

Experts call for organic farming to be the future model for European agriculture

European Seminar on organic food and farming and its political framework (1) was delivered by the IFOAM EU Group (2) in Hungary

Brussels/Hortobagy 19/09/2008 – Thirty European experts from 20 EU and EFTA countries, meeting at the seminar in Hortobagy, Hungary – "Organic food and farming and its political framework" (3) – welcomed the French Presidency's initiative to review the CAP post-2013 and called on the Council to adopt organic farming as the future model for European agriculture.

The CAP has arrived at a pivotal turning point: budget cuts, rising food prices, production of agro-fuels, climate change, environmental problems. These call into question the current system of agricultural production and funding. The French Presidency has recognised this and will be discussing future orientation of the CAP at the informal meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture in Annecy, France, this weekend.

"Organic farming can offer solutions to all these problems", said Francis Blake, president of the IFOAM EU Group. "We are past the time for piecemeal measures, which tend to work against each other, and therefore cost more. We need a holistic approach, and only organic farming provides this."

The French EU-presidency suggested in its paper for the Minister's council four objectives to be met by the future CAP:

- Ensure food safety, including public health aspects
- Contribute to global dietary health to participate in world food safety
- Preserve the equilibrium of rural areas
- Participate in the fight against climate change and for environmental improvement

The participants of the seminar concluded that organic farming delivers a unique combination of positive effects to all the above aims: health and food quality; food security (self reliance particularly in developing countries); rural society and quality of life in rural areas, e.g. through creation of jobs, local marketing; and environment (including lower energy use and carbon sequestration).

Francis Blake continued, "therefore organic farming should become the overall model for farming in Europe – and the future CAP should be designed according to this model".

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Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

Notes

- (1) The CAP Seminar "Sustainable agriculture in Europe – the role of organic food and farming and its political framework" will afford the opportunity to outline impacts of changing legal frameworks in Europe.
- (2) The IFOAM EU Group represents the 334 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU, 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) The seminar has taken place from 18-21 September in Hortobágy, Hungary. It is co-financed by the European Community, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. The sole responsibility for the communication/publication lies with the author. The Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.