

Implementing Social Standards in Organic Certification

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Abstract

Since 2004, IFOAM has called upon organic certifiers to implement the social standards outlined in the IFOAM Basic Standards. In this workshop, certifiers who are taking the lead will analyze their experience, review the difference between a production audit and a social audit, share the documentation they have developed for verification and inspections, and engage in dialogue with one another and workshop participants about whether it is the moment for IFOAM to expand upon the IBS requirements for social standards.

Although social sustainability has been a basic precept in organic agriculture throughout the years of IFOAM's existence, organic standards have focused on production practices for farming and processing. Governmental programs, such as the National Organic Program of the United States Department of Agriculture are silent on the social relations on farms or processing plants, or the pricing of organic farm products. Only a few organic certification programs have included social standards along with production standards from their inception. Since 2004, IFOAM's International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) has called upon certifiers to implement the social standards outlined in Chapter 8 of the IFOAM Basic Standards (Chapter 9 of the IFOAM Benchmark Standards), and a number of certifiers have responded to this call. The purpose of this workshop is to hear from some of these certifiers about the progress of their work with social standards, to compare methods and share documentation, and to discuss whether and how IFOAM should build further upon its basic commitment to social justice and social rights.