

IFOAM EU Urges to Take Advantage of EU´s Most Successful Agricultural Quality Scheme: Organic Production

Prague, 12/03/2009 - Organic is the most successful EU food quality scheme – it combines high quality products with delivering an array of public goods. Despite the financial crisis a still booming organic sector offers excellent opportunities for farmers and food processors, in a way that is good for rural jobs, for the environment and for climate change, and producing food that consumers want. On the occasion of the high level conference of the Czech EU Presidency on Agricultural Quality Production (1) the IFOAM EU Group (2) urges policy makers to use this potential through a proper, quality-minded policy.

Opened by EU Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel, the conference follows the Commission´s Green Paper on EU Agriculture Products Quality Policy (3). “However, in order to expand the organic market the main obstacle is not to make the single market work better as highlighted in the Green Paper”, says IFOAM EU President Francis Blake, one of the speakers at the conference. “What is needed is a proper strategic policy for organic production, to place it prominently within the CAP, and a consistent application of existing support measures across member states.”

Further, “an enhanced organic research is needed at the EU level to use the organic potential and benefit to its full extent”, adds the Director of IFOAM EU Group Marco Schlüter. “We are currently identifying the most important organic research needs within the framework of the newly founded Research Technology Platform ‘TP Organics’ (4). “If we now meet properly these research needs, we would be better equipped to face major global challenges like climate change, loss of biodiversity, food security and depopulation of rural areas.”

More information:

IFOAM EU Group, phone + 32-2-280 12 23, Fax: +32-2-735 73 81,
info@ifoam-eu.org, www.ifoam-eu.org

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(1) The Conference on the Future of the Quality Policy of Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs is taking place in Prague, March 12-13, under the auspices of Petr Gandalovič, the Minister of Agriculture, and Mariann Fischer Boel, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. More: <http://www.qpc.cz/index.php?lchan=1&ired=1>

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

(3) In October 2008 the European Commission issued a [Green Paper on Agricultural Product Quality Policy](#) to initiate consultation on how to improve the EU policy instruments related to quality. The current conference is a second step towards the formulation of a Commission Communication on Quality of Agricultural Products which is expected in May 2009 and could later result in legislative amendments affecting agricultural producers and processors.

(4) [TP Organics](#) is a platform for organic food and farming research which joins the efforts of industry and civil society in defining organic research priorities and defending them vis-à-vis the policy-makers. In December 2008 the Platform was officially launched and presented its first major document – a [Vision for Organic Food and Farming 2025](#). It is currently working on a Strategic Research Agenda to identify and put together detailed proposals for organic research. More: www.tporganics.eu