

European Committee of the Regions
EU Organic Awards Organizing

Brussels

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's-Hertogenbosch, 12 mei 2023

Ref: CvB / 2305035

Dear Commission,

On behalf of the Executive Board of HAS green academy we would like to offer and show our support for the application of the province of Noord-Brabant regarding the Best Organic Region Award.

The region of Noord-Brabant is known for his high food and feed productivity. Which strongly developed after World War II in a highly productive area to feed our inhabitants. Therefore this area is known for his intensive farming and high production yields. For some decades these high production targets, cost price driven, were seen of higher importance the environmental impact it had on the region and even further. This had led to the loss of biodiversity, water and nitrogen pollution, soil degradation and animal welfare issues. The need to change this system is necessary.

The province of Noord-Brabant has set ambitious and concrete goals to achieve this change towards the future. They included all stakeholders, like primary production, processing facilities, handling, storing and transportation possibilities, but also schools and universities. Since a system transition is needed to transfer the food production into a sustainable, circular agricultural system, with opportunities sustainable businesses.

Organic agriculture is known for its sustainable and circular method. The system is certified, controlled and known all over Europe. Which makes it a perfect opportunity in the transition. The province has set clear and ambitious goals for organic production. By incorporating all stakeholders a network of businesses and organizations are connecting to share knowledge, skills and business opportunities with each other. This vision and ambition is of great importance and inspiration for other provinces, National Government, businesses and organizations.

HAS traditionally provides higher education on agriculture, food and environment. But last year we had our name changed to HAS green academy. Agro is still important, but healthy food and an healthy environment even so. Together with the different stakeholders in Brabant we are developing an organic course to incorporate in our students program.

Is the province of Noord-Brabant already Europe's *best organic region*? No, it isn't. Not yet. It isn't leading with the highest percentage of organic production. It isn't leading in the number of organic farms of productions. But it is willing to change – we are willing to change! The province of Noord-Brabant is supporting, stimulating and connecting all stakeholders to make the change actually happen, therefore we kindly ask you to take the province of Noord-Brabant into consideration for the award of Best Organic Region.

Yours sincerely,
Executive Board HAS green academy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reggy van der Wielen', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Reggy van der Wielen