

Newsletter No. 4, July 2005

Dear Reader, dear colleague,

Some time has gone by since you received ISO FAR's last newsletter. ISO FAR's office has been working at full capacity preparing our first conference in Adelaide in September 2005. Meanwhile, more than 160 contributions have been revised by independent experts. An interesting spectrum of scientific contributions will be presented.

Maybe you are one of the lucky people who are able to come to Adelaide. If so, you will probably finalize your plans very soon, if you have not already done so. Like me, you might be surprised at how fast the time has gone by. It was only two years ago that we launched ISO FAR in Berlin. Those who will travel to Adelaide from other continents - and indeed this will be the majority of the participants - will again become aware of the long distances that need to be overcome.

Not only this simple fact, but also the excursions selected by our Australian partner NASAA, that will showcase successful organic agriculture under contrasting climatic conditions, again raises the question whether these events of international knowledge exchange, although only carried out tri-annually, are necessary to support ISO FAR's main aims at this time. Are regional conferences more appropriate? The awareness that kerosene is derived from a very limited and ecologically harmful resource makes this question all the more pertinent.

In light of the site-specific research, such international conferences may appear to be less significant. But we are still far from ISO FAR's target of establishing powerful research groups within the regions and organising scientific regional conferences at shorter intervals. Progress will depend on the number of scientists interested and active in organic agriculture research in the different regions of the world. Cooperative and participatory work is essential. Mistakes made at other sites should not be repeated. Knowledge in Organic Agriculture is a limited resource that needs to be handled with care and efficiency. Personal participation at conferences, enabling direct knowledge exchange, may deliver unimagined inspiration and creativity for others, thus contributing to the dissemination of unexpected, innovative approaches.

Hence, it is essential that you join ISO FAR if you are not already a member. Help us promote the further development of Organic Agriculture based on expanded scientific knowledge in order to gain more recognition and support for this environmentally sound and sustainable agricultural system.

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In recognising all the undeniable benefits of current Organic Agriculture research, it also should not be overlooked that science and research in Organic Agriculture are at a relatively young stage of development. But true pioneers always deliver their benefits selflessly, without focusing on their own reputation. Based upon my observations, I conclude that despite the new and extraordinary pressures upon active ISOFAR members, working within the Society has delivered great benefits to members. This path needs to be continued.

I look forward to having your company on this path, and to meeting you in Adelaide.

Yours

Ulrich Köpke

President ISOFAR

Announcement: ISOFAR General Assembly

Saturday 24 September 2005, University Hall , Adelaide

All ISOFAR members are kindly requested to participate in the GA. Please find the tentative agenda below. Participating members are invited to suggest further topics. Suggestions for candidates for the ISOFAR Board of Directors should be sent to the ISOFAR secretariat at info@isofar.org. Please contact ISOFAR's office at info@isofar.org no later than 15 August 2005.

Ulrich Koepke, Urs Niggli, Erik Steen Kristensen
(Executive Board of the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISOFAR).

Provisional Agenda

- Welcome
- Report of the President, U. Koepke
- Cash statement, E.S. Kristensen
- Future strategies and structures I, U.Koepke/ U.Niggli
- Elections
- Future strategies and structures II (N.N.)

The final agenda will be sent to ISOFAR members in July 2005.

15th IFOAM Organic World Congress - International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture „Researching Sustainable Systems“

▪ General Info

The International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture „Researching Sustainable Systems“ is a main module of the 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress, hosted by NASAA. The Scientific Conference is coordinated by the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISOFAR) in co-operation with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA).

The conference will be held in Adelaide, Australia, 21 - 23 September 2005 **with the Opening Ceremony commencing at 4 pm, 20th September** Please find attached to this Newsletter a conference brochure.

