

# Summary of a LBI-project report 'Wie zaait zal oogsten' ('Those who sow will harvest'), 2007

*Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Coen ter Berg and organic growers*

*Louis Bolk Instituut, Hoofdstraat 24, NL-3972 LA Driebergen, The Netherlands. E.lammerts@louisbolk.nl*

In the Netherlands we work with a three category derogation system for the use of organic seeds: single derogation per crop(segment) for non-organic seed as soon as organic seeds are available, a national annex when the assortment of a crop(segment) is appropriate, and general derogation when no organic seeds are available, see [www.biodatabase.nl](http://www.biodatabase.nl). This is yearly updated by expert groups who advice the ministry of agriculture. After a rapid growth of crops on the Dutch annex list, currently several important biannual vegetable crops are not yet on the Dutch annex list. After the turbulence in 2006 when onion appeared on the Dutch annex and no more derogations for the use of non-organic seed were permitted, it became clear that for further progress a better attuning between growers and seed companies is required, also including relevant export countries.

The aim of this project 'Wie zaait zal oogsten' was to enlarge the commitment of growers in the development and the decision making on the use of organic vegetable seed and to involve more seed companies in the production of organic seed to arrive at 100% use of organic seed in the future. Besides, more insight in the conditions of seed companies and growers to produce organic seed and to but it, was required. Within the limited time span of this project we focussed on those crops which seemed promising candidates for an appropriate assortment of varieties within the coming years.

This project showed that coordinated and direct communication between grower groups and seed companies can be very effective. When growers indicate which varieties are required then a broadening of the assortment can be discussed by the seed companies. The yearly list of derogation requests was very helpful to make up a list of most required varieties. There are clear perspectives to appear on the national annex list in 2010/11 for: celeriac, most categories of carrot, red beat, Chinese cabbage and curly kale, see attached table. For the early carrots, chicory, Savoy cabbage, white and red head cabbage, leek and babyleaf lettuce more efforts are needed. This is partly due to technical problems with organic seed production (e.g. chicory) and partly due to the fact that some suppliers of required main varieties are not (yet) prepared to start organic seed programs (e.g. Seminis, Syngenta, Vilmorin, Clause).

The seed companies we contacted were very pleased with this process of attuning the supply and demand. They indicated that for the broadening of the assortment not the regulation but the size of the market is most relevant. This project has led to a restart of organic seed programs of some companies that had slowed down or stopped their activities for the organic sector: De Ruiters Seeds (green house crops), Nunhems Seeds, Rijk Zwaan and possibly also Nickerson Zwaan. Besides Vitalis, Bejo Seeds was already involved and will broaden its assortment according the growers demand.

By contacting UK, Denmark and Germany we stimulated the urgently needed, international attuning, especially for the biannual vegetable crops being exported. However, more efforts remain necessary, not only by grower groups, but also by governments and policy makers for international attuning to gain level playing field for certain crops. At this stage no hard decisions can be made concerning the expected year of appearance on the national annex of the involved crops but progress has been made!

Table with the missing varieties required by organic growers and the perspectives (year of availability) for organic seed production, LBI 2007

(Note that this list does not show the varieties that are already available on the bio-database, see www.bio-database.nl)

	Celeriac	Bunching carrots	Early Nantes	Carrot for storage	Carrot for processing	Red beet	Chicory	Chinese cabbage	Curly kale	Savoy cabbage	White head cabbage	Red head cabbage	Leek
Rijk Zwaan	President? Cisko?				Karotan?	Akela?					Kalorama ?		
Bejo	<i>Briljant</i> (10/11) <b>Rowena</b> (09) (Ilona)	<b>Mokum (10)</b>	<b>Namur</b> (07) <b>Napoli</b> (07)	<b>Nerac</b> (09) <b>Nectar</b> (07) Narbonne	<b>Kamaran</b> (10) <i>Nappa</i> (10/11) (Bergen)	<i>Pablo</i> 10/11) <i>Rhonda</i> (10/11)	(Octaaf)	<i>Manoko</i> (10/11) <b>Bilko</b> (07) <i>Mirako</i> (10/11)	(Starbor) <b>Reflex (09)</b>	<i>Barbosa</i> (10/11) <i>Wirosa</i> (10/11) (Firenza)	(Colmar) <i>Reaction</i> (10/11) (Slawdena) (Bingo) <b>Impala (07)</b>	<b>Primero (09)</b> <b>Integro (07)</b> (Lectro) (Auroro) (Huzaro)	<b>Striker</b> (10) <b>Catcher</b> (09)
Nunhems	<b>Prinz (07)</b> <b>Monarch</b> (08)		<b>Laguna</b> (09)				Focus? Vintor?						<b>Kenton</b> (09) <b>Shelton</b> (09) <b>Ashton</b> (09) <b>Roxton</b> (09)
Nickerson											<i>Castello?</i> <i>Gilson?</i>	<i>Roderik?</i> <i>Rodon?</i> <i>Rovite?</i>	
Semenis												(Roxy)	(Davincie)
Syngenta			(Natalja) (Yukon)						(Winnetou)	(Alaska) (Siberia)	(Junior) (Unifor)		(Artemis)
Clause										(Medee)			
Vilmorin							(Platine) (Yellow star)						
Perspective to be listed on the NL annex (year)	2010	2010	?	2010?	2010/11?	2010/11	?	2010/11	2009?	?	2010/11?	2010/11?	?

Bold: organic seed production planned; italic: organic seed production in consideration; between brackets: will not be produced organically; ?: not yet decided by seed company.