

Dear members,

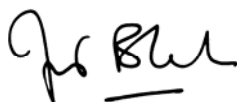
The price of oil continues to climb. With every increase, nitrogen fertiliser gets more expensive, and organic farming gets more competitive. On the other hand, food prices are also rising as climate change, the demand for biofuels, and the growing affluence of China and India take their effect. But whilst organic farming will stand to benefit from all this, it won't be unaffected and it too will have to adapt.

How ready are we for the twin challenges of rising energy costs and climate change? Organic farming has all the components within it to ensure we are well placed: more resilient soils, more balanced systems, greater biodiversity, about a third more energy efficient, emphasis on local markets. However, most of us are still a long way from the ideal and we have a lot to learn and a lot to develop.

To help us, the importance of appropriate and targeted research cannot be over-emphasised. The IFOAM EU Group, along with the organic research community joined together in ISO FAR, have been working intensively over the last year on both an organic research vision, and the means to promote it to the European authorities.

The vision document looks ahead until 2025 and will be a vital tool in informing and guiding all stakeholders on the key issues that we need to address over the next 15+ years if organic food and farming is to really deliver its potential. Within the current second consultation phase you are invited to [provide comments](#) until May 12th. It is vital that you contribute your views so that the vision truly reflects the whole of the organic sector - that is your needs and aspirations. Please contribute to it and give your views.

With best organic wishes,

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

Francis Blake, President



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1. Activities of the IFOAM EU Group

1.1 The new Organic Regulation – continuing work on the Implementing Rules

► New draft of the Implementing Rules

The revision of the organic regulation is getting closer to its final stages – that is however, if everything goes as the Commission has planned it. On April 10th the Commission released a [second draft](#) of the Implementing Rules to the new organic regulation (Council Regulation 834/2007), which was then presented to the SCOF members on April 15th and 16th. The decision of SCOF (Standing Committee on Organic Agriculture) was that the Commission can proceed with the draft.

A first assessment of the document showed that some, but far not all, of the comments given by the IFOAM EU regulation committee have been considered well in the new draft. IFOAM EU provided its [opinion](#) on it in a communication to the Commission on 23rd of April.

The recent special edition of the IFOAM EU Group newsletter, devoted to the [Revision of the organic regulation](#), gives details and puts the whole process into a context. Please follow the [link](#).

► Implementing Rules - imports

The Implementing Rules for imports are still far less developed. The Commission released an early [draft document on organic imports](#) from third countries on March 25th this year. So far it has not been made

clear when a more elaborated proposal will be presented to SCOF. The IFOAM EU Group is in preparation of its position on the current draft.

► Aquaculture

The work on the rules for implementing the regulation as regards to the aquaculture is ongoing. The IFOAM EU Group

agreed on and presented to the attention of the Commission on April 29th a [Proposal for the Aquaculture Implementing Rules](#).

1.2 IFOAM EU Group delivered a seminar in Bulgaria

On April 3-4 the IFOAM EU Group held a seminar in Plovdiv, Bulgaria on 'The future of organic food and

farming within the context of the European Organic Action Plan and the CAP Health Check'. The 35

participating agricultural experts came from 21 countries.

The seminar discussed the need to postpone the introduction of the proposed new mandatory EU 'bio' logo. The IFOAM EU Group concluded that the best option to keep the new EU regulation on track would be to withdraw the requirement for a mandatory logo, which has anyway been always controversial.

On the other major issue of the seminar, the CAP Health Check, the IFOAM EU Group called on the European Commission to enforce

Both the seminar and the work of the IFOAM EU Group received great media attention thanks to a press conference held in the Ministry of Agriculture in Sofia and a public presentation of the seminar outcomes in the Agricultural University of Plovdiv.

On the picture: the President of IFOAM EU Group Francis Blake concludes the public presentation at Plovdiv University, offering organic chocolates to Ms Vyara Stefanova, Head of Agri-environment and Less Favoured Areas Department of the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture.

1.3 IFOAM EU in Kyiv

The IFOAM EU Group was present through its director Marco Schlüter in the International Conference on the Organic Sector Development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asian countries which took place on April 10-12 in Kyiv, Ukraine. The participation in this event indicated the growing

higher mandatory modulation and to change the single farm payments so that they do not disadvantage systems that deliver high merits for society. Farming systems that provide public goods, such as organic farming, should be supported by the CAP.

The seminar has been co-financed by the European Community, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The next seminar of the IFOAM EU Group will take place in Hungary in September 2008.



attention in the Group to developing organic markets like those in the CEE countries. The conference concluded with a 'Kyiv Declaration' stressing on the importance of the regional cooperation and development. For details please refer to the conference [press release](#).

