

How to integrate basic ethical values of organic agriculture in standards and the EU regulation? A proposal for procedures

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The context

- Organic agriculture is by tradition value based
- All stakeholders including consumers have value expectations
- Standards are almost a virtual contract on delivery of values
- Concerns in the organic sector
 - lack of grounding in core values ('conventionalisation')
 - discrepancy expectation/practise
- Revision of the EU regulation

Basic aims

- Identify core values of organic agriculture
- Compare with standards and current practise
 - Which values are realised/not realised?
- What is the role of ethical values in standards and regulations?
- What procedures should be used for decision-making about values?

Identify value base

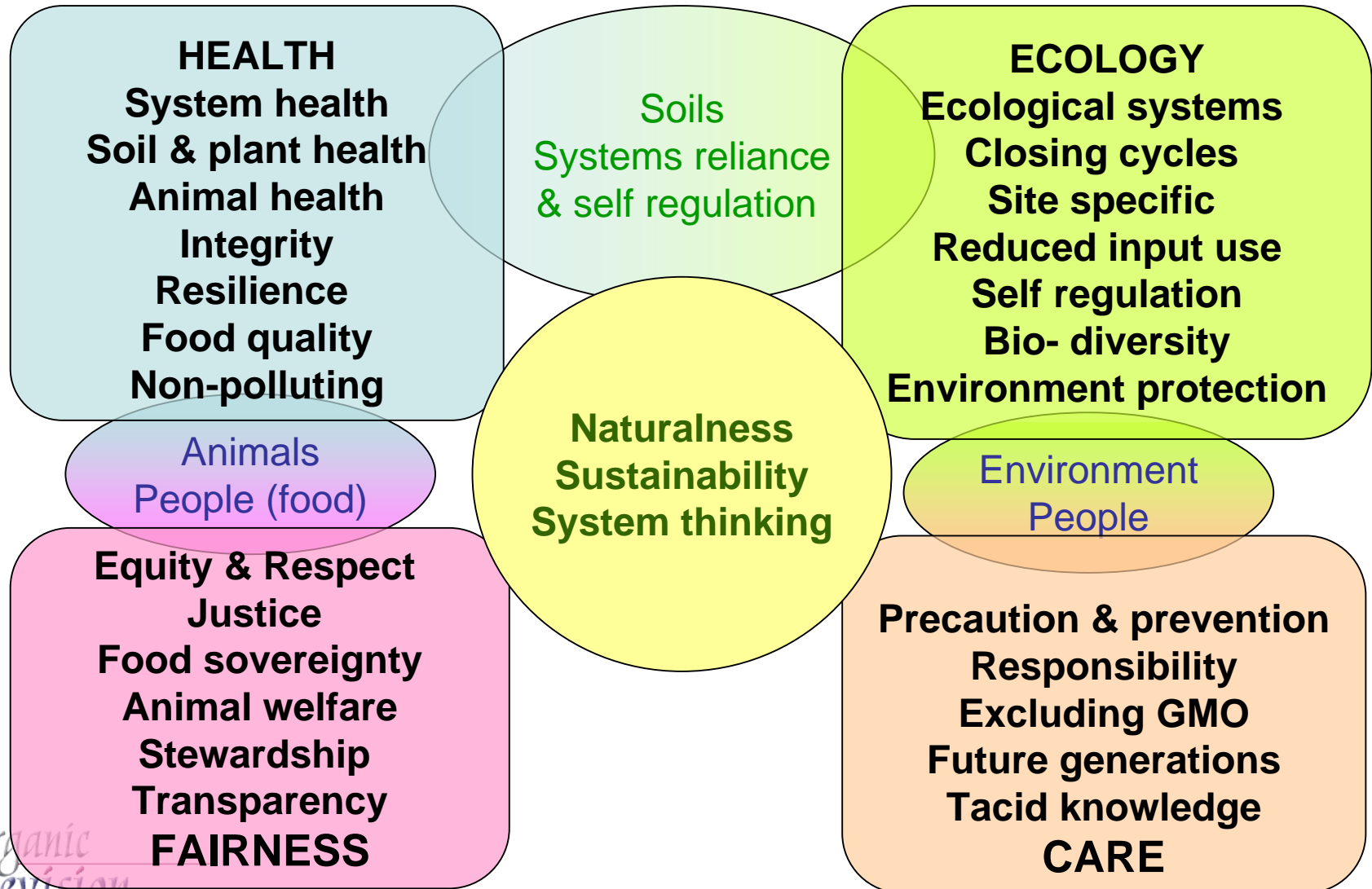
Core organic values are mentioned:

