



## International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems

**– aiming for the organic principles to become the global reference for agricultural sustainability**

The International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems (ICROFS) was founded in 2008. The centre is an expansion of the former Danish Agricultural Research Centre for Organic Farming (DARCOF), which the Danish Government decided to provide with an international mandate and an international board.

The main purpose of ICROFS is to provide research results that may contribute to the promotion of organic food systems, including agriculture, aquaculture, processing and consumption of organic food.

The vision of ICROFS or the “Big hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG)” is that “the principles of organic agriculture have become a global reference for sustainability in agriculture and food systems due to evidence based on research and adaptive management.”



## About ICROFS

The International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems (ICROFS) is a “centre without walls” where the research is performed in interdisciplinary collaboration between research groups in different institutions and universities.

The Centre will contribute to the coordination, management and performance of strategic and user oriented, high quality research at the national as well as the international level, on the basis of the organic philosophy and organic principles and issues.

## Organisation

ICROFS is headed by a Board of directors consisting of research leaders and stakeholders from Asia, Africa, America, Europe, and Denmark. The board will develop and evaluate the Centre’s vision and strategy for enhancing international research in organic food systems. Further, to oversee and advise on the Centre’s national research and development activities in Denmark, a Danish programme committee has been appointed with representatives from universities, farmers associations and NGOs affiliated with organic farming.

## Activities

The secretariat of ICROFS initiates, coordinates, and participates in national and international research activities in organic farming and food systems. It is also very active in disseminating organic research results and knowledge on the importance of

organic food systems to the environment, nature and biodiversity, animal welfare, health, food safety and quality, economy, structural and market development as well as social significance. The Centre, furthermore, promotes understanding of the characteristics of organic food systems and contributes to a knowledge based development of organic food systems nationally and internationally.

## Research facilities and infrastructure

Over time several organic research facilities have been set up, which allow close cooperation between different research environments. Since 1996 long-term organic crop rotation trials have been performed on four locations in Denmark. The crop rotations have different proportions of legumes, cereals, and catch crops and are carried out on different soil types and with different levels of manure. The aim is to investigate how type of rotation affects yields, nutrient balances, weed and disease problems, soil fertility and emission of greenhouse gasses.

## European cooperation

ICROFS participates in the EU research Framework Programmes and has coordinated several projects. ICROFS is an active partner in ISOFAR (International Society of Organic Agriculture Research) and FQH (Organic Food Quality and Health research network). Moreover, ICROFS has participated in the development of the European vision for an Organic Food and Farming Research Agenda 2025: “Organic knowledge for the future” and is an active partner in the technology platform TPOrganics.

## **CORE Organic**

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ICROFS coordinated the FP6 ERA-net, CORE Organic (Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming) in which public funding bodies of 11 European countries worked together and funded eight transnational research projects. The collaboration now includes more than 20 countries in the CORE Organic Funding Body Network, which is open to all European countries having or intending to have a funding programme on research in organic food systems. Building on the success of CORE Organic a second ERA-net "CORE Organic II" will be proposed under FP7 with 25 partners.

## **Research programmes**

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ICROFS is presently managing the third consecutive Danish research programme in Organic Food and Farming. The title of the initiative is "DARCOF III - International research cooperation and organic integrity". The research programme consists of 15 projects with a total budget of approx. 23 million € for the period 2006-2010.

DARCOF III was preceded in 1996-2000 by DARCOF I consisting of 33 research projects, carried out by 15 institutes and about 100 researchers. This research effort was followed up by DARCOF II in 2001-2005. This initiative consisted of 42 major research projects, involving 140 researchers from 19 different research institutes. All these research projects are described on [www.icrofs.org](http://www.icrofs.org)



## **The aim of ICROFS' current research programme, DARCOF III**

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- ▶ to initiate and coordinate research, which on the basis of the organic principles develops integrity and efficiency in the organic food chain – from farmer to consumer
- ▶ to provide more knowledge on the potential contribution of organic farming to a sustainable development of society
- ▶ to ensure a high international level of research quality and maximum utilization of the allocated research resources
- ▶ to contribute to a strengthened European and international collaboration on research and research education in organic farming and food production
- ▶ to ensure relevance and application of the research through communication and cooperation with research users and research communities



## Expertise in dissemination

Dissemination of the research results is a central activity in ICROFS. Dissemination is achieved mainly through web-based media, such as public homepages, newsletters, video presentations from field activities, platforms for corporate work and web portals. Presently, there are more than 4500 subscribers to the newsletters that ICROFS issues as part of the dissemination activities.

Also, for corporate project management, internal newsletters are issued and intranet sites are provided based on specific project management software.

All newsletters and platforms provided by ICROFS can be accessed from the main homepage [www.icrofs.org](http://www.icrofs.org).

Besides the web-based activities, ICROFS has a long time experience in organization of field days for farmers and stakeholders, thematic workshops and organic congresses. Recently, ICROFS was the co-organizer of the Joint European Organic Congress in Odense (DK) that attracted more than 1000 participants and we contribute to organic researcher conferences internationally such as the Organic World Conference of IFOAM/ISOFAR and regional conferences.

**Organic  
eprints**

### Organic Eprints

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ICROFS hosts and administrates Organic Eprints ([www.orgprints.org](http://www.orgprints.org)), the Open Source archive for publications and information materials in organic research. Here, researchers can deposit and share their information with colleagues, students and stakeholders worldwide. As by medio 2008, the archive has 7500 deposited papers and 9000 registered users. There are more than 5000 daily visits to the archive from countries all around the world. Organic Eprints additionally serves as platform for submission of congress papers, such as those submitted to the Organic World Congress (OWC) in Modena 2008.

### Contact

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The secretariat of ICROFS welcomes contacts from colleagues, stakeholders and others with interest in organic food and farming systems. Please contact us at [icrofs@icrofs.org](mailto:icrofs@icrofs.org).

Contacts can also be directed to Head of Centre Niels Halberg at [niels.halberg@icrofs.org](mailto:niels.halberg@icrofs.org).

### About ICROFS

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The main purpose of ICROFS is to coordinate and monitor international research in organic food and farming systems in order to achieve optimum benefit from the allocated resources. Further, the aim of ICROFS is to initiate research and create impact of the research results through support and dissemination of high quality research of international standard.

More information at [www.icrofs.org](http://www.icrofs.org)

