

# WINNERS OF EUROPEAN ORGANIC AWARDS 2024

## CONNECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS

By Kim Assaël

[The 23 of September 2024, the EU Organic Awards was granted for the third time](#) to acknowledge excellence in organic production and consumption.

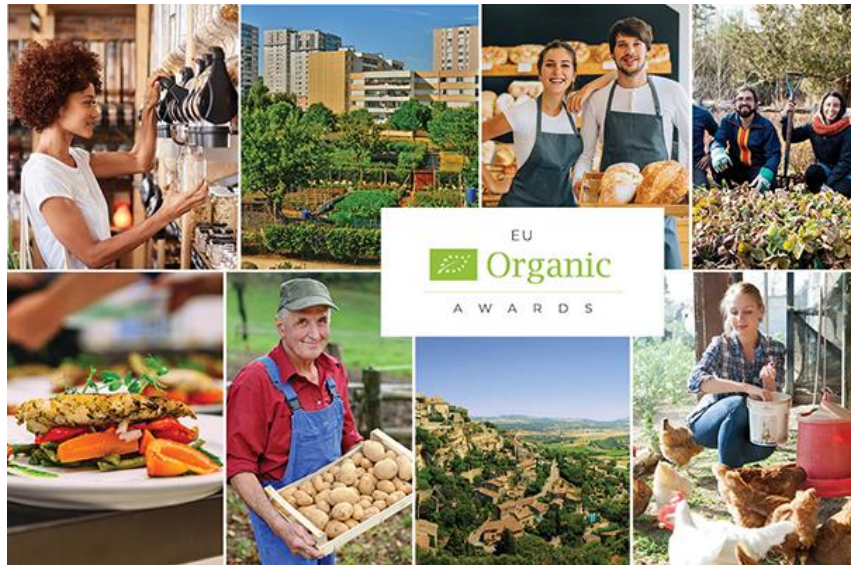
The EU Organic Awards consist of 8 awards spanning across 7 distinct categories. For this 2024 edition the finalists came from 11 countries (Austria, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Belgium, Portugal, Ireland, Slovenia) from across the EU, with [24 candidates shortlisted](#) among nearly 100 applications received.

The winners are various actors from the European organic sector who represent the overall organic's transformative potential in reducing the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and antimicrobials with positive effects on climate, the environment, biodiversity, and animal welfare.

On the 23 of September 2024, as one of a range of activities and events to mark the occasion of the EU organic day 2024, the European Commission has announced the eight winners of the third edition of the Award.

[The Winners 2024 for each category are the following actors.](#)

- **Best organic farmer (female):** [Reinhilde Frech-Emmelmann in Austria](#). Ms Frech-Emmelmann founded [ReinSaat GmbH](#) in 1998 at a biodynamic Demeter farm in St. Leonhard am Hornerwald, Lower Austria. The farm specialises in organic, GMO-free seeds, with over 800 seed-resistant varieties, promoting biodiversity and sustainable farming across Europe.
- **Best organic farmer (male):** [Benny Schöpf in Germany](#). Mr Schöpf is the chief vegetable grower at [Kartoffelkombinat](#), the largest community-supported cooperative farm in Germany. Supplying 2,300 households with organic vegetables weekly, the farm prioritises fair working conditions and sustainable practices, promoting an alternative agricultural economic system.
- **Best organic region:** [South Savo in Finland](#). The region has built a strong organic farming culture through 40 years of collaboration between farmers, researchers, and local authorities. With 200 organic farms, the region promotes sustainable practices, preserving water quality and biodiversity, and is home to the Finnish Organic Research Institute.
- **Best organic city:** [BioStadt Bremen](#) in Germany. With over 30% of farms certified organic, the city promotes sustainable food





systems through community projects and innovative farming initiatives, empowering citizens to drive local change. BioStadt Bremen is working towards converting all municipal catering in schools, nurseries, and hospitals to 100% organic by 2025.

