

Organic Agriculture and Food Industry in Austria – attitudes, wishes, expectations and knowledge of young people and young adults

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Teenagers and young adults shape the future development of the organic sector through their behavior, their expectations and their opinions on organic agriculture and food supply. In the present study, young people (teenagers, between 15-19 years and young adults, between 20-25 years of age) from Austria were surveyed (N 1008) concerning their attitudes towards agriculture and food production, their consumption and purchasing behavior, their wishes and expectations as well as their knowledge on organic farming and food production.

Overall, the study shows a high respect and appreciation of young Austrian people for the organic sector. Those participants who self-identify as eating healthy diets, consuming little amounts or no meat and less fast food, and those who like to cook, showed the highest positive values. High percentages of interviewees self-identify as "eating healthy" and "like to cook". The "Intensive-Organic-Consumer-group" is best informed about organic regulations and they have the highest expectations of the organic farming and the food industry. At the same time,

they show the highest willingness to pay higher prices for organic-products. The following aspects of organic farming are particularly important for young people: 1) free range housing in organic livestock farming; 2) no child labor, 3) fair trade/production and 4) strict controls in the organic food importing sector; 5) regional origin of foodstuff; 6) grazing of cattle, sheep and goats; 7) protection of soil, water and environment in organic crop production; 8) freshness and quality of imported products; 9) animal welfare and animal protection as well as 10) the natural taste of organic food.

According to the data, it can be assumed that the organic market in Austria will continue to grow. 60% of the teenagers and young adults indicate the willingness to consume more organic products in future. In contrast only 4% suggested to "decrease" and 2% to "significantly decrease" organic food consumption. 81% of the teenagers and young adults said that the organic sector should be further developed in Austria. Further detailed results are available at www.raumberg-gumpenstein.at/bio-news.