

ECOLOGICAL RECYCLING AGRICULTURE

Guidelines for farmers and advisors

Vol I - IV



Farming guidelines



Economic guidelines



Marketing guidelines



Farm examples

Vol III: MARKETING GUIDELINES

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BERAS *implementation*
Baltic Ecological Recycling
Agriculture and Society

Baltic ECOLOGICAL RECYCLING AGRICULTURE and Society

In the BERAS Implementation (2010 - 2013) project a network of farms and social initiatives focusing on building the link within the whole food chain from farmer to consumer has been established to achieve a good environmental status of the Baltic Sea. The transnational project is part-funded by the European Union and Norway – The Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007 – 2013.

Ecological Recycling Agriculture is based on local and renewable resources and has the potential to

- reduce more than 50 % of the nitrogen surplus
- reduce the phosphorus surplus significantly
- avoid synthetic pesticides and enhance the natural control of pests through diverse crop rotations
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions through low input of external resources and increased carbon sequestration
- improve soil fertility and natural nitrogen reserves through legume cultivation
- protect biodiversity
- increase reliance on regional food supply
- enhance rural development in the region

An ERA farm is an ecological farm in line with the European Organic Regulations (EC No 834/2007) and additional criteria:

Crop rotation: at least 30 % legumes

Balanced livestock/land ratio: 0.5 - 1.0 animal livestock unit per ha

Self-sufficiency in resources: more than 80 % self-sufficient in fodder and manure

Effective nutrient recycling: within the farm and between farm cooperations



Ecological Recycling Agriculture Guidelines for Farmers and Advisors

The Box of Guidelines contains

Vol. 1	Farming Guidelines
Vol. 2	Economic Guidelines
Vol. 3	Marketing Guidelines
Vol. 4	Farm Examples

Imprint

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Catchment area of the Baltic Sea



BERAS future

Following the conclusion of the EU project BERAS Implementation in 2013 a Network Agreement has been concluded to further develop BERAS and secure the continuation of the concepts both in the Baltic Sea Region and to share our competence and building alliances with initiatives in other parts of the world.

Preface

Despite various measures the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea is not decreasing and the resilience of multiple ecosystems is at stake. In this situation business as usual is not an option. New approaches are needed creating a safe operating space within the environmental boundaries. BERAS develops and implements practical examples where innovation and entrepreneurship from a multisectorial engagement flows into realistic, fully integrated ecological alternatives for the whole food chain - from farmer to consumer.

The BERAS concepts have been developed through two transnational projects part-financed by the European Union and Norway (the Baltic Sea Region Programme), BERAS (2003 – 2006) and BERAS Implementation (2010 – 2013). It is the common efforts from the partnership from nine countries around the Baltic Sea (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland), Russia and Norway and includes national and local authorities, universities and research institutes, advisory services, ecological and environmental NGOs, farmers' organizations, food chain actors and finance institutions.

The concept of Ecological Recycling Agriculture (ERA) is based on many years of research and studies on how organic farms can be organized to be truly sustainable and environment-friendly and has demonstrated its potential related to reduction of nutrient leakage from the farm, soil carbon sequestration/climate effect, biodiversity and increased soil fertility. BERAS has also successfully started the implementation of fully integrated, full scale examples of regional Sustainable Food Societies (SFS) in all countries in the Baltic Sea Region. The consumer engagement concept "Diet for a clean Baltic" offers a sustainable lifestyle with consumption of enough and good food without threatening the environment of the Baltic Sea or the planetary boundaries.

The Guidelines for Ecological Recycling Agriculture focus on the work by the farmer. It is the result of a transnational Baltic Sea Region cooperation by farmers, advisors and researchers. With the guidelines, we hope to encourage and help conventional farmers to convert to ERA farming as well as to support organic farmers to optimize their system towards recycling agriculture.

We want to thank each of the individual authors of these Guidelines for their dedication to the work and also for the coordinating function performed by Dr. Karin Stein-Bachinger at the Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research in Germany.

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Resilience of our
ecosystems is at stake

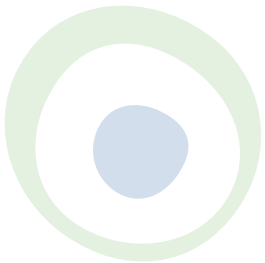
BERAS - background and
main concepts

Guidelines for farmers and
advisors

1. Analysis of the initial status

The organic food market is now one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Organic farming in the world covers 37 million hectares, and the global market for organic products, was valued with \$ 62,8 billion (Sahota 2010). Growing interest in organic is a food trend occurring not only in Europe, but throughout the world. Consumers are more likely to pay attention to food safety, the source of its origin and the way of its production.

Organic and ERA farming brings major advantages. First of all the ability to preserve traditional forms of agriculture and rural development which in a broader concept is the benefit of a social nature. Next is the ecological benefit, as organic agriculture and organic production do not bring a burden to the environment. With the exclusion of pesticides and mineral nitrogen fertilizers, it reduces considerably the contamination of soil and groundwater, reduces the leaching of nutrients from the soil, and promotes biodiversity. Ecological farms are often small family businesses, where emphasis is put on the quality of the product and efficiency and the scale of production.



2. Strategies of promotion and marketing

2.1 Goals

What is marketing and how to sell well?

Organic farming provides the market with certified products according to the EU standards or even more strict standards of special organic farmers associations. In the process of producing organic food and its processing it is not allowed to use synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides, and it is prohibited to use chemical food additives. These conditions cause that in order to be successful the farms and processors operating in this production system have to be able to use the advantages of their products by creating an attractive offer: they must be able to sell their products effectively.

