

++++**IFOAM Telegram**++++

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Mark Your Calendar: the 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress in Modena, Italy

Organic Viticulture and Wine Conference and Organic Fiber and Textile Conference: June 16-17 2008
The Organic World Congress, including an Organic Cosmetic and Body Care Conference: June 18-20 2008
The IFOAM General Assembly: June 22-24 2008.

Cultivate the future is the title of the 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress, because we believe that the contribution made by organic agriculture is fundamental for guaranteeing generations to come with a healthy, fair, correct environment for harmonious living that respects people and the earth. Modena is a land of pioneers and a cradle of organic agriculture in Italy, not only because of the methods and cultivation techniques used, but also due to its culture of living in harmony with Mother Earth.

The congress will be structured around the Principles of Organic Agriculture, and will address a wide range of issues, including animal production, vegetable crops, cereals and organic seeds, training, rural development, GMOs, viticulture, textiles, development policies, markets, bio-energy, cosmetics and body care.

Call for papers

A call for papers will be issued by the end of April 2007, and the deadline for submission of abstracts will be October 15th 2007. Continuous updates will be available at www.ifoam.org.

1st IFOAM Conference on the Marketing of Organic and Regional Values to take Place from August 26-28 2007 in Schwaebisch Hall

The marketing of organic products is viewed as a significant link between production and consumers. Today, organic products are becoming increasingly interchangeable, disconnecting the linkage between producer and consumer and diluting their identity. Stakeholders can obviously organize organic production, but in light of continuous growth and the entrance of organic in mainstream markets, it is important to develop new and specific marketing strategies that protect organic product identity, traditional knowledge, and biodiversity, and thus organic farmers and rural communities.

IFOAM is organizing this conference with the goal of initiating discussion and fostering knowledge about the marketing of organic and regional values. This conference will focus on a discussion of specific marketing strategies that aim to give value to products by taking into consideration their uniqueness. It will deal with the question of how to create and identify regional and other specific values, and ultimately how to translate these values into successful marketing strategies for organic products. Communicating these values to the consumer is part of that strategy. The conference will consider various concepts and marketing strategies, including regulatory approaches, to protect regional values and traditional knowledge.

Call for papers

Papers are invited for a list of topics that can be found on the website. Case studies and practical marketing experiences are strongly encouraged; it is hoped to receive a full range of papers spanning from grassroots and political nature, to scientific and professional articles. The deadline for abstracts is April 26th. Complete details can be found on the website.

For more information, visit: http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/regional_values_2007.html

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Organizes International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security In Partnership With IFOAM

The International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security will be held from May 3-5 2007 in FAO's Headquarters (Green Room) in Rome, Italy, in connection with the 33rd Session of the Committee on World Food Security (7-10 May 2007).

After calling on the FAO to invest in organic agriculture and to recognize the contribution of organic agriculture to food security, the FAO has begun to realize the truth in IFOAM's message. This conference will serve as a forum to demystify organic agriculture and to communicate its benefits to government delegates attending the 33rd Committee on Food Security and country representatives to FAO. The Conference objective is to shed light on the contribution of organic agriculture to food security, through the analysis of existing information in different agro-ecological areas of the world. The Conference will identify organic agriculture's potential and limits in addressing the food security challenge, including conditions required for its success.

The outcome of the Conference will be a thorough assessment of the state of knowledge on organic agriculture and food security, including recommendations on areas for further research and policy development. The Report of the Conference will be submitted to the 33rd Session of the Committee on Food Security, for information and further action.

The Conference is free of charge. The Registration Form and dedicated Conference webpage is available on the FAO website on Organic Agriculture (www.fao.org/organicag). For further information, please contact Nadia Scialabba (nadia.scialabba@fao.org).

Gunnar Videgård, Former IFOAM General Secretary, Passes Away

On Saturday January 6th 2007, Gunnar Videgård, former IFOAM General Secretary, passed away peacefully at Orupslunds nursing home in Höör, Sweden. From 1982 – 1987, Gunnar Videgård his wife Airi served voluntarily as the General Secretariat of IFOAM. Gunnar also served as the treasurer of the organization at this time, and due to his successful financial management and because he undersigned the loan guarantee for the first 2 years budget, IFOAM was able to finance a professional General Secretariat in 1987.

Nearly 31 Million Certified Organic Hectares Worldwide - IFOAM Publishes Eighth Edition of the World of Organic Agriculture

The study shows that nearly 31 million hectares are currently certified according to organic standards. Australia continues to account for the largest certified organic surface area, with 11.8 million hectares, followed by Argentina (3.1 million hectares), China (2.3 million hectares) and the USA (1.6 million hectares). The most significant portion of global organic surface area is in Oceania (39%), followed by Europe (23%) and Latin America (19%). In terms of the certified organic agriculture as a proportion of all arable agricultural surface area, the Alpine countries, such as Austria with more than 14%, top the statistics. Dr. Helga Willer und Minou Youssefi, who have headed up the study for the last eight years, emphasize that the growth exhibited in the USA (more than 400,000 hectares) and certain European countries (more than 110,000 hectares in Italy and 85,000 hectares in Poland) has been the most noteworthy. In addition to the certified organic arable land, nearly 62 million hectares are currently certified to organic standards for the collection of wild product, according to research by the International Trade Center (ITC).