- Homepage 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress <http://www.ifoam2005.info/>
- Homepage Conference „Researching Sustainable Systems“ <http://www.isofar.org/adelaide2005>

Papers and Programme of the „Researching Sustainable Systems“ Conference

▪ Papers submitted

More than 160 papers were submitted and reviewed by the ISOFAR reviewers. Of these around 120 will be presented as oral papers. The rest will be posters. The papers cover a wide range of subjects.

▪ Programme

Please find the provisional programme of the conference “Researching Sustainable Systems” on the following pages. Please note that changes might still occur as some sessions are already overfilled and others only have a few papers. Posters will be displayed within the World Exhibition at the Congress, allowing all delegates to see them during morning teas, afternoon teas, lunches and functions, held in this area. The programme of the 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress is available at the congress homepage.

- Programme of the conference “Researching Sustainable Systems”:
<http://www.isofar.org/adelaide2005/programme.html>. Details will be available in the course of the summer 2005
- Programme of the IFOAM Organic World Congress
<http://www.ifoam2005.info/congress3.html>

▪ **Oral Presentations**

Oral presentations will be 10 to 15 minutes in order to leave plenty of time for discussions.

▪ **Poster Presentations and Guidelines**

Posters must be portrait format and not exceed the dimensions of 1 meter wide by 1.2 meter high. The size of the font should be such that it can be read from a distance of about 1 meter; i.e. lettering should be at least 2 to 32 cm high for the poster title and for headers and at least 1cm for the rest of the text.

Text should be restricted to key words and short sentences. Drawings and graphs should be simple with bold lines. Presenters are asked to bring their posters and some velco strips to the congress. Presenters will be advised of where to place their posters.

Programme

	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3
21. September			
Morning I	PLENARY IFOAM ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS		
Morning II	Arable Crop rotations and Intercropping	Food Quality	Sociology
12.30-1.30 Lunch	B		
Afternoon I	Nutrient Management of Arable Crops in Closed Cycles	Vegetable Growing and Vegetables under glass	Land use, Conversion and Rural Development
Coffee			
Afternoon II	Managing Weeds	Workshop Research Structures and Methods	Supply Chain Management: Improving Co-operation between market actors
22. September			
Morning I	PLENARY IFOAM ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS		
Morning II	Soil Communities	Animal Husbandry & Welfare: Ruminants	Market Analysis: Improving knowledge about markets and their actors

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12.30-1.30 Lunch			
Afternoon I	Organic Matter and Plant Growth	Animal Husbandry & Welfare: Non-ruminants	Knowing how consumers think and act to improve marketing
Coffee			
Afternoon II	Quality aspects of Compost	Animal Health	Political Instruments for Organic Farming
23. September			
Morning I	PLENARY IFOAM ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS		
Morning II	Pests and Diseases - Prevention or Control ?	Long-term Field Experiments I	Sustainability of farms
12.30-1.30 Lunch			
Afternoon I	Environment, Biodiversity & Landscape	Long-term Field Experiments II	Economics and Farmers Perspectives
Coffee			
Afternoon II	PLENARY	PLENARY	PLENARY

Registration

All relevant information about registration is available at the Homepage of the 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress of which the Researching Sustainable Systems Conference is a module. Full registration includes admission to all congress sessions, exhibition, welcome and Aussie BBQ, lunches, morning and afternoon teas. The congress abstracts, satchel and proceedings are also included. Attendance at the Congress Dinner is not included.

- >> Registration Homepage <http://www.ifoam2005.info/registrations1.html>.

▪ **Deadline for Registration for Presenters (oral and poster): 15th of July!**

In order to have their papers included into the proceedings all presenters must register by July 15th. Later registrations cannot be considered for the proceedings and book of abstract.

▪ **Reduced fees for ISOFAR Members**

Members of ISOFAR can claim a \$65 discount on full registration. If you wish to join ISOFAR and gain a discount on your registration fee you may do this via the ISOFAR website: www.isofar.org.

▪ **Presenters' Discount**

Presenters will be eligible for the membership discount.