All actions which aim at introducing organic products to the market should take into account the specificity of organic production and are reflected in the marketing of their products. The concept of marketing means “an intentional activity on the market, based on an integrated set of tools, activities and market orientation” (Kotler and Kettler 2012). This definition shows that marketing is not an accidental but a deliberate way of action. Marketing is based on a variety of instruments and activities that make up an integrated system. The basis for the regulation of this procedure is changing market conditions. Marketing is a living concept, changing with the development of a market economy. Today, we mostly talk about the concept of social marketing. The basis of this concept includes three, instead of two subjects of exchange processes: producer, consumer and society as a whole. Social marketing involves environmentally responsible marketing (i.e. eco-friendly marketing, ecomarketing, green marketing).

The term of “green marketing” (‘ecomarketing’) as a special kind of marketing strategy is based on the promotion of the production system, which is based on biological methods of food production and processing and the idea of balancing economic, social and environmental objectives. The main role in “organic marketing” is played by promotion and communication strategies.

Sales targets are constantly stimulated by demand and supply of organic food which is manifested by rising rates of production and sales in a region, a country and abroad, as well as building a network of cooperative relations.

Communication objectives on the supply side focus on: building ecological awareness on the functioning of ecological systems of production (building awareness) and facilitating the sale of products through various sales channels such as processing, chain stores, direct sales (at the farm or delivered to customers). Marketing communication is a kind of dialogue between the business, the entrepreneur, the producer and its environment: current and potential consumers, partners, competitive environment, centers of opinion leaders, advisors etc.



A very important issue in the context of the promotion of ERA (Ecological Recycling Agriculture) farms is to address information to different audiences including opinion leaders such as the press, local administrations and academic communities. The specific objectives of marketing communication related to the promotion of ERA products and farms may be the following:

- Building **awareness** on the special features of Ecological Recycling Agriculture: It produces and provides the market with tasty and healthy products while their production meets environmental and social objectives.
- Providing **information on the benefits** of Ecological Recycling Agriculture, highlighting the values associated with the balance of plant and animal production, reducing nutrient losses, and the conservation of biodiversity.
- Providing **information about the product and its features**, possibly with an own brand. Forms of advertising could be fairs and events, press, radio, sponsorships, Internet and multimedia, public relations, promotional gadgets, and product placement.
- Developing a **coherent visual identity system** by developing a logo with a high degree of recognition.
- Providing the widest possible customer group with **product information** by using Internet for marketing communication (e.g.: your own website, social messaging, mailing).
- Information how to **join the network of cooperation** with the farms implementing ERA.
- Creating the **image of your company** as a reliable and trustworthy partner.
- Promoting **environmental culture and eco-business**.
- Building your **own brand** and sharing a database of participants in the market for ERA products and offers.

2.2 Target groups

When you start to build a promotion strategy it is important to identify your target groups to whom you will provide the information / message about your product and to take into account that ERA food is less popular among consumers of food products. These problems relate to:

- the lack of information about ERA food
- the lack of information about places where you can buy such food
- a low availability of ERA food in the market
- the lack of awareness of ERA food producers to the need to promote their products
- the lack of belief that ERA food is of better quality than the conventional products that you can buy at the grocery store
- the lack of awareness about the benefits of the ERA food consumption to the human body
- high prices.

Marketing communication must be directed to different consumer groups but mainly it should be built on two pillars: the **producers** and **recipients** of ERA food products.

The producers of ERA food, target group I (TG I) include

- suppliers of ERA products, for direct sale and raw materials for processing
- suppliers of processed eco-friendly products such as meat products, dairy products, processed fruits, bakery products, who already have their own brand
- suppliers of ready ERA products who do not have their own brand
- eco-agrotourism.

The second pillar of recipients of the offer of ERA farms is **the demand side** - buyers and users of ERA food, both present and potential. They are the **target group II (TG II)**. This group is very diverse, both in demographical and psychographic terms.

Moreover we also find:

- companies which certify organic food
- research companies monitoring the quality of organic food
- suppliers of products necessary for the proper and consistent operation of all subjects in the industry related to organic food - including packaging manufacturers and design firms.

The recipients of the promotional message on the demand side should be:

- present and potential buyers of ERA food - those responsible for purchasing decisions in the household, interested in healthy living that is based on healthy nutrition. This group includes parents of young children, pregnant women and young mothers, people with allergies and gastric problems as well as elderly people
- those who like to support an ecologically sound production of food and its processing
- current and potential individual buyers of ERA food - especially those who care about their appearance and condition. This group will mainly include the customers of health centers, beauty salons and fitness clubs.



The other part of TG II are the distributors of ERA food products:

- A network of independent producers, retailers, general stores, specialist stores, school and university canteens.
- Altering outlets (bars, restaurants, catering companies), which offer or want to expand their menu of organic food.
- Cafeterias, bars and restaurants, especially at or near hospitals and sanatoriums.
- Canteens, bars and restaurants, located in or near the most attractive tourist destinations.

Beside the two main target groups (TG I and TG II) there is a group that is also very important – stakeholders and opinion leaders who are involved in opinion forming: – research, media, government, regional administration, industry and business organizations. Other environment organizations popularize a healthy lifestyle and nutrition, like schools of environmental profile, medical and health clinics which play an advisory role and have an impact on the food purchasing behavior of buyers. Moreover, these are research institutions that deal with the identification of organic food, verifying the quality and working on its improvement.

The analysis of the needs of the target groups will allow a selection of the best marketing tools. Messages constructed for each of the target groups should include some of the fixed elements of communication.

These are:

- Information about the advantages of ERA food.
- Information about the places where you can buy ERA food “close to home” (regional aspect) and how you can recognize ERA food on the shop shelf.
- Information about why the price of ERA food is higher than the price of conventional foods.



2.3 Strategic assumptions concerning brand message and communication

Customers when buying a given brand (in the form of a product or service) not only buy the specific appearance, taste, quality, flavor, color, but also its image, which is manifested by the unique characteristics of sales.