- Textbooks, historical documents
- Empirical research of motives and values
 - Important values to stakeholders
 - Market research
 - Identify principles
- IFOAM principles (wide consultation, movement)

Increasing ethical or 'normative'

Guiding practise, formulating ethical, respect for a range of fundamental values, coherence

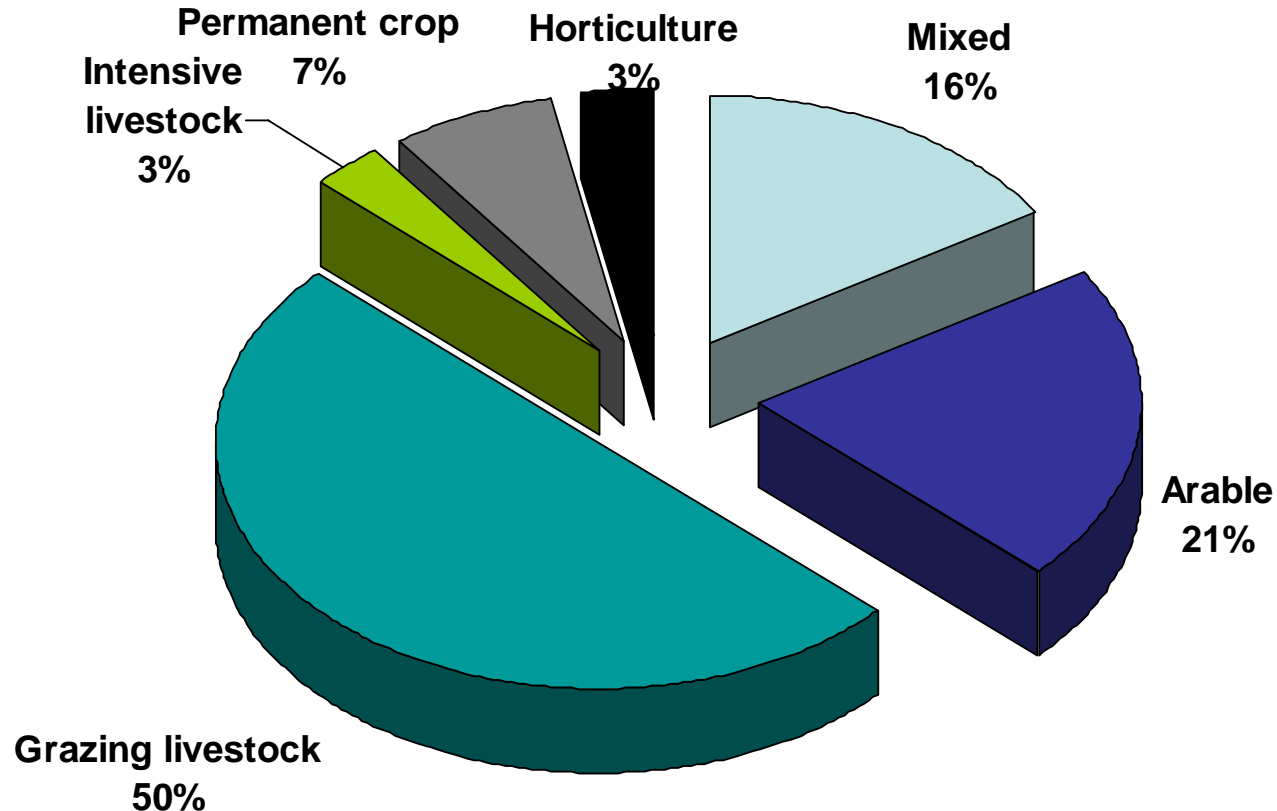
Values in IFOAM principles



Compare with current practise

- Concerns about **intensification**
 - higher use of production factors, in particular external inputs and resources like energy, water
 - negative impact on environment
 - EEA indicators
- Concerns about **dependency** from non-organic inputs
 - contamination, integrity
- Data sources
 - Statistics, certification data, derogation request
 - Case descriptions

