

**Newsletter n°16
Extra Edition on “Organic Revision project results”**

Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	p. 2
II. General short description of the Project.....	p. 3
III. IFOAM EU role in this EU research project.....	p. 4
IV. Results of the Organic Revision Project.....	p. 6
Result 1: Identifying and integrating basic ethical values of organic agriculture in the development of the EU Reg. 2092/91.....	p. 6
➤ Identified basic ethical values in organic agriculture and results of empirical inquiry on current values among organic stakeholders	
➤ Procedures for balancing and integrating basic ethical values in organic agriculture based on value inquiry and examples from case studies	
➤ Balancing and integration of basic ethical values in the revision of EEC 2092/91	
Result 2: Database and analysis of the EEC Reg. 2092/91 in relation to other organic standards.....	p. 11
➤ Framework for web based standards database and identified ethically	
➤ Organic standards database with comparison of the EEC 2092/91 with selected national (min 15) and international organic standards in relation to harmonisation, regionalisation and simplification of EEC 2092/91 problematic areas in the EEC 2092/91 and other organic standards	
➤ Identification of specific areas of the EEC Reg. 2092/91 where harmonisation, regionalisation or simplification may be implemented	
Result 3: Feed materials and feed additives.....	p. 13
➤ Demand and supply of feed and feed additives	
➤ Development of evaluation criteria for feed materials and feed additives to be included in Annex II C and D	
➤ Future need for conventional feed materials after 2005 and evaluation criteria for feed materials and feed additives, such as synthetic products and pro-biotics	
Result 4: Organic farming dependency on conventional seed and propagation materials.....	p. 16
➤ Literature review on born disease and organic seeds quality	
➤ Availability and suitability of organic seeds and propagation materials	
➤ Future need for revision of the requirements concerning organic status and quality of seeds and propagation materials	
V. Other research inputs.....	p. 18
VI. Contacts.....	p. 19

I. Introduction

The IFOAM EU Group, as a Regional Group integrated in the International Federation of Organic Agriculture structure, has been involved through their membership in the process of developing and regularly revising the Basic Standards of Organic agriculture since 1980. Therefore, the IFOAM EU Group assisted by third parties, through pre-agreements¹ or subcontract² with either IFOAM member organisations or individual IFOAM members based in Europe, had taken the opportunity to participate as full partner in the **Organic Revision Project** activities, a three year EU funded Policy-oriented Research (SSP), from the Sixth Framework Programme (Priority 8.1), started in March 2004 and finalised this year. The reason for that was the relevancy of the project outcomes for the improvement of the EU regulation on organic food and farming and it's consequences in the future development of this sector in Europe.

Even though the EU has introduced harmonised regulation for organic agriculture more than 10 years ago, different requirements still exists at national and regional level and in many cases the several certification bodies apply different policies for labelling of Organic Farming products. For farmers, consumers, traders and the organic farming industry the number of different standards, labels and certification bodies is highly confusing.

In this project new knowledge has been provided in order to understand this complexity and identifying possible solutions and produce recommendations to support the revision and further harmonisation and simplification of EU Regulation 2092/91 on organic agriculture.

For all this reasons, the IFOAM EU Group wants to contribute to the dissemination of the research results and knowledge to the stakeholders with this Newsletter, as contribution to the development of the organic food and farming sector.

¹ Pre-agreements: FNAB - Fédération nationale d'Agriculture biologique des Régions de France, 40 Rue de Malte, F-75011 Paris, France ; ISD - Institute for Sustainable Development, Metelkova 6, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; OET - Organic Equivalency Technologies Ltd, Kanta-loimaantie 1 as 9, FIN-32210 Loimaa kk, Suomi – Finland; PRO-BIO - Association of Ecological Farmers, Nemocnicni 53, CZ-787 01 Sumperk, Czech Republic.

² Dr. Sylwia Zakowska-Biemans, Ul. Zalamana 13, PL96 515 Teresin, Poland and Dr. hab. Jozef Tyburski, Godki 13, PL-11 042 Jonkowo, Poland.

II. General short description of the project

Originally, organic farming was a localised, self-regulating agricultural practice driven by distinct ethical values. In the last decades organic agriculture has undergone significant growth and development, and now it exhibits organic industries and international trade. Today there are a large number of

different standards, labels and certification bodies, and this is confusing for consumers, traders and the organic farming industry. The EU regulation 2092/91 can therefore be of high importance for the credibility and harmonisation of organic standards.

Project objective(s)

The overall objective of this project was to provide recommendations for the revision and further development of the EU Regulation 2092/91 and other standards for organic agriculture.

Specific objectives are:

- to identify the basic ethical values and value differences of organic agriculture in Europe and develop a procedure for balancing and integrating the basic values in developments of EU regulation (WP2);
- to compare the organic standards from national and private

organisations in Europe with the EU regulation in order to give recommendations on further harmonisation of the EU regulation (WP3);

- to provide more knowledge on how to achieve 100 % organic rations in diets for livestock (WP4);
- to provide more knowledge on how to reduce the use of seed and vegetative propagation materials from conventional sources in organic farming (WP5);
- to discuss and disseminate project results with stakeholders (WP6).

