

Organic agriculture as a pillar of food security

1. What does food security mean for the Netherlands?

Food security is conventionally understood through four dimensions: availability, access, utilisation and stability. Increasing agricultural output can improve availability, but does not necessarily improve food security if food remains unaffordable or if production depends on vulnerable external inputs and degrades its natural resource base.

For the Netherlands, this means that **food security is not only a question of production volumes, but also of safeguarding the natural resource base and reducing critical dependencies on external inputs. Organic farming can be a key pillar of this strategy.**

By reducing dependency on synthetic, fossil-fuel based fertilisers and pesticides while strengthening soil fertility, nutrient cycling and biodiversity, organic farming contributes to long-term production capacity and resilience. Developing the domestic market for Dutch organic food is equally important: production without sufficient demand does not provide a viable transition pathway for farmers. This is consistent with the EU [Vision for Agriculture and Food](#) and the Commission's [Organic rulebook fit for the future](#), which explicitly recognise organic production as a pathway to Europe's strategic autonomy by reducing external-input dependencies, strengthening resilient territorial supply chains and supporting robust and sustainable agri-food systems.

The Netherlands already has an important policy foundation for this transition: the Dutch [Organic Action Plan](#) aims to increase organic agricultural land from 4% in 2022 to 15% by 2030 by developing production and consumer demand in parallel.

2. What would a resilient Dutch agricultural and food system look like?

A food-secure Netherlands does not need to produce every agricultural commodity domestically. But resilience requires avoiding excessive dependence on a small number of suppliers, vulnerable transport routes or imported external inputs.

For crop production, this means maintaining strong yields while increasing rotations, legumes, nutrient recycling, soil fertility and biological pest management.

For livestock, the relevant question is what animals eat. Ruminants can convert grass from land unsuitable for arable production, while pigs and poultry can utilise food-industry by-products. Greater reliance on these resources and reduced use of imported protein and human-edible crops as feed for animals increase food security.

Organic farming provides a practical model within this transition. Improving productivity remains essential, of course, particularly in a land-scarce country such as the Netherlands. As recommended in the Dutch Organic Action Plan, research, innovation and knowledge exchange should continue to improve yields and resource-use efficiency in organic systems.

At the same time, a greater share of protein crops should be used directly for human consumption. The [EU Protein Action Plan](#), part of the European Commission's Vision for Agriculture and Food, explicitly links protein diversification to food security and strategic

autonomy. Dutch policy can accelerate this transition by supporting domestic protein-crop production, processing and consumer demand through a coordinated national plant-based action plan. Denmark's **National Plant-Based Action Plan** and the EUR 170 million fund that supports it, provide a model where 50% of funds target organic initiatives, doubling up on impact for environment, food security and strategic autonomy.

Policy recommendations for the Netherlands

1. **Integrate organic farming as a pillar of wider food-security and transition policy.** Include organic farming more systematically into policy packages for climate, nitrogen, CAP, regional development, and for food security and strategic autonomy.
2. **Strengthen implementation of the Organic Action Plan.** Establish a platform for systematic monitoring by government and the organic sector to assess progress towards the 15% target; identify barriers and invest in both “push and pull” measures supporting farmer conversion and market development.
3. **Reduce strategic input dependencies while enhancing productivity and protecting productive resources.** Reduce input requirements through a transition towards organic farming and other agroecological practices. Invest in breeding, agronomy, nutrient recycling, biological pest control, precision farming technologies and knowledge that maintain and improve sustainable productivity.
4. **Adopt and finance a national Plant-Based Action Plan, with a strong organic pillar.** Support recommendations (launched on 10 September) for a Dutch Plant-based Action Plan to increase Dutch production and consumption of plant proteins for human food, targeting minimum 1/3 of investments towards organic initiatives.
5. **Build markets for resilient Dutch food production.** Strengthen demand for Dutch organic and plant-rich food through new investments in market development and mobilization of public procurement, as recommended in a strategic market development plan from organic sector organisations earlier this year.

Conclusion

The central food-security challenge facing the Netherlands is how to maintain sufficient, affordable and nutritious food supplies while reducing dependencies and safeguarding the natural resources on which future production depends.

Organic farming can be an important pillar of this strategy. It combines reduced dependency on external inputs with practices that protect the productive resource base, while R&D investments continually improve its productivity. The Netherlands already has a framework for expanding organic production and markets through its Organic Action Plan and 15% ambition. Strengthening its implementation and adopting a Plant-based Action Plan are indispensable tools in a strategy for Dutch food security and strategic autonomy.

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