

### ***Commission must secure adequate animal welfare at EU level: Organic provides a good reference***

**Brussels, 28/10/2009** – The IFOAM EU Group (1) welcomes the EU Commission objective to improve animal welfare at the EU level. The Commission report approved today (2) outlining options for animal welfare labeling recognizes that organic farming already delivers higher animal welfare standards and therefore offers an opportunity for producers and consumers to improve, promote and support animal welfare. However, the IFOAM EU Group urges policy makers to take responsibility for ensuring sufficient animal welfare on EU level.

“An EU labelling scheme is not the solution”, says Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group. “Consumers and citizens in Europe expect the legislator to ensure adequate animal welfare at the EU level and to increase legally binding minimum standards to improve the welfare of farm animals. Examples would be the time limitation of animal transport to slaughter houses or the setting of maximum stocking densities to allow farm animals’ natural behaviours.”

“The EU should strengthen animal welfare as a cross-cutting issue. We will only achieve real improvements in animal welfare in the EU when the issue is mainstreamed in all food and agriculture legislation and policies”, added Marco Schlüter, Director of the Group. “However, the IFOAM EU Group is concerned that an indicator-based approach – as suggested in the Commission report – is not yet scientifically justified, might lead to an excessive level of bureaucracy, be difficult for farmers to implement, and difficult for consumers to understand.”

Organic is based on production systems with a holistic approach that successfully deliver a high standard of animal welfare, other sustainability benefits and high food quality. Organic farming standards are based on principles of health, ecology, fairness and care. Consumers trust organic standards, EU organic logo and the inspection and certification system behind them that have been harmonised Europe-wide. The IFOAM EU Group therefore sees the main value of outcome based indicators for animal welfare as being an evaluation tool for food systems.

End (characters 2077 with spaces)

More information:

IFOAM EU Group, phone + 32-2-280 12 23, Fax: +32-2-735 73 81, [info@ifoam-eu.org](mailto:info@ifoam-eu.org), [www.ifoam-eu.org](http://www.ifoam-eu.org)



## Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

### NOTES:

(1) The IFOAM EU Group represents the 300 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU-27, EFTA and the accession countries. Member organisations include: consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.

(2) [REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION](#) TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on options for animals welfare labeling and the establishment of a European Network of Reference Centres for the protection and welfare of animals.