Specialisation of 550 organic farms



Source: Nieberg et al., (2005)

Organic livestock: EU 15

- Higher uptake among livestock producing farms
- **2.3 %** of total livestock in EU certified in 2003
 - IT, SE, DE > 0.4 m LU
 - UK and FR > 0.3 m LU
 - AT, ES > 0.2 m LU
- **Dairy:** 40 % of organic herd in UK and DE
- **Other cattle:** 25% in AT, IT, DK
- **Pigs:** only 0.4% of all – DE, FR, IT, UK
- **Poultry:** France and UK

Intensity / dependency cases

- Pigs and poultry in NL
 - No limit on use of **external organic feed** (>90%)
 - **Non-organic** feeds are still in use
 - Organic concentrate feed demand higher than supply
 - Feed is transported over long distances or further requests for derogations
- Arable production (NL)
 - Up 75% of N from **non-organic sources**
 - Non-organic manure limited by 170 kg/ha
 - Other N input (e.g. vinasse) not covered
- Other animal producers in DK
 - Reliance (dependency) on **non-organic straw** for bedding
- All descriptions comply with EU regulation 2091/91
- Reducing *non-organic* inputs (e.g. feed) does not reduce reliance on *external* inputs

Practise compared with values

HEALTH

System health
Soil & plant health
Animal health*
Integrity
Resilience
Food quality
Non-polluting*

conflicts

ECOLOGY

Ecological systems*
Closing cycles
Site specific
Reduced input use*
Self regulation
Bio- diversity
Environment protection

conflicts

Equity & **Respect**
Justice
Food sovereignty
Animal welfare
Stewardship
Transparency
FAIRNESS

conflicts

Precaution & prevention
Responsibility
Excluding GMO
Future generations
Tacit knowledge
CARE

?

Standards and values

- Most standards don't state values
- Many (incl. 2092/91) reflect only some values
- Focus on those that are easy to audit
- European standard setting bodies should aim for **harmonising the values** behind the rules
 - Build on four principles of organic agriculture
 - Basis for harmonising rules and flexibility
 - Strengthen consumer trust in organic labels
- Communication about organic values (principles) and interpretation

Procedure for integrating values

- **Integrating values brings uncertainty**
 - Values are *per se* in need of interpretation
 - There is no unambiguous, clear interpretation of the core organic values
- **Process (*how to make decisions*) and content (*what values*) matter**
 - Procedural ethics: the *ideal* process to arrive at the morally right answer
 - Other experiences of ethical dialogue
 - Organic could act as example

Where are procedures relevant?

- 1. General rules for decision-making in relation to ethical values**
- 2. Consolidation of core organic value base in standards and regulations**
- 3. Implementing values in the rules**

