

ORGAP NEWSLETTER

Third Issue - 04th July 2007

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION
2. PROJECT RESULTS
 - a. *Asses sing the feasibility and appropriateness of existing assessments of Organic Action Plans as data sources for ORGAPET (Task 3.2)*
 - b. *National Focus Group Discussion on the Implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan (Provisional results)*
 - c. *Orgapet update version 5*
 - d. *Synthesis report on the ORGAPET testing*
 - e. *Comparison of National Organic Action Plan (last version)*
 - f. *Early assessment of potential risks and implementation problems with the EU-AP OF&F (Preliminary results)*
 - g. *Meta evaluation of national organic action plans – actual work plan and chosen case-studies (Provisional results)*
 - h. *ORGAPET Manual*
3. ORGANIC ACTION PLANS NEWS FROM EUROPE
 - a. *Promotion campaign and consumers Information*
 - b. *Using results from finalised organic research projects*
 - c. *Using national/regional rural development programmes schemes to support organic farming*
 - d. *Improving transparency in the EU regulation 2092/91 implementation regarding third countries*
 - e. *Developments in UK of Organic Action Plans*
4. ORGAP INTERNET FORUM ON STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT
 - a. *Instructions for Forum Participants*
5. OTHER RELATED NEWS
6. ORGANIC ACTION PLANS ADDRESSES
7. CONTACT

Introduction

This is the 3rd issue of the newsletter of the research Project “European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming - Development of criteria and procedures for the evaluation of the EU Action Plan for Organic Agriculture (ORGAP)” (www.orgap.org), ORGAP is an EU funded policy support research project under the 6th Research Framework Programme of the European Union to give scientific support for the implementation of the European Action Plan, launched by the European Commission in June 2004.

Process of implementing the European Action plan for organic food and farming

In this issue of the newsletter an update is given about the main activities and results delivered by the ORGAP project. Furthermore information are given about the implementation of the European Organic Action Plan and National or Regional Organic Action Plans

ORGAP Project results

Assessing the feasibility and appropriateness of existing assessments of Organic Action Plans as data sources for ORGAPET

ORGAPET is a toolbox for the evaluation of organic action plans, which is one of the main outcomes of the project. In order to develop this toolbox, one approach within the project was to conduct a review of four evaluations of National Organic Action Plans (OAP) or other organic support and development plans. This review was coordinated by the University of Hohenheim. It was undertaken to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of the ORGAPET indicators by analysing these evaluations (including the data collected for these evaluations). This feasibility assessment will be undertaken using OAP assessments from Germany (DE), Denmark (DK), the Netherlands (NL) and England, UK (ENG-UK).

The four evaluations can be divided into two groups based on the types of evaluations completed. Firstly the DE and the ENG-UK study consider the performance of the individual measures with the plans. Indicators that were used in these evaluations had a strong focus on the measures and how their performance could be measured. These evaluations did not directly consider the wider impacts of these policies on the organic sector and the environment. The data available to substantiate these assessments are available for the DE study and not for the ENG-UK study. The second group contained the DK and NL evaluations. The indicators used in these studies were more closely aligned to the ORGAPET indicators and there was a greater amount of data that was potentially useful for ORGAPET.

The different approaches highlight some issues in evaluating these types of policies: How to measure the effectiveness and the direct effects of the policy separate from the general performance of the organic sector? What is the impact of exogenous events and how can these be addressed in an evaluation? In the most useful study (the Danish study) coverage of the ORGAPET indicators is still poor. For nine of the 19 core indicators and seven of the 47 low priority indicators data are available with moderate or high utility (with various degrees of coverage and time series data) for assessing the ORGAPET indicators. The majority of the ORGAPET indicators can not be assessed using this evaluation as a data source.

As conclusions, it is important to focus on the performance of the measures against indicators e.g. the DE evaluation. This does provide an overall picture on the impact of the OAP on the organic farming sector or the wider bio-physical, social and economic environment.

