

# Ministry of Education remains a pioneer in promoting (local) organic food!

This week, Mouvement Ecologique had a stimulating meeting with Education Minister Claude Meisch regarding Restopolis' supply of food to school canteens. The meeting also addressed the question of whether the current purchasing criteria should be changed. As is well known, Minister for Agriculture Martine Hansen and other stakeholders from the agricultural sector have advocated that, in future, conventionally produced food from Luxembourg should be given preference over organic food produced abroad.

To come straight to the point: Claude Meisch emphasised to the Mouvement Ecologique that the existing criteria will not be changed! The current model will remain in place, and he has also informed the Minister for Agriculture of this.

## **The following facts are also interesting:**

- Restopolis buys seasonal products, so no one needs to worry that strawberries will be bought from far away in winter, for example.
- Conventionally produced local food currently accounts for around 80% of the total. This means that Restopolis offers local farmers excellent new sales opportunities for their products! Restopolis thus makes a very important contribution to Luxembourg's agriculture.
- Over 60% of the organic goods purchased are also produced locally. The majority of non-locally produced goods are products that cannot be produced locally, such as rice.
- Only a tiny fraction of organic food from abroad could therefore be replaced by conventional products.

These figures confirm once again that instead of viewing these organic products as competition and fighting against them, the Ministry of Agriculture should follow the example of the Ministry of Education and set up its own purchasing platform to ensure that all public canteens (e.g. hospitals, retirement homes, etc.) make greater use of locally produced conventional and organic food. This would create another significant sales market!

Certain optimisations that Restopolis intends to implement were also discussed. For example, providing even clearer and better information at an early stage about which foods Restopolis will be demanding in the future. This will improve planning for farmers and also promote further conversion to organic farming. Mouvement Ecologique expressly welcomes the position taken by the Ministry of Education. It is of considerable importance for organic farming, Luxembourg agriculture, biodiversity, climate protection, water management and the health of all schoolchildren.