Summary of outcome and project approach

The project has identified basic ethical values and value differences in organic agriculture and has developed a procedure for balancing and integrating the basic values in revisions of the EU regulation (WP2). It has also established an organic standards database that enables comparison of national and international organic standards with the EU regulation (www.organicrules.org) and analysed the exposed differences (WP3). It is

expected that these outcomes will help to identify trade barriers, provide a better understanding of the ongoing development of organic agriculture and how it can be regulated, enable regionalisation of the organic production and support harmonisation as well as simplification of the EU regulation so that it may constitute a better basis for communicating in a transparent way with consumers,

producers, policy makers and other stakeholders.

The project provided specific recommendations on the derogations of the use of conventional feed (WP4) and seed (WP5) in the EU regulation. It has assessed the availability of organic seeds and propagation materials and developed information exchange and decision criteria for the seed regime. It has also surveyed the supply and demand of organic feed

and feed additives. It developed evaluation criteria for specific feed and feed additives, thus ensuring animal welfare as well as the credibility of organic agriculture. This is expected to reduce the dependency on inputs from conventional production in organic farming systems. Implementation of the results was done by means of a project web-page and 3 workshops in close collaboration with the Commission(WP6).

List of participants in the project

No.	Name	Short name	Country
1	Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming / Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences	DARCOF / DIAS	Denmark
2	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture	FiBL	Switzerland
3	University of Wales, Aberystwyth	UWA	UK
4	Associazione Italiana Agricoltura Biologica	AIAB	Italy
5	International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements EU Regional Group	IFOAM EU Group	Europe
6	Louis Bolk Institute	LBI	The Netherlands
7	University of Kassel	UNKA	Germany
8	Bundesanstalt für alpenländische Landwirtschaft	BAL	Austria
9	University of Lund	ULUND	Sweden

III. The IFOAM EU Group role in the project

The IFOAM EU Regional Group is an independent group within IFOAM infrastructure and has up of some 340 IFOAM members in the EU, EFTA and candidate countries. The group is covering the complete range of organic professional and consumer organizations, including producer associations, research establishments, certification bodies, consultants, development organizations, processors, wholesalers and retailers.

The EU Group works as a forum for common interest, information exchange, development and policy work. The regular consultative meetings held in

Brussels at the invitation of Commission officials, are an important channel of direct communication and dialogue with EU Authorities.

Furthermore, the EU Group Board is also represented in a number of EU Commission committees, including the Advisory Committee on quality and health, the standing group on organic farming. In the past the group was represented in the expert working group on the European organic action plan and several expert working groups of the Standing Committee on organic farming. All this is giving relevant opportunities to interact with the EU policies on organic farming.

The major role of IFOAM EU Group in the project was to involve organic stakeholders in the discussion of the research findings and results of the project and to bring their opinions on the researched topic. For this purpose it was necessary to keep all them informed and updated about the project activities and outcomes on time for consultation and to disseminate regularly the projects results. This was made by an existing E-mail list, regularly Newsletter which goes periodically to the 330 IFOAM EU member organisations in Europe. For this purpose the IFOAM EU Group contracted a part-time research assistant³ who was also attending the E-Board meetings, each 3 months in a different country.

Stakeholders involvement in all the stages of research processes and in the (new) standards development and setting processes in order to improve existing standards, have been also one relevant aspect of the IFOAM EU Group role in the project. A paper outlining the reasons for IFOAM EU Group to be involved in organic research projects presented in the Organic Joint Congress in Odense (Denmark) in 2006, and about reasons to involve stakeholders in setting research priorities at EU level was presented in the III QLIF Congress in Hohenheim (Germany), can be downloaded at the webpage <http://orgprints.org>.

In the next pages of this news letter you can find short summaries of the main project results which can be found at the project webpage <http://www.organic-revision.org>. Also an overview of all publications published under the auspice of Organic Revision can be found via the open access archive http://orgprints.org/view/projects/eu_organicrevision.html

³ Victor Gonzalez (IFOAM EU Group Spain Board member), Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica (SEAE). Cami del Port, s/n Edif ECA Patio int. 1º Apdo 397. E-46470 Catarroja, Valencia. Tel: +34 961267200. Fax: +34 961267122. Mobile: +34 627343399. E-mail: vgonzalez@agroecologia.net Website: www.agroecologia.net

IV. Results of the Organic Revision Project

1. Identifying the basic ethical values and value differences of organic agriculture in Europe and developing a procedure for balancing and integrating the basic values in developments of EU regulation)

1.1 Identified basic ethical values in organic agriculture and results of empirical inquiry on current values among organic stakeholders

a) Purpose and means of basic ethical values

The purpose and means for identifying basic ethical values/principles and the functions, which such principles can have in relation to the development of organic agriculture in general and organic standards and regulations in particular are lay out.