Focus group discussions on the EU member state implementation of the EU Organic Action Plan (Provisional results)

As part of the ORGAP analyses of the national action plans, focus group discussions were held between November 2006 and February 2007 in 8 EU member states: the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, England, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain. The objective of the focus group discussions were to define areas of conflicts and synergies from a national stakeholder point of view regarding the implementation of the EU Organic Action plan within member states' national policy framework. The discussions included important stakeholders in each of the eight member states. The discussions focused on how the participants perceived the problems of implementing the European Organic Action Plan in the national context - and which strategies they would suggest regarding coping with the implementation problems. Only two main topics were covered in each focus group. One topic common to all discussions was the proposal for a revised regulation on organic production. It represents an attempt to realize many of the recommendations from the European Action Plan. The second topic was common to six focus groups: the recommendation aiming for a more transparent European market for organic food. Only in Italy and England they preferred to discuss the issue of financing organic action plans as part of the Rural Development Plans.

The focus group discussions went very well. The number of participants varied from 7 to 20 - and all participants found the discussions relevant. Against expectations, discussions were characterized by consensus. Hence only few conflicts appeared and synergies were not easy to detect either. The discussions are now analyzed by the Danish team and will contribute to the project with a list of implementation problems and coping strategies that need to be taken into consideration when member states implement the EU organic action plan and when the action plan is implemented. (More information: Johannes Michelsen, jm@sam.sdu.dk)

ORGAPET updated version 5

The development of the Organic Action Plan Evaluation Toolbox (ORGAPET) is a central part of the ORGAP project. The structure for ORGAPET consists of four main sections: Section A is a background/contextual documents series on organic action plans, organic farming policy, stakeholder involvement and evaluation principles and procedure. Section B is dealing with evaluation methods relating to action plan development and implementation process, including conflicts and synergies, coherence, implementation failure risk and stakeholder engagement. Section C is about evaluations methods relating to action plan outputs, effects on the organic sector and impacts on public policy goals and Section D is about approaches to synthesising overall conclusions including interpretation issues relating to cause and effect relationships, interactions between elements and likely developments in the absence of the action plans or specific action points.

Each section is sub-divided into a number of specific topics, with an overview document providing a guide to key issues and possible solutions, and a series of annexes providing illustrative examples, specific methodological details or useful data sources. It is envisaged that a manual will be developed to provide an accessible guide to action plan development, evaluation and ORGAPET in due course.

During the second year of the project, ORGAPET has been developed in an iterative process with most sections completed by the time Version 4 was subjected to testing with stakeholders in the different countries (see below). The feedback will be incorporated into Version 5 of ORGAPET by June 2007. This version will then be tested with respect to the EU action plan, and a final version 6 produced by December 2007 with publication envisaged for April 2008.

ORGAPET has been developed as a web-based toolbox, with links between the different elements designed to make navigation easy. These features will also be enhanced in Version 5. The current versions 4/5 of ORGAPET can be made available to interested users on a trial basis, with feedback particularly welcome during the remaining development period. If you would be interested in trialling ORGAPET in your work, please contact Nic Lampkin (leading the UWA ORGAPET development team) directly so that password-protected access can be arranged. Email: nhl@aber.ac.uk

Synthesis report on the ORGAPET testing

The ORGAP project has developed the evaluation toolbox ORGAPET (ORGanic Action Plan Evaluation Toolbox). The designed toolbox is an instrument for the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming. The initial evaluation toolbox covers the key areas of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming by adapting already existing policy evaluation methodologies. This initial evaluation toolbox was reviewed and completed now in another step of the ORGAP project, in consultation with national and European stakeholders. More information: www.orgap.org

In the first assessment of the ORGAPET toolbox done by the ORGAP project team there were many positive remarks on the comprehensive and well-researched texts, the user friendly checklists and suggestions of indicators, as well as the fact that important issues to evaluators are covered, and accordingly most sections meet their needs. Nearly all experts assessed the toolbox as systematic, with a holistic approach along the entire value added chain. The indicators were assessed as "having a very broad scope and reliable sources – they are a good support for all target groups". One compliment for the ORGAP project consortium was: "...as evaluator the author would have appreciated having ORGAPET".

Furthermore it was also noted that the comprehensive description on stakeholder involvement and the resulting benefits is very informative, but that in reality the possibilities to integrate them are limited by practical availability of adequate stakeholders. Some general remarks dealt with the indicator section: "The allocation of a certain toolbox does not keep evaluators from intensely reviewing their particular evaluation task. Also, ORGAPET should not be considered a replacement for a sector expert or sector specific knowledge in the evaluation team". Obstacles of applying ORGAPET in practice could not be identified.

