

# Policies, Partnerships and sector organizations driving organic breakthroughs:

## *Lessons from Denmark*

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**Visionary**

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eco / consult

**IFOAM**  
ORGANICS  
INTERNATIONAL



Photo:  
Arla Foods

# Germany: “Organic Strategy 2030” Action Plan released *in november*

- **A Government-led Plan**, developed through consultations with organic actors/research.
- **Full spectrum** addressing entire supply chain: supporting farmers, innovation and market development.
- **Organic as driver & model for transition in all of agriculture.**

“Organic opens up opportunities for the whole of agriculture and the food industry. For me it is also about innovations. Numerous developments in the organic sector are now widely used, going beyond the organic sector.”

-- Cem Özdemir, Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture





# The Netherlands: Organic Strategy from Organic Orgs. as *inspiration* for National Organic Action Plan

- **Organic stakeholders** develop strategy for farm transition, innovation, market development, and public procurement. *Recommend actions for both ministry and private sector actors.*
- **Ministry takes ownership** of actions and goals they consider most impactful and feasible, utilizing existing resources and new. **Gather in a National Organic Action Plan.**
- Organic integrated into **Strategy for sustainable agriculture**



## Groei van biologische productie en consumptie

Biologische landbouw kan in Nederland een belangrijke rol spelen in de transitie naar een duurzame en toekomstbestendige landbouw. Met dit actieplan zetten we als Rijksoverheid de ambitie neer om biologische productie en consumptie fors te laten groeien. De acties zijn een vertrekpunt om samen met ketenpartijen aan de slag te gaan.

15% biologisch landbouwareaal in 2030



### Meer biologische productie



Behouden en uitbreiden van productie



Inzet van de keten



Toegang tot geschikte en betaalbare grond

### Meer kennis en innovatie



Onderzoek



Van elkaar leren



Blijven innoveren

### Meer biologische consumptie en een grotere afzetmarkt



Biologische producten worden bekender



Groter aanbod in meer verkoopkanalen



Betere prijs voor boer en consument



# Active use of Organic Action Plans!

Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark



*No nation has developed a thriving organic farming sector without a national organic policy framework*