The identification function of a brand is an indication of the unique features which the product offers to the customer, emphasizing the benefits of a functional and emotional character.

The promotion is the use of a brand - a graphic symbol and the word - in all forms of communication with potential buyers of the product. A brand should be implemented in every message directed to purchasers and consumers of the product. This will help to build a message directed to all the customers in a consistent manner.

According to the marketing strategy, there are three ways to increase the profitability of a company through marketing activities:

- Attracting new customers
- Causing customers to buy more
- Causing customers to buy more often.

The marketing activities related to the sale of ERA foods have to make use of its attributes.



Attributes of ERA food- to be used in marketing



An important element to support ERA production could be to create a brand that represents all the attributes of ERA food production and processing. An example for such a brand could be "**Diet for a clean Baltic**". The brand "**Diet for a clean Baltic**" can fulfill many functions, the main ones are identification, guarantee of quality and better promotion. It is equally important to build a positive image of "**Diet for a clean Baltic**" and the ERA farm, among its potential customers and consumers of food.

In this way, the brand structure could support the image of the product with which it will operate. The image of the brand will support the purchase of the product or service.

Conclusions

- The customer does not buy on the basis of quality, appearance, taste, brand awareness, etc. of the product. As long as quality, taste, packaging, aesthetics, and accessibility are within a generally acceptable range the greatest influence on the selection of the brand's image is formed on the basis of the message, the used channels of communication and positioning.
- The most important attribute of a brand chosen by the respondents can be built in the minds of potential users by a slogan, a product image, the packaging and the attractiveness of the message.

What does a consumer think when buying a given brand?

- Values (What rational values does the product bring?- Certificates, higher value of organic food compared to conventional food)
- Associations connected with it (feelings, memories of their own experiences, image advertising)
- The brand personality (what features does the brand have?)
- Opinion (if people I know would choose this brand? Should I buy this brand and use or consume it among my friends?).



Strategic objectives for an ERA-brand in general, and in the future, "Diet for a clean Baltic" should be based on the following references:

Exhibiting rational features that are characteristic for ERA products

Production without the use of mineral nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides, GMO-free, higher quality than conventional food, certification of the production process, and food certification based on continuous monitoring of product quality.

Underlining positive characteristics connected with the geographical origin

Connecting quality, reliability, integrity, and innovation with regional food production and processing.

Emphasizing the aspirations of the brand

The recipient must have the impression that ERA food is unique because of its quality. These unique attributes should be exhibited, such as the characteristic shape and color of packaging products, the sign of legal protection of the brand, and an appropriate slogan.

Building respect for the brand

The ability to use the trade sign should be limited in the form of additional substantive criteria to protect against pauperization - it is necessary to take care of the brand through the use of the system and provide brand protection developed with the Visual Identification System (Altkorn 2001).

The slogan has to emphasize the most important attributes of the brand

Origin and quality of the products and their uniqueness on the scale of the region and the country should be visible. The content should be presented directly, and not impede the perception of the main idea.



3. Selection of the media and channels to reach target groups

On the basis of the analysis of the objectives, target groups and the ability of the media and non-media access channels, it is necessary to develop specific tools for marketing communication that should be optimized.

Outdoor

Outdoor advertising is frequency-based and is used to build brand awareness. For this purpose, billboards of different dimensions should be located at the largest passageways and in heavily populated areas.

Press (dailies, weeklies and monthlies)

Advertising in newspapers is meant to build brand awareness. Traditional advertising as well as advertorial or sponsored articles are possible. Press allows the transfer of more complex information.

Articles should be implemented in Friday's editions (the highest readership). Local weeklies allow the extension within target groups outside major cities and have a relatively long-lasting transmission (they function for 1 week at least). Thematic press is meant to provide information to the most desirable parts of TGII – those looking for specific knowledge.

Radio

A supporting medium, frequency-based, allows you to build brand recognition. Radio features should rely on experts. The opinion of an expert who is associated with ERA farms is highly rated in the eyes of TG I and TG II.

Internet

Advertising on the Internet is frequency-based and mainly serves to build brand awareness. Internet activities should include the creation of a platform and its detailed monitoring and updating. The platform is to be the source of information and cooperation between ERA farms.

Traditional mailing to TG I - sending information materials for potential ERA food producers

It is the action of a profiled character and serves to build awareness. Mailing should take the form of a folder or leaflets presenting the brand and the benefits for farms producing ERA food. These are actions of an image - informational type, essential for the promotion of the ERA system.

Internet mailing to TG II and support groups (opinion leaders)

It is the action of a profiled character and serves to build brand awareness and to increase the knowledge about ERA farming and food. Communication is addressed to companies, opinion leaders, informal and potential ambassadors of the brand, namely the companies and farms operating in the ERA system. It is a very cost-effective form of communication. People using this form of communication are open to new ideas and concepts.

Public Relations (PR)

PR is to increase the frequency of contact, to build brand awareness and to extend the knowledge about the brand. These actions are targeted to the media and journalists by whom they will be transferred to the target groups.

Event marketing

This is creating a situation in which the greatest number of people from TG I and TG II will directly come in contact with the offer of ERA farms. These are very precisely oriented activities aimed at specific audiences. The event marketing should include picnics, fairs, press conferences, and scientific conferences. Event marketing also involves participation in various fairs, both regional, national and abroad.

Gadgets

Directed especially to younger buyers of ERA food, and therefore gadgets should be designed to be attractive for them. Gadgets should be distributed at the events as well as during visits to farms and processing plants. These actions promote products through the direct contact with the customer. One of the forms of advertising materials may be product samples.



4. Recommended marketing tools for ERA farms

4.1 Forms of product sales



Organic farmers can sell their products in very different ways: in farm shops, at the local market or in retails, fairs, and health food shops or in conventional stores, warehouses and processing plants as shown in the following table.

