research in organic farming has a long tradition at Hohenheim. In 1973, Hohenheim became the first German university to establish an organically managed research farm. Today, the organic research station “Kleinhohenheim” is available to all the university’s working groups of the university as well as to national and international project partners to carry out research related to organic farming. In addition, research is conducted on a variety of issues ranging from certification to product quality to social aspects of organic farming. Scientists work on various topics, including plant breeding, agronomy and plant nutrition and the effects of organic farming on biodiversity.

In order to promote the transfer of knowledge between different stakeholders, conferences and workshops on organic farming are held regularly at Hohenheim. Key events are the annual “Winter Conference on Organic Farming Baden-Württemberg” on current topics for the organic sector of Baden-Wuerttemberg and the biennial conference “Ecofruit”, which provides European scientists a platform to exchange the latest research on organic fruit and berry production. Furthermore, Bachelor’s and Master’s theses deal with current issues in organic agriculture through on-farm trials and cooperations with processing companies.



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**Further information about the
Center for Organic Farming**
<https://oeko.uni-hohenheim.de/en>



UNIVERSITY OF
HOHENHEIM



CENTER FOR ORGANIC FARMING

**Forward Thinking
Research, Education
and Practice**



Center for Organic Farming

ORGANIC FARMING AT HOHENHEIM

The Center for Organic Farming at the University of Hohenheim is part of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, one of the leading agricultural faculties in Europe. The aim of the center is to link science and practice in order to optimize and further develop organic farming. The core tasks of the center are the initiation, coordination and management of research projects, teaching in organic agriculture at Bachelor's and Master's levels, and knowledge transfer through dialogue with the organic sector.

The core concepts of organic farming are at the heart of the Center for Organic Farming, including the principles of closed farm cycles and the breeding and selection of cultivated crops adapted to local conditions. Organic farming uses natural control mechanisms to reduce pests and diseases and promotes soil fertility through biological measures. A long crop rotation with a high proportion of nitrogen-fixing legumes like clover-grass preserves soil fertility and reduces the occurrence of pests and diseases. Additional fertilization takes place mainly through liquid or solid manure, ideally from the farm itself, and the harvest in turn serves also as feedstock for the farm's animals. Animal feed is sourced mainly from the farm itself or from other organic farms. The extent to which livestock are raised is dependent on the farm size. Animals have access to pasture or are free-range, and are cared for according to animal welfare and husbandry conditions that ensure the natural behaviour of the animal is a core feature. Chemically synthesized pesticides, mineral fertilizers and genetic engineering are prohibited.

In recent years, consumer interest in organic food has increased significantly. Changing consumption patterns, consumer expectations and current issues such as climate protection and the preservation of biodiversity are generating a large number of new research questions along the organic food chain. Hohenheim actively engages in these cutting-edge issues both in education and in research. Moreover, new movements like community supported agriculture, urban farming and vegan lifestyles are challenging established views on organic farming and leading to new socio-economic research questions on the transformation of food systems.

EDUCATION: FUTURE-ORIENTED

Bachelor's Program (in German) B.Sc. Modules in Organic Agriculture

At Hohenheim, four modules specifically on organic farming are offered as part of the internationally recognized Bachelor's degree program in Agricultural Sciences.

- Basics and Socio-Economics of Organic Farming
- Organic Crop Production
- Livestock Husbandry in Organic Agriculture
- Conversion to Organic Farming

Master's Program Organic Agriculture and Food Systems

The Master's program in Organic Agriculture and Food Systems is unique in Europe and taught exclusively in English. It covers all aspects of organically produced food from farm to fork. It includes current topics in the organic sector, including sustainable agricultural production, processing, quality control and marketing. In addition to eight compulsory modules, six additional modules are chosen as electives. These modules can be freely selected from all courses offered by the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, providing the students the opportunity to shape their individual study profiles.

8 Compulsory Modules

- Economics and Environmental Policy
- Global Agri-food Systems: Conventional, Organic and Beyond
- Sustainability Marketing and Marketing Consulting
- Organic Food Systems and Concepts or Principles of Organic Food Systems (Double Degree)
- Organic Livestock Farming and Products
- Organic Plant Production
- Processing and Quality of Organic Food
- Project in Organic Agriculture and Food Systems



EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL AND HANDS-ON

Teaching focuses on crop production and animal husbandry in organic production, the processing of organic foods and the economic and social conditions of the organic sector. Excursions provide a deeper insight into practical aspects of organic agriculture and are an integral part of the curriculum. The study program is offered as a "Single Degree" (at the University of Hohenheim) or as a "Double Degree," which can be obtained by studying at the University of Hohenheim and at one of four European partner universities.

- Aarhus University (Denmark)
- BOKU - University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (Austria)
- ISARA - Agro School for Life (France)
- Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Poland)

As organic farming gains importance globally, international students become more and more interested in our program – to date, students from over 30 countries have already completed the Master's program in Organic Agriculture and Food Systems. The Center for Organic Farming is closely connected to the organic sector in Germany and abroad and links students with their future employers; guest lecturers from companies, associations, international organisations and certification bodies offer students the opportunity to gain insights into future work areas. Future prospects for graduates are good; the growing organic market offers a variety of career opportunities for students in different national and international companies, organizations and associations.

The growing importance of the organic sector is reflected in a growing and very active community of researchers working on organic farming topics in Germany, but also on global scale. The Center for Organic Farming maintains contacts with universities, research institutes, associations and companies in Germany and abroad in order to strengthen research into organic farming on a national and international level.