

Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

Meet the climate challenge - meet organic farming!

Climate friendly and sustainable practices such as organic farming should be mainstreamed in EU policies

Brussels, 14/09/2009 – The EU Agriculture Ministers are today visiting an organic farm in Sweden as part of their informal meeting on climate change (1). On this occasion, Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group (2), welcomes the fact that Swedish Agriculture Minister Erlandsson is showing a best practice example of climate friendly farming to his colleagues:

“On their farm visit ministers can verify for themselves the high potential of organic farming to adapt to the consequences of and to mitigate the risk of climate change (3) and that climate friendly farming practices and high quality food production go perfectly together on organic farms. Climate change as a global challenge has to be addressed across all relevant policies, therefore climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies must be mainstreamed in the next CAP and related policies if we want to see real progress. “

Marianne Schonning, member of the IFOAM EU Group’s board from Sweden, adds: “Organic farmers perform well in climate friendly practices, e.g. through higher carbon sequestration in soils, responsible energy use and integrated systems of animal and plant production. The organic delivers innovation in developing climate responsible solutions for the food chain: KRAV for example, the most prevalent organic label in Sweden, introduces climate criteria in its standards. But it is time for change in the whole farming sector: food production has to go hand in hand with environmentally sustainable practices.”

“We call on the politicians to encourage farmers to adapt climate friendly practices such as organic farming - and to make an end to unfair competition between conventional and organic food production. Environmental costs caused by unsustainable farming practices must finally be internalised in the product costs – taxes on synthetic fertilisers and pesticides are an important step to achieve this.”

End (characters 2068)

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NOTES:

(1) More on the informal meeting of EU Agriculture Ministers – http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/9/13/informal_meeting_of_agriculture_and_fisheries_ministers.

Discussion paper prepared by the Swedish Presidency:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st12/st12142.en09.pdf>

(2) 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.

(3) As also outlined in the EU Commission staff working document accompanying the White Paper "Adapting to Climate Change: the challenge for European agriculture and rural areas": "Organic farming has potential for mitigation through its efficient nutrient cycles and soil management, and as it usually implies higher diversity and high level of knowledge of the functioning of the farm ecosystem, it is also likely to be more resilient to climate change." The document is available at:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st08/st08526-ad05.en09.pdf>