1.4 Policy

► IFOAM EU calls for a EU ban on cloning of animals for food

Members of the Brussels office of the Group took part in the end of April in a Brussels-held informal meeting of organisations concerned with animal cloning for food production. (Please find in the link an informative [Briefing note on animal cloning.](#)) The meeting, which will probably be followed by others in order to shape up actions in this area, comes after the IFOAM EU Group and 11 other organisations sent an open [letter](#) to the EU

Commission President Barroso, calling on the Commission and the EU Member States to introduce an immediate ban on the cloning of animals for food production and the sale of imported food products from cloned animals and their offspring. The [letter](#) has in the meantime received the following [reply from DG SANCO](#) stating that the Commission is in the process of organising 'a wide public consultation' on the matter.

► Common statement to EP on GMO policy and food and feed prices

CPE, Friends of the Earth Europe, IFOAM EU Group and other organizations sent on 22nd of April a [common statement](#) to members of the European Parliament, which arguments and calls for investigating on the real reasons of food and feed price increases – and not linking it to unrelated issues, specifically the GMO regime in Europe, "in an attempt to force more genetically modified crops into the EU".

The statement was issued when the oral question, tabled by MEP Neil

Parish on the "economic consequences of the EU's zero tolerance regime for unauthorised GMOs", was unexpectedly scheduled for the Strasbourg plenary session of EP on April 23rd. It points to the causes for the recent price increases and the lack of evidence to suggest that the GMO regime in Europe is one of them. The [common statement](#) also calls to the MEP to ensure that the EU resists pressures to weaken its GMO regulations.

1.5 Research

► Discussion forum on the new draft Vision paper for organic research

The second public consultation on the *draft Vision for an Organic Food and Farming Research Agenda 2025* is open for comments until Monday, May 12th. You can find the current

[draft Vision paper here](#). This consultation is an initiative of the IFOAM EU Group and ISOFAR which aims to outline the future challenges in the area of food and

agriculture and the potential of organic food and farming. The consultation will be followed by a further stakeholder meeting in May/June and further group consultations. It is foreseen to finalise the process and publish the Vision by summer 2008.

If you are interested in participating in this consultation, we kindly ask

you to state your comments online via the website www.organic-research.org. Please first read the [Vision paper](#) carefully. Then go to the [discussion forum](#) and register in order to access the forum.

Your contributions will be most valued.

► **ORGAP news: ORGAPET practical manual to be published soon**

A practical resource manual for the organic food and farming sector will be published in May 2008. Please, re-visit the [ORGAP project website](#) to find and make use of the manual. Its main purpose is to provide a *tool for stakeholder involvement* in futu-

re development and implementation of Organic Action Plans on EU, national and regional levels. The manual can also serve as a guide to the use of ORGAPET (Organic Action Plan Evaluation Toolbox), developed through the [ORGAP](#) project.

► **ORWINE project meeting in Montpellier**

The first ORWINE project meeting for 2008 took place in Montpellier on April 10-12. It was jointly organized by ITAB and INRA. The discussion focused on the results of the second project year and the so-far collected stakeholders' comments on the regulatory proposal for organic wine growing and making.

Bernard Lefèvre from DG Agriculture of the European Commission presented the CMO reform in wine that will enter into force on August 1, 2008. Please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap_reform/wine/index_en.htm

One of the main working fields of the ORWINE project at the moment is the completion of so-called fact sheets that contain 19 oenological substances that are being assessed



On the picture: the ORWINE project meeting in Montpellier, April 2008

on their compatibility with the principles organic agriculture and therefore their listing in the new implementing rules for organic wine.

The next ORWINE meeting and the European Project Advisory Committee will take place on May 26-27.

Mid of May 2008 the ORWINE project will start its third consultation round with regard to the regulatory framework under the new Council Regulation 834/2007. The proposals will contain a proposal for sulfite use/restrictions, a positive list of substances (additives and processing aids) to

be amended and eventually also a negative list of processes not desired in organic wine processing. Stakeholders will be invited to participate in this broad consultation. Details will follow as soon as the preliminary proposals are finalized.

More on ORWINE: www.orwine.org

1.6 IFOAM EU Group/office in Brussels & internal structure

The Brussels office of the IFOAM EU Group now works with 7 office members. The most recent arrival was that of Miss Michaela Senek from Sweden who started a traineeship in the beginning of April.

The selection result from the recently conducted interviews for the position of a Research Platform Coordinator will be announced soon.

2. Decisions/Reports concerning organic farming

Standing Committee on Organic Farming - short reports of the meetings of the Standing Committee on Organic Farming:


- [72nd meeting on 26-27/02/2008](#)
- [71st meeting on 16-17/01/2008](#)
- [70th meeting on 27/11/2007](#)

The minutes from the last SCOF meeting on April 15-16 were not available at the time of publication.