The global market for organic products reached a value of 25.5 billion Euros in 2005, with the vast majority of products being consumed in North America and Europe, according to the market research experts of Organic Monitor. For 2006, the value of global markets is estimated to be at more than 30 billion Euros. Healthy growth rates are expected to continue in the coming years. Angela B. Caudle, IFOAM Executive Director, suggests that the ever-growing demand for organic products offers attractive opportunities for producers – especially those in developing countries.

The World of Organic Agriculture: Statistics and Emerging Trends 2007 is being presented for the eighth consecutive year at BioFach 2007. In addition to chapters reviewing organic agriculture worldwide, numerous illustrations and graphs, and completely revised reports about the emerging trends and regional

development highlights on each individual continent, the study includes a comprehensive annex with the entire data set and expanded coverage of commodity specific data.

The study can be purchased as a download, cd or hard copy via the IFOAM website.

Dossier on the Millennium Development Goals Published

Around 850 million people continue to suffer from hunger, and more than 1 billion still live on less than 1 dollar a day. In 2000, the member states of the UN adopted the Millennium Declaration, which established the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

The Dossier delves into the question of how organic agriculture will contribute both directly and indirectly to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Organic agriculture provides a long-term solution to poverty and food insecurity, has the ability to empower women, improve human health, promote environmental sustainability and enhance and preserve biodiversity. The contribution of organic agriculture to achieving the MDGs is even greater when entire communities, as well as indirect benefits are considered.

With increasing evidence and awareness of the advantages of organic agriculture and its contribution to the MDGs, a number of measures can be adopted by governments and policy makers to encourage organic agriculture on a wider scale. Included in this dossier are the “Organic Agriculture MDGs” - goals that are meant to widen the horizon of the current MDGs, and provide a perspective on what organic agriculture implies.

You may download the Dossier from IFOAM's for a fee of 6 Euros.

IFOAM Publishes Background Paper on Organic Agriculture and Globalization

Most organic agriculture organizations have been involved in the anti-globalization movement, but thus far, no attempts have been made to reach a common position on the matter at the international level. With the primary intention of providing an overview and background information that may lead to a decision as to whether IFOAM should engage more seriously with the issue in some way, IFOAM published this paper as a general introduction to globalization from the perspective of the organic agriculture movement. The paper briefly assesses the fundamentals of agricultural trade, the WTO and other trade agreements, and includes references for further investigation. The paper concludes that a position on globalization by the organic movement could offer an original contribution to the globalization and food trade discussion, if it is backed by key companies engaged in organic food trade, and thus achieving considerable credibility both on the market and as a political statement.

To download the complete paper, visit:

www.ifoam.org/organic_facts/politics/pdfs/OA_Globalization_BackgroundPaper.pdf

Global Leaders in the Organic Trade Discuss the Future of the Organic Trade at the IFOAM Trade Symposium

IFOAM organized a trade symposium with the title In-Between Discount and Premium - Friend or Foe?, inviting key players in the organic sector and bringing together 120 participants from 20 countries to

discuss the implications of large-scale conventional businesses entering the organic marketplace. The symposium took place on February 14 2007 in Nuremberg, Germany, in connection with BioFach 2007, the world's largest organic trade fair, of which IFOAM is the patron. The IFOAM Trade Symposium 2007 consisted of four presentations by key players in the organic sector, and was moderated by Gerald A. Herrmann, IFOAM President.

Dr. Götz Rehn, Director of Alnatura - one of Germany's largest organic retailers and brands - expressed that "The aim of a business is not profit. The aim of a business should be to produce good products that serve humanity and protect the earth. The achievement of profit is the expression and measure of how efficient this is being done."

Mr. Bruno Fischer, Director of International Procurement in Europe and South America for The Hain Celestial Group, concluded, "Our core business is nurturing the development of knowledge at all levels with all stakeholders regarding organic agriculture and principles. Our industry is built upon long, sustainable cycles. Be brave enough to go slow enough to allow for that." He emphasized that long-term scarcity of organic commodities increases the quality of organic products and further stated, "The term borrowing from future generations is often used, but borrowing is always based on consent between two parties. Taking from another party without consent is robbery."

According to Thomas B. Harding, Jr., President of AgriSystems International and former IFOAM President, "Building a sustainable, high quality and ethical organic business is not about the size or scale of the operation. Crucially, it is about creating systems that deliver organic products that hold fast to the Principles of Organic Agriculture and impart holistic values to consumers, irrespective of scale."

Gerald A. Herrmann, IFOAM President, summarized the thread of the discussion, noting, "The speakers, all leaders and pioneers in the organic sector, have reminded us that it is us - nobody else - who are defining how this market will develop, and that we need to bring everyone to the table to make this happen. This is precisely the role of IFOAM - to create a better world by creating a platform that brings people together, including those who are not already part of the system. This symposium also confirms that through ethical trade and education, the organic sector is provoking long-term consumer commitment and sustainable economic success."