
Action 1: Information campaign

What is the content?

Introduce amendments in Council Regulation (EC) No 2826/2000 (internal market promotion) which would give the Commission greater possibilities for direct action in order to organise information and promotion campaigns on organic farming.

Launch a multi-annual EU-wide information and promotion campaign over several years to inform consumers, public institutions canteens, schools and other key actors in the food chain about the merits of organic farming, especially its environmental benefits, and to increase consumer awareness and recognition of organic products, including recognition of the EU logo.

Launch tailored information and promotion campaigns to well-defined types of consumers such as the occasional consumer and public canteens.

Increase Commission cooperation efforts with Member States and professional organisations in order to develop a strategy for the campaigns.

What has been done? What was achieved?

- Beginning of 2005 the legal basis was created for carrying out EU promotion campaigns. This permits co-financing of national campaigns by the EU.
- In March 2005 DG-Agri made a consultation about the content of such an information campaign.
- In autumn 2005 DG AGRI launched a call for a promotion project (3 Mio Euros).
- In July 2006 a Consortium was appointed to make the information campaign. Media Consulta International Holding AG, Wassergasse 3, D-10179 Berlin. Tel. (49-30) 65 00 02 25. E-mail: h.zulauf@media-consulta.com. Fax (49-30) 65 00 03 70. For more information on the contract see: <http://www.dgmarket.com/eproc/np-notice.do?noticeId=1414484>
- The types of services to be provided are: designing and setting up a web site on organic farming; designing and setting up a 'toolbox' for national promotional campaigns and communication campaigns; other services including organising and maintaining the web site and 'toolbox'
- An expert group for the promotion of organic farming was established in autumn 2006.

What is planned? What is on the way?

A redesign of the EU logo is in progress due to problems with the previously agreed version. The logo will be compulsory on packaging from 2009, based on the new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91, which is planned to be implemented in 2009.

The promotion campaign will be launched in July 2008 in Belgium.

Action 2: Internet database on the private and national standards

What is the content?

Establish and maintain an internet database listing the various private and national standards (including international standards and national standards in main export markets) compared to the European Community standard.

What has been done? What was achieved?

Within the project “Organic Revision” such a database was set up (see www.organicrules.org).

Initially, the most relevant national standards of the EU were entered in the database. In November 2006, the database was updated to include international standards. Currently 34 standards are in the database. 735 submissions are in the database, describing differences of regulations and standards compared with the current EU regulation 2092/91.

A report on the differences in standards compared to the EU Regulation 2092/91 and potentials for harmonisation, simplification and regionalisation has been published on the website of the Project EEC 2092/91 (Organic) Revision: www.organic-revision.org.

What is planned? What is on the way?

DG AGRI is examining the maintenance of the database after the project has ended.

Action 3: Statistical data

What is the content?

Strengthen research on organic agriculture and production methods.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The EU concerted action project “EISfOM” (www.eisfom.org) has developed proposals, how to improve the collection of data in a conference in Brussels (10th - 11th November 2005) and in the recommendations submitted to DG Agriculture and Rural Development on the 31st January 2006.

The final report from EISfOM (September 2006) summarises the most relevant findings of the project and suggest ways in which organic data collection and processing systems (DCPS) can be improved (see <http://orgprints.org/8961/>). The final recommendations included:

- Improvement in the current situation of data collecting and processing systems for the organic sector;
- Innovation in data collection and processing systems for the organic sector;
- Integration of conventional and organic data collection and processing systems.

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 has created a legal basis for collection of data by EUROSTAT.

What is planned? What is on the way?

EUROSTAT is planning to integrate a chapter on organic farming in the next farm census in 2010, building on the Farm Structure Survey data collected in 2000, 2003, 2005 and 2007.

Comments

While production level statistics are improving, market data relating to supply chain, retailers and consumers still needs attention

Action 4: Top-up support for producer organisations in F&V sector

What is the content?

Allowing Member States to top-up with aids the EU support devoted to producer organisations in the fruit and vegetable sector involved in organic production.

What has been done? What was achieved?

Through the reform of the fruit and vegetable market reform this support is now possible.

What is planned? What is on the way?

The Commission proposed specific measures in favour of organic farming in the 2007 proposals for reform of support to the fruit and vegetable sector.

The regime will change from 2008 as the result of integration of fruit and vegetable support in the Single Farm Payment.

No further actions planned.

Action 5: Web-based menu listing EU measures

What is the content?

The European Commission will develop a web-based menu listing all EU measures that can be used by the organic sector in relation to production, marketing and information.

What has been done? What was achieved?

Not done.

What is planned? What is on the way?

The responsibility of this action is in the unit F3 of DG AGRICULTURE.

