

DRAFT DEFINITION of ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Background:

The 2005 General Assembly adopted the motion that 'IFOAM shall succinctly define 'organic agriculture' based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture'. The World Board installed a Task Force whose members are recruited from the former Task Force on Rewriting Principles of Organic Agriculture. The World Board agreed that the definition would adhere to the following criteria:

- Short / concise
- Positive as opposed to normative
- Positive as opposed to negative (what Organic Agriculture is NOT or does NOT use)
- Covers the full diversity of Organic Agriculture in the world
- No specific reference to certification (in line with position on full diversity of organic agriculture)
- Based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture

The first step in developing the definition was to prepare a report on existing definitions to provide a basis for the Task Force. Definitions were collected and analyzed from the public (on the internet), regulations, past IFOAM publications, Organic Agriculture-related definitions, and definitions submitted from IFOAM members. The report can be downloaded from the IFOAM website at:

http://www.ifoam.org/organic_facts/doa/pdf/Definition_of_Organic_Agriculture_Report.pdf

Based on the report, the Task Force had several conference calls and email discussions to formulate the first draft. In addition to the mandate set by the World Board, the Task Force decided the Definition of Organic Agriculture should:

- Be functional, without being legalistic
- Be elegant, without being poetic
- Refer to organic's farming roots (because the task is to define "organic agriculture" as opposed to "organic food" or "organic products")

Next Steps:

In the following months, feedback from IFOAM's internal bodies will be collected and used to craft a second draft. The second draft will then be presented to the membership and external stakeholders for their feedback. This will result in a third draft to be presented at the Summit in 2007. The World Board will approve the final version and will put the Definition of Organic Agriculture forward to the General Assembly 2008 for ratification.

The First Draft:

Organic Agriculture: farm production systems that sustain the health of soils, plants, animals, and people; rely on ecological systems to conserve resources and maintain natural balance; build fair relationships that account for social and environmental costs; and care for the long-term productivity of the living landscape.

Please submit your comments and suggestions to r.horwat@ifoam.org

by **November 13th, 2006**

Thank-you!