More information: Alrøe, H. F. and Erik Steen Kristensen (2004). "Why have basic principles for organic agriculture? And what kind of principles should they be?". In: Ecology & Farming; No. 36: 27–30. <http://ecowiki.org/IfoamPrinciples/EcologyAndFarming>;

Byrne, J.; Alrøe, H. F.; Glover, L. (2005) "Globalisation, sustainable development and organic agriculture: the role of ecological justice". <http://ecowiki.org/GlobalPerspective/ReportOutline>.

b) The need of organic normative principles in organic agriculture

If organic farming is to continue as a distinct alternative to mainstream agriculture, there is a need for identifying a few basic principles for organic agriculture. This principles must be normative, or ethical, principles on how to act in an organic way, because it can help resist unwanted developments; support the development and extension of organic agriculture into new areas, the planning of proactive research, and the development of organic rules; and serve as a guide for practice and development that, to some degree, will lessen the need for ever more rules. Finally, some examples of how such principles can be formulated are presented.

More information: Alrøe, H. F. & Kristensen, E. S. (2004), "Basic principles for organic agriculture: Why? And what kind of principles?", In: Ecology & Farming, No. 36: pp. 27-30.

c) Rewriting the principles for organic agriculture

Some inputs to the process of rewriting the principles and to define and to include the ecological justice concept, playing a key role in one of the suggested organic farming principles, are given by different authors:

Byrne, J., Glover L., and H.F. Alrøe (2006), "Globalisation and sustainability". Chapter 2 in: Halberg, N., H.F. Alrøe, M.T. Knudsen and E.S. Kristensen (eds.) *Global Development of Organic Agriculture: Challenges and Prospects*. Wallingford, UK: CABI Publishing, pp. 49-74;

Alrøe, H. F. Byrne, J. and Glover, L. (2006). "Ecological justice and organic agriculture: ethics and practice", Chapter 3 in: Halberg, N., H.F. Alrøe, M.T. Knudsen and E.S. Kristensen (eds.) *Global Development of Organic Agriculture: Challenges & Prospects*. Wallingford, UK: CABI Publishing, pp. 75–112

Alrøe, H. F. & Noe, Egon (2006) "What makes organic agriculture move - protest, meaning or market? "A polyocular approach", presented at the XXI European Society for Rural Sociology Congress, Hungary, August 22–25, 2005.

d) The polyocular approach

As many different actors have different hopes and aspirations for the future of organic agriculture, we suggest a polyocular approach that facilitates a comprehensive and balanced understanding of organic agriculture by enabling us to handle different perspectives reflexively. To illustrate this approach we describe three significant perspectives on organic agriculture based on **protest, meaning and market**. No perspective is the 'right' one and, we claim, different perspectives on organic agriculture cannot be merged to one. The polyocular approach as a general analytical tool, and the three specific perspectives, will be helpful in understanding the future development of organic agriculture and how it may be influenced and could facilitate a comprehensive and balanced understanding of organic agriculture by enabling us to handle different perspectives reflexively.

Egon Noe, Alrøe H. F. & A.M.S. Langvad (2006) "A semiotic polyocular framework for multidisciplinary research in relation to multifunctional farming and rural development.". Presented at the XXI European Society for Rural Sociology Congress, Hungary, August 22–25, 2005. Working Group on Continuity and change in organic farming – philosophy, practice and policy", submitted to the special issue of IJARGE;
Alrøe, H. F. & Noe, E. (2007). "What makes organic agriculture move - protest, meaning or market? A polyocular approach to the dynamics and governance of organic agriculture". International Journal of Agricultural Resources, Governance and Ecology (IJARGE)

1.2 Procedures for balancing & integrating basic ethical values in organic agriculture based on value inquiry and examples from case studies

a) Decision making processes and values balance

To balance and integrate a set of values the issue of decision making is of high relevance. Forming a common policy in a heterogeneous group challenges the procedure of decision. In a scientific paper two models of public decision-making are discussed and related to issues related to food policies.

On the other hand, strong ethical principles are seen as a tool to evaluating the development of organic agriculture so that corrections can be made where they are considered necessary.

More information: Röcklinsberg Helena (2005). "Consent and consensus in policies related to food – five core values". In: Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics, November

Alrøe, H. F.; Schmid, O. & Padel, S. (2005). "Ethical principles and the revision of organic rules". The Organic Standard, No. 51: pp. 8-11.

b) Globalisation, functional differentiation and localness

There are two main forces that work against the local, **globalisation and functional differentiation**. Localness as such is not a basic principle of organic agriculture, but the concerns for localness are connected to two ethical concerns, functional integrity and ecological justice, which are expressed in the

organic principles. The problem of delocalisation is not simply a question of spatial distance but of associated consequences such as externalities, commodification, unfair trade, lack of transparency and breakdown of local food systems. Therefore, it is not easy to measure and regulate localness. Simple distance measures do not directly address these consequences, and more sophisticated measures are difficult to implement. One way to regulate is to add a "localness label" on the products and leave the choice, and the responsibility, with the consumers. Another way to regulate localness is to address the consequences associated with distance in the organic standards, where complex and varied issues can be handled, but then precautionary concerns need to be addressed.

