

# ENSA contribution consultation

## Organic Action Plan

There is a consensus among the scientific community on the needs to rebalance our current dietary patterns to consume less animal protein and more plant-based protein<sup>1</sup>. By offering consumers tasty, convenient and nutritionally relevant alternatives, the plant-based foods industry has a role to play towards a more sustainable food consumption. This is true for conventional plant-based food products, and even more so for organic plant-based food products.

Consumers who are seeking to adopt a healthier and more sustainable diet are more likely to look for both organic and/or plant-based foods. For instance, the organic plant-based drinks such as soy, almond, rice and other nuts- or cereals-based drinks represent 20-25% of the total plant-based drinks market in Europe (in comparison to the organic cow's milk segment representing 3% of the total EU milk production<sup>2</sup>).

We believe that consumer demand is the key to attain the 25% organic production target set in the Farm to Fork Strategy. But to attract consumers, organic food products need to be tasty, affordable, convenient and nutritionally relevant. We support the views expressed by the broader organic sector on ways to make organic food products more accessible and more affordable for consumers. We would however like to focus our own comments on the need to ensure that organic products can be as convenient and as nutritionally relevant as conventional food products.

In particular, it is essential that organic plant-based food products can be made using a wide variety of (organic) ingredients to meet consumer expectations in terms of texture, taste and nutritional profile. For instance, since the addition of nutrients in organic food is prohibited, plant-based foods manufacturers need to be allowed to use and have access to agricultural ingredients which are naturally rich in calcium, such as the red algae *Lithothamnium*, to offer consumers an organic product similar to the conventional one from a nutritional perspective. Ensuring the continued use of functional food ingredients is a must-have to make organic food products at least as attractive as the conventional equivalent.

Increased consumption of organic plant-based foods will be good for consumer health, for the environment and for the organic farming sector. Organic agricultural materials for plant-based drinks are sourced directly from organic farmers (in the case of organic soybeans, 100% sourced from EU farmers), with contracts running over 1 to 3 years. Growing plant protein for the food market brings economic benefits for farmers<sup>3</sup>, even more so in the organic sector where an organic premium is paid on top. Supporting EU farmers to grow more (organic) plant protein is an objective of the EU which the plant-based food sector fully supports and contributes to through local programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> The EAT-Lancet [report](#) *Our Food in the Anthropocene: Healthy Diets From Sustainable Food Systems* (January 2019)

<sup>2</sup> EU agricultural market [brief](#) *Organic farming in the EU* March 2019.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission's [report](#) *on the development of plant proteins in the European Union*, November 2018

## About ENSA

The European Plant-based Foods Association (ENSA) represents the interests of plant-based food manufacturers in Europe. ENSA is an association of internationally operating companies, ranging from large corporations to small, family-owned businesses with an annual turnover of around €1 billion. ENSA members produce high-quality plant-based alternatives to dairy and meat products. Since its establishment in 2003, ENSA has been raising awareness about the role of plant-based diet in moving towards more sustainable and healthier food consumption patterns.