

Dear friends in the European organic movement,

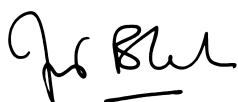
Work on the new organic regulation continues apace. The Commission has just completed a (rather limited) consultation with stakeholders on certain aspects of the proposed new implementing rules. This especially related to transforming what used to be 'derogations' into the new category of 'exceptional production rules'. As ever, your IFOAM EU Group board and the Brussels office have been active participants in this process.

With the consultation now closed, we await with interest the first draft of the implementing rules, due in January. In the meantime, we have identified a number of areas that need further elaboration, to clarify what are either differences in interpretation in different countries, or impediments to smooth development and implementation of the regulation. So we are still hard at it and we welcome the involvement of any IFOAM members who wish to contribute to this.

Over the last few months, there have been a number of changes to Commission staff responsible for the organic sector. This presents us with both challenges and opportunities: challenges because we have to establish relations with these key posts all over again, introducing the work of the IFOAM EU Group, emphasising the importance of what we do and that we represent the whole organic sector in the EU; it also gives us opportunities to educate people who are often totally ignorant about organic food and farming and what it stands for, so they come to appreciate its benefits, and also value our advice.

In this context, the European Organic Congress on 4-5 December could not be coming at a better time. But of course, its timing is also right in other ways. With the CAP 'health check' in full swing and the European organic action plan nearing the end of its useful life, not to mention all the work on the new regulation, organic farming is rightly holding centre stage in the politics of agriculture.

I hope you will join us at the Congress to help celebrate, explore and progress the future of organic farming in the EU - looking forward to seeing you there!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis Blake'.

Francis Blake,  
President





## **Summary**

### 1. Activities of the IFOAM EU Group

1.1 The European Organic Congress gains momentum

1.2 Revision of the Organic Regulation (2092/91) – further work on the implementing rules

1.3 IFOAM EU Group/office in Brussels & internal structure

1.4 Policy - CAP Health Check

1.5 Research

\* Research Technology Platform

\* Project news - ORGAP

1.6 IFOAM EU in the public

### 2. Decisions/Reports concerning organic farming

### 3. Calendar /Links /Other news

3.1 Calendar

3.2 Links

3.3 Other news

-----

## 1. Activities of the IFOAM EU Group



### 1.1 The European Organic Congress gains momentum

The IFOAM EU Group-organised European Organic Congress, which will take place in Brussels on December 4-5, is in full-fledge preparation. The ambition of the organising team is to stage a high-level forum bringing together officials from the EU and other institutions and stakeholders from the organic sector. The congress, entitled "The future of organic food and farming within the reformed CAP", will focus on working out a vision for the future organic policy in Europe and hence for the development of the sector.

Starting on a high note with the opening speeches of the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Marian Fischer Boel, and the IFOAM EU Group President Francis Blake, the congress will continue with a number of interesting speakers concerned with organic farming. Among them are:

- Poul Skytte Christoffersen, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Fischer Boel and speakers from 3 Directorates within the European Commission;
- EU Parliament Vice Chair of the Agriculture Committee, Graefe zu Baringdorf;
- Wilfrid Legg, Head of the Policies and Environment Division in the OECD Agriculture Directorate;
- Andrea Caroe, Chair of the USDA National Organic Standards Board

*(For list of all speakers and full programme, please click [here](#)).*

Designed as a forum for exchange between the organic policy makers and representatives of the organic sector, the European Organic Congress is a chance to discuss the future policy for organic production in Europe. This is especially in light of the ongoing and forthcoming policy changes which are shaping the operational environment for the work of farmers, processors, retailers, traders. With the current work on the implementing rules of the new organic regulation, now is the moment for providing grass-root and expert input in the decision-making process. In view of this and aiming to secure broad representation of standpoints from the sector, the IFOAM EU Group is inviting to the congress all stakeholders and all interested in the future of the organic farming.

In addition to that, thanks to a co-financing from the European Commission and the contribution of sponsors, we are able to offer favourable financial conditions to the participants. The registration process is still open – for details, please visit the IFOAM EU Group [congress webpage](#).



## **1.2 Revision of the Organic Regulation (2092/91) – further work on the implementing rules**

The adoption earlier this year of the [new organic regulation](#) (834/2007), which will replace Council Regulation 2092/91 as of January 2009, transferred the revision process and therefore the lobby work of the IFOAM EU Group to the Implementing Rules which will be attached to the new regulation. The Rules are currently being hammered out and are expected to incorporate the old technical annexes of 2092/91.

In September '07, the European Commission took steps in stakeholder consultation by circulating a [comparative analysis table on the implementing rules](#) as well as a [draft consultation questionnaire](#). Together, these provide an outline of what will likely be the new Implementing Rules.

The IFOAM EU Group worked out and presented on September 20<sup>th</sup> an [initial response](#) to the questionnaire, expressing concerns about the lack of focus of the questionnaire (too expert for the general public, too general for the experts) and providing comments on some of the questions. In the beginning of October, the Commission launched the questionnaire to stakeholders and member states inviting input on the content of the new implementing rules. The EU Group handed in its [response to the questionnaire](#) on October 22, and a few days later its [comments on the Commission's analysis table](#) on the implementing rules.