Alrøe, H. F. & Chris, K. (2006): *"How to measure and regulate localness?"* Presented at Joint Organic Congress, Odense, Denmark, May 30-31, 2006

c) Value concepts of organic producers and other stakeholders

Unprompted producers associated health, sustainability and professional challenge with organic farming in all countries. In most of the also farming naturally and minimal use of external inputs were mentioned. Producers' motives for conversion to organic farming were similar to those reported in other studies with mixture of internal and external factors appearing important. The widely held view that new entrants convert only for financial reasons and do not engage with values of organic agriculture could not be confirmed. However, the longer-established producers seemed more familiar with some "organic farming" theories (cycle of health) suggesting a challenge for the sector that new entrants have access to these ideas

In all countries, food quality and health, environmental protection, and limiting resource use were seen as important values for the organic sector. Economic pressures and a downward trend for organic prices were seen as preventing producers from realising all of their organic values, especially in larger trading structures and globalised markets. Limiting the use of non-renewable resources, particularly energy sources, avoiding contamination with GMO's, fair or cost-covering prices were values expected to be important for organic farming in the future

Many stakeholders associate organic farming with health, low residues and healthy products. Environmental and ecological values are important to all stakeholders. Organic farming is associated with sustainability of agriculture, and social justice is likely to become a more important value in the future. Animal health and welfare appeared important to consumer, other stakeholders and recently converted producers. Both producers and consumers preferred regional organic networks for a number of reasons but recognised limitations. For many participants the systems-oriented approach of organic farming represented a fundamental difference to conventional agriculture...

Padel, S. (2005). *Focus groups of value concepts of organic producers and other stakeholders: Organic Revision Project Reports, No. D21*, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Institute of Rural Sciences

Values of organic producers

Results of a focus group study of the values of organic producers entering the sector at different times in Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK and Switzerland are presented. As well as expressing values widely associated with organic farming, such as food quality, health and environmental protection, established and converting producers also mentioned professional challenge, fairness in the food chain, and maintaining farm income as important values. The reviewed literature includes examples of a theory of conventionalisation which implies that later converting producers are less committed to core organic values than the previously established organic producers. The conclusions of this paper do not support this idea. In interpreting the observed differences between the values of established and converting producers, it is argued that these are consistent with some aspects of adoption diffusion model, but changes in external circumstances and the learning experience that conversion represents must also be considered.

Padel, S. (2007). *Values of organic producers converting at different times: Results of a focus group study in five European countries*. International Journal of Agricultural Resources, Governance and Ecology (IJARGE).

Local and organic food

Exploring the meaning of organic and local food and how closely they are related in the mind of consumers and producers of organic food, with consumers and producers in Europe, both groups associate organic food with local trade and see this as an important value. It is concluded that in the complex organic food networks both producers and consumer have to balance localness with other values and constraints when making decisions about where to buy or where to sell their organic products.

Padel, S. (2006). *"Local and/or Organic: A balancing of values for producers and consumers"*. Poster presented at *What Will Organic Farming Deliver COR 2006*, Edinburgh, 18-20 September 2006

1.3 Balancing & integration of basic ethical values in the revision of EEC 2092/91

The basic aim of the report is to develop a procedure how the ethical value base of organic farming could be included in the standards and regulation for organic farming. In line with the EU Organic Action Plan (EC 2004) the Organic Revision project supports the idea that delegating a larger role to values and basic principles will help to harmonise the rules in relation to flexibility and to simplify the Regulation 2092/91. In order to achieve this it is necessary to identify the value base, consider its coherence, compare it with existing practises of organic farming, consult with stakeholders about inclusion and finally communicate the value basis. This procedure has similarities to policy evaluation, such as the evaluation of the EU action Plan for organic farming.

It is important to include basic values in the EU regulation, because organic farming is value based and all actors/stakeholders have value expectations, in particular consumers who the regulation wants to protect. Standards act as a

kind of contract between the consumer and producer in relation to the implementation of certain values.

In the past few years there has been considerable concern that -as a result of rapid growth and economic pressure arising from globalisation- that the organic food and farming sector has lost touch with its basic values, and is in danger of becoming conventionalised. If this happens, the sector might no longer be able to function as an alternative to general agriculture for consumers as well as for policy makers.

In line with the European Action Plan, a process total revision of the EU regulation on organic agriculture is currently underway and should come into force in Jan 2009. The aim of the new regulation is to simplify the understanding and the proposed text includes a formulation of principles of organic production.

The report analyses what core ethical value are associated with organic agriculture and contrasts this with the examples of practise of organic agriculture, before making some recommendation regarding a procedure how such values can be considered and implemented in the regulatory framework.