Each form of distribution has advantages and disadvantages and will affect the farm, the farmer or the commodity production differently. The choice of a distribution channel is a very important decision. It affects the farm for a long time and often requires more investment and effort before bringing the desired results (Mickiewicz and Gotkiewicz 2002).

Forms of sales of organic products (%)

Country	Conventional stores (mainly supermarkets)	Specialist stores with organic food	Direct sale	Specialist stores (bakeries, butcher's shops)	Restaurants, canteens	Other
Switzerland*	74	13	5	No data	No data	8
Austria**	67	14	7	No data	5	7
Germany***	53	26	10	No data	No data	10
Poland****	5	27	66	No data	No data	2

* data for 2011 (Bio Suisse Jahresmedienkonferenz 2012)

** data for 2011 (Biologische Landwirtschaft in Osterreich 2012)

*** data for 2007 (Koreleska and Łętkowska 2010)

**** data for 2004 (Tyburski and Żakowska-Biemans 2007)

4.2 Direct sale

Direct sale is the delivery of products by the farmer to consumers without intermediaries. The advantages of this form of sales primarily are a smooth flow of information on the product, a complete control over the flow, the ability to take over the market margin by the farmer and the independence from trade (Czubala 2001). Besides that you get in close contact with the clients. That allows you to recognize their needs and expectations and respond quickly to the changes in preferences.

Direct selling is a special marketing tool which by its ability to stimulate four of the five senses - sight, smell, taste and touch - can generate desired reactions in the consumer (Thomas 1999).

The organization of direct sale, however, requires farmers to perform two different activities (production and trade) and thus engage in capital and time distribution activities. The farmer incurs expenditure connected with the final preparation of the product for sale and commercial activities, maintains inventories, etc.

Direct sales of organic products may take very different forms (Kreuzer 1996):

- Sale on the farm itself (the possibility of collecting harvest directly from the field by the customer).
- Sale nearby consumers (sale at markets, fairs, door to door, weekend sale, delivery on request (the system of consumer packages, the so-called eco box)).
- Roadside sale or in your own shop (located near or far from the consumer).



In various countries, such as Germany, new popular forms of direct sales are centralized farmers' stores, doorstep selling, subscription sales, mail orders, and leasing. Sometimes, the concept of direct sales is understood as to include sales of finished products to retailers and wholesalers (Wirthgen and Maurer 2002).

For the consumer the main advantage of direct sale is the freshness of goods originating from known and reliable suppliers and the possibility to get information about the products and the farming method.

Options that organic farmers commonly use to market their products along with some of their pros and cons from a farmer's perspective are shown in the following table.



	Pros	Cons	Questions
Farmer's market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good public exposure • Direct customer contact, social events • Does not require a fixed regular supply of products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market stall fees • Transport costs • Needs staffing 	<p>What are the best markets for me?</p> <p>How do I bind customers to my market stall throughout the year if I do not want to offer out-of-season products?</p>
On-farm store/pick your own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No transport costs or additional fees • Fresh products • Harvest to match the demand for direct customer contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires physical store-front and staffing (or honesty system) • Insurance etc. is the farmer's responsibility 	<p>How and where will you build an on-farm store, and at what cost?</p> <p>Are there enough customers around?</p>
Community Supported Agriculture (e.g. box schemes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production requirements and income are known up-front • Direct customer contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires sorting/packing of customer orders • Availability of each customer's preferred produce is not guaranteed 	<p>How will you pack and deliver your produce?</p> <p>Minimum order?</p>
Online store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide potential customer base • No physical store needed • High potential for expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have to arrange delivery of produce • Requires an internet order/sales system • No face-to-face customer contact 	<p>Who will build and maintain your on-line presence and at what cost?</p>
Direct to retailers, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special food stores • Restaurants • Supermarkets • Institutions e.g. schools, hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer receives wholesale prices • Avoids sorting/packing consumer orders • Reasonably easy to obtain end-consumer feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cosmetic quality may be very important • May take considerable time to develop relationships with enough retailers • Individual sales may be relatively small • Continuous supply required • Often minimum quantities required 	<p>How will you maintain a reliable supply to restaurants that may have variable and unpredictable requirements?</p>
Direct to wholesalers, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grower co-operatives • Wholesalers/Distributors • Supermarket buyers • Processors • Consider the marketing logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger volume sales are more likely • Wholesalers manage most of the marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport costs • Farmer may not have much price negotiation power • High cosmetic quality may be very important • Often minimum quantities required 	

4.3 Indirect sale and possibilities of export of ERA products



Indirect sale can take different forms like sales to retailers, wholesalers, and processing plants. Advantages of indirect distribution channels come from the benefits for the producer from the involvement of the intermediary. The presence of an intermediary in selling partially or completely frees the producer from paying the costs of distribution, allows for selling more and less diverse products, reduces the producer's risk connected with marketing, and therefore allows for obtaining the benefit from specialization and increases the potential for market penetration.

However, the drawbacks of this form of selling primarily include the loss of direct control over the pricing, promotion, product acceptance, and also a frequent extended payment period for the product (crediting sales agent) (Czubała 2001). Specialist stores that specialize in organic food sales are an important form of indirect sales. Among the specialist stores, we can find a variety of outlets. These include, among others, shops with a long tradition which act as a co-operative. The cooperatives run joint marketing and training activities, e.g. for new sellers (Rensida 2002).

Another form of specialist shops are bio-supermarkets which are usually owned by various independent companies that usually have one or two outlets. In contrast to conventional stores, they do not have the same common strategy. These stores are characterized by the assortment of approximately 5,500 products, but sometimes even more than 10,000. Fresh products account for over 50 % of the offered products, most of them are fruits, vegetables, cheese and bread. The share of non-food goods is only 10 %, and it mainly consists of natural cosmetics.