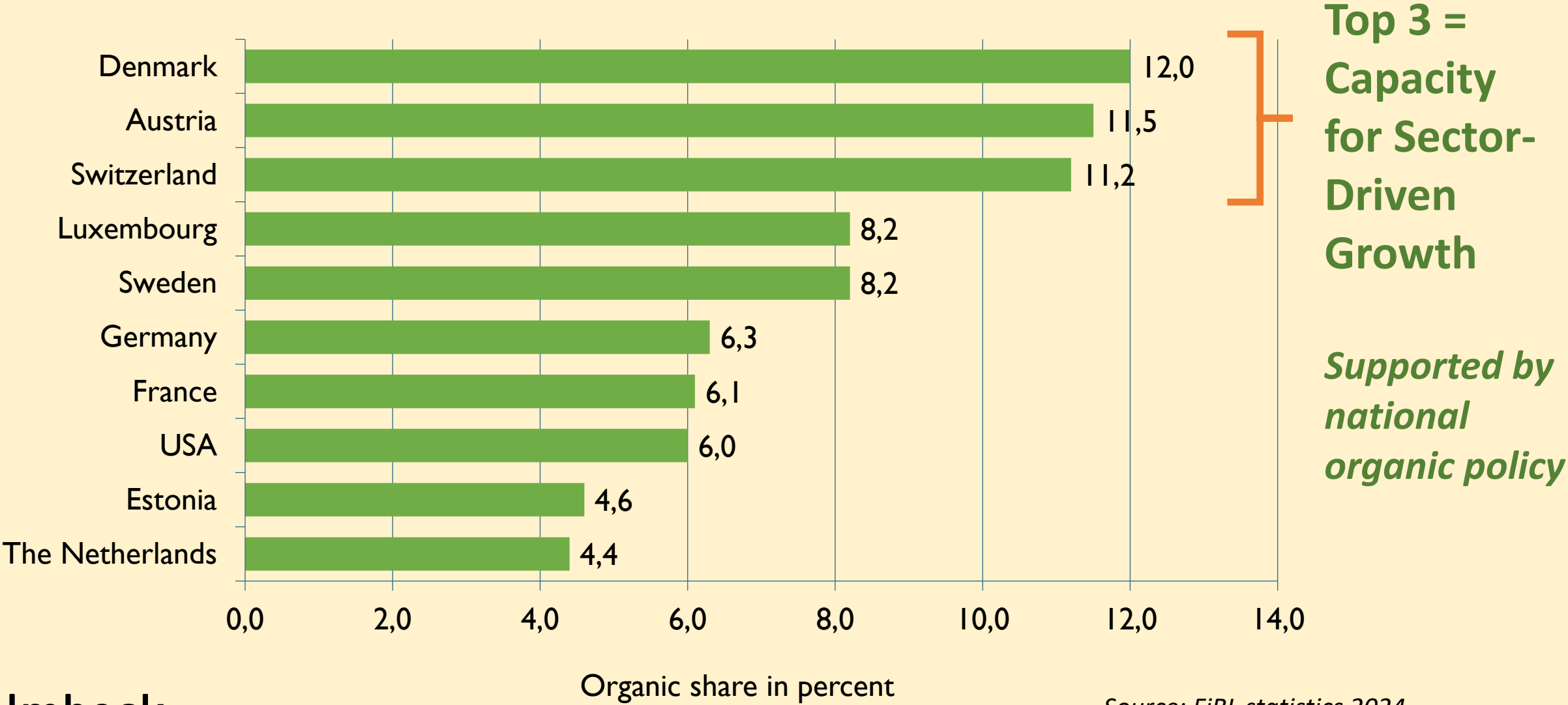
Photo:  
Axel Månsson A/S



Organic Action Plan for Denmark  
Working together for more organics



# Impact from Organic Partnerships and Policy: The ten countries with the highest organic retail sales











## Organic momentum in agriculture

- ✓ Organic area doubled 2007-20  
New goal: 2x again in 2030
- ✓ Eggs (25%) Veggies (30) Milk (13)
- ✓ Organic farmers earn more (8 of last 10 years)
- ✓ Interest from young farmers
- ✓ Organics driving innovation and competitiveness:

“Organic farming is Danish Agriculture’s **strongest** sustainability and value-added concept”  
– Danish Food and Ag Council



# None of this happened on its own! Key drivers for organic growth in Denmark:

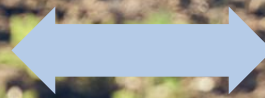
+ Collaboration  
+ Coordination



Policy

Organic NGO  
Capacity

Market  
initiatives







**Embedding organic policy as tool in broad policies for climate, jobs, nature**

**Platform for govt dialogue with organic stakeholders on policy needs/design (Organic Council)**

**Invest in Organic NGO capacity to drive policy implementation in market & fields**

**The "How" of impactful organic policy**

**Key elements for success**

**Powerful enabling role in the ministry  
Strong Organic Unit working through NGOs**

**Active use of Organic Action Plans**

**Balanced Push-Pull:  
Goals & actions for both Production & Market**





Drinking water protection plan  
(Nitrogen, pesticides)

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

Rural Development Programme

Green Public Procurement

Agriculture Strategic Plans

National Climate mitigation/adaptation strategies (NDCs)

***Integrating Organics***  
**as tool in broad national policies**  
**=> where organics *delivers***



# Case: Organic as a pillar of climate policy (NDC)

2021: Danish Climate strategy for Agriculture:  
*2x organic area as climate tool + additional support for organics*

2021: Europe's largest national investment in plant-based foods  
50% targetted to ORGANIC plant-based initiatives

2021: Innovation Center for Organic Farming  
(Organic Denmark and Danish Food & Agriculture Council)

2020: Plant-based Innovationcenter: organic plant-based supply chains  
(Organic Denmark and Vegetarian Society)

