



## Austria

### Bio is nothing special, Regionality is trumps!

The hype surrounding "Bio" (organic) products, including their "hallmarking", seems to be over. Not so much because organic products are no longer of interest but far more because the overwhelming opinion amongst consumers seems to be one of "nowadays everything is Bio anyway isn't it!" says Vera Grasl. The war which has been waged in recent years in the name of Bio products and the way in which they can be identified seems to have been fought and lost. As far as the consumers are concerned, in recent years the labelling of foodstuffs has become difficult to understand and, above all, inflationary (after all, now there is an image of a seal on every packet you pick up, even if all it says is a guarantee of where it comes from) and this has obviously resulted in a falling away of the awareness of how foods are produced. This lack of transparency and clarity in the context of the buying and selling of food has, apparently, led to the very pleasant misapprehension on the part of many that you are buying organic products anyway. This is manifested in the significance of "Bio" when buying food: whereas about 10 years ago, nearly 40% of the population were very keen to see a high proportion of "Bio" products on the shelves in the supermarkets, in the meantime this figure has halved without, in reality, the actual turnover figures achieved for organic products having fallen at all.

Nevertheless, there is an underlying dormant desire on the part of many consumers for safety and reliability and transparency with regard to the quality of foodstuffs and their manufacture. In the meantime, the satisfaction of this need has turned to the purchase of regionally produced items, as over the last few years we have seen a continuous increase both in the desire for the ranges available in the shops to have more regional products amongst them and the associated confidence placed in knowing where the product originated. In this way, we already see more than a third of Austrians making a close association between the quality of foods and their region of origin, whilst only just one fifth of them do the same thing with regard to the term "Bio". In addition, regional products are perceived as having outstandingly good flavour and to be fresh. On the other hand, according to the GfK researcher, whether the regional products have been produced conventionally or organically is of interest to only a small number of consumers.

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