One suggestion for improvement is the establishment of a user interface that allows differentiation between different user types (e.g. separate "entrance" for evaluators, non-experts, etc.), so that the information relevant to that group can be found more easily. Another recommendation addresses the restructuring of the text in order to make it more compact, giving clear outlines/overviews of all important steps and links to the more detailed information to avoid confusion and enables all users to "work" with the toolbox. Concrete, practical examples should be designated throughout the text, for example from experiences in existing evaluations. The interviewed experts recommended comprehensive editing of all ORGAPET documents in order to achieve a uniform structure of the text and avoid repetitions (particularly in the sections of the checklists).

A more application-oriented comment dealt with the topic of indicators and the role of stakeholder integration in the evaluation process: "Applying this

information (the ORGAPET toolbox) would have had a considerable added value for evaluators by having information about objectives of action plans for the organic sector, lists of indicators and mainly the checklists available", "additional added value would have been given by the verification of these issues by stakeholders being involved in their elaboration". The experts also mentioned the value of the practical examples in: "What would be interesting for future evaluators is a more in-depth analysis of implemented evaluations in the sector".

Some negative remarks addressed the number of indicators: "Perhaps fewer indicators should be planned to ensure that sufficient resources available for those which are most important". It was stressed that the evaluators have to adapt the provided set of indicators to their specific situation; there is the danger that non-experts or administration staff may rely too much on the ORGAPET indicator set and refrain from forming specific indicators, relevant to their specific situation, when evaluating an action plan.

Overall, the conclusion from the extensive review and testing process of an intermediate version of ORGAPET is: stakeholders and experts view ORGAPET in principle as a useful and helpful tool. There are a few suggestions for structural and general changes. The interviewed stakeholders stated that ORGAPET is in a shape to be used in practical evaluations. More info: C. Eichert [eichert@uni-hohenheim.de] and www.orgap.org

Comparison of National Organic Action Plan (last version)

The last version of the Comparative Documentation of Action Plans for Organic Agriculture of eight national and regional action plans for organic food and farming (Czech Republic, Andalusia (Spain), England, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia and Italy), conducted by the ORGAP as a part of the EU project has been finalised last February 2007. The main results were presented in the last ORGAP News (www.orgap.org) by country/region and in form of a cross-country comparison in relation to a) Development process of the action plans; b) Targets and Objectives; and c) Measures. The case study action plans vary with regard to the elaboration process, targets and objectives, and emphasis of measures on certain areas. This is due to quite different political and socio-economic framework conditions for organic farming in these countries.

Comparing the findings of the status quo analysis with the target setting in the actual action plans shows that the weaknesses identified in the status quo analyses have only partly been translated to the targets and measures included in the action plan documents. This is a result of a national priority setting on the one side. On the other side, this result needs to be reflected against the background of the EU governance structures, the corresponding national or regional regulatory responsibilities and the respective budgetary situation of the country. More information: otto.schmid@fibl.org and at the webpage www.orgap.org.

Meta evaluation of evaluations of national organic action plans – actual work plan and chosen case-studies (Provisional results)

It is clear that the researched evaluation studies are not perfect. In doing this meta-evaluation, the question is whether the evaluations achieve their purpose at an acceptable qualitative level. In general, the in-hand meta-evaluation pursues the approach of programme theory.

As the meta-evaluation within the ORGAP project is planned as a desk study, the presented results could not be used as an overall picture of the researched evaluation work. Some of the valuations were not possible due to the limited data and document insights. Regrettably, several interesting points concerning, for instance, many questions on reliability, financing, treating and interim reports could not be evaluated for the same reasons.

In other areas, the in-hand meta-evaluation can help illuminate methods and details for improving evaluation methodology in the field of organic farming support schemes. One important improvement is the analysis of stakeholder integration in the planning, conducting and assessment of evaluations.

This meta-evaluation tries to verify whether the already done evaluations could help improve their political field and/or society. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (1996), it is important that an evaluation find its audience in order to exploit its worth. Consequently, an evaluation shall assure

- relevance for the decision makers and/or other stakeholders,
- involvement of the users in the planning and reporting stages,
- reputation/credibility of the evaluator,
- qualitatively adequate communication of the findings and results (in terms of time, frequency and method) and
- procedure that assist in the use or recommendation of (future) action.