1. Rules for decision-making

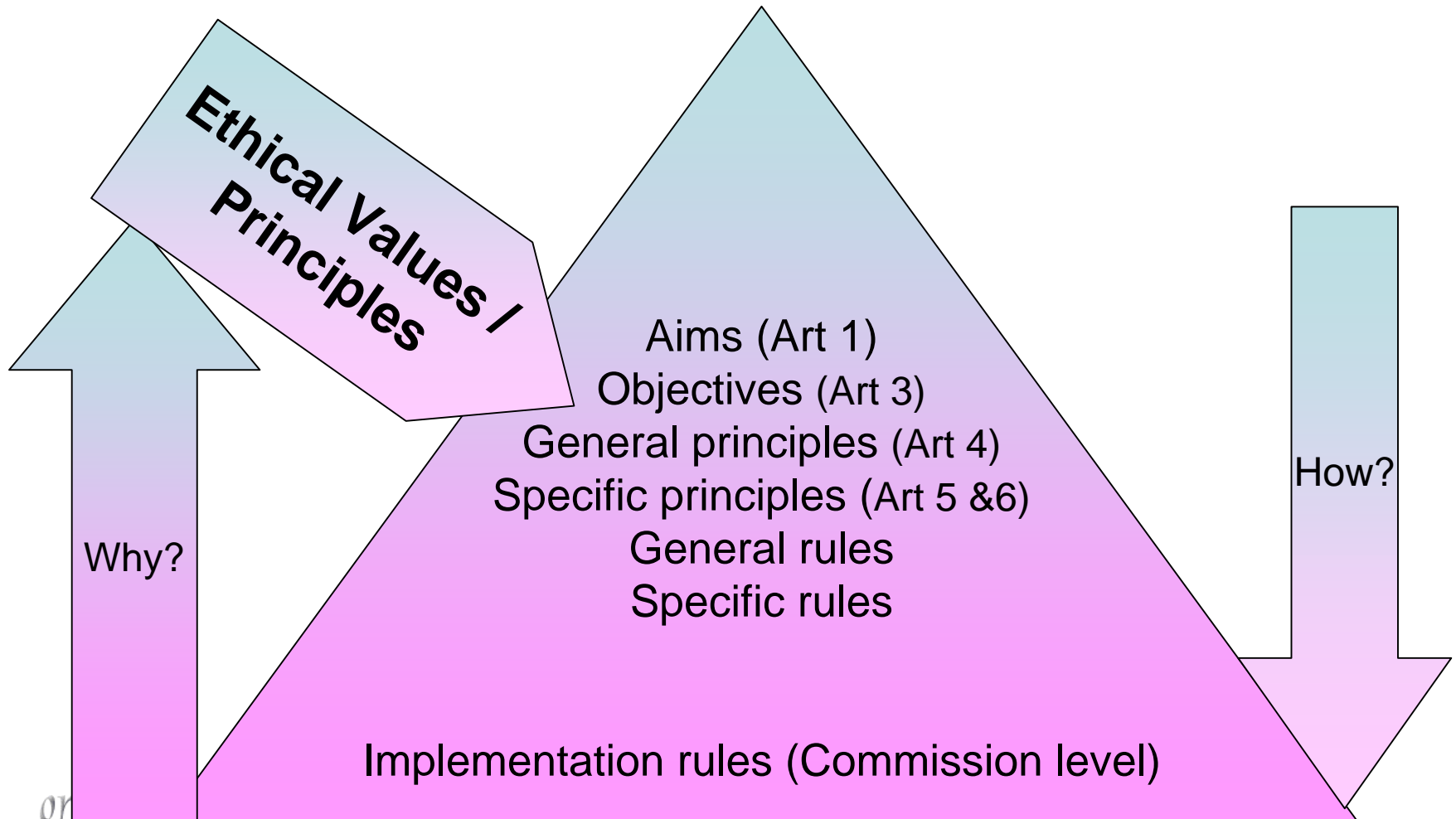
- Dealing with **discrepancies & heterogeneity**
- Different models of democratic processes:
 - Election/voting by majority
 - Participation by involvement
 - **Democracy by deliberation**
- Involve **relevant stakeholders**
 - Procedural ethics: The right decision or moral justification can be best be developed among those involved
 - Connects well with traditions in the organic sector