In October, the IFOAM EU Group also presented two other position papers on:

- The [Minimum Conversion Periods](#) (Annex I.A. of Regulation 2092/91 which will be transferred to the Implementing Rules)
- The [Labelling of Seed Mixtures](#).

This adds to the recent input from the Group on other topics which are part of the future Rules: [Sodium carbonate in Annex VI B and Potassium bicarbonate in Annex II B](#), [Risk based inspection](#) and [Exceptional Production Rules](#).

For documents and more information, look at the IFOAM EU [Revision Info page](#).

### **1.3 IFOAM EU Group/office in Brussels & internal structure**

**New office staff** – Having secured two trainees under the European voluntary service scheme (Monica Styczek and Andrzej Szeremeta, PL) and a third one outside of this scheme (Camilla Mikkelsen, DK), the IFOAM EU Group staff is now also supplemented by one more new trainee – Guillaume Coutelet from France who will work in the Brussels office until February 2008 and help with the congress preparation.

The IFOAM EU Group has now also **created a new position**. To ensure the proper implementation of its new project, a research technology platform on organic food and farming (see below), the Group has announced the opening of a position of **Technology Platform Coordinator**. Job description and details can be found on the [webpage of IFOAM EU](#). Applications must be handed in by November 18.

### **1.4 Policy**

**CAP Health Check** – The Commission is currently undertaking a CAP Health check and announced that it will launch its proposal on November 20, 2007. The proposal should be then discussed in the Council under the Slovenian Presidency next year. This means, together with the budget review in 2008, the opening of the discussion about the future of the CAP.

The IFOAM EU Group submitted its comments on the CAP Health Check in its position paper and will elaborate the discussion during the organic congress in Brussels December 4-5.

For the position of the IFOAM EU Group on the CAP Health Check, please follow the [link](#).

### **1.5 Research**

\* **Research Technology Platform** - The IFOAM EU Group and ISOFAR (International Society of Organic Agriculture Research) have joined forces in initiating and leading the establishment of a research technology platform on organic food and farming. The platform will bring together stakeholders involved in the organic sector with a main aim and outcome - the development of a common research vision to help guide European and national organic research plans. It is meant to give input to the research priorities of the European Union and to secure sufficient EU funding for organic research projects. The platform secretariat will be hosted at the IFOAM EU Group office in Brussels.

As an initial step, a vision camp held in Hagenthal-le-bas in France in June 2007, gathered together representatives from the whole organic sector to develop an organic research vision until 2025. The draft research vision will be publicly launched within the next weeks and will be subject to public

consultation, e.g. at the European Organic Congress in Brussels on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2007. The further steps include delineating a strategic research agenda which will identify concrete research priorities.

**\* Project news: ORGAP – report on stakeholders’ participation in Organic Action Plans**

The Specific Support Action Project, ORGAP is implemented by IFOAM EU Group under the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming. Its objective is to develop evaluation tools for the action plan. It has recently finalised a document comprising different views on the subject *evaluation of organic action plans*.

The report named “Comparative Documentation and Synthesis of ORGAPET testing” gives an insight into already conducted evaluation studies via three meta-evaluations. ORGAPET stands for ORGAP evaluation tools. The aim is to contribute to a methodological learning process and help to optimize the **ORGAPET toolbox**. The report registers all comments on the ORGAPET toolbox collected via a comprehensive testing process conducted in: the Czech Republic, Andalusia (Spain), England, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia and Italy.

The report “Implementing the European Organic Action Plan in EU member states - stakeholders’ perceptions of implementation problems and coping strategies” summarises the results of a series of national workshops undertaken in winter/spring 2007. This brings together very different views and perceptions on organic action plans and possible evaluation methodologies.

The ORGAP team members want to thank warmly all involved stakeholders and experts for supporting them, pushing forward their work and helping them understand better the complex field of organic farming policy evaluation.

**ORGAP – Forum**

A new topic is being discussed in the ORGAP forum: “Organic Action Plans and finances”. It tries to gather opinions about the relevance of the financial support for the success of different organic action plans.

More info: [www.orgap.org](http://www.orgap.org)

**1.6 IFOAM EU in the public**

The IFOAM EU Group is proud to be, for the second time, the patron of Conference on “Cultivation Technique and Phytopathological Problems in Organic Fruit-Growing”. This conference is one of the leading events bringing together European researchers consultants and producers working with organic fruit growing. It will be an opportunity to discuss latest results regarding the improvement of the production system of organic fruit growing. The conference will take in Weinsberg, Germany, from February 18-20, 2008.

More information: <http://www.ecofruit.net>

## **2. Decisions/reports concerning organic farming**

No new legislative decisions have been taken since the IFOAM EU Newsletter No 17 at the end of October. Below you can find links to the decisions on amendment of the organic regulation, which were taken earlier this year.