More information: Padel, S.; Röcklinsberg, H. ; Verhoog, H. ; Alrøe, H. F.; Wit, v. J.; Kjeldsen, C. and Schmid, O. (2007). *Balancing and integrating basic values in the development of organic regulations and standards: proposal for a procedure using case studies of conflicting areas (D23)*
http://130.226.173.223/Upload/OrganicRevision/Document/d23_final_draft_%20jan_29.pdf

Recommendations for the EC Organic regulation proposal

In response to the conclusions of the European Action Plan for organic food and farming the European Commission has adopted a proposal for a new Council regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products. Although the aim of the new regulation is to improve clarity for both consumers and farmers, stakeholders have raised questions and expressed concerns on various issues of the proposed regulation (for example at the stakeholder conference held on March 27, 2006 by the European Parliament). In order to ensure the most relevant focus for research in Organic Revision, the project has nominated three contested areas that need to be further analysed. Following this refocusing the project (Alrøe and Padel) has provided preliminary comments concerning objectives and principles (Title II) of the EC Proposal for a new regulation

The conclusions are in short:

- The term objectives and principles should be defined in article 2
- It should be considered to extend Title II to cover the whole food chain including trade
- Objectives (Art. 3) should be broader. It should include point 5 and 17 in the explanatory memorandum, Article 5b, as well as social objectives
- Principles (Art. 4) should include a systems approach as first priority and not only focus on inputs

- Organic actors and other stakeholders should be involved in formulating objectives and principles
- Further comments must depend on changes in objectives etc.

More information: Alrøe, H. F. & Padel, S. (2006). *Preliminary comments on Title II of the EC Proposal for a new Council regulation on organic production*. Working Paper, Organic Revision.

2. Comparison and analysis of organic standards from national and private organisations in Europe with the EU regulation with a database and recommendations on further harmonisation of the EU regulation)

2.1 Framework for web based standards database & identified ethically

Explains how to come to decision criteria from principles in 3 case (feed, food processing, crop inputs), are described. At least 2 additional steps are necessary to come from very general overarching basic principles to decision criteria: a) For the most important areas the relevant (working) principles have to be formulated: => translate subject/area-related (operational) aims as basis for norm setting and b) participatory procedure with stakeholder involvement is important, which needs time. Criteria should be precise enough (clear priority, exclusion criteria, criteria for derogations) – for operators and control bodies.

Schmid, O., (2006). *From principles to decision procedures and criteria - 3 case studies resulting from EU policy oriented research project work: criteria for feed, for food processing and for crop inputs*. Presentation at Biofach Workshop on principles, Biofach Workshop Nuernberg, 16th February ,2006.

2.2 Organic standards database with comparison of the EEC 2092/91 with selected national and international organic standards in relation to harmonisation, regionalisation and simplification of EEC 2092/91 problematic areas in the EEC 2092/91 and other organic standards

The variations between the EU Regulation, governmental rules and private-sector standards do not concern basic nor fundamental requirements; i.e. there is a general agreement on the concept of organic agriculture within the EU. Differences are rather in technical aspects at the implementation level.

Harmonisation is recommended firstly on the international level with the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines and the IFOAM International Norms. Many of the private national standards as well as governmental regulations provide indications on how to handle and reducing derogations. They give also indications for the potential of stricter requirements, since they have already been implemented successfully. Simplification of the EU Regulation would be

possible by reducing derogations or providing clearer criteria for derogations. The analysis showed possibilities for more regional flexibility, as foreseen in the revision process of EU Regulation 2092/91 (e.g. for seed and feed where non-availability is documented).

In addition to the general conclusions regarding harmonisation it should be mentioned that it is not just a question of other rules being needed but of developing supporting projects, better communication, more transparency and cooperation in the crucial areas. Equivalence and sustainability should be the two major goals, rather than identical rules and standards.

More information: Schmid, O.; Huber, B. Ziegler, K. (2006). *Analysis of EEC Regulation 2092/91 in relation to other national and international organic standards*, (draft) Project report D 3.2

2.3 Identification of specific areas of the EEC Reg. 2092/91 where harmonisation, regionalisation or simplification may be implemented

The detailed analysis has shown different areas, where a harmonisation is possible. For example the private national standards provide interesting indications of ways to reduce derogations, e.g. on seed and feed, and indications of the potential for stricter requirements, since they have already been implemented successfully. Another example is the list of processing additives for new product groups.

Harmonisation on an international level is more difficult: The US NOP (National Organic Programme) has a different concept in some areas (e.g. conversion period). Harmonisation with US NOP would conflict with the European concept of organic agriculture in certain aspects (e.g. some fertiliser inputs). On a more general level however a continuous harmonisation is necessary with Codex Alimentarius Guidelines and IFOAM Basic Standards.

Simplification of the EU Regulation would in some cases be possible by establishing more precise requirements and by reducing derogations or providing clearer criteria for derogations.

