

## **Organic farming does not tolerate GMO contamination**

**Brussels, 23 January 2006** - On the occasion of the Agriculture Council discussion today about the Commission's proposal to revise the organic regulation<sup>1</sup>, the IFOAM EU Group underlines that the organic movement does not tolerate GMO contamination of organic products. The Commission used some language which has led many to conclude that routine contamination of organic products with GMOs would be allowed under the revised regulation. In our understanding this is not the case, and the IFOAM EU Group would like to clarify why.

The Commission correctly notes that labelling thresholds under GMO regulations<sup>2</sup> apply equally to organic and conventional non-GM products. While true, this statement is nevertheless misleading, because GMO contamination in organic products is not primarily addressed by the GMO regulations, but by first, organic certification and second, the organic market.

Under the present organic regulation, certified organic producers are not allowed to use any inputs containing GMOs or GMO products. This restriction is unchanged in the revision proposal. Compliance is controlled by organic certifiers – independent third-party bodies which exercise a very high level of control, including annual physical inspection of each producer, the requirement to keep strict and comprehensive records, and access to all documentation at the farm level.

In current practice, organic certifiers will generally take action as soon as any contamination at all is detected or suspected. Furthermore, as organic consumers do not accept any GM contamination in organic foods, nor do organic processors and retailers. Thus the organic market operates on the basis of no contamination above the reliable detection limit.

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<sup>1</sup> *Proposal for a Council regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products*, COM(2005)671 final. - [http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/qual/organic/com2005\\_671\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/qual/organic/com2005_671_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 1829/2003 and 1830/2003.



## Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

Should GM contamination enter the organic food chain, organic farmers will necessarily be economically damaged. The IFOAM EU Group's position<sup>3</sup> is, and remains, that the EU must introduce a proper and effective liability regime. The EU has a duty to ensure those farmers, both organic and non-organic, who wish to remain GMO-free are properly protected in the event of contamination.

There has not been and will not be any tolerance at all for GMO contamination of organic products.

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<sup>3</sup> Please see our position paper from 2003, *Co-existence between GM and non-GM crops. Necessary anti-contamination and liability measures*, available at <http://tinyurl.com/al2se>