### **Overview of all amendments to Council Regulation 2092/91**

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/standards/amendments.htm>

#### **Amendments to 2092/91:**

[\(Official Journal L 098 , 13/04/2007 P. 0003 – 0004\)](#)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 394/2007 of 12 April 2007 amending Annex I to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto in agricultural products and foodstuffs. This amendment increased the allowance for 2<sup>nd</sup> year in-conversion feed to 50% for brought-in rations and to 80% for own-farm rations, until the end of 2008.

[\(Official Journal L 181 , 11/07/2007 P. 0010 - 0011 \)](#)

Commission Regulation (EC) No 807/2007 of 10 July 2007 amending Annex II to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs. In Table III (Substances to be used in traps and/or dispensers) in point 1 of Part B (Products for plant protection) of Annex II to Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91, for the entry 'Metaldehyde', the date '31 March 2006' is replaced by '31 March 2008'.

For further information on EU decisions, reports and new laws you can always refer to the Official Journal of the European Union:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en>

## **3. Calendar/Links /Other news**

### **3.1 Calendar**

**November 26-27, 2007:** European Commission - 3rd European Forum on Eco-Innovation, Paris, France

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoinnovation2007/2nd\\_forum/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoinnovation2007/2nd_forum/index_en.htm)

**November 19-20, 2007:** Food in a Future Climate - Conference on Sustainable Food Systems, Norrköping, Sweden

<http://www.cul.slu.se/english/conference/index.html>

**December 4-5, 2007:** IFOAM EU Group, European Organic Congress,

<http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org/>

**February, 18-20, 2008:** 13th International Conference on Cultivation Technique and Phytopathological Problems in Organic Fruit-Growing, Weinsberg / Germany  
<http://www.ecofruit.net/>

**April 17-18, 2008:** Colloque international, « Agriculture Biologique & Changement Climatique », Lempdes, France, [www.abiodoc.com](http://www.abiodoc.com)

**May 12-16, 2008:** GMO-Free Global Summit on Diversity during the Biosafety Protocol Meeting of Parties and the Convention on Biological Diversity, Bonn, Germany.  
<http://www.gmo-free-regions.org/planetdiversity.html>

**June 16-20, 2008:** The 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress, Modena, Italy  
[http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam\\_conferences/owc/Organic\\_World\\_Congress.html](http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/owc/Organic_World_Congress.html)

### 3.2 Links:

#### **Standing committee on Organic Farming- Short report of the meetings of the Standing Committee on Organic Farming:**

- 68<sup>th</sup> Meeting on [13/06/2007](http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/owc/Organic_World_Congress.html)
- 69th meeting on [16/10/2007](http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/owc/Organic_World_Congress.html)

#### **Animal welfare and the CAP Health check -**

[http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/policy/pdf/paper\\_cap\\_health\\_check\\_sep\\_07.pdf](http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/policy/pdf/paper_cap_health_check_sep_07.pdf)

#### **Animal welfare and climate change -**

<http://www.ciwf.org.uk/globalwarning/downloads.html>

### 3.3 Other news

**OECD questions biofuels policy:** Governments should not create new biofuel mandates & should phase out current favourable conditions, according to a "background paper" entitled "Biofuels: Is the Cure Worse than the Disease" by the Organisation for Economic Development & Cooperation (OECD). The paper seeks to contest the notion of biofuels as a "champion energy source" using a range of empirical data.

More: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/41/39276978.pdf>

**Massive biomass potential from agriculture:** Some 20-40 million hectares of agricultural land in the EU-27 could be used for the production of biomass without harming food supply, according to the European Biomass Association

(AEBIOM). Biomass already provides 2/3 of the EU's renewable energies and remains the energy source with the greatest potential.

More: [www.aebiom.org](http://www.aebiom.org)

**MEPs opt for compromise on EU soil directive:** The European parliament's environment committee has voted against a major weakening of proposals for an EU directive on soil protection. Adopting a series of compromise amendments, MEPs retained an obligation on member states to establish risk reduction targets for priority soil degradation areas. The committee's position now goes for a first-reading vote in the parliament's plenary body. After this governments will adopt their own first reading stance.

**More:** [European parliament environment committee](#) and [Ends Europe Daily](#)

**DG SANCO opened public consultation on its future challenges paper** 2009 - 2014 and expect feedback by the end of December 2007. For details, go to the Commission's webpage:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer/events/future\\_challenges\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/events/future_challenges_en.htm)

---

This newsletter exists to inform IFOAM members about the work of the IFOAM EU Group and its liaison and coordination office in Brussels. The IFOAM EU Group is the European Regional Group of the worldwide umbrella organisation IFOAM and is responsible for all matters related to organic farming with a Europe-wide scope. Information IFOAM EU Group:

<http://www.ifoam-eu.org>

---

© IFOAM EU GROUP 2007

Please send any comments on the newsletter to [info@ifoam-eu.org](mailto:info@ifoam-eu.org). For further information contact your national board member or the office in Brussels.

Editor IFOAM EU Group Newsletter:  
Sevelina Todorova/Marco Schlüter  
Rue Commerce 124, 1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Phone: + 32-2-280 12 23  
Fax: +32-2-7357381