Regionalisation allows more precise and appropriate provisions in cases where there are severe difficulties at national level caused by geography, climate or governmental regulations as well as national support policies. The analysis showed possibilities for more regional flexibility, as foreseen in the revision process of the EU Regulation 2092/91 (e.g. for seed and feed where non-availability is documented). However, regional flexibility must not involve any areas which could create consumer distrust, give rise to market distortion or neglect organic principles/values.

Full report: Schmid, O., Huber, B., Ziegler, K., Hansen, J.G., Plakolm, G., Gilbert, J., Jespersen, L.M., Lomann, S., Micheloni, C., Padel, S. (2007): *Analysis of EEC Regulation 2092/91 in relation to other national and international organic standards*. (D 3.2 of the FP6 project, EEC2092/91 Revision, in press)

3. Providing more knowledge on how to achieve 100 % organic rations in diets for livestock

3.1 Demand and supply of feed and feed additives

a) Achieving a 100 % diet in pigs and poultry in Europe

The question of quantity and quality of inputs that may be used is of high importance for the development of organic livestock production in light of the current revision of the European regulation on organic food. The paper is based on the EU funded project Organic Revision and presents selected results concerning the question of independence from conventional inputs in relation to organic feed. Fundamental differences in the structure and in the relationship between input and output lead to completely different agro-ecosystems. This limits the relevance of recommendations derived from nutritional research in conventional systems for organic animal husbandry. The limitation of protein supply in organic systems represents not only a challenge but also an opportunity for improved quality. It is possible to formulate diets for pigs and poultry with only organic ingredients, although availability of protein can be problematic. Farmers can adopt a range of measures to reduce the demand for high quality protein sources in the diet of pigs and poultry.

The total organic flock in the EU 25 appears to have increased by between 6 and 9 per cent, depending on stock category. Greatest increases occurred for sheep in France, Italy, Spain and the UK. In the other livestock categories, increases in some countries were balanced by decline in others, leading to overall small increases (see Table 3 update1).

The production area of organic cereals increased between 2003 and 2004 by approximately 6 %. Significant reduction (9%) in the cereals area seems to have occurred in Italy, Spain and Hungary, whereas the area increased in Austria, Greece and Portugal (see Table 4 update).

The area for pulses appears to have declined by a further 14% in the EU 25. Reductions occurred in particular in France and Italy as two important producers of organic pulses, but increased in some other countries. There is greater uncertainty in the data for pulses, as not as many countries report data for pulses separately.

On 100% organic rations the demand for concentrate feeds for all organic livestock currently kept in the EU would have risen from approximately 1.1 million to 1.2 million tonnes. The proportions remain unchanged (65% of this demand is for cereals, 26% for pulses that could be grown in most regions of the EU, and 9% for high quality protein sources) (see Table 5 update).

In all three years, the EU would have grown more than sufficient organic cereals to feed all organic livestock on a 100% organic diet. For organic

cereals, there seems to be a surplus of supply over demand that would allow for further increases in stock numbers at current feed production levels.

A potential deficit for home grown pulses that was projected for 2003 is likely to have increased further in 2004, because of reductions in the area for organic pulses. It appears that the intended shift to 100% organic diets has not stimulated increases in the production of organic pulses in the EU.

Padel, S. and Sundrum, A. (2006). "How can we achieve 100% organic diets for pigs and poultry?" Poster presented at *What will organic farming deliver COR 2006*, Edinburgh, 18-20 September 2006;
Padel, Susanne (2005). *Overview of supply and demand for concentrated organic feed in the EU in 2002 and 2003 with a particular focus on protein sources for mono-gastric animals*. Deliverables of Organic Revision no. D41, Institute of Rural Sciences, UK-Aberystwyth.

3.2 Development of evaluation criteria for feed materials and feed additives to be included in Annex II C and D

Organic livestock farming is intended to contribute to the equilibrium of agricultural production systems; establish and maintaining an interdependence between soils, plants and animals; is land-related ruling out landless productions, and should support the development of a sustainable agriculture. The criteria for the evaluation of non-organic and organic feed inputs should be consistent with these principles of organic livestock production.

This report provides an overview of issues to be considered with regard to the inclusion of criteria for non-organic and external feed materials in the further development of the EC-Regulation 2092/91 on organic food. The various implications of a criteria based approach are discussed in relation to the main objectives and principles in organic production. A system approach is recommended to provide a tool for balancing the divergent and ambivalent issues in relation to the inclusion of non-organic and external feed material on the different levels relevant in organic production.

Sundrum, A and Padel, S (2006). "Evaluation criteria for including feed materials in Annex II C and dietary supplements in Annex II D of the EC-Regulation 2092/91". Report No. D 4.2, University of Kassel, UNKA. <http://orgprints.org/10074/>

3.3 Future need for conventional feed materials after 2005 and evaluation criteria for feed materials and feed additives, such as synthetic products and pro-biotics

The following system levels can be identified in relation to external and non-organic feed inputs in organic farming: a) individual animals; b) total herd of farm animals; c) the whole farm system; d) the regional level; e) the EU level.