3. Calendar of events/Other news

3.1 Calendar of events

Time (2008)	Event
May 12-16	Planet Diversity – World Congress on the Future of Food and Agriculture, Bonn/Germany http://www.planet-diversity.org
May 19-20	International expert meeting on access to information, public participation and access to justice with respect to GMOs, Cologne/Germany http://www.unece.org/env/pp/

<p>May 26-27</p> 	<p>Organic Marketing Forum 2008, Warsaw/Poland - note 1 http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org/index.php?lang=english</p>
<p>June 12</p>	<p>DG Environment Conference "Climate Change – can soil make a difference?", Brussels/Belgium http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/conf_en.htm</p>
<p>June 16-20</p>	<p>The 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress, Modena/Italy – note 2 http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/owc/Organic_World_Congress.html *</p>
<p>June 23-24 June 26-27</p>	<p>→ The European FAO-Civil society Consultation of 2008 → FAO European Conference, Innsbruck/Austria http://www.csa-be.org/spip.php?rubrique30</p>
<p>July 3-4</p>	<p>European meeting on "Organic Agriculture, basis for future common agricultural policy? ", Lille/France Information – from the organisers from FNAB</p>
<p>September 3-5</p>	<p>Bioacademy 2008 – 8th European Summer Academy on Organic Farming, Lednice/Czech Republic http://www.pro-bio.cz/bioak/info.php?lan=eng <i>Under the patronage of the IFOAM EU Group.</i></p>
<p>September 16-20</p>	<p>VIII Scientific biannual Congress on Organic Farming and IV Ibero-American Agroecology Congress, Bullas/Spain Look for information on the SEAE website: www.agroecologia.net</p>
<p>November 5-7</p>	<p>5th International Scientific Conference on Sustainable farming systems ECOMIT, Piešťany/Slovakia http://www.ecomit.vurv.sk/about-the-meeting/intro/</p>

Featured events

1 – The organisers of the **Organic Marketing Forum on May 26th and 27th in Warsaw** announced the 'Best of Organic' contest for the award of the best organic product of the year. The winner product will be selected by the jury consisting of the expert audience of the Forum.

The Organic Marketing Forum is the key international expert meeting for organic companies with interest in

Central and Eastern Europe. Organic companies from various sectors like trade, food and raw material production will gather together in order to get to know better the organic markets of Central and Eastern Europe, to gain new contacts and take home new innovative ideas. For more information on the event please visit www.organic-marketing-forum.org.

2 - The 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress 2008, which will take place in June 16th to 24th in Modena/Italy, is in full-scale preparation. [Registration](#) for the event is still possible through the IFOAM website. You can check the [congress programme](#) for updates and get familiar with the supporting [cultural programme](#) which promises to make your stay in Modena more pleasant. The [Programme for Sponsored Participation](#) is now closed. Potential sponsors though

can still inquire into the benefits of the various existing [Sponsorship opportunities](#).

The [IFOAM General Assembly](#) will follow immediately after the congress – it will take place on June 22 - 24 in Vignola, Italy. The IFOAM General Assembly convenes once every three years in conjunction with the IFOAM Organic World Congress. It is the democratic decision making forum for the international organic movement.

3.2 Other news

▶ **Biofuels should provide 50 % Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission savings from 2015**, according to a Slovenian Presidency compromise text on *sustainability criteria for biofuels* circulated in April. All biofuels counting towards the EU target of 10% of overall transport fuel by 2020 should not only provide a 35% GHG emissions saving (relative to the equivalent

fossil fuel) from the entry into force of the new renewables directive, but this criteria should be tightened to a minimum 50% GHG saving from 2015 onwards. Both the 50% figure and the 2015 date are in squared brackets, however, as well as the 10% biofuels target. Check these [news reports](#) on the sustainability criteria and the surrounding debate.

▶ **The importance of food security & environmental security as public goods** and the challenge of addressing these dual aims, was underlined by the former EU Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler during the "1st Forum for the Future of EU Agriculture Policy" held in Brussels. Fischler highlighted the poll conducted among the 300+ conference delegates a majority of whom believed that policy makers are not doing enough to secure these requirements. A number of

speakers criticised the EU's biofuels target (10% by 2020) for its effect on food supplies to the EU market, with the OECD's head of agriculture Stefan Tangermann warning that current trends are likely to see roughly half of EU arable land (growing cereals, oilseeds & sugar beet) dedicated to biofuel production in order to achieve the 10% target for transport fuel by 2020.



Newsletter, No 23, May 2008

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

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>

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

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