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## MEMBER

# PFN HESSEN

**Living Lab** PFN HESSEN | Germany



Praxisforschung im  
ökologischen  
Land- & Gemüsebau

In this network, professionals from agricultural practice, agricultural advisory services, and research collaborate as equal partners. Together, we address questions and topics from organic farming practices, developing research projects with and for farmers.

## Aim

Our aim is to develop and establish practical innovations through joint research projects that will further develop organic farming.

## Background information

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The development and establishment of the PFN Hessen is part of the Organic Action Plan Hessen 2020-2025 and is funded by the Hessian Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (HMLU). The Association of Organic Farming in Hessen (VÖL) e.V. is the network's project management organisation and has been coordinating the establishment of the network since 2021.

## Activities

- Arable farming: Influence of three tillage methods and different catch crop mixtures on humus build-up and nitrogen retention in the soil-plant system.
- Vegetable Farming: Effect of compost or manure in combination with catch crops on soil water holding capacity and humus build-up.

## Methods, stakeholder engagements and tools

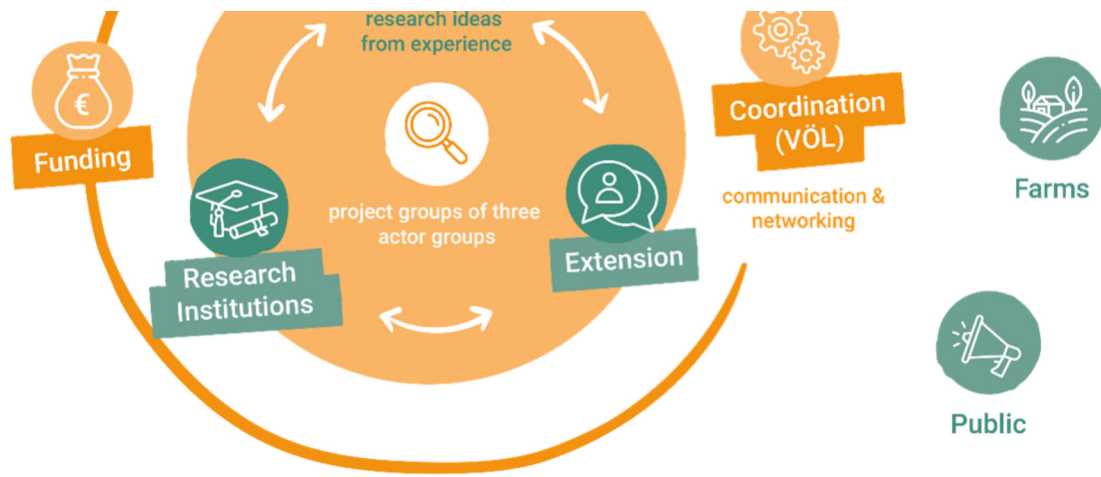
### Cooperation

The **“Netzwerke Ökokompost Hessen” (NÖK)** <sup>→</sup> It serves the sustainable networking of stakeholders for the production and application of quality-assured biowaste and green waste <sub>↙</sub>composts in organic agriculture at all levels. <https://noek-hessen.de/>

### Methods and tools

A well-structured organisation of the five groups of stakeholders is crucial for the successful development of this network. VÖL coordinates the participatory collaboration between farmers, advisory services, and researchers (represented by universities) in alignment with the funders. Key elements of this co-creative network include regular project group meetings, professional exchanges between all network members and external experts, as well as ongoing feedback, knowledge sharing, and evaluations.





Structure of the network. Source: Götzner



C. Weber. Source: PFN HESSEN

“I joined the PFN because for the past 25 years, I’ve been doing new experiments in the field and barn each year. Now, I finally have the opportunity to do this with scientific support and evaluation within a network. I want to collaborate with professional colleagues to analyse challenges and develop solutions together. This cooperation is motivating, and it’s rewarding to know that our contributions help generate new knowledge for future farmers and society, contributing to the development of sustainable agriculture.” – C. Weber



PFN-Team for Agroecology. Source: PFN HESSEN

## Achievements

Currently, more than 30 organic farmers, advisors from organic farming associations, the State Office of Agriculture Hesse and researchers from various Hessian research institutions and the network coordinators are part of PFN Hessen. At regular meetings we exchange ideas, discuss, and learn from and with each other to work together as equals in a dynamic network structure. Experts from practice, extension, and research work together in different project groups (arable and vegetable farming). These groups follow a participatory approach to develop and implement projects together. Additional project groups are planned for the future.

## Contact



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