

EU Organic Aquaculture Rules: Milestone or failure?

Brussels, 13/05/2009 – The IFOAM EU Group (1) urges Member States to send out a positive signal and respect their responsibility when deciding today on EU organic aquaculture implementing rules (2). Until now it is not clear if the proposal by the EU Commission will be watered down by member states to standards close to conventional practices.

“Member states can decide if they will set a milestone in the development of organic farming or if they risk the credibility of organic production”, says Marco Schlüter, director of the group. “It is important that organic aquaculture rules deliver clear benefits for the environment and animal welfare. Only then will consumers trust the new rules. It is not the role of organic aquaculture to ‘green-wash’ conventional practices”.

In particular:

- The most important point concerns the issue of fishmeal. It is vitally important to minimize “fishing for fishmeal” and to abandon the use of conventional aquaculture trimmings for organic aquaculture.
- The area of animal welfare has to be taken very seriously. E.g. eyestalk ablation in female shrimp (for triggering reproduction) has to be limited to the absolute minimum extent and should be forbidden completely after transitional period.
- Some member states are pushing for higher densities of certain species that are, in some cases, close to conventional practices.
- There should be no other substances allowed for use in organic aquaculture added to the new regulation. Further, the use of “copper sulfate” should be forbidden.

We hope that Member States will make a wise decision today and thus allow the development of a credible organic aquaculture sector.

End (characters 1715)

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Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

NOTES:

(1) The IFOAM EU Group represents more than 300 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU-27, 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.

(2) The implementing rules for organic aquaculture of (EC) 834/2007 will be decided today in the Standing Committee of Organic Farming.