A new form of specialized retail shops are online stores with organic food. The research shows (Koreleska and Pawłowska-Tyszko 2008) that the internet is an important source of information on food for young consumers. Over time internet may become an important place of purchase for a larger group of consumers.

Organic products in retail chains try to improve the image as points of sale with low quality and price (Knieć 2004). An example for such a program in the trade network for organic products is 'Naturaplan'- network in The Coop chain in Switzerland (Coop Group Sustainability Report 2011).

Sales of products by organic farmers through retail chains are difficult and raise many concerns among them. In practice, cooperations with retail chains are only possible for large and strong associations of producers that can meet the needs of the network and try to negotiate the most favorable terms of cooperation for farmers affiliated to them. The chains require continuous and large supplies. They also might put additional requirements such as deferred payment, delivery of products in a specific time and place and specified packaging.

Expectations regarding the appearance of organic products are the same as for conventional products, so the share of commercial yield in the total yield is decreasing. Chains usually offer organic products under their own brand names without giving any signs regarding the producer, which creates the dangers to domestic suppliers being replaced by cheaper foreign competitors and the threat of price pressure.



For many farmers, working with retail chains might be difficult, not only because of the demands as to the product, but also in the ideological sense because of the denial of their ideals (Knieć 2004).

Based on analysis of the assortment, management, pricing and information policy with regard to organic products, we can differentiate three types of strategies used by conventional networks (Żakowska-Biemans and Gutkowska 2003).

The first type of strategy known as **maximum**, is characterized by:

- a large share of organic products in different product groups
- the presence of more than 400 products
- the intensive use of organic products in promotional activities
- appropriate trained staff and attractive product presentation
- clear labeling of organic products
- high quality.

The second type of strategy called **basic strategy** is characterized, among other things by:

- the presence of 50-200 products
- a low level of involvement of staff
- the use of marketing strategies with the elements which have worked well in the case of conventional foods.



In the third type of strategy we can observe nowadays the growing share of catering facilities (restaurants, cafeterias) in the structure of sales organization of many European countries. The studies (Schermer 2002) have shown that the sale of organic products to canteens has many advantages, among others it ensures farmers with systematic sale and satisfactory prices, but it requires the cooperation between organic farmers.

An Austrian pilot study conducted among owners of conventional canteens (Schermer 2002) shows that 94 % of entrepreneurs are willing to take up offering organic meals. Among the tested canteens, over 80 % of the companies would accept higher prices for purchasing raw material. The highest percentage of companies (50 %) said that they would accept a higher price by 5 %, 11% of the companies would accept a price higher by 10 %, and 20 % of the canteens by 15 %. The results indicate that the acceptance of higher prices would be relatively low.

The problem with catering facilities can be supplying canteens in schools and kindergartens, where there is a lack of demand during the holidays.



4.4 Competition

Head-to-head competition and the focus on rivals within the food business, is the normal way. There is little emphasis on partnerships. "The farmer always loses".

In today's economy, no one vendor is expected to do it all. So you must rely on partners and allies to help complete the whole product that solves your target customer's compelling reason to buy. The ERA approach looks across alternative markets and tries to create a new market space and win-win partnerships.



The ERA approach compared to the conventional marketing approach

Normal approach	Key drivers	ERA approach
Bulk: Single raw materials or products, little processed products, no value added services.	Products	Looks across to complementary product and service offerings that go beyond the bounds of conventional food business. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole product solutions for modern consumers • On farm processed products • Special delivery systems and services
Maximizing the value of products and service offerings within the bounds of its industry. Little bit of everything to everybody. Little relationship with the final customers.	Customers	Redefines the buyer group of the industry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segmented customers • Regular and deep customer relationships
Focus on maximizing the value of products. Low price strategy based on costs.	Price	Focus on target customer groups which understand the added value of organic produce and are therefore motivated to pay a higher price. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic certification
Focus on wholesalers and food industry.	Distribution channels	Focus on direct selling to consumers. Selling to wholesalers can also be quite positive e.g. one of our BICs sells to an organic wholesaler which is 100 % organic and is a consumer-producer cooperative. -> this is also an important marketing channel since larger volumes can be sold and the income is quite stable.
"Business as usual": Improving price-performance rather than relationships with the customers.	Promotion	"Building Sustainable Food Societies" means the functional-emotional orientation of the food business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local marketing • Direct contacts with customers who will recommend the products
Head-to-head competition, focus on rivals within the food business. Little emphasis on partnerships, "farmer always loses".	Competition	Looks across alternative markets and tries to create a new market space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win-win partnerships
Adapting to external trends as they occur.	Future trends	Participation in shaping external trends over time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing new ways to develop the whole organic food chain

5. Examples of good ERA practices in the range of promotion and marketing

5.1 Denmark

Krogagergård

Henning Hervik



The Krogagergård farm was a dairy farm, the dairy production ended in 2003. Now the main production is beef that is supplemented with pork and sheep. Fodder is fed to animals and grain is both used as fodder and for bread making. Rapeseed is processed on the farm into oil and used as fuel for the farm machinery. The farm employs 2-3 persons plus the owners - Bjarne & Kirsten.

All meat is processed in an on-farm slaughterhouse built in 2004. The old slaughterer retired. A new one was hired and he is very innovative. The main organic products offered include all kinds of meat products because the consumers like them. Vegetables, potatoes, eggs and meat are sold to a consumer network. The customers buy via the farm shop (33 %) but the main part is sold via the internet-based box scheme (66%).

The main problems in marketing activities are difficulties to reach the customers – Krogagergård is situated in a remote area!



