



Forewords

For more than 35 years, ISARA has collaborated with stakeholders in the organic farming sector to generate scientific and technical knowledge in support of an agroecological transition. From our pioneering work on cereal systems in the 1990s, through major national and European partnerships, to creating dedicated training programmes and networks, our institute has always prioritized innovation and sustainability. Today, our identity remains firmly grounded in organic farming. We continue to work towards resilient food systems that combine economic performance with respect for the environment and social equity, from farm to fork. The establishment of the Centre for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems in July 2024 is the latest example of our commitment to generating knowledge, providing support and offering training to stakeholders in today's and tomorrow's agricultural sectors.

Wishing you a pleasant reading,

Christophe David,
Deputy Dean, ISARA

Cover crop : a key driver of farm resilience



In organic farming, **cover crops** — plants grown to improve soil structure, recycle nutrients and limit erosion — are **essential for compensating the absence of chemical inputs**. Their effectiveness depends on sufficient biomass, achieved through careful planting, an appropriate growing period and flexible management.

However, their **adoption remains limited** due to **climatic constraints** (narrow sowing windows) and **socio-technical barriers** (costs, farming practices, lack of flexibility). Owing to climate change, their role is evolving: water management, the selection of resilient species (sorghum, camelina) and permanent cover crops are becoming priorities to strengthen the resilience of farming systems.

This is a promising avenue to make it a sustainable lever, provided that practices, species and policies are adapted. Olivier Duchêne revisits this topic in an article published following his participation in the symposium 'Cover crops for multi-service organic farming' on 2 December 2025 in Paris

[To read the article \(in French\)](#)

[Learn more about cover crops](#)

Teaching organic farming and its challenges: our involvement in the European ENOAT network

ENOAT (European Network of Organic Agriculture Teachers) is a **European network bringing together universities and engineering schools**, including ISARA, to

revitalise the **teaching of organic farming**. Since 2006, it has been promoting the exchange of teaching practices and the development of tools tailored to the sector's challenges..



Among its initiatives, there is an online module in English, taken by around a hundred students each year, which explores the specific characteristics of organic farming in 14 European countries. Participants analyse the key factors driving its development and propose policy recommendations to address the challenges identified.

A dynamic network that meets annually to advance teaching methods and collaboration in organic farming.

[Learn more about the ENOAT Network](#)

Building climate resilience in the organic sector: from agricultural assessment to business strategy

Under the lead of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Organic Cluster and Isara Conseil, and with the financial support from DINAI, this project **assesses the impact of climate change** (+1.8 °C in the region) on the **organic arable and fruit sectors**

The main challenges identified include water stress, an increase in pests, and



a decline in crop quality and logistical disruptions. The study highlights adaptation strategies for businesses, such as diversifying supply sources, securing volumes through contracts or buffer stocks, and strengthening agroecological practices. These measures aim to balance climate resilience, emissions reduction and economic viability.

A practical approach to anticipating risks and building sustainable strategies.

[Learn more about this study \(in French\)](#)

Do you know the 'Be Creative' project ?



The **BE CREATIVE** project aims to encourage creativity and devise **solutions to accelerate the transition towards pesticide-free agriculture** in regions across France. As part of this national project, which brings together research teams and local stakeholders from across France, CLAS researchers are working to **promote organic fruit production in the Pilat Regional Park** (known as the 'Parc Naturel Régional du Pilat' in the south of Lyon).

In order to address this deeply complex and systemic issue, they intend to **design agroecosystems** that are either **pesticide-free** or use minimal pesticides by combining **agronomic innovations**, supply chain diversification and **collective action** with local stakeholders.

Led by INRAE, ISARA and local partners, BE CREATIVE seeks to **strengthen the resilience of fruit farms in Pilat** in the face of climatic and economic challenges

whilst creating added value for producers. The project's goal is to establish Pilat as a model region for organic fruit cultivation, providing scalable solutions.

[Learn more about the Be Creative project](#)

Organic farming & Health, the latest episode of the podcast “La Charrue avant les boeufs” [In French]

Our societies have long been, and continue to be, preoccupied with questions about the relationship between diet and health.

This connection can be recognised or questioned at various stages of production, distribution and processing, but above all during consumption. Although we eat several times a day, do we take enough time to consider what we are eating and its effect on our development and, consequently, our health?

CLAS offers you 55 minutes to gain a better understanding of the well-established links between organic farming and health.

This episode is based on an expert report published by ITAB in June 2024 about the positive externalities of organic farming [in French].

[Click on the image below to listen to the podcast](#)



[Learn more about the ITAB report \(in French\)](#)

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CLAS - ISARA

Campus Lyon : 23 rue Jean Baldassini
69007 Lyon

Campus Avignon : 105 Rue Pierre Bayle,
84140 Avignon

Phone: 0033 / (0)4 27 85 85 85

Email: centreagroecologie@isara.fr

For more information, visit our website

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centreagroecologie@isara.fr

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