5 elements of ethical dialogue

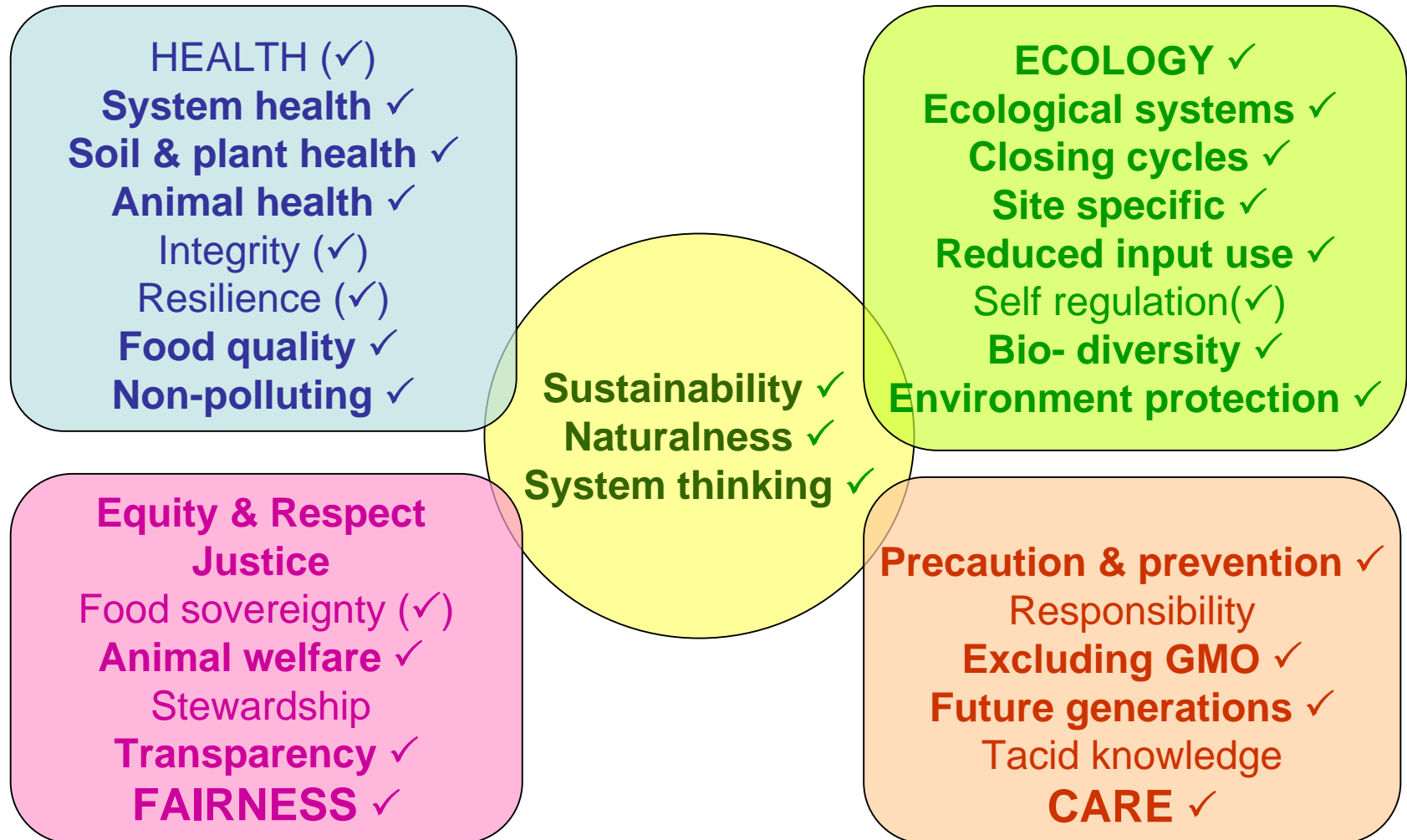
1. Respect for the discussion partners
2. Respect for arguments and emotions
- 3. Context sensitivity**
- 4. Developing common understanding or shared picture**
- 5. Relating the theory (values) to practise**

Guidelines for decision-making in relation to values in organic regulation and standards

2. Consolidating values



Values taken up EU Revision



3. Important remaining decision

- Implementing values in the rules
 - Taking values seriously implies implementing them in the rules
 - EU revision implementation rules (Annexes)
- Interpretation of core values
 - How to deal with conflicting interpretations
 - Consider organic values in input approval
 - Self-regulation of the organic sector

Integrating values requires procedures

- Values (also organic ones) are ambiguous
- Working with uncertainty, different perspectives potential conflicts (culture, language)
- Representation of relevant stakeholders (deliberative democratic process)
- Open and transparent process
- The rules of stakeholder participation should be clearly and widely communicated
 - EU advisory committee with sector representation
- Examples from/for ethical dialogue

Conclusions

- Regulators should be (and are) recognising the value tradition of organic farming
- Current practise and many existing standards do not consider all values
 - ecological system thinking, social, fairness
- Aim for **EU value harmonisation**
 - health, ecology, fairness and care
- The **challenge** is implementing the values in rules (EU revision of Annexes)
 - Bring together **ethical values** and their interpretation in the **practise** leading to decision (common understanding, context sensitive)
 - Role for independent expert committee with ethicists