In the first subchapter, the studies from Denmark, The Netherlands and Germany and their underlying programmes are briefly presented. Subsequently, there is an assessment of the studies according to the used set of criteria. The chapter conclude with an overall assessment comparing the three studies to each other and the inferred recommendations.

More information: eichert@uni-hohenheim.de

Early assessment of potential risks and implementation problems with the EU-AP OF&F (Preliminary results)

An early assessment of potential risks and implementation problems with the European Action Plan on Organic food and farming planned in the Project is under development. A "Risk Priority Number" (RPN) is calculated, based on the product of: Detection X Severity X Probability of Occurrence The RPN will enable ranking of the most important problem areas for which the indicators provided in the toolbox may perform insufficiently. An electronic Consultation will occur in second half of June 2007. Participant has been asked to rate the various failure modes.

More information: zanoli@agrecon.univpm.it

ORGAPET Manual

An Organic Action plan initiation and evaluation manual is being developed by the Consortium Project. The ORGAPET Manual concept and structure is currently being finalised. The Manual concept is intended to serve two functions: a) to be a tool for stakeholder involvement in future action plan development and implementation processes at national and regional level as well as EU level and b) to provide a guide to the use of the ORGAPET evaluation toolbox. The ORGAPET Manual will be finalised in December 2007.

More information: vgonzalvez@agroecologia.net

ORGANIC ACTION PLANS NEWS FROM EUROPE

There are four main areas in this EU Organic Action Plan. The main action points are concentrated in the area on *“Improved transparency, scope and implementation of the regulation defining organic farming”*. This has been taken up with the new draft (from 21/12/05) for a Council regulation revising the EU regulation 2092/91, which is still in discussion and further elaboration. Also in the area of *“Consumer information and promoting campaigns”*, a Consultancy Company was contracted in a public call made by DG Agri, in order to develop a promotion campaign at EU level. In the third area *“Improved research, market intelligence and statistical data collection”* some projects have delivered some recommendations which have been taken up by some Members States. Finally, in the area of *“Rural development programme utilization and other options to support organic farming”*, there are still action points pending.

Recently the EU Commission has updated Member states representatives of the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF) on the state of play of this EU Organic Action Plan in the meeting in March 2007. There are 21 actions in the Action Plan, which have all been triggered. Two actions need a review: Rural development policies and question of the use of parcels arising from CAP. A summary table will be made available for the next committee meeting in 12th - 13th of June 2007. (Sources: Notes from the SCOF meeting, Brussels 13th of March 2007)

Table 1 - Areas and update of the activities and actions of the EU organic Action Plan

Main Action Areas	EU Organic Action Plan activities done
Consumer information & promotion campaigns	Action 1: DG AGRI has contracted a consulting company to develop the Information Campaign,. Several meetings organised.
Improved research, market intelligence and statistical data collection	Action 3: Statistical data: proposals from EU project EISfOM (www.eisfom.org). Eurostat and some EU member states are taking its recommendations.
Rural development programme & other options to support organic farming	Most national programmes are in notification process
Improved transparency, scope & implementation of the regulation defining organic farming	Action 2: Internet database on standards established (www.organicrules.org) in EU project “Organic-Revision” Actions 8-10; 12-13: taken up in new draft Council regulation revising 2092/91 (from 21/12/05) Action 19: proposal in new draft Council regulation Action 11: proposal for an expert panel elaborated in EU project “Organic inputs”:. DG Agri is currently establishing such a panel. Action 16: Control integrated in new control regulation 882/2004, but consequences unclear.

Promotion campaign and consumers Information

Action point one is the development of an information campaign for organic food and farming.

The EU Commission hopes, by having contracted a specialised consultancy firm (Media-Consulta, Berlin) to set up a rich and diverse website (and toolbox) containing videos/ database of images / leaflets etc , to assist organic producers and retailers with marketing. There is also room for other initiatives for example conferences and fairs. (Source SCOF meeting of March, 12th -13th 2007).

Mr. Sfyroeras (from the EU Commission) has informed the Advisory Group on Organic Farming (AG-OF) that the Commission was currently working on what would be the content of the campaign and on what would be the instruments available to carry on the campaign. Several meetings with the group of national experts as well as with the inter-service steering committee permit to monitor the campaign (Sources: Meeting notes, Advisory Group on Organic Farming. Brussels, 01 March 2007).

