



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS

Headlining a Sustainable Future: 2008 Highlights and Achievements

With a mission to transform agriculture systems toward ecologically-, socially-, and economically-sound models, IFOAM's efforts help create the knowledge base and infrastructure to support a sustainable future.

Supporting Organic Worldwide

In 2008, IFOAM activities focused on helping countries with an emerging organic sector. Through these activities, substantial progress was made in areas pivotal to the development of Organic Agriculture.

- **Group Certification** - IFOAM was very involved in advocating on behalf of Organic Agriculture during the drafting of the U.S. National Organic Standards Board's recommendation on group certification. The continued acceptance of group certification is critical for the growth of the organic sector and the livelihoods of thousands of smallholders in developing countries. IFOAM's objective is to ensure that the group certification is perceived as fair, legally valid, technically defensible, and implementable.
- **Formation of the Organic World Foundation (OWF)** - Founded and set up by IFOAM to support funding and activities and increasing the visibility of organic production in the world, OWF is intended to support Organic Agriculture by helping lead, unite, and assist the organic movement in its full diversity.
- **Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) Self-Evaluation Tool** - The IFOAM PGS Task Force developed a voluntary questionnaire for PGS to evaluate their success in meeting key goals. The tool will also be used by IFOAM to collect information about existing PGS worldwide and ultimately facilitate information exchange and network building, on a voluntary basis.

Leading International Discourse

As part of its core mission, IFOAM unites the organic movement and provides forums for discussion. By organizing and sponsoring events in 2008, IFOAM created platforms for important discussions about Organic Agriculture.

- **IFOAM General Assembly, Vignola, Italy, June 22 - 24** - A tri-annual event, the General Assembly is a grassroots democracy where members serve as guardians of organic credibility and integrity. With unique meeting facilities and simultaneous translation in two languages this year's event generated the highest attendance in IFOAM's history.
- **Organic World Conference (OWC), Modena, Italy, June 16 - 20** - Members and supporters gathered to address a wide range of issues, including animal

production, vegetable crops, organic seeds, training, rural development, GMOs, viticulture, textiles, development policies, agrofuels, and cosmetics and body care. Scientists, sociologists, and business leaders in the organic sector inspired the unprecedented number of attendees to work toward sustainability through meaningful workshops, seminars, roundtable discussions, and interactive forums.

- **The Trade Symposium, Nuremberg, Germany, February 20** - Key players in the organic sector came together to focus on the implications of large-scale conventional businesses entering the organic marketplace. The day-long conference entitled “Global Sourcing: An issue of Credibility,” was organized in connection with BioFach 2008, the world’s largest organic trade fair. Attendees were reminded that they have the power to define how the market will develop.
- **Planet Diversity, Bonn, Germany, May 16** - IFOAM co-organized this event, which paralleled the UN delegates’ negotiations on the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity. Over 550 people from more than 90 countries participated.

Speaking on Behalf of Organic Movements

Members of the World Board, the Executive Director, and other IFOAM members attend high-level or political meetings and contribute and present content for specialized audiences. In 2008 members participated in over 100 such events, including:

- The 29th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East, Cairo, Egypt, March 1-5
- Expert Meeting on Opportunities and Challenges of Responses to Climate Change for Indigenous and Local Communities, their Traditional Knowledge and Biological Diversity - Helsinki, Finland, March 25
- International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), Johannesburg, South Africa, April 7-14
- Making Sustainable Standards Work for Small-Scale Farmers, Arusha, Tanzania, April 7-9
- Addressing the Opportunities and Challenges of Globalization for Development, Arusha, Tanzania, April 20-25
- 1st International Conference on the Organic Sector Development in Central/ Eastern European and Central Asian Countries, Kiev, Ukraine, April 10-12
- 30th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, Brasilia, Brazil, April 14-18



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS

- The United Nations 16th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development New York, USA, May 5-16
- Cuban Association of Agriculture and Forest Engineers, La Havana, Cuba, May 13-16
- Organic Agriculture for Biodiversity: International Day for Biological Diversity (IBD), Bonn, Germany, May 22
- Organic Expo 2008, Sydney, Australia, July 25-27
- BioFach Japan - Tokyo, Japan, September 24-26 (Under IFOAM's patronage)
- International Fair Trade Association (IFAT) and Europe Regional Conference and AGM, Rome, Italy, September 25-27
- Asia Fair Trade: Driving Innovation and Growth, Marawila, Sri Lanka, October 11-15
- Natural and Organic Products Exhibition 2008, Cape Town, South Africa, October 17-19
- Organic Asia - The Way Forward Conference: Innovations, Challenges, and Collaboration for the Future, Sarawak, Malaysia, October 28-31
- Middle East Natural & Organic Products Expo (MENOPE) and Conferences 2008, Dubai, U.A.E., November 16-18
- 1st West African Summit on Organic Agriculture and 4th National Conference, Abeokuta, Nigeria, November 17-21
- India Organic Trade Fair (IOTF) 2008, New Delhi, India, November 27-30

Training Resources and Guidelines

To facilitate the practical adoption of Organic Agriculture in targeted regions IFOAM provides training resources and guidelines. New material in 2008 includes:

- **Internet Training Platform** - IFOAM further developed this platform to provide worldwide access to training materials and opportunities on Organic Agriculture. Available material increased by 30 percent in the last year. Supporting the added value this platform has brought to members, there has been a sharp increase in the number of visitors. Over 2,000 people visit the site per month.
- **Comprehensive Information Package** - Introduced this year, this package provides information to countries with an emerging organic sector. It is based on two excellent studies, *Building Sustainable Organic Sectors* and *Best Practices for Organic Governments: What Developing Country Governments Can Do to Promote the Organic Agriculture Sector*, as well as additional tools and resources.

- **Criticisms and Frequent Misconceptions About Organic Agriculture: The Counter-Arguments** - This guide provides a comprehensive set of arguments as responses to the different criticisms that are made towards Organic Agriculture.
- **Answers to the Frequently Asked Questions on PGS** - Quality assurance initiatives that are locally relevant, PGSs emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers, and operate outside the frame of third party certification. The IFOAM PGS Task Force has developed answers to the most frequently asked questions about PGS.
- **Group Certification: Who Should Be Eligible?** - This report, from the Organic World Congress discussion surrounding group certification, deals with the acceptance of group certification by the US National Organic Standards Board (NOSB).
- **Organic Agriculture and the Impact of Agrofuels** - This leaflet outline's IFOAM's position on the production and use of Agrofuels.