

## INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR COPPER-FREE LOW INPUT AND ORGANIC FARMING SYSTEMS (EU-PROJECT CO-FREE)

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In January 2012 the EU-project CO-FREE (theme KBBE.2011.1.2-06, grant agreement number 289497) with duration of 54 months, was launched. The project is coordinated by Dr. Annegret Schmitt with support of Dr. Sara Mazzotta (Julius Kühn-Institut). Deputy coordinator is Dr. Lucius Tamm (Forschungsinstitut für Biologischen Landbau). The CO-FREE project aims to develop innovative methods, tools and concepts for the replacement of copper in European organic and low input fruit, grapevine, potato, and tomato production systems. Copper-free production systems will be achieved by (i) providing alternative compounds and biocontrol agents, (ii) smart application tools and (iii) by integrating these tools into traditional and novel copper-free crop production systems, including agroforestry. The copper-free apple, grapevine, potato and tomato production systems will be (iv) evaluated in a multi-criteria assessment with respect to agronomic, ecologic and economic performance. CO-FREE will also develop strategies to develop (v) smart breeding goals by development of crop ideotypes and (vi) foster consumer acceptance of novel disease-resistant cultivars by consumers and retailers. The project follows a construction kit system, in which the different tools are integrated in to effective strategies and combined with horizontal activities regarding determination of socio-economic and ecological impacts. By involving farmers, advisors, plant protection industry, policy makers and researchers as well as the stakeholders of the European organic and low input sector (food supply chain, retailers, producers associations), CO-FREE will ensure a rapid development, dissemination and adoption of the copper replacement strategies. The multidisciplinary consortium proposed for the project includes 11 academic and 9 industry (all small and medium enterprises) partners from 10 European countries. All partner institutions are leaders in their respective fields and/or are leading providers of advisory services to farmers, retailers, policy makers and other stakeholders in the organic and low input sector. More information and the possibility to register for the CO-FREE newsletter is available under [www.co-free.eu](http://www.co-free.eu).