Using results from finalised organic research projects

Official presentations of five finalised organic research projects were made in the last SCOF Meeting in Brussels the 20th of March 2007:

- Organic marketing initiatives and Rural Development, meeting the challenge of organic agriculture in rural / less advantaged areas. (<http://www.irs.aber.ac.uk/omiard/>)
- Seed treatment for organic vegetable production (STOVE project), comparing the benefits of physical and biological seed treatments <http://www.stove-project.net/index2.html>
- INTERCROP – Intercropping of cereals and grain legumes for increased production, weed control, improved product quality and prevention of N-losses in European organic farming systems (<http://www.intercrop.dk/index.htm>)
- Organic Inputs evaluation– Harmonised and standardised procedures for evaluation of plant protection products, fertilisers & soil conditioners for use in organic agriculture (<http://www.organicinputs.org/>)
- Sustaining Animal Health and Food Safety in Organic Livestock Farming (SAFO) (<http://www.safonetwork.org/>)

Using national/regional Rural Development programmes schemes to support organic farming

National/regional Rural Development programmes are now in the process of notification by the European Commission. They should consider the Community strategic guidelines for Rural Development programmes, 3.2. (iv) "consolidating the contribution of organic farming" and the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming, Action 6, which called upon the Member States to support the organic sector through their Rural Development programmes.

The Agro-environment measures should help to improve environmental quality and the devoted budget was supposed to support this and to involve stakeholders in this process. Organic stakeholder's organisations have expressed their concerns on the development plans. which can be summarized as follows:

- Support for Axis 1 / investments: A significant number of plans, Rural Development funds are proposed for intensification of agriculture – instead for diversification and environmentally sound forms of agriculture. Many of the Rural Development programmes emphasize support for investment for modernisation and innovation, which could be used in a way that contradicts the aims of agri-environmental programmes.
- Share of budget for agro-environmental programmes /organic measures: Some of the programmes are reducing, providing not sufficient budget for organic farming measures. To further develop the organic food and farming sector, the most important tool is Rural Development programmes, especially agri-environmental schemes facilitating support for organic farmers. The level of the support for organic farming compared to other measures (with lower requirements), is a constraint to the expansion of organic farming. Maximum per farm limits for organic farming support could prevent (larger) farms from converting to organic farming (as reducing the financial incentive).
- Participatory process: The rules for the development of the national (regional) programmes require a participatory process, but this constructive involvement of stakeholders has not been sufficient in most member states. The planned CAP Health Check could deliver more information on the pre-evaluation of the National/Regional Rural development Programmes.

Improving transparency in the EU regulation 2092/91 implementation regarding third countries

The EU Commission gave a brief overview of the situation with third countries waiting for equivalence and also asked for co-reporters for Bolivia, Uruguay and Paraguay. There was also a brief discussion on possible changes to the trade agreement between Switzerland and the EC. As it is an international agreement it takes precedence over EC Regulation 94/92 where Switzerland is noted as an equivalent country. There is a proposal to change the international trade agreement which could have the effect of abolishing certificates of inspection for Swiss imports. The decision on this will be made by the EU Council, and should it come into force the EU Commission would amend 94/92 for clarity. Source: SCOF meeting 12th and 13th of March 2007.

Developments in UK of Organic Action Plans

In common with the decentralisation of agricultural policy to each of the four nations in the United Kingdom, there are also four action plans. An action plan is also under development for the Isle of Man.

Wales was the first to publish a plan in 1999, which led to the establishment of Organic Centre Wales (www.organic.aber.ac.uk). Wales is now implementing the second action plan 2005-2010 (see <http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk/policy>), which has a stronger emphasis on market development and consumer promotion, but also actions to support research and extension for producers and financial support for organic horticulture. From a low start of 0.3% land area managed organically in 1998, 5% was reached in 2005, and a target of 10-15% has been set for 2010.

The first English action plan for organic farming was published in 2002 (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/policy/actionplan/index.htm>), which led to the reform of control institutions (with UKROFS changing to ACOS) as well as the introduction of maintenance payments for organic producers. The English target (70% of UK market for indigenous foods supplied by domestic producers by 2010) is very much market focused, taking account of the high reliance of the UK organic food market on imports. With most of the original action points delivered, and a review of progress published in 2004, the current focus is on integrating future work with the English Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/policy/sustain/index.htm>).