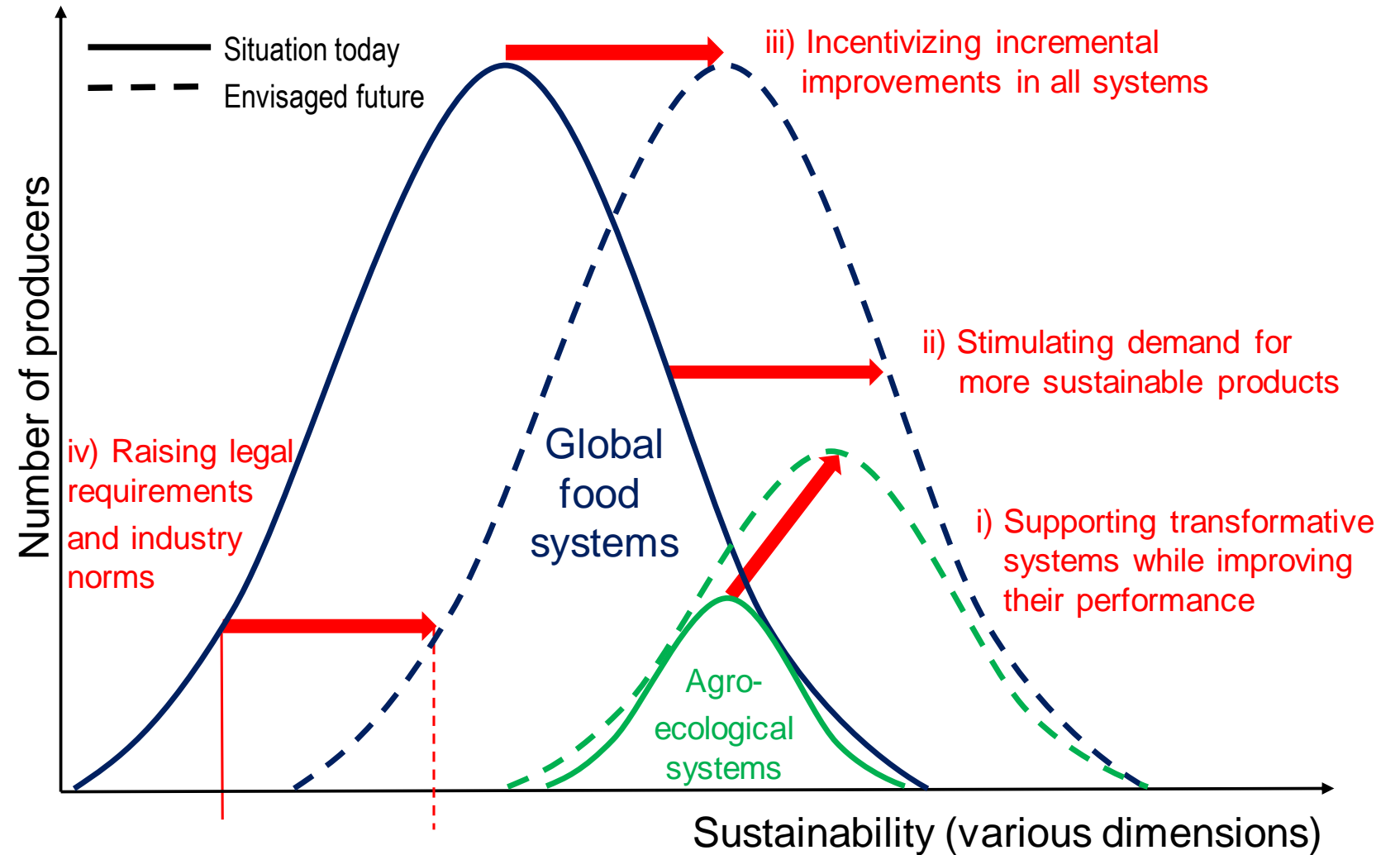
**Organic central in plant-based, low-waste, public meals**



# Policy levers driving maximum impact for sustainability

1) Shifting all farming with regs, incentives.

2) Growing transformative approaches like organic.....and using organic to drive innovation



Eyhorn, F., Muller, A., Reganold, J.P., Frison, E., Herren, H.R., Luttikholt, L., Mueller, A., Sanders, J., Scialabba, N., Seufert, V., Smith, P.  
Sustainability of global agriculture driven by organic farming. *Nature Sustainability* 2 (2019) 253–255.



Powerful enabling  
role in the ministry

Strong Organic Unit,  
institutions

**Enhanced**  
ministry role as:

*Partner, catalyst  
and policy  
innovator for  
upscaling  
organics **through  
other actors.***