Meat cut in
Krogagergård



Family visitors in
Krogagergård

5.2 Lithuania

Kentriu farm

Jolanta Paulaitienė

Farming started in 1991. The farm was established in Pagegiai municipality, Pagegiai elderly, Kentriu village. In 2004 the holding gained the status of an organic farm. The total area of the farm consists of 324 ha, pastures cover 136 ha, and the remaining area is arable land. The farm has crop and livestock production. Winter and spring crops are produced and grinded in the own mill for fodder and the remaining crops are sold. Milk and meat are produced for selling. The farm employs 6 people permanently and depending on the season, 2 laborers temporarily.

Milk and meat are usually sold to the parent milk and meat processing companies in the region. The price for the organic milk is higher, but there is very low interest for it. So the farmer sells his milk as normal conventional milk.

The main problems in marketing activities include:

- the lack of information about the needs of customers
- no market for organic products
- problems with appropriate co-operations with other companies (suppliers, distributors, etc.).

5.3 Finland

Luomu Heikkilä farm

Kim Westerling

Luomu Heikkilä farm, situated in South West Finland, has been family owned from the beginning of the 1900s. The current owner, Teppo Heikkilä, began farming in 1996 when he took over the farm from his uncle, and converted his fields to organic. In 2005 Teppo bought Hereford cattle, which has been organic from the beginning. Teppo's farm is a mixed farm with beef cattle (Hereford), cereals, broad beans and vegetables. From 2012, Teppo has been selling his products (beef, cereals and beer) with his own brand 'LuomuHeikkilä'.

The main organic products offered include:

- meat products from Hereford (LuomuHeikkilä brand); cattle is grazing in semi-natural, traditional biotopes
- cereal products (flours, flakes), broad beans, beer (LuomuHeikkilä brand)
- vegetables
- products of regional organic farms. Regional organic products include vegetable oil, juices and jams, and bakery products
- ice cream (Poutakesä Dairy Ltd.)
- rapeseed oil and honey.

The most important sale channel is direct sale (farm shop, household delivery) for meat and cereal products.

The main problems in marketing activities include problems with appropriate co-operation with other companies (suppliers, distributors, etc.)

Few examples:

- Meat: Butchering and cutting are done in separate places. Fitting the time schedules with these is challenging.
- Small co-operation companies (Poutakesä for example) Irregular delivery of products from small producers.
- Logistics are relatively expensive because of small volumes. The farmer and a marketing person are trying to find ways to make logistics cost-efficient.

The products that are sold with LuomuHeikkilä brand through the farm shop and direct sale are very few, which makes logistics between different actors (suppliers, distributors, direct sale to household customers etc.) challenging.

LuomuHeikkilä



Knehtilä farm

Kim Westerling



The Knehtilä farm is situated in Palopuro village in the town of Hyvinkää in South Finland. The farm is run by the family since 1800. The current farmer couple has started on the farm in 1997. In 2012 the farm received its certified organic status. The production in the Knehtilä farm is mainly cereals. Knehtilä farm co-operates with three organic vegetable producers, e.g. marketing.

The main organic products offered include:

1. Cereal products (flour, flakes, brans); fresh flour products.
2. Vegetables sold in the farm shop; co-operation with organic vegetable producers.
3. Protein feed is produced under contract production and sold to organic animal farms.



The main innovation implemented on the farm is the co-operation with farms that produce vegetables. The most important sale channel is wholesale. Direct sale (farm shop and farmers market) is most labour intensive.

The main problems in marketing activities are connected with organizing the processing of the farm products. Knehtilä farm has a special product which is fresh milled flour. It means that it has to reach the customer within two weeks. This poses challenges to the logistic supply chain. Before converting to organic, Knehtilä farm utilized milling services from the Sälänkää mill, which is the closest one to the farm. However, this mill is not in the organic certification system. The two mills, Töllinmylly or Mustio, that could produce the organic flour and flakes are located quite far off, and fresh flour production is compromised. Now Knehtilä farm is using its own stone mill, but the production volumes are quite small. The farmer is planning to build a bigger mill and a bakery close to the farm.



5.4 Sweden

Nibble Mejeri

Wijnand Koker

Nibble Mejeri is a dairy situated at Nibble farm – the Järna BIC farm. The dairy started in the 1980s and produces cheese of the farm milk (380 t/year). An agreement with the farmer has been established to secure the quality of the cheese: On-farm produced roughage fodder (only hay) with limited use of concentrate. The dairy also buys some milk from neighbouring farms to produce fresh dairy products (160 t/year).

The main organic products offered include: cheese, milk, yogurt, sour-milk and butter. Cheese is the original main product which made the dairy well known for the taste and as a product without additives. Now also fresh milk has become an important product in the local market.

The most important sale channel is wholesale as well as direct selling to consumers. Cheese is mainly sold through a wholesaler to shops in a large part of Sweden, while fresh milk products are only sold through local shops.

The main problems in marketing activities include:

- the certification process (does not guarantee/support the quality)
- the size of the dairy (it is too small to expand, to process more milk without large investments in a new dairy)
- problems with appropriate co-operations with other companies (suppliers, distributors, etc.).



Järna Mjöl produced at Nibble Mejeri



Järnaost cheese produced at Nibble Mejeri

Production of cheese at Nibble Mejeri



5.5 Germany

Brodowin

Ludolf von Maltzan



The Brodowin Demeter farm was founded in 1991. Today 1,200 ha of farm land and 30 ha of vegetables (0.2 ha greenhouses) are cultivated. Furthermore, 400 cows (200 lactating), 200 goats and 400 chicken (in mobile stables) are kept. Animal feeding is based on farm crops. Manure and a high percentage of legumes in the crop rotation supply nitrogen to the crops and proteins to the animals.