The first Scottish action plan was published in 2003. The third annual report has recently been published and documents achievements with respect to financial and advisory support for organic farming, marketing and research. Organic support payments have been increased, although access is not universal with a point system used to determine eligibility. More information: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Agriculture/Agricultural-Policy/15869/3748>

The Northern Ireland plan is the most recent, published in May 2006 (<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/fisheries-farming-and-food/organic-crops/organic-action-plan-group.htm>). This followed an earlier Organic Farming in Northern Ireland Development Strategy published in 2001. A key focus of the current debate in Northern Ireland is the possible introduction of maintenance payments for producers, which may be introduced as part of the new rural development plan. Other actions focus on the development of the market including promotional and public procurement initiatives, support for research and considering the feasibility of an organic resource centre.

Following elections earlier this year, new coalition governments, in some cases with very different political complexions, are being installed or negotiated in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which may lead to new initiatives or changed priorities, particularly as part of the rural development plans still to be submitted to the European Commission.

More information: Nic Lampkin (nhl@aber.ac.uk), Institute of Rural Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

New Regional Organic Action Plan in Flanders

There will be a new action plan for organic farming in Flanders by June 2008. This was announced last Friday (May 25th) by the Flemish minister for Agriculture Yves Leterme. One item in the new plan is to compensate actors in the organic sector for a part of the (extra) control costs they will have to pay. The compensation may be up to 135 euro for farmers and 319 euro for processors and importers. More info: Joris Aertsens (Universiteit Gent - Belgium). E-mail: Joris.Aertsens@UGent.be

ORGAP INTERNET FORUM ON STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholder participation is one of the main aspects to be studied by the ORGAP Project. This is also relevant for the EU Commission. One example is that the new President of the EU stakeholder Advisory Group on Organic Farming was invited to attend the last SCOF Meeting in March 20th 2007. The SCOF President informed that one representative of this Advisory Group would come to each meeting to feed into decision making.

As part of the ORGAP project and to ensure the involvement of relevant stakeholders a broad e-mail consultation on the project results and dissemination of the project to the main stakeholder EU network is important. Therefore an open ORGAP Internet Forum was installed end of May 2007, moderated by the IFOAM EU Group. The feedback of the forum participants will be made available to Consortium partners as input for the project tasks.

More information: www.orgap.org

Instructions for Forum Participants:

ORGAP team members are already registered in the list and are allowed to post contributions.

External users can access and view the contributions posted in the forum.

Before posting their topics or replies to the forum, external users are requested to fill in a registration form. The forum moderator will check the registration form and add them to the member list of the forum. The new forum members will be notified by e-mail about the activation of their user account. Once their accounts are activated, they can log in and participate actively to the forum.

To access the external forum:

Go to www.orgap.org and click on "Forum" on the left side of the start page. The "index page" of the forum will appear.

To view contributions (= topics), post new topics and reply to topics:

1) Go to the section "Log in" of the index page of the forum and enter your user name and password. As registered member of the forum, you are able to post your contribution/topic only once you have logged in

- 2) In the section “public forum”, click on the heading “Have stakeholders nothing to do with the action plans for organic food and farming?” By doing so, you open the list of topics posted to the forum
- 3) To post your topic, please click on “new topic”. There you can enter the subject and the message body.
- 4) Click on “submit” at the bottom of the page. Now your contribution will appear on the list of topics
- 5) To view a topic, go back to the index page of the forum and click on the title of the topic in the list of topics (the title corresponds to the subject of the topic)
- 6) To reply to a topic, click on its title in the list of topics (on the index page of the forum). The message and author will appear. Click than on “post reply”, enter the message body and subject, and click on “submit”
- 7) To view a topic and the replies, go to the index page of the forum and click on the title of the topic. The original text of the topic and the reply will be visible.

To edit or delete your own topics and replies:

- 1) Go to the index page of the forum and click on the title of the topic you want to delete or edit
- 2) Once the text of the topic or reply is visible, click on “edit” on the right side of the message. Edit the message or the subject of the topic/reply and click on submit at the bottom of the page
- 3) Once the text of the topic or reply is visible, click on “X” (= delete) on the right side of the message and confirm.

To update your profile:

Each member of the forum is able to update only his/her own profile.