▪ **Registering for the Conference "Researching Sustainable Systems": Member Number not necessary**

The electronic registration form at the homepage of the IFOAM Organic World Congress requests an ISOFAR member number. The form can also be filled in without entering a number.

▪ **Student Registration**

Student registration includes admission to all congress sessions, exhibition, lunches, and morning and afternoon teas and welcome drinks. The congress abstracts, satchel and proceedings are also included. Students must provide formal evidence of full time tertiary student status from the institution they attend. This must be attached to the completed registration form. Student registration is \$250 and no further discounts apply.

▪ **Sponsored Delegates**

All applications for sponsored delegates closed on the 1st June 2005. Late applications can still be forwarded but will only be considered after all previous applications have been processed and if there are sufficient funds.

▪ **Confirmation of Registration**

A confirmation letter will be sent to all delegates when payment of fees is received in full. If you do not receive a written confirmation, please contact the Congress Secretariat at ifoam2005@sapro.com.au / <http://www.ifoam2005.info/contact1.html>.

An electronic taxation invoice can be issued upon request to registered delegates. Invoices will be sent to delegates as requested on their registration form. Supply of Congress satchels and contents cannot be guaranteed for late/onsite registrations.

▪ **Further registration info**

Registration for one day or shared registration is also possible. For further information on these and other options, for payment & currency, cancellation policy and refunds, please check the homepage of the IFOAM Organic World Congress.

- Registration Homepage <http://www.ifoam2005.info/registrations1.html>.

Proceedings / Book of Abstracts

A book of abstracts will be available for the participants of the 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress. For this book the abstracts submitted as part of the four page papers for the “Researching Sustainable Systems Conference” will be used.

The four page short papers will be available on the conference CD, which includes all papers presented at the 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress.

The four page papers will also be available as separate, printed proceedings for the Researching Sustainable Systems conference.

News

▪ **Organic progress in India**

India is one among the several developing countries, where organic farming is developing primarily due to improved export prospects. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA) and the alongside Ministry of Agriculture have taken several initiatives to promote organic agriculture in India. These initiatives and concerted efforts by the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have led to exports of several agricultural commodities like spices, fruits, cereals, tea, cotton, coffee, honey etc from India. In 2003, a total of 684 agencies involved with organic production, processing and exports were registered with the APEDA. Products are mainly exported to developing countries. Given the vast geographical area of India and the global market for these products, the quantum of export of organic products is very miniscule.

The recent developments indicate that the organic sector would grow more rapidly in coming years and India's share in global organic market is likely to increase manifold. The Government of India, especially the agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture, Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and the State government agencies including State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) are gearing up towards research and development activities in the area of organic production. The Government of India launched a National Programme of Organic Production (NPOP) in 2001, and recently set up a National Centre for Organic Farming, in order to support organic agriculture. The government is focusing in the Northeastern region of India, which has ideal conditions for organic farming. Some of the states in India, mainly mountainous ones like Uttranchal and Mizoram have declared themselves as organic states. Organic farming, thus, is no longer restricted to a few NGOs, but

the government is increasingly involved in its promotion. The state agricultural universities and research institutes under the ICAR are now having more programmes and projects on organic agriculture. Efforts are on to include organic agriculture as one of the subjects in the curriculum of undergraduate programmes at agricultural universities.

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▪ **Canada: Organic farming reduces erosion risk**

Since organically managed arable fields in Western Canada tend to be large, one important question regards erosion risks of organic farming. A study conducted by the graduate student Alison Nelson and Jane Froese of the University of Manitoba addressed this question through on-farm and research centre research. Soil erosion risk was assessed through measurement of wet and dry soil aggregate stability. The on farm study took place in 5 of Canada's ten provinces. Results of the on-farm testing showed that crop rotation was more important than organic management in determining soil mobility. Crop rotations that included perennial forage crops consistently had higher soil stability.