There is a need to differentiate between following categories of external feed inputs that can be used on an organic farm for which different conditions for use are specified and that carry different risks to the integrity of organic production:

1. External organic feed materials from plant and animal origin and by-products of organic processing (max 50% of total feed intake);
2. Non-organic basic feed materials from plant and animal origin and non-organic industrial by-products (set derogations or flexibility rules, Annex II C 1 & 2);
3. Non-organic feed materials from mineral origin and feed additives (Annex II C 3 and Annex II D).

The criteria 'necessity to use non-organic feed inputs', 'impact on animal health and welfare' and 'impact on the environment' are related to availability and to the balance of supply and demand of feed materials. To realise the principle 'to use as few external and non-organic inputs as possible and as many as necessary' these criteria should be decided at the lowest possible system level.

In general, it is possible to formulate diets for cattle, pigs and poultry without non-organic basis feed materials (see report 4.1.1 of the EC-Revision project). However, there are problems of availability in many regions and for some ingredients, especially high quality protein sources.

In the last 3 years the EU has produced sufficient cereals to feed all stock with 100% organic diets (see report 4.1.2 of the EC-Revision project). Currently, there seem to be deficits in the supply of pulses (data uncertain). Derogations have possibly prevented increases in the production of organic pulses in the EU.

The necessity for supplementation with Annex II C (1 &2) feed materials on any organic livestock farm can be assessed through farm gate feed balance, feed analysis and the calculation of feed rations considering stages of development of the animals and the performance level. Farm gate feed balance sheets would assist farms in developing strategies that improve the efficiency of home-grown feedstuff and to prevent imbalances that may cause harm to the animals or the environment. The implementation of similar feed back mechanisms could also be used to assess the necessity for supplementary feed at the regional level.

The absence of such feedback mechanism within organic production is likely to be one of the main reasons for the observed problems with product quality and animal health and welfare on some organic farms.

Further research is needed to assess the availability of and requirements for vitamins under the condition of organic farming.

Using feedback mechanisms as criteria of balance or necessity of supplementation could contribute to prevent unfair competition and at the same time improve flexibility with regard to the use of external and non-organic inputs. Flexibility requires treating different situations differently. Achieving a balance within defined systems on different levels could ensure

common overall objective of organic production. A balance can be achieved irrespectively of the specific conditions and can be offered to the consumers as a qualitative performance of the organic production method that justifies claiming a common organic label.

Detailed recommendations can be found at:

http://orgprints.org/10074/01/Final_report_Criteria_for_the_inclusion_of_feed_material_1.01.pdf

Sundrum, A and Padel, S (2006). "Evaluation criteria for including feed materials in Annex II C and dietary supplements in Annex II D of the EC-Regulation 2092/91". Report no. D 4.2, University of Kassel, UNKA. <http://orgprints.org/10074/>

4. How to reduce the use of seed and vegetative propagation materials from conventional sources in organic farming

4.1 Seed born diseases in organic seed and propagation material

The results of the literature review and the outcome of the stakeholder consultation were discussed and up-dated in July 2006. A literature review on seed born disease shows more need of information on this topic organic seeds quality.

Micheloni, C. & Roviglioni, R. (2006). Literature on seed born diseases and organic seeds quality. (see also <http://www.eco-pb.org>)

4.2 Availability and suitability of organic seeds and propagation materials

The national reports on derogation for the use of non-organic seeds of the year 2004 have been analysed and compared to the total acre-age cultivated. The results for cereal seeds show big differences between the states regarding the share of non-organic seeds in cultivation.

Thommen, A. and Schmid, O. (2006). "The use of organic cereal seed in selected European countries". Paper presented at Joint Organic Congress, Odense, Denmark, May 30-31, 2006.

The organic system is urging the use of organic seeds in order to complete its integrity and enhance its reliability. The VIFP Organic Revision offered the possibility to investigate on the different issues related to organic seeds production and use: alternative seed treatments methods; variety availability; derogation regime in several EU Member States and causes for non-use of organic seeds. The results indicate the extreme difficulty the organic vegetable sector will suffer in case it is decided to stop the derogation regime and compel producers to use exclusively organic seeds.

Micheloni, C. & Roviglioni, R. (2006). "Dependence of organic vegetable production on conventional seeds: are we ready for emancipation?" Paper Joint Organic Congress, Odense, Denmark, May 30-31, 2006

4.3 Future needs for revision of the requirements concerning organic status and quality of seeds and propagation materials

The national annual organic seed reports 2004 and 2005 differ much in form and quality. The data show considerable differences in the offer of organic seeds and the use of non-organic seeds between the reporting states.

Authorisations for the use of non-organic seeds or a general derogation mean a financial benefit for the respective farmers. Since the seed costs can not be neglected in calculating the whole sale product price, countries with high rates of non-organic seeds can take advantage of this situation on the European market.