- 1) Log in to the external forum
- 2) Click on “profile” at the top of the page
- 3) Actualise the data, i. e. your e-mail address or password
- 4) Click on “submit” at the bottom of the page.

To view the member list of the forum:

- 1) Access the external forum
- 2) Click on “member list” at the top of the page.

More detailed instructions are available on the forum:

- 1) Access the external forum
- 2) Click on “Userdocumentation Forum” at the top of the index page.

More information: vgonzalvez@agroecologia.net

OTHER RELATED NEWS

9th Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture, University of Hohenheim Germany. 20-23 March 2007, of the German Speaking Countries "Wissenschaftstagung zum Ökologischen Landbau" took place 20-23 March 2007, supported by ISOFAR. The conference language was German. There were, however, also sessions in English since many foreign students and researchers are working at the University of Hohenheim due to the new study program on Organic Food Chain Management and the university's emphasis on international research. Conference Homepage www.wissenschaftstagung.de.

3rd International QLIF Congress "Improving Sustainability in Organic and Low Input Food Production Systems" at the University of Hohenheim, Germany, 20-23 March 2007, was organised by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL in cooperation with the University of Hohenheim, and supported by ISOFAR. Homepage www.qlif.org/congress2007

Workshop on self-sufficiency in organic farming - The objective of this workshop - held on 21 March 2007 at the University of Hohenheim, Germany, in connection with the [QLIF congress](#) - was to elucidate possibilities and barriers for increased self-sufficiency in organic farming. Three presentations dealing with different aspects of this topic: a) "Organic farming & Biogas" arguing that biogas could become a useful tool in order to ensure independence of conventional manure, improve crop rotations, initiate energy production and improve the environmental profile of organic farming; b) "Barriers and possibilities for independent plant breeding and seed production" outlining the challenges facing organic breeding and seed production and c) "Contribution of organic livestock farming to face the challenge of climatic changes", discussed organic livestock production in relation to both global and system-related implications and benefits. In the discussion a general point was on what level self-sufficiency in organic farming should be achieved: on field or herd level, on farm level, or on regional, national or global level?

The above mentioned three presentations can be downloaded from the Organic Revision project site:

<http://www.organic-revision.org/dissim/hohenheim/index.html>

It was generally agreed that the lack of self-sufficiency in organic farming is a problem that needs more attention. Due to the nature of the challenges, there is a need for both European action and international cooperation in order to provide solutions that are sustainable both locally and globally. As time for discussion was very limited it was suggested to provide possibility for continue the discussion at an electronic forum. A discussion forum has therefore been set up at www.organicforum.org.

2nd International Symposium on organic viticulture on "Regulations for organic enology" in Stuttgart/Germany, 24 April 2007, during the Intervitis

Interfructa 2007 was organised jointly by the German Organic Winegrowers Association (ECOVIN) and the German Winegrowers Association (DWV) Links: Publications on Organic Wine in the Organic Eprints Archive. Contact: Clemens von Eltz, Deutscher Weinbauverband e.V. (DWV), Heussallee 26, D53113 Bonn, Germany, Tel. +49 22894932516, Fax: +49 22894932523 or on the ORWINE project website: www.orwin.org

Orwine Project: The consortium has organised the first European Project Advisory Committee (EPAC) meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, on the 23-24 April 2007, which was combined with the II International Viticulture Symposium Intervitis". Several papers were presented. The Orwine project aims to provide recommendations on the organic wine and viticulture standards. More info: www.orwine.org

"Organic agriculture & food security" Report (UN Food & Agriculture Organization), found that in 2006, Organic agriculture practised across 31 million hectares in 120 countries around the world can satisfy global food needs while having a far smaller impact on the environment than conventional agriculture. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/paia/organicag/ofs/OFS-2007-5.pdf>

Meeting the food security challenge through organic agriculture - States should integrate organic agriculture objectives within national priorities, FAO says. "*Organic agriculture is no longer a phenomenon in developed countries only, as it is commercially practiced in 120 countries, representing 31 million hectares and a market of US\$ 40 billion in 2006,*" FAO underlines in a paper ("Organic Agriculture and Food Security") presented at an International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security (3-5 May 2007)

The International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security was organized by the [FAO](#) (the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization) on [Organic](#) Agriculture and Food Security, in Rome, in partnership with Associazione Italiana per l'Agricoltura Biologica, the Centre International de Hautes Études Agronomiques Méditerranéennes, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, the Rural Advancement Foundation International, the World Wildlife Fund, the Third World Network, the Research Institute for Organic Agriculture and the Worldwatch Institute. The aim was to shed light on the contribution of organic agricultural methods in preserving food security, to identify their potential, and to outline the conditions needed for their success. In a paper published in advance of the conference, said, "*the strongest feature of organic agriculture is its reliance on fossil-fuel independent and locally-available production assets; working with natural processes increases cost-effectiveness and resilience of agro-ecosystems to climatic stress*".