The on-farm dairy processes milk, butter, mozzarella and goat cheese as well as cow milk. Other products are vegetables, salami, sunflower and linen oil. Regional marketing takes place through the well-established box scheme supplying 1,400 families in the nearby cities including the capital Berlin. The farm stall offers all Brodowin products.

Besides that, products are sold at 3 farmer's markets in towns of the region. The farm employs up to 77 people, mainly from the region, in and around the small village Brodowin.



The main organic products offered include:

- Brodowin fresh milk, not homogenized. Available in bottles and bags (natural material which consists of 40 % chalk)
- other dairy products: butter, mozzarella, goat and cow milk cheese
- salami
- sunflower oil and linen oil
- vegetables (20 different kinds, for example carrots, potatoes, onions, cabbages).



The most important sale channels include:

- the delivery service to private households - Box scheme with over 1,000 articles
- wholesalers (for providing all organic markets in the Berlin region)
- farmer's markets.



The main problems in marketing activities concern the climatic restrictions in crop production i.e. droughts. It is also problematic for farms to find together and secure production over a long time period. Furthermore, it is often problematic to store the products without losing quality.
<http://www.brodowin.de>



5.6 Latvia

Liepa

Laura Ludevika



The individual family enterprise “Liepa” is located in an ecologically clean environment – “Tumes Pičas” in Tume village, Tukums province in Latvia. The main specialization of the farm is growing sea buckthorns and vegetables. Among farmers growing sea buckthorns, Livija and Peteris Paparinski are those few who produce organically certified berries. Geographer Peteris and designer Livija Paparinski are former citizens of Riga who plant sea buckthorn in Tume village since 2003.

Sea buckthorn was first harvested in 2006 but the first serious harvest was in 2008, and since then the Paparinskis could sell their home-made products in eco-markets.

The main organic products offered are: sea buckthorns, marmalades, jams and sweets. At present the product range comprises 20 different processing products.

The marmalade sweets are produced from self-cultivated rhubarb, cherries, strawberries, black currants, gooseberries, apples and bilberries picked in the forest, as well as from sea buckthorns, or in combination with pumpkins, carrots or rhubarb. Berries are also purchased from other certified organic farms but in very small volumes.

13 types of sweets have a certificate for their organic origin. Other products are not certified because the production is based on conventional produced sugar.

The main problems in marketing activities are connected with law regulations as the enterprise has the status of a home-producer. The Law on Monitoring Food Turnover provides that “food that is produced or processed in a home environment shall be delivered exactly to the end user”, thus, home-producers can sell their products only by themselves, not using any intermediaries. That in turn means that a home-producer has a choice – to stand in markets, fairs on the corners of streets or to cook in kitchens.

The closest plans and objectives are in 2012 to start adjusting the production facilities and paper work for obtaining the status of a recognized producer.

The main distribution channels for the home-made products of “Liepas” are eco-markets (Berga bazaars, Kalnciema Street and Straupe), fairs and holiday markets (e.g. Christmas market). Participation in the markets in the previous years has facilitated product recognition, the direct communication with the end user has also been valuable.

Individual orders are also accepted, which is especially typical at Christmas when enterprises place orders for the production as presents for their employees or clients.

Product design and packaging conceptions have been developed by the Paparinskis. The enterprise also has its own webpage, which contains information about both the range of products and the enterprise (<http://www.dabigsgardums.lv>).



Liepa main products

Sea buckthorn



5.7 Poland

Organic Food Valley Cluster

Krzysztof Jonczyk

Organic Food Valley Cluster (OFV) is the first cluster in Poland, bringing together different entities engaged in the promotion and development of organic food. Organic Food Valley Cluster is open for associated parties and organizations interested in the development of organic food production in Poland and Eastern Europe.

The members of OFV cluster are involved in various activities of vegetable cultivation, purchasing and processing of organic products, herbs cultivation, production of bread and meat, oil production and trade. The cluster is also affiliated to an association supporting the development of organic agriculture.

OFV promotional activities are based on a marketing communication which constitutes a comprehensive way of communication between entrepreneurs and the market.

Promotion of Organic Food Valley Cluster has a two-fold character. There are informational activities directed at two consumer groups. The first group consists of current and potential members of the Organic Food Valley Cluster. The second group are customers/consumers of organic food.



Logo of OFV cluster and the examples of its use in promotional materials

Main goals of a promotional campaign

The main objective is to inform potential members of the Organic Food Valley Cluster of the benefits offered by the association in the cluster. It is carried out by the means of a promotional campaign for organic food consumers to inform them of the superiority of organic food over conventional food.

It is equally important to build a positive image of organic food among its potential customers as food which is free of chemical additives, prepared with organic products and informs the public about the importance of organic farming in the context of the protective function of environmental resources.

Description of examples of promotional activities carried out by the OFV cluster

Visual identification system

Development of a consistent graphical labeling available for all participants in the cluster. A visual identification system is used as a promotional tool by its placement on all advertising materials, printed materials, etc.



Internet

Advertising on the Internet is frequency-based and serves mainly to build brand recognition. Internet activities include the creation of a platform and its detailed monitoring and updating.

The platform www.dolinaeko.pl is a source of information and a cooperation between members of the Organic Food Valley Cluster.

Main website of dolinaeko.pl portal

Promotional activities on the internet also include mailing addressed to a specific audience. One group is a potential partner of OFV cluster and the other groups are opinion environments (so-called opinion leaders). These are actions of an image and informational character. It is a more cost-effective form. Another argument is that the people using this form of communication are mostly open to new ideas and concepts.

Activities of public relations and publicity



The activities in the press include:

- advertising in regional newspapers
- advertising in the trade press.

The press was selected as a tool to reach target groups representing organic producers, consumers and opinion leaders. An advertising campaign in the press is realized in the form of an insert to the press, as standard press advertising, and sponsored articles. The information in the press includes the main objectives of OFV Cluster, logos and contact details of members of the cluster, and values of organic food.