- **Best organic bio-district:** [Sörmland Bio-district](#) in Sweden. Located south of Stockholm, Sörmland has been a pioneer in organic farming since the 1940s, bringing together farms, food processors, restaurants, and more. With 20% of its farmland organic, the district promotes local organic products, sustainable tourism, and awareness of organic food's health benefits.
- **Best organic food processing SME:** [Gino Girolomoni Cooperativa Agricola](#) in Italy. Located in the Marche region, this cooperative specializes in organic pasta production, continuing the mission of its founder. With 80 hectares of organic farmland and renewable energy-powered facilities, it produces 9 million tons of pasta annually, supporting over 300 farmers and 60 local workers.
- **Best organic food retailer:** [SAIFRESC](#) in Spain. Founded by three farmers in 2011, SAIFRESC transitioned to organic farming, revitalizing agriculture in the Huerta de Valencia. With 30 hectares of organic land, they produce 70 organic products, selling 90% of their harvest locally and reducing packaging. The initiative promotes a circular economy and provides educational workshops on organic farming.
- **Best organic restaurant/food service:** a [Kalf & Hansen](#) in Sweden. Founded in 2014 by Rune and Fabian Kalf-Hansen, this restaurant chain offers 100% organic, seasonal Nordic cuisine. With two restaurants, catering services, and organic meals on Swedish trains, Kalf & Hansen prioritize local sourcing, sustainability, and affordable organic meals, building strong relationships with local producers.

The annual European Organic Awards recognizes the most excellent and innovative actors along the value chain in the organic sector, from individual to regional level. Jointly organised by the European Commission, the [European Economic and Social Committee](#), the [European Committee of the Regions](#), [COPA- COGECA](#) and [IFOAM Organics Europe](#) they share inspiring stories of the actors who gained.

In particular, every year the Awards also includes the Organic Bio-districts among the 8 categories of the Prize in consideration of their innovative methodology spread in Europe for twenty years until the adoption in March 2021 of the EU [Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production](#). From the year 2022 the winning Organic Bio-districts included Cilentto in Italy, Idanha-a-nova in Portugal, and [Sörmland Bio-district](#) in Sweden.

They all testify their territorial approach with its transformative potential to build and scale up a more resilient and sustainable agri-food system in Europe and to find out the way how addressing today's pressing challenges: from food security to the biodiversity and climate crises. Organic production combines the best environmental and climate practices, enhances biodiversity and the health of soil and plants. Its fundamental role has also been recognized by the EU, which identified organic production as playing a key role in the achievement of the objectives of the [European Green Deal](#), the [Farm to Fork strategy](#) and the [Biodiversity strategy](#).

Moreover, the [Action Plan](#) adopted intended to stimulate organic production and consumer demand for organic product, and to increase public awareness of the characteristics and benefits of organic production also through the launch of yearly awards recognizing





excellence in the EU's organic value chain, retail sector, food services, food processing SME, organic sustainable territories.

In 2024, with the awareness of implications of organic food on ecosystem and people health, community city projects, initiatives of territorial resources recovery, sustainable farming practices that has increased, the Organic Award gains an additional significance due to the simultaneous presentation of the results of the [“Strategic Dialogue on the future”](#) of agriculture and food in Europe, promoted and organized by the EU Presidency, which guides and indicates the necessary future changes in the common agricultural policy.

It is particularly highlighted the territorial approach of Bio-districts, for its ability to address both the environmental and production challenges of the coming years, and to reconcile agriculture with the protection and regeneration of plant and animal ecosystems. It is rather about the *functional coordination and integration of economic, environmental, and social factors in agricultural production*, as well as all upstream and downstream phases of the entire food chain, including demand, collateral policies, consumer behavior, and life habits.

Today winners are a living proof of a strong and sustainable accessibility and affordability of the organic food (despite certain challenges, notably the high food inflation and rise of energy costs) in the EU which deserves recognition for its contribution to reach the EU 25% target of organic production by 2030. The [EU Commission reports](#) an increase in the share of total organic area in the EU's total utilized agricultural area that rose from 5.9 % to an estimated 10.5 %. This represents (an estimated increase of 7.4 million hectares from 2021 to 2022). In the last few years, the market for organic products has held up remarkably (total EU organic retail sales increased from €38.6 billion in 2019 to €45.0 billion in 2022, with a peak at €46.3 billion in 2021) and the EU is the second largest market for organic products, after the US.

Further information about the candidates, the selection criteria, and the awards in general are available on the [EU Organic Awards webpage](#).

### To know more

[EU Organic Awards webpage](#)

[Winners 2024 for each category](#)

[Action plan for the development of organic production](#)

[Finalists 2024 announced](#)

[Winners 2024 inIFOAM Organics Europe](#)

[European Green Deal](#)

[Farm to Fork strategy](#)

[Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture](#)