Results from the organic-conventional comparison trials located in Western Canada showed either no difference, or organic management resulted in greater soil stability than conventional management. Greater soil stability in the organic system was attributed to a wider range of plants growing in organic compared to conventional systems.

- Contact: Professor Dr. Martin Entz, University of Manitoba, Agronomy and Cropping Systems, CAN- Winnipeg, MB, e-mail plantscience@umanitoba.ca

▪ **Update on European Organic Farming Research**

Recently two newsletters from two major European research projects – Core Organic and Q-Lif – were published. Both newsletters inform thoroughly about recent developments in European organic farming research.

CORE Organic is an acronym for "Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming". CORE Organic is to step up cooperation and coordination of research activities carried out at partner states. In order to do so a number of tools will be developed; e.g. an internet portal and a common project database.

QualityLowInputFood is an integrated project funded by the European Commission. In this project quality and safety issues associated with organic and "low input" are being researched.

- Q-Lif News. Newsletter No 2, May 2005, Health in Focus
<http://www.qlif.org/qlifnews/april05/index.html>

- Core Organic News, May 2005
<http://www.coreorganic.org/corenews/may05/index.html>

- **Europe / Denmark: Joint Organic Congress in May 2006: Organic Farming and European Rural Development**

"A balanced development of rural districts, healthy and safe foods, clean drinking water, production of renewable energy, protection of nature, care for farm animals, ..." Both consumers and society are asking for diverse services from agriculture, and thus providing new challenges for European farmers, food producers and policymakers.

As a mean to comply with the new demands, the European communities have initiated research to investigate the possibilities for developing the various aspects of agriculture and food systems. Some of the research is focussing on the development of organic food and farming.

In May 2006 researchers from a dozen EU funded research projects in organic food and farming will join the same congress in order to present their results for organic producers and processors, as well as for those interested in an overall sustainable development in Europe.

The research, to be presented, includes the integrated project "Improving quality and safety and reduction of cost in the European organic and "low input" food supply chain" (QLIF). Other research projects like ENVIRFOOD, REPCO, INTERCROP and SAFO are focussing on the development of environmental friendly production systems, health and food safety in organic animal husbandry.

Furthermore, projects focussing on policies and regulation will participate in the congress together with the CHANNEL project, which focus on East and Central European collaboration and the new ERA-NET scheme CORE Organic, which focuses on transnational research coordination.

The congress will however not be restricted to researchers from the above projects. Other researchers wishing to present papers within the congress will be welcomed. -"Our goal is to organize a programme, which is rewarding for organic producers and processors seeking new knowledge on a specific organic production. At the same time the programme should provide an overview of current European research in organic food and farming and thus an impression of the possibilities to implement research results in an overall rural development", the organizers of the congress pronounces.

The event will take place on 30 – 31 May 2006 in Odense, Denmark, and it will be held in collaboration with the biannual Danish Organic Congress. Together with the congress the Danish organizers are preparing an exhibition on technologies and products within organic food and farming.

A preliminary programme and a call for papers will be published in August 2005. More information is available at www.organic-congress.org

▪ **Germany: International M. Sc. programme “Organic Food Chain Management” in Hohenheim, Stuttgart**

The two-year M. Sc. programme “Organic Food Chain Management” comprises four semesters, during which fifteen thematic modules and the Master Thesis have to be completed. The language of instruction is English.

The programme starts in October (winter semester) and April (summer semester) of each year. A typical semester consists of five modules each including three and a half week of instructions and a written exam. Students are encouraged to spend one semester in the secondary year at a partner university abroad, to gain additional experience and to strengthen their individual profile. Assessment is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which facilitates such kind of international mobility.