PR activities are the leading element of the campaign - they are supported by advertising on the Internet and in the press. They cover a very broad spectrum of media and non-media actions. They are a part of building a brand position in the market but also allow reaching people and companies with specific market needs. As part of the PR, OFV cluster periodically organizes [press conferences](#).



Sale of organic products in EKOBAZAR – joint initiative of the cluster members

Biobabalscy Farm

Maria Staniszevska

Biobabalscy farm is one of the oldest organic farms in Poland, run by Mieczyslaw Babalski.

The farm has 9.5 ha of which arable lands cover 4.4 ha, grasslands 2.4 ha, vegetables and orchard about 1.2 ha. Two cows and calves are kept for a better balance of production and for manure.

There is a mill and pasta processing plant on the farm. The mill processes raw materials from the farm, and as the farm is not big, cereals are bought from other farms. The mill produces also other products like: cereal flakes, groats and bran. All these products are sold by direct supply or through wholesales almost in every organic food shop in Poland. The pasta as one of the first processed products is the most known organic food in Poland.



Pasta is very special, because it is produced:

- from the flour milled on the farm
- of whole grain flour, with and without herbs
- with small special Italian equipment suitable for the production of whole grain pasta
- in driers, which use hot air from solar panels located on the roof of the processing plant
- in different shapes
- from different cereals: popular soft wheat and less popular rye and spelt.



5.8 Summary

High differentiation of sale channels was identified in the selected case farms (next table). In western EU countries direct sale (by farm shops, box schemes or farmer's markets) is an important sale channel. This tool practically was either very weakly developed or not existing in the new EU member countries.

On the one hand, importance of direct sale shows high development of organic food markets, on the other hand this type of selling has the potential to give proportionally higher profits than other more traditional sale channels. It should be emphasized that wholesale was an important channel, both in old and in new EU member states. In some Eastern countries, other sale channels like fairs or processors were also important.

The following table summarizes the main problems in marketing activities identified across the studied farms. A wide range of problems were found. However, connected with "inappropriate cooperations with other companies" was the most common one. This shows the importance of cooperations in marketing activities.

The problems indicated, reflected different conditions of organic food markets in particular countries. In some new EU member countries i.e. Lithuania a significant problem was the lack or very weak development of the organic food market. In other countries, bureaucracy and imperfect law regulations were a significant barrier (Poland, Latvia).

In Western countries where the organic food market is already well-developed, other types of problems appeared. They were connected with physical barriers (climatic restrictions, size of a farm, distance to the costumers) and technological problems (in processing, storage) than with the status of the organic food market itself. Moreover, one farm in Sweden indicated problems connected with the certification process. In Germany, climatic restrictions concern mainly problems with frost and severe winters that can damage winter crops (cereals and rape). It also includes problems with draughts that quite often happened in last spring.

Main sale channels in the selected case farms

Country	Name of farm	Sale channel					
		(Internet based) box scheme	Farm shop	Wholesale	Farmer's market	Fairs	Processors
Denmark	Krogagergård	X	X				
Finland	Luomu Heikkilä farm	X	X				
Finland	Knehtilä farm			X			
Germany	Brodowin	X	X	X	X		
Latvia	Liepa				X	X	
Lithuania	Kentriu farm						X
Sweden	Nibble Mejeri		X	X			
Poland	Biobabalscy Farm			X			X

Main problems in marketing activity in the selected case farms

Name of farm	Country	Problem
Krogagergård	Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural problems (size of the farm, difficulties to reach the costumers)
Luomu Heikkilä farm	Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate co-operation with other companies
Knehtilä farm		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological problems in organizing processing/ storage
Brodowin	Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological problems in organizing processing/ storage
Liepa	Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureaucracy/ Imperfect law regulations
Kentriu farm	Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate co-operation with other companies No or weak market for organic products
Nibble Mejeri	Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate co-operation with other companies Weakness of certification process Structural problems (size of the farm, difficulties to reach costumers)
Biobabalscy Farm	Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureaucracy/ Imperfect law regulations Lack of raw materials

To find out more

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Baltic Foundation HPI
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Polish Ecological Club in Krakow, City of Gliwice Chapter
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Independent Autonomous Association of Individual Farmers 'Solidarity'
www.solidarnosc.pl



Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Center in Gdańsk
www.podr.pl



GERMANY

Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research, www.zalf.de



DENMARK

The Danish Ecological Council
www.ecocouncil.dk



BELARUS

International Public Association of Animal Breeders "East-West"

PURPOSE

The environment of the Baltic Sea is endangered. Input of plant nutrients from highly intensive and specialized agriculture are a main source. BERAS Implementation can solve this problem through a systemic shift to Ecological Recycling Agriculture in association with the whole food chain from farmer to consumer.

WHO CAN USE THE GUIDELINES?

The guidelines will help farmers and advisers to practice and develop Ecological Recycling Agriculture. This type of agriculture will improve the environmental conditions of the Baltic Sea. They can be equally used for educational purposes, by decision makers and by politicians.

CONTENTS

The guidelines consist of four books that cover the following topics:

The **Farming Guidelines** give basic practical recommendations for implementing ERA and present proven agronomic measures and optimization strategies for effective nutrient recycling within the farm and between different farm types during and after conversion. Included are **Software Tools** that help to assess and improve sustainable crop rotation planning and nitrogen fluxes on a farm level.

The **Economic Guidelines** give advice and support to farmers how to plan the conversion process and highlight how the changes to ERA farming will affect farm economy.

In the **Marketing Guidelines** farmers can find support and ideas on how to more effectively promote and sell organic and ERA products.

The **Farm Examples** provide a personal presentation of different farms around the Baltic Sea, mainly farms in conversion to ERA, their challenges and future plans.

The books are available at www.beras.eu in digital form.