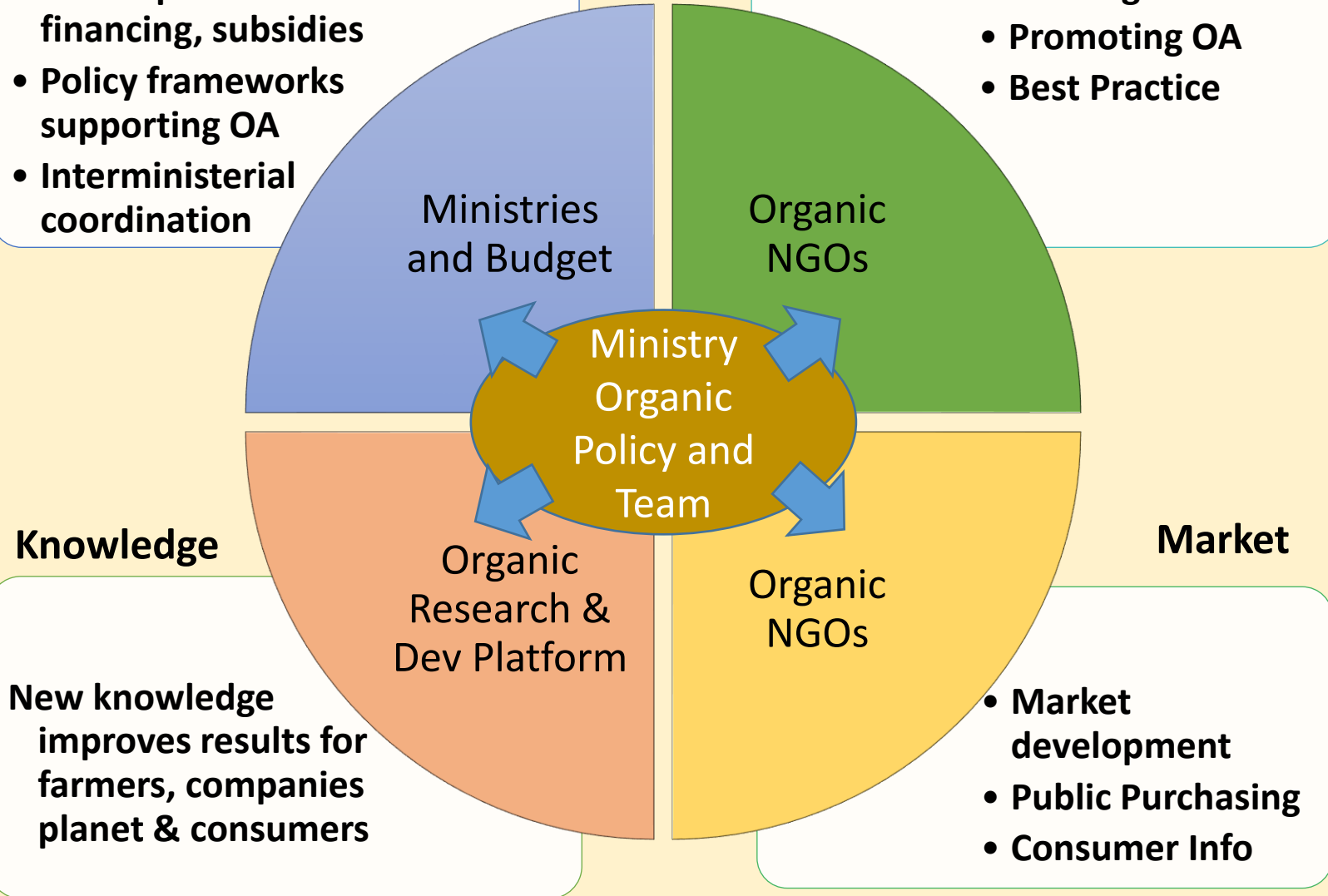
**Enabling  
organic growth.**

### Policy and resources

- Development financing, subsidies
- Policy frameworks supporting OA
- Interministerial coordination

### Farmers

- Training farmers
- Promoting OA
- Best Practice





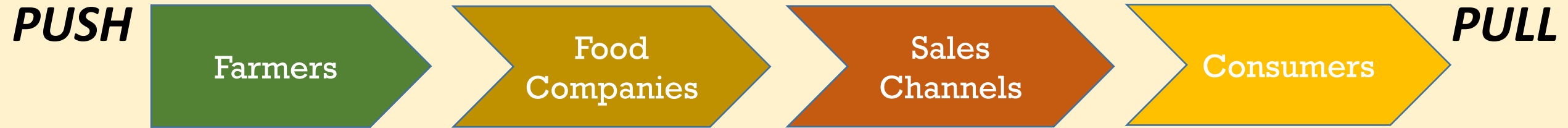
## Balanced Push-Pull: Goals & actions for both Production & Market

- ✓ Organic subsidy
- ✓ Paid Certification
- ✓ Training/Demos
- ✓ Research & Dev
- ✓ Innovation Centre
- ✓ Conversion advice

- ✓ Product development
- ✓ Market info
- ✓ Organic School
- ✓ Supply Chain dev.

### Market Development targeting:

- ✓ Supermarkets
- ✓ Food service
- ✓ Export promotion
- ✓ Local markets
- ✓ Public procurement
- ✓ Consumer awareness



Policies and collaboration targetting every link in the organic supply chain!





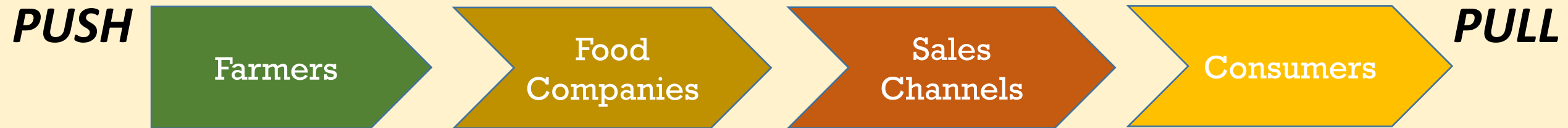
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***In red: Actions implemented via organic associations.  
Reflects a cross-cutting objective of building capacity in  
organic organizations as catalysts***





# Creative financing approaches: Fund for Organic Agriculture (2001)

A powerful, agile policy multi-tool for:

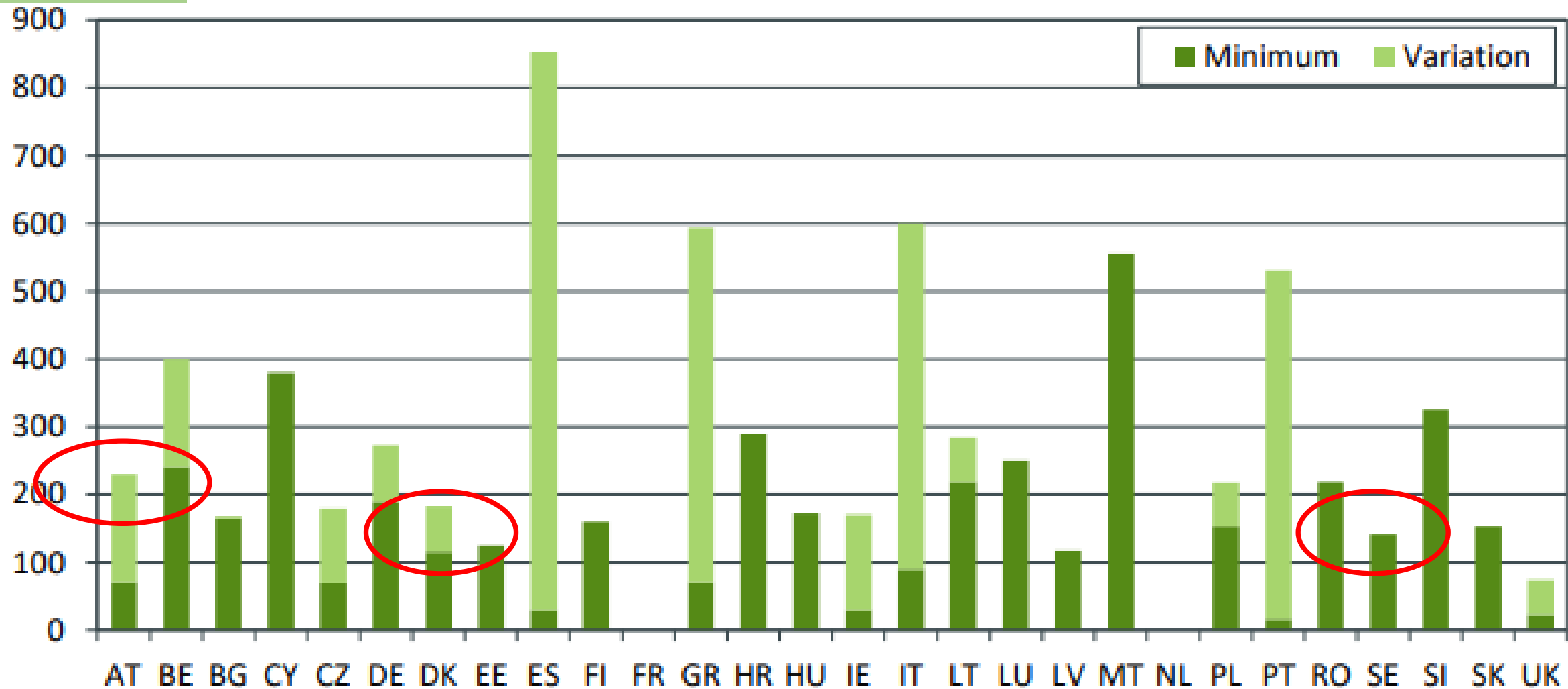
- ✓ Innovation in organic farming
- ✓ Organic advice, best practice
- ✓ Market development

*Photo: Coop Danmark/Søris*



# PUSH MEASURES

## Annual payments for maintenance of arable land, €/ha, 2019



*Organic subsidy typically from repurposed existing subsidies.*

Source: Lampkin, 2022 (Thünen Institute)





**PUSH:**  
Free "Conversion  
checks" motivate  
farmers, debunk myths.

Photo: Naturmælk

*Photo: Joachim Kjeldsen,  
Innovation Centre for  
Organic Farming*





**PUSH: Inspiration from research & colleagues**

✓ **Barn and field schools: Groups of farmers addressing animal health, soil fertility, carbon draw down**



## ***PULL Policies driving market growth***

*Consistent* political support for ***differentiated*** organic market initiatives:

- ✓ Leveraging retail via partnerships
- ✓ Developing farmer-direct sales
- ✓ Export promotions
- ✓ Consumer awareness initiatives  
communicating “the why” of organic

***Small public investments that leverage private resources.***



*Photo: Coop Danmark*

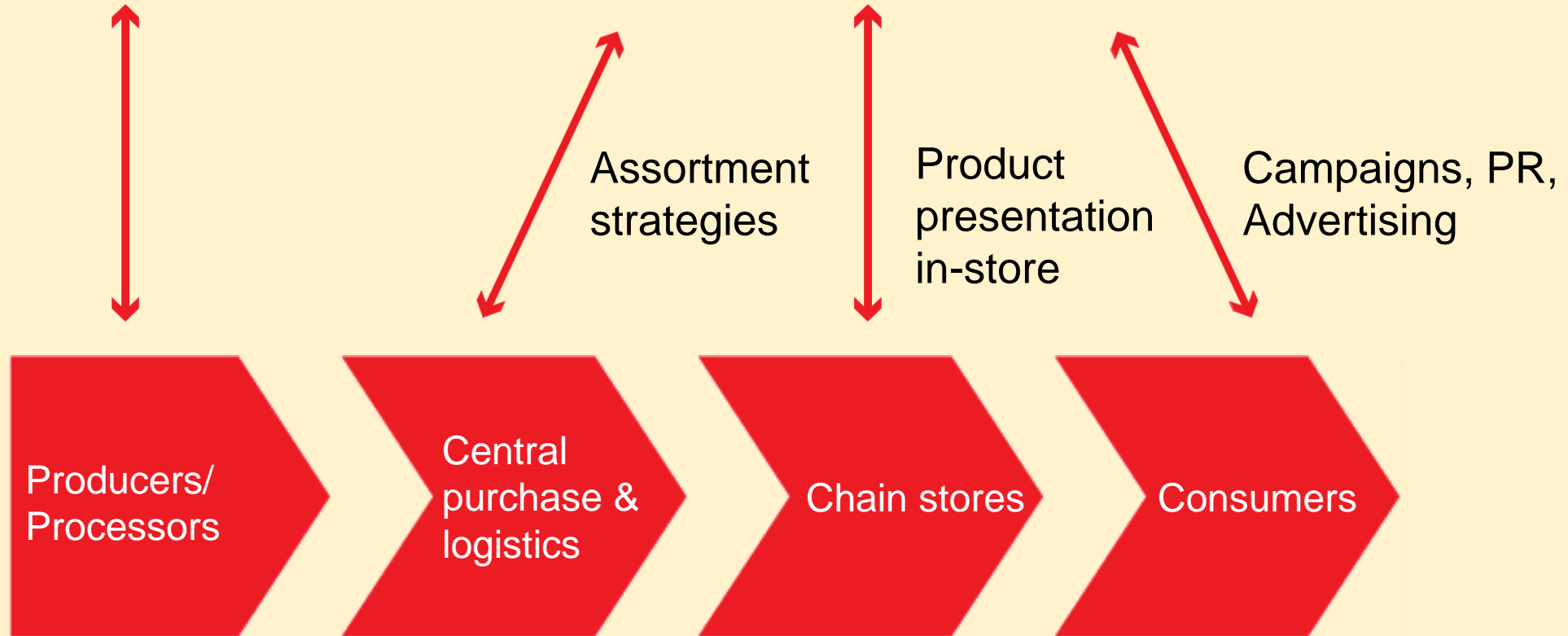


# Policy support for partnerships mobilizing supermarkets



Inspiration  
←→

## Top leadership in retail (strategy)



Making organics *available, visible, affordable and meaningful!*





*Photo: Naturmælk*

Policy support  
helping companies  
succeed

Start-ups working  
professionally with retail and  
food service.

Better Market data

Product development help;  
new value positions

Better basis for:

- ✓ New organic crops,
- ✓ Conversion of large branded farms, and
- ✓ Better prices to farmers



# Policy support for organic sector capacity to communicate “the why” of organics

- ❖ Govt. owned logo => marketing by organic sector
- ❖ Clear, simple positive messaging about the value of organics.
- ❖ Small investments leverage capacity in Retail
- ❖ Unified communications team in organic sector

The collage features various organic marketing messages and the organic logo. The messages are:

- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **ORGANIC FARMERS HELP THE CLIMATE BECAUSE THEY HAVE FEWER LIVESTOCK PER HECTARE**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **ORGANIC LIVESTOCK ARE FREE-RANGE ANIMALS**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **ORGANIC FARMERS HELP THE CLIMATE BECAUSE THEY USE LESS FERTILIZER?**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **ORGANIC LIVESTOCK HAVE PLENTY OF SPACE AND CAN MOVE AROUND FREELY**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **THERE ARE 30% MORE WILD ANIMALS AND PLANT IN AND AROUND ORGANIC FIELDS**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **ORGANICS CONTRIBUTE WITH CLIMATE-FRIENDLY SOLUTIONS**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **ORGANICS PROTECT NATURE?**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **ORGANICS ARE RECOMMENDED BY THE UN AGAINST FOOD SHORTAGES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?**
- ORGANICS ARE A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE BECAUSE** | **YOU PROTECT OUR GROUNDWATER WHEN BUYING ORGANIC?**

The organic logo is a red stylized 'O' with a crown inside. Other icons include a pig, a cow, a pear, a bird, a pig, wheat stalks, a cloud, and a faucet.



Mobilize *local, state and provincial* policy:

*Incentivized* by national policy

Achieving *provincial & local* goals for climate, water quality, jobs & public meals



**LØFT**  
**VERDENSMÅLENE**

Kommuner har succes med økologi som redskab

FORÅR 2019

ØKOLOGISK landsforening

ØKOLOGIEN HJÆLPER KOMMUNERNE MED AT JAGTE FN'S VERDENSMÅL:

- STORKØKKENER: SUND, KLIMAVENTLIG MAD
- RENT DRIKKEVAND TIL BORGERNE
- ØGET VÆKST OG FLERE LOKALE JOB
- PLEJE AF NATURAREALER
- SKOLEHAVER MED ØKO-VIDEN
- KLIMAHANDLINGSPLANER PÅ GÅRDENE

STORKØKKEN I ODENSE KOMMUNE MED ØKO-SØLV-MÆRKE RYKKER PÅ FN'S VERDENSMÅL:

**” ØKOLOGIEN ER DET RIGTIGE, HVIS VI SKAL PASSE BEDRE PÅ KLODEN**

VERDENSMÅL for bæredygtig udvikling



# Teaming up with cities

- ✓ Reducing CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions through Climate Schools and farm-based climate action plans
- ✓ Partnerships with 35 cities targeting organic conversion and free conversion checks to protect local nature & drinking water supplies.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



15 LIFE ON LAND



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



*Photo: Linda Rosager Duve,  
Innovation Centre for Organic Farming*





**Public  
Procurement as  
driver for organic  
growth**

*Photo: Copenhagen House of Food*





# Public Procurement success: mobilize Policy, Market and Sector capacity

## Political support

1. **National goal:** 60 % organic in all public kitchens.
2. **Financing:** Support for cities for education in the kitchens.
3. **National organic cuisine label:** documentation and pride!

## Organic Sector mobilisation

1. **Guarantee for supply –** Collaboration in supply chain.
2. **Organic Schools for Food Service Companies.**
3. **Education** and motivation in the kitchens





## Holistic, transformative sustainability agenda!

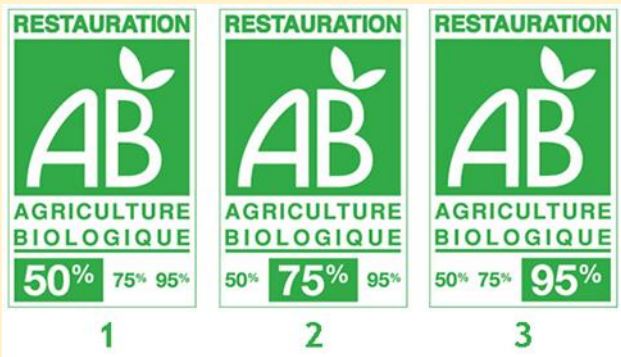
- ✓ Less meat
- ✓ More greens; root veggies
- ✓ Food in season
- ✓ Reduced waste

Healthy, organic, climate friendly, meals *within* the same budget

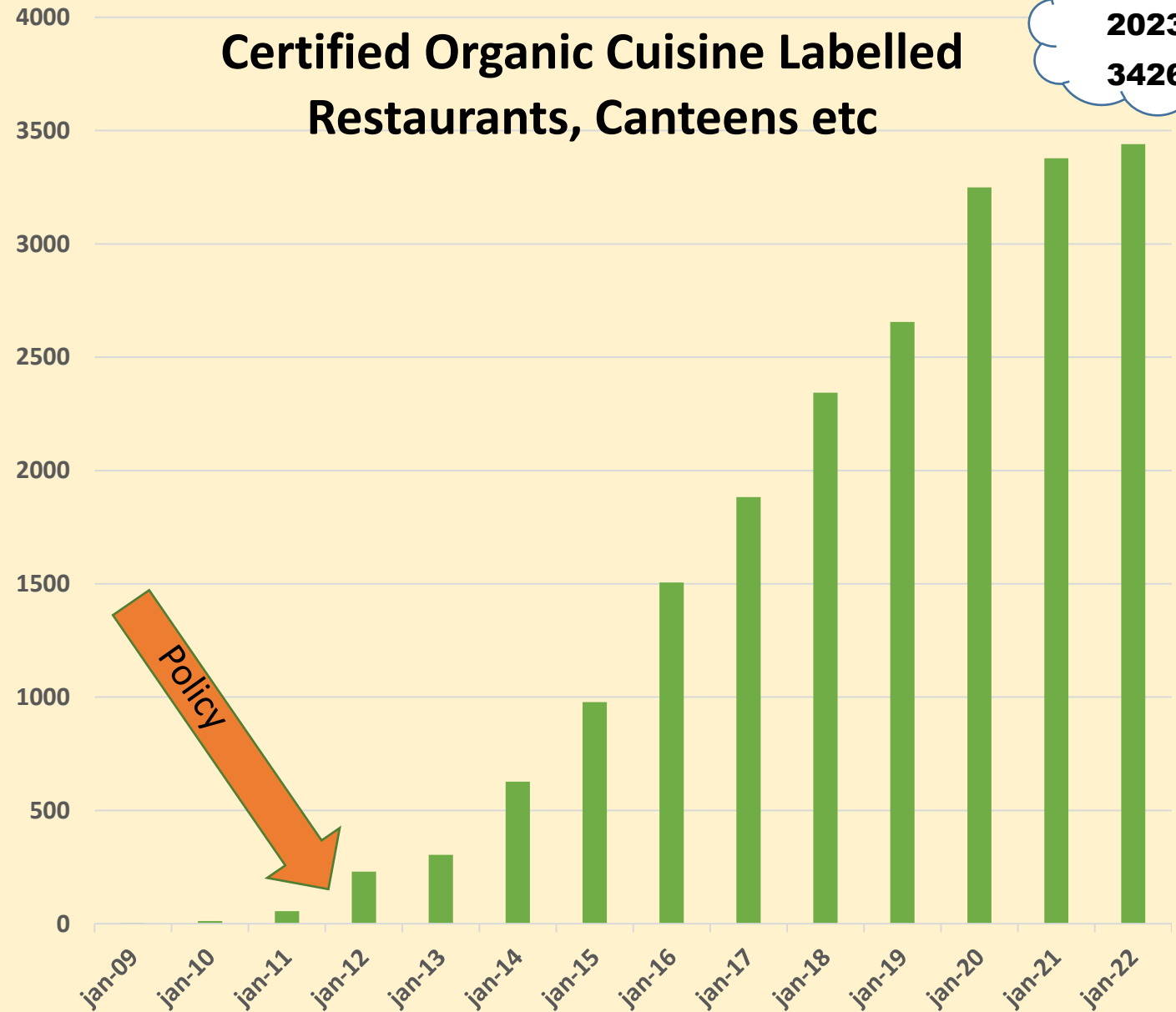




# THE ORGANIC CUISINE LABEL



holmbeck  
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Source: Fødevarestyrelsen



**Best practice in Organic Public Procurement: The case of Denmark**

*A successful business case for organic public procurement. With useful lessons for other nations.*



Author: Paul Holmbeck<sup>1</sup>

December 2020

<sup>1</sup> Director at Holmbeck Eco Consult, more information [here](#)

Policy best practice in  
Organic Public Procurement:

The case of Denmark  
Here

WHO report on best technical  
practice in organic public tenders  
Here

Photo: Axel Månsson A/S



# Building organic momentum.

- *Develop a strong **National Organic Action Plan** with goals, budgets & actions for both organic farming and market development*
- ***Integrate** organics into broader policies for climate, biodiversity and rural livelihoods, and into regional/city policy.*
- ***Create** an inclusive stakeholder platform to advise the ministry.*
- ***Use policy to build capacity** in organic organisations as catalysts for market growth & farm transition*



Photo: Aarstiderne





Thank you for listening!

More info: [paulholmbeck.com](http://paulholmbeck.com)

[ifoam.bio](http://ifoam.bio)