- Contact. Sabine Zikeli, Programme Coordinator, Organic Food Chain Management, University of Hohenheim (340), 70593 Stuttgart, Germany, Tel. +49 711 459 3248, Fax +49 711 459-3869, E-mail organicfood@uni-hohenheim.de, <http://www.uni-hohenheim.de/organicfood>

▪ **Greece: Master of Science degree on Sustainable Agriculture**

A Masters of Science (MSc) degree on “Sustainable Agriculture” is offered by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (Greece) over a period of two years. The course includes organic farming modules.

- Contact: Dr Ioannis Livieratos, Scientific Co-ordinator, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, Alysillon Agrokepion, P.O.Box 85, GR-73100, Chania, Greece. Tel.: +30 28210 35000, Fax: +30 28210 35001, E-mail: livieratos@maich.gr, <http://www.maich.gr/>

Events

▪ **30 – 31 May 2006: Congress on European Organic Farming Research in Odense, Denmark**

In May 2006, researchers representing all aspects of European research in organic food and farming will present their work at a joint congress to be held in Denmark. The congress will combine public meetings as part of EU supported projects in collaboration with the biannual Danish congress, which usually attracts more than 600 participants.

- Homepage of the Joint Organic Congress 2006: <http://www.okologi-kongres.dk/uk/>

▪ **10 – 11 November, 2005: 2nd EISfOM European Seminar: Towards a European Framework for Organic Market Information**

The second seminar of the project European Information System for Organic Farming (EISfOM) will take place November 10 and 11 2005 in Brussels. The seminar is titled „2nd EISfOM European Seminar: Towards a European Framework for Organic Market Information”. The aim is to consult

with national and international agencies and stakeholders so that full support of the EISFOM proposals, to be ready by September 2005, can be achieved. Programme and registration details are available at the project homepage.

- Project Homepage: <http://www.eisfom.org/>

▪ **9 - 11 November, 2005**

International Symposium Organic Agriculture in the Mediterranean – Problems and Perspectives, Chania, Crete, Greece

The National Agricultural Research Foundation – Institute for Olive Trees and Subtropical Plants of Chania undertook the initiative for organizing an International Symposium on “Organic Agriculture in the Mediterranean – Problems and Perspectives” that will be held at Chania on November 9-11, 2005 and will include the following topics:

- Present situation of organic agriculture in the Mediterranean (country reports)
- Research advances related to organic agriculture
- Scientific reports on socio-economic aspects of organic agriculture

The deadline for abstract submission has been extended to July 31st. For any further information you may visit the symposium website at <http://www.nagref-cha.gr/symposium2005/>.

- Contact: Dr. Georgios Psarras, Head of the, Organizing Committee, Dr. Georgios Psarras, NAGREF - Institute for Olive Trees & Subtropical Plants, GR-73100, Agrokipio, Chania, Crete, GREECE, Tel. +30 28210 83457, Fax: +30 28210 93963, E-mail: gpsarras@nagref-cha.gr

▪ **13 October 2005: Conference “Evaluating inputs for organic farming – a new system”, in Brussels**

A public conference of the Organic Inputs Project will be held on October 13, 2005 in Brussels, at the European Commission’s Borschette conference centre. At the conference, the consortium of the Organic Inputs Evaluation project will be presenting the conclusions its work, seeking feedback from interested stakeholders. Conference participants will be feeding into the last stage of the project, as the final recommendations to the European Commission are drawn.

- Conference Homepage: <http://www.organicinputs.org/conference.html>

▪ **21 – 23 September, 2005: Researching Sustainable Systems, Adelaide, Australia**

The International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture Researching Sustainable Systems is coordinated by ISOFAR in co-operation with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) and the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA). The conference is a main module of the 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress. The conference will be held in Adelaide, Australia, 21 - 23 September 2005.

- Conference Homepage: <http://www.isofar.org/adelaide2005>

▪ **20 - 23 September 2005: 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress, Adelaide, Australia**

The 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress, Congress will include the following events: 'Shaping Sustainable Systems', the International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture 'Researching Sustainable Systems' (in cooperation with ISO FAR) and the 8th International IFOAