

## Cloud technology to safeguard integrity of the organic sector

*Check Organic is a cloud-based solution which has been designed to enhance the visibility and traceability of organic products. It brings together certification, information and supply chain data. On an online platform, users can visualise their supply chains, track products and be notified when problems may arise. This solution was a winner at the TP Organics 'Organic Innovation Days'.*

### Supply chain integrity in the organic sector

Supply chain integrity is about ensuring the visibility and traceability of products within the supply chain. Organic consumers trust the labels on organic products, and therefore the integrity of the sector must be ensured to maintain the trust of the consumer.

According to Gerald A. Herrmann of *Check Organic*, "Safeguarding the integrity of the organic sector is a challenge. While concrete improvements to the certification regime such as risk assessment inspections are continuously being introduced, fraud has not been fully prevented. A number of scandals in Europe have had a profound impact on sales and the economics of affected supply chains."



Besides regulatory requirements, a number of private initiatives are currently addressing this issue. This includes **Organic Services** that has developed a system called "*Check Organic*".

### *Check-Organic*, the concept

*Check Organic* is a cloud-based supply chain tool that brings together organic certification and supply chain data.

Current trading practices rely on paper certificates or their digital version being sent to the buyer in advance. There is no possibility for a buyer to verify whether or not a certificate is valid at the specific moment of the delivery of the products. Has certification been withdrawn recently? Is the product covered by the scope of the certificate? The only means of checking is to contact the certification body in question for every batch to find out. This is time consuming and costly.

*Check Organic's* approach is therefore to offer a real-time worldwide source of certification data including data from certification bodies independent of their location, of national, regional or international scope as well as from already existing national data bases. It is available for use by buyers when they are making a purchase of organic goods. In order to maintain this tool, Organic Services cooperates with government bodies and institutions (e.g. the USDA and the EU Commission), private sector organisations (e.g. ACA, EOCC, OTA, IFOAM), as well as individual certifiers, manufacturers and trade.

*Check Organic* is able to enhance supply chain integrity on two levels:

- **Certification**

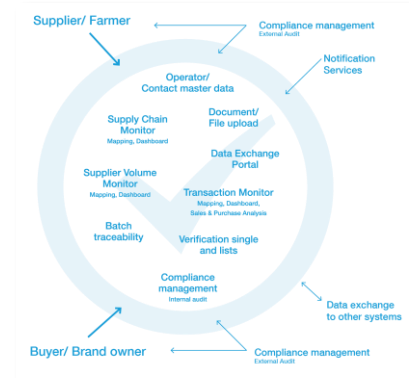
Certification data is stored in *Check Organic* and comes directly in real time from the certifiers themselves, who ensure its accuracy

- **Supply chain**

The movement of goods along the supply chain is documented by real-time transactions of traders and manufacturers

## How it works

Starting from the field, a production amount is entered by the certifier based on the producer's field size and historical production, which is then checked against this number as the goods move through the supply chain. *Check Organic* acts as a data bridge between certifiers and buyers. The system provides several supply chain integrity solutions: certification verifications, a supply chain monitor, a supplier volume monitor, a transaction monitor that maps supply chains dynamically, status change notifications, a data exchange portal and others.



Users of *Check Organic* can look up operators, visualise their supply chains, track product quantities as they move along the supply chain, and be notified when problems arise. "*Check Organic* contributes to making the organic sector more efficient by eliminating the need for offline processes, improving documentation and therefore transparency" Frank Gerriets, Director of Organic Services says.

This system means that buyers can go to the platform and check that the organic products they are buying are certified.

Even though the system is not specifically geared towards farmers, *Check Organic* does provide information on farm of all sizes. It can therefore be especially valuable to smaller-scale farmers and their associations because it improves their visibility on the market by making them searchable in the system and connecting their production data to the market.

"At the beginning of 2017 we connected the USDA/NOP Organic Integrity Database to Check Organic, allowing to search for data of all accredited certifiers, globally. The FEDERBIO Integrity Platform establishing the organic grain mass balance in Italy became mandatory and several company based solutions are implemented. Check Organic is ready to serve the global organic sector" underlines Gerald A. Herrmann, Director of Organic Services.

## Organic Innovation Days

This solution was a winner at the TP Organics **Organic Innovation Days** which took place on 6 December 2016 in Brussels. *Check Organic* won first prize for the session '*Innovating for organic, innovating for agriculture*' under the theme '*Increasing transparency in the organic value chain*'.

## More information

<http://www.check-organic.com/>

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<http://tporganics.eu/organic-innovation-days-2016-review-and-presentations/>



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