Action 6: Use of Rural Development Programme instruments

What is the content?

The European Commission strongly recommends Member States to make full use within their rural development programmes of the instruments available to support organic farming, for example by developing national or regional action plans focussing on:

- stimulating the demand side by using the new quality schemes;
- actions in order to preserve the benefits for the environment and nature protection on the long term;
- developing incentives to organic farmers to convert the whole instead of part of the farm;
- organic farmers having the same possibilities for receiving investment support as non-organic farmers;
- developing incentives to producers to facilitate the distribution and marketing by integrating the production chain by (contractual) arrangements between the actors;
- support to extension services;
- training and education for all operators in organic farming, covering production, processing and marketing;
- Targeting organic farming as the preferred management option in environmentally sensitive areas (without restricting organic farming to these areas).

What has been done? What was achieved?

In 2006, the Commission carried out several awareness raising actions with members states, particularly in the context of SCOF meetings to prepare for the implementation of the 2007-2013 rural development regulation (EC) No 1698/2005.

The Community strategic guidelines for Rural Development programmes make specific reference to organic farming, in particular 3.2. (iv) "consolidating the contribution of organic farming with respect to environment and animal welfare" and the reference to the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming in the context of cross-axis synergy.

Several national/regional Rural Development programmes are now in the process of negotiation with the European Commission. Most national and regional programmes (at least a hundred so far) contain specific measures for supporting organic farming, although with varying levels of intensity and financial resource. The main measures used to support organic farming relate to quality and agri-environmental policy. The first programmes were approved in June 2007 and most of the remainder should be approved by end 2007.

Comment

The role of RDPs in supporting national action plans is particularly relevant. Some Member States have started in 2006 to make new national organic action plans (Estonia) or to revise their action plans again (The Netherlands, Sweden, Andalusia, Belgium): Denmark has included an organic farming chapter in RDP.

Action 7: Research

What is the content?

Strengthen research on organic agriculture and production methods.

What has been done? What was achieved?

Several projects have been funded under the 6th Framework Programme (see list of EU research projects on <http://forschung.oekolandbau.de/service-links-eu-projekte.html>).

DG Research is financing the project "CORE-Organic", which is focussing on co-ordinating national research funding (see www.coreorganic.org). First projects started in June 2007.

End May 2006 there was a conference about organic farming research in Denmark (see www.organic-congress.org).

The Work Programme 2007 of the 7th Framework Programme was published in December 2006.

In the first call only one topic was related to organic agriculture (costs of certification). In the second call there is a topic on animal breeding in organic/low input farming.

What is planned? What is on the way?

In the latest (end 2007) call, the societal impacts of organic farming and biodiversity indicators for organic/low-input farming are included.

Comments

IFOAM EU, the organic research community and several Member States have addressed their concerns about the decreasing support for organic farming research in the 7th Framework Programme compared with the 6th Framework Programme in letters to DG Research (October 2006 and in July 2007).

Action 8: Defining the principles of organic farming

What is the content?

Make the regulation more transparent by defining the basic principles of organic agriculture.

What has been done? What was achieved?

On the 21st December 2005 the European Commission has published a new draft proposal for a restructured European Council regulation with a list of basic principles of organic agriculture.

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 has re-adapted the objectives and principles of organic farming.

This was achieved with input from the project EEC 2092/91 (Organic) Revision. Two reports from the project are available on the project website:

- “Focus Group of value concepts of producers and other stakeholders” (see <http://www.organic-revision.org/values/D21.html>).
- Balancing and integrating basic values in the development of organic regulations and standards: proposal for a procedure using case studies of conflicting areas (D2.3)

What is planned? What is on the way?

The implementing rules to realise the new principles are currently under discussion – a consultation document has been issued by the Commission in autumn 2007.

Action 9: Maintaining the deadlines for the derogations

What is the content?

Ensure the integrity of organic agriculture by reinforcing the standards and maintaining the foreseen end dates of the transitional periods.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 should give more flexibility for regional derogations.

Several deadlines were or are addressed in the current work of the Standing Committee for Organic Food and Farming, e.g. feeding (adaptation of the feed regime) or tethering (on-going).

What is planned? What is on the way?

The European Commission is planning to address the derogations in the planned implementation rules which are planned to be developed in 2007.

Action 10: Complete and harmonise the standards

What is the content?

Complete and further harmonise the standards for organic agriculture by:

- establishing the list of permitted additives and processing aids for processed animal products;
- considering whether to establish specific standards for organic wines;
- improving the standards relating to animal welfare;
- considering the need for extending the scope to other areas such as aquaculture;
- considering the need for improving standards relating to the environment (use of energy, biodiversity, landscape and others).

What has been done? What was achieved?