Harmonisation of the derogation policy on EU-level as well as on national level should therefore be of high importance for the authorities. To increase the use of organic seed some measures has to be taken on national level.

Measures recommended on national level:

- 1) Some national databases need technical improvement and more registered varieties to be a useful tool for organic farmers. International cooperation of the database managers should be enhanced.
- 2) A registration duty for farmers calling for a derogation of the acreage planted or the number of pot plants produced, in order to allow the evaluation of the acreage planted with non-organic seeds in the national organic seed reports.
- 3) Use of a standardised reporting scheme including a common species list, subtotals for crop groups (e.g. vegetables), species and subspecies to make reports comparable. Assembling of raw data versions according to a common template in order to allow a direct comparison in Pivot-tables. The reports should immediately be made publicly available, according to Art. 12 and 13 of the EC-Reg. 1452/2003.
- 4) Establishment at a national level of lists of equivalent varieties (useful for professional growers) for every subspecies (variety group) in order to facilitate the decision making of the control bodies and to make possible, that individual calls for derogation can be denied with respect to farmers needs.
- 5) Establish a fee system that balances the cost difference between organic and non-organic seed in order to avoid unfair competition. This money can be used to promote organic seed marketing, to support organic seed production and breeding projects as well as to reduce the price of organic seeds.
- 6) Establishment of measures to enhance the use of organic seed, e.g. by introducing a system of minimal percentages on farm level either for organic seed volume or for the acreage covered with organic seeds for important crops.

- 7) Introduction of national Annexes (instead of a or) to come to a common European one (Annex 1) with respect to the national organic seed offer and to make the organic seed use compulsory would give security for the seed companies to increase the organic seed production.
- 8) In order to grant fair conditions among EU producers, common Annexes with neighbour countries or countries with similar production systems and markets (especially export markets) should be favoured. Annexes on national or bilateral/regional level seem to be more realistic, than a common European Annex 1. The number of species/subspecies listed in the national Annex 1 has to increase annually.

Full document can be found at the project webpage: Thommen, A.; Micheloni, C.; L. van Bueren, E.; Plakolm, G.; Bertelsen, I.; Schmid, O.; González, V. (2007). "Comparison of the national derogation reports according EC Regulation 1452/2003 of the years 2004 and 2005 and recommendations to improve the use of organic seeds and transplants in Europe". European Organic Seed Report.

V. Other related research projects

ORGAP Project

Latest outcomes of this project, developing a toolbox for evaluation of the European Union Organic Action Plan and from the National organic Actions Plans can be found at the project webpage the IFOAM EU Group is also partner in this project: (see [http://: www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org))

Core Organic Project

An independent, international expert panel has evaluated the project proposals submitted to the CORE organic pilot call for transnational research. Based on the evaluation, the CORE Organic Governing Board has selected eight projects for further negotiations. Read more about the process at <http://www.coreorganic.org/corenews/march07/index.html>

QLIF Project

The 3rd International Congress "Improving Sustainability in Organic and Low Input Food Production Systems" of the European Integrated Project Quality Low Input Food (QLIF), was held in Hohenheim (Germany), in March 20-23th, 2007. A pdf version of the Proceedings can be downloaded free of charge from the project website at www.qlif.org, Congress website www.qlif-congress.org or at http://orgprints.org/view/int-conf_qlif_2007.html

EU funded studies show organic food has higher nutritional quality

Three new European research projects have just revealed that organic tomatoes, peaches and processed apples all have higher nutritional quality than non-organic; supporting the results of research from America on kiwi fruit reported 26 March 2007. Organic tomatoes "contained more dry matter, total and reducing sugars, vitamin C, B-carotene and flavonoids in comparison to

the conventional ones", while conventional tomatoes in this study were richer in lycopene and organic acids.

Previous research has found organic tomatoes have higher levels of vitamin C, vitamin A and lycopene. In the latest research, the scientists conclude "organic cherry and standard tomatoes can be recommended as part of a healthy diet including plant products which have shown to be of value in cancer prevention". A French study has found that organic peaches "have higher polyphenol content at harvest" and concludes that organic production has "positive effects ... on nutritional quality and taste".

In a further study just published, organic apple puree was found to contain "more bio-active substances - total phenols, flavonoids and vitamin C - in comparison to conventional apple preserves" and the researchers conclude "organic apple preserves can be recommended as valuable fruit products, which can contribute to a healthy diet". The 3 studies can be downloaded from:

http://orgprints.org/view/projects/int_conf_2007qlif_2_food_quality_and_safety.html

ISOFAR Newsletter n°7

The International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISOFAR), has published the Newsletter n°7. It can be seen at <http://www.isofar.org>. If you want more information about this organisation, please send an E-mail to: info@isofar.org

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Note: Information on the IFOAM EU Group activities and positions papers can be found at www.ifoam.org