It also called on governments to devote resources to organic agriculture, and to integrate it within national agricultural development and poverty reduction strategies. It called for particular attention on vulnerable groups. The report from

the conference will be presented to the 33rd committee on World Food Security. IFOAM expects this will result in FAO policy changes that favour organic agriculture. The issue of food security has had food policy experts assessing other models for the future of food supply on a global basis. Previously the FAO has devoted attention to key areas in the effort to ensure future food security

Agricultural practices are often responsible for environmental degradation, such as non-sustainable food production, poor fuel use, natural resource depletion and habitat exploitation.

More info: http://www.fao.org/organicag/ofs/index_en.htm

Conference “Towards future challenges of agricultural research in Europe” - 26-27 June 2007, organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research on the future of agricultural research in Brussels (Charlemagne building), Belgium. The conference aims at debating research needs and developing a coherent European research agenda in order to enable agriculture to cope with a range of complex and interlinked challenges, such as rapidly increasing globalisation, energy shortages, climate change and unsustainable consumption of natural resources.

The discussion will build on the results of a wide foresight process, initiated by the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR), aimed at identifying possible scenarios for European agriculture with a 20-year perspective and appropriate research responses.

Registration in <http://agriculturalresearch.conference.intbase.com>.

More information: agriculturalresearch@teamwork.fr

Organic Revision Project was finalised last 30 April 2007 (www.orgnic.revision.org). An Extra edition Newsletter by IFOAM EU Group (Consortium partners) has summarized the main project results. More info: www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/around_world/eu_group/eu_group.html

ORGANIC ACTION PLANS ADDRESSES

Czech Action Plan:

Action Plan of the Czech Republic for the Development of Organic Farming until 2010 (Akční plán České republiky pro rozvoj ekologického zemědělství do roku 2010). Ministry of Agriculture, 2004.

URL: <http://www.agronavigator.cz/ekozem/attachments/AP.pdf>

Danish Action Plan:

Danish Action Plan II Development in organic farming (Aktionsplan II Økologi I udvikling). Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri, 1999.

URL: <http://www.dffe.dk/Default.asp?ID=8012>

English Action Plan:

Action plan to develop food and farming in England. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2004

URL: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/actionplan/>

German Action Plan:

Federal Organic Farming Scheme. Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture, 2001.

URL: <http://www.oekolandbau.de/cfsubs/pdf/010302.pdf>

Dutch Action Plan:

Dutch Policy Document on Organic Agriculture 2005-2007. Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and food quality, 2005. URL:

http://www9.minlnv.nl/servlet/page?_pageid=112&_dad=portal30&_schema=PORTAL30&p_item_id=92764

Action Plan of Andalusia:

Andalusian Action Plan for Organic Farming (Plan Andaluz de Agricultura Ecológica). Consejería de Agricultura y pesca, 2002.

URL:

http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/agriculturaypesca/prospectiva/Ecologico1_doc.pdf

Italian Action Plan:

Italian National Action Plan for Organic Agriculture and Organic Products (Piano d'Azione nazionale per l'Agricoltura Biologica e i Prodotti Biologici). Ministro delle Politiche Agricole e Forestali, 2005.

URL:

http://www.sinab.it/allegati_news/352/Piano_Azione_nazionale_plur15aprile05uff.pdf

Slovenian Action Plan:

Plan of Long-Term Development of Organic Farming in Slovenia (Načrt dolgoročnega razvoja ekološkega kmetijstva v Sloveniji). Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2005.

URL: <http://www.mkgp.gov.si/index.php?id=576>

Contact:

IFOAM EU Group, Victor González
Rue Commerce 124, 1000 Brussels, BELGIUM,
Email: vgonzalvez@agroecologia.net.
Phone: +32 2 735 27 97. Fax: +32 2 735 7381