

# THE OGS COURIER

GUARANTEERING  
ORGANIC

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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF  
ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS

## ONE WEEK LEFT TO PROMOTE YOUR STANDARD AT BIOFACH!



How to deal with the jungle of organic standards will be a question high on the agenda at the upcoming BioFach Germany. The question will be addressed from the harmonization and equivalence angle in the GOMA conference, with

prominent speakers such as Alexander Mueller, Harsha Singh, Miles McEvoy, Jean-François Hulot, Gunnar Rundgren and others. It will be addressed from an international coordination and credibility endorsement perspective in the congress sessions organized by IFOAM and by the IOAS.

For standard owners however, an important challenge will be simply to communicate their existence and credibility to the rushing crowd of BioFach visitors. Those already featuring on the IFOAM Family of Standards will have the chance that their

standard will appear in the list of organic standards in the Family Frame displayed prominently on the IFOAM BioFach booth and publications. That is an assurance that despite the increasingly confusing jungle of organic standards, their standard will not be forgotten and that its credibility will be endorsed by IFOAM.

**All applications submitted to [ogs@ifoam.org](mailto:ogs@ifoam.org) before January 31, 2012 will be featured at BioFach.**

We want to give other standard owners a last chance to bring their standard in the Family Frame that will be displayed at BioFach: all applications submitted to [ogs@ifoam.org](mailto:ogs@ifoam.org) before January 31, 2012 will be featured at Biofach. Others will miss this year's unprecedented opportunity.

André Leu - IFOAM President

## DAVID GOULD JOINS THE IFOAM OGS TEAM



IFOAM now has a new valuable member in its OGS team: David Gould has been hired starting January 1. David will work partly on the OGS and partly on the IFOAM Best Practice Program. With almost 20 years experience in the organic sector, and having worked with the entire supply chain, David will be a terrific resource for the OGS and for IFOAM as a whole. A warm welcome to him!



### EVENTS

The IFOAM Organic Guarantee System at the upcoming BioFach




### IFOAM FAMILY OF STANDARDS

Welcome new applicants to the Family of Standards



### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

IFOAM and IOAS present their tools and solutions to governments



## THE IFOAM ORGANIC GUARANTEE SYSTEM AT THE UPCOMING BIOFACH

BioFach Germany is the biggest international organic trade fair and the place 'where organic people meet'. This year's Biofach (February 15-18, 2012), will feature many events and opportunities to learn about the IFOAM OGS:

- The contribution of the OGS to the goals of global harmonization and equivalence will be presented by Markus Arbenz, IFOAM ED, during the GOMA conference, February 13-14, 2012 (see [www.goma-organic.org/](http://www.goma-organic.org/)).
- The IOAS will present the benefits and potentials of IFOAM accreditation in a congress session entitled "New ideas on how government authorities can use IFOAM accreditation" on February 15.
- Government and private sector representatives will share their experience with the COROS tool as a way to assess organic standards in a session entitled "The Jungle of Standards: Which Ones are Truly Organic? Which are the Best?" on February 16.
- The IFOAM Family of Standards will be displayed prominently at the IFOAM Booth during the entire Biofach period. The Family of Standards will also feature in a number of brochures and publications available at the IFOAM booth, and IFOAM staff will be available at the IFOAM booth and throughout the fair to answer questions and receive comments related to the OGS services.



## Welcome to new Applicants to the Family of Standards!

In December, IFOAM received the following applications for the IFOAM Family of Standards:

- the Pacific Organic Standard;
- the Krav Standard;
- the Standard of the Hong Kong Organic Resource Center;
- the Quality Certification Services International Program Standard Manual;
- the Biocyclic Standards of the Biocyclic Network;
- the Kumnandi Standards of the Siyavuna Development Centre;

IFOAM will now assess the equivalence of these standards against the IFOAM Standards Requirements (COROS), IFOAM policies and procedures. Stakeholders may comment on the above applications by e-mail to [ogs@ifoam.org](mailto:ogs@ifoam.org). Comments should be submitted no later than February 21, 2012 in order to be taken into account.



## IFOAM AND IOAS PRESENT THEIR TOOLS AND SOLUTIONS TO GOVERNMENTS

IFOAM and the IOAS (International Organic Accreditation Service) have had a joint vision for several decades that IFOAM accreditation could be a tool to ease the burden of international trade requirements for organic products. There has however been little update of this vision from the part of governments. In the past few years, both organizations reflected on this lack of success, adapted strategies and worked both to shape the contextual factors that impeded uptake, and to propose new and complementary tools for governments to use.

IFOAM worked with its partners FAO and UNCTAD through the ITF and GOMA projects to promote the concepts of harmonization and equivalence. This has significantly changed the political landscape. More recently, IFOAM revised its Organic Guarantee System to propose a range of new tools and concepts, such as the IFOAM Family of Standards and the Global Organic System Accreditation, which come to complete a picture, which IFOAM accreditation alone could not cover.

IFOAM, with the input of its GOMA partners, has articulated this vision and the range of solutions proposed to governments in a Policy Brief entitled "How Governments can regulate Imports of Organic Products Based on the concepts of Harmonization and equivalence". The core recommendation of IFOAM is to use the Global Organic System Accreditation (and IFOAM accreditation) as a sufficient accreditation for imported products, and to use the Family of Standards or COROS assessments as the main way to handle the issue of standard equivalence. The IOAS has also highlighted in a separate paper the role that, at the very least, IFOAM accreditation could play. The paper, entitled "Government authorities can use IFOAM accreditation to ease the burden of international trade requirements for organic products", explains why the long-nurtured vision of IFOAM and the IOAS regarding IFOAM accreditation is now more relevant and accessible than ever.