Several points have been realised:

- A list of permitted additives and processing aids for processed animal products as part of the EU regulation 2092/91 was agreed and published in 2006.
- The new Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 foresees rules for wine and aquaculture.
- A three year project on organic wine processing has been financed by DG Research and started in February 2006, which will make recommendations for new rules for organic wine. (see www.orwine.org).
- In the new Council Regulation on organic production it is stated that high animal welfare standards have to be followed in organic husbandry.
- Principles for a stronger environmental orientation are taken up in the new above mentioned Council regulation.

What is planned? What is on the way?

Detailed requirements for these new areas will be taken up in the Commission implementation rules, which still have to be developed – a consultation document was circulated in autumn 2007.

Action 11: Expert panel for technical advice

What is the content?

Establish an independent expert panel for technical advice.

What has been done? What was achieved?

A proposal for such an expert panel should be composed has been developed in the final recommendations of the EU concerted action project on organic inputs (see www.organicinputs.org).

In the Project EEC 2092/91 (Organic) Revision in the report D 2.3 on “Balancing and integrating basic values in the development of organic regulations and standards: proposal for a procedure using case studies of conflicting areas” a further developed proposal for the composition of such an expert panel was made. (see www.organic-revision.org).

What is planned? What is on the way?

DG AGRI has started the preparation of the legal framework for the establishment of the legal framework for such an expert panel for 2008

Action 12: GM contamination

What is the content?

Including provisions in Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 clarifying:

- that products that are labelled as containing GMO's, can not be labelled as organic;
- that the general labelling thresholds equal the thresholds for the adventitious presence of GMO's for products (other than seed) used in organic farming.

The question of deciding whether specific thresholds for seed used in organic farming need to be set and at what level is still under consideration by the Commission.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 propose the same general threshold for GMO contamination of max. 0.9 %. The EU commission clearly stated that in the new regulation in the explanatory note No. 9, that "the aim is to have the lowest possible presence of GMO's in organic products. The existing labelling thresholds represent ceilings which are exclusively linked to the adventitious and technically unavoidable presence of GMO's."

What is planned? What is on the way?

Further details will be in the Commission implementation rules, which still have to be developed – a consultation document was circulated in autumn 2007.

Comments

There is still a controversial debate if the proposals lead to routine contamination, when the general implementation of the coexistence system is not implemented in the EU Member States.

Action 13: Risk based approach and cross inspections

What is the content?

Improve the performance of the inspection bodies and authorities by introducing a risk-based approach targeting operators presenting the highest risk in terms of fraudulent practices, and by requiring cross-inspections under Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 foresees more risk-based inspections.

What is planned? What is on the way?

Details have still to be developed in the implementation rules of the Commission and/or in some guidelines.

Action 14: Develop sampling and analytical methods

What is the content?

Continue the ongoing work in the JRC to develop sampling and analytical methods which can be used in organic farming.

What has been done? What was achieved?

A number of projects with organic content have been commissioned from JRC, including:

[Control of the quality and safety of food and related items \(development, validation and harmonization of analytical methods\) \(2002\)](#)

[Food and feed safety and quality \(2003\)](#)

[Compliance and Control of Agricultural and Regional Policies \(2003\)](#)

[Evolution of agrofood production systems \(2003\)](#)

The context is that fraud remains a considerable risk, due to the lack of sound analytical methodology to distinguish organically and conventionally grown crops. For these reasons, the JRC is currently investigating the feasibility to analytically discriminate between organically and conventionally grown crops. Most of the activities are carried out at the JRC-IRMM in the area of organic are covered by the JRC's Institutional budget under the JRC's Action 33004 (Food Safety and Quality). The JRC also participates in a FP6 project, TRACE, <http://www.trace.eu.org/>

What is planned? What is on the way?

The JRC has initiated a systematic study involving the screening of a wide range of methods, on several crops, grown under controlled conditions, in a multi-year feasibility project started in 2004. The key aim is to investigate the feasibility of distinguishing, by analytical means, between organically grown and conventionally grown crops. The last crops were harvested in the autumn of 2007. 2008 will be dedicated to analysis of the samples and a multivariate statistical study, to see if there are any patterns, trends, or significantly significant differences between organic and conventional products, and to make recommendations for which areas to focus further research on. A final report for the feasibility project is expected early 2009.

Further details can be found at:

http://irmm.jrc.ec.europa.eu/html/activities/organic_food_and__sustainable_agriculture/index.htm

Action 15: Use of land parcel identification

What is the content?

Member States should study the possibility of using land parcel identification established for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) management for the location and monitoring of the land under organic farming.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The relevant Commission and Member states services have considered on the basis of a preliminary analysis that this approach is not particularly well suited to monitoring organic farming.

What is planned? What is on the way?

The issue will nevertheless be revisited and discussed again.

Action 16: Better co-ordination of inspection activities

What is the content?

Ensure better coordination among inspection bodies and between the inspection bodies and the enforcement authorities under Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 is relying on the new EU Regulation 884/2004 for public food and feed control.

What is planned? What is on the way?

Details still have still to be clarified in the implementation rules – a Commission consultation document was circulated in autumn 2007.

Action 17: Specific accreditation system for organic inspection bodies

What is the content?

Develop a specific accreditation system for inspection bodies under Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91.

What has been done? What was achieved?

Based on the new EC Regulation 882/2004, inspection bodies need to be accredited and should follow the principles of EN 45011 or ISO 66.

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 foresees that an accreditation under EN 45011 or ISO 66 is mandatory.

What is planned? What is on the way?

Details still have still to be clarified in the implementation rules – a Commission consultation document was circulated in autumn 2007.

Action 18: Publishing information on breaches

What is the content?

The Commission will publish the annual report from the Member States on the supervision of approved inspection bodies including statistics on type and number of breaches.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The supervision report from the year 2005 was presented to the Standing Committee on Organic Farming in September 2007 and has been published on the Commission website (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/organic/control/report_art15_en.pdf).

What is planned? What is on the way?

Regular reports will be published.

Action 19: Imports and equivalency

What is the content?

Step up efforts to include third countries in the equivalency list, including on-the-spot assessments.

Amend Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 on organic farming, replacing the current national derogation for imports by a new permanent system making use of technical equivalency evaluations by bodies assigned by the European Community for that purpose. This could include, following appropriate consultations, developing a single and permanent European Community list of inspection bodies recognised as equivalent for their activities in third countries not already on the equivalence list.

Continue to ensure that the definition of equivalence with third countries takes into account the different climate and farming conditions and the stage of development of organic farming in each country.

Upon entry into force of this system, offer all imported products access to the EU logo.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The adopted Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 foresees an adaptation of the current system, opening the possibility for the EU to approve directly inspection and certification body in third countries.

Products must be certified by an inspection body which is listed on one of the following lists:

- List of inspection bodies applying an inspection system and production standards compliant to EU;
- List of inspection bodies applying an inspection system and production standards equivalent to EU;
- List of countries with an inspection system and production standards equivalent to EU

Import authorizations will be ceased (12 months after publication of list of approved equivalent inspection bodies).

What is planned? What is on the way?

Details still have still to be clarified in the implementation rules – a Commission consultation document was circulated in autumn 2007.

Action 20: International standards and capacity building

What is the content?

Establish a systematic comparison between the European Community standard on organic farming, the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines and the IFOAM standards (see also Action 2).

Step up efforts towards global harmonisation and development of a multilateral concept of equivalency based on the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines in co-operation with Member States, third countries and the private sector.

Support capacity building in developing countries under the development policy of the EU by facilitating information on the possibilities offered by more general support instruments to be used in favour of organic agriculture.

Further measures to facilitate trade in organic products from developing countries will be considered.

According to article 12 in the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, members shall provide differential and more favourable treatment to developing country members to this agreement.

What has been done? What was achieved?

DG Agriculture and Rural Development are involved in a task force for harmonisation, which FAO, IFOAM and UNCTAD have established.

In the project "Organic Revision" a comparison was made between the EU Regulation and other standards like the IFOAM Basic Standards and Codex Alimentarius Guidelines. A public report will be available End of July 2007 (see www.organic-revision.org and the database site www.organicrules.org).

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 mentions that the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines should be taken into account.

What is planned? What is on the way?

Details still have still to be clarified in the implementation rules – a Commission consultation document was circulated in autumn 2007.

Action 21: International negotiation mandate

What is the content?

Reinforce recognition of EU organic farming standards and inspection systems in third countries by obtaining a negotiation mandate from the Council.

What has been done? What was achieved?

The Council refused to give a negotiation mandate to the EU Commission.

The new Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 will give more responsibilities to third countries.

Furthermore it will be possible that inspection/certification bodies can be directly accredited by the European Commission.

What is planned? What is on the way?

Details still have still to be clarified in the implementation rules – a Commission consultation document was circulated in autumn 2007.

Comments

Indirectly the new Council regulation for organic production of June 2007 strengthens the role of inspection bodies in third countries, as they can apply to get on the list of EU recognized inspection and certification bodies.

Disclaimer

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Should the publication of corrigenda becomes necessary, there will be posted at the project website www.organic-revision.org.

ORGAP Project

Scientific Coordinator: Otto Schmid, FiBL

Administrative Coordinator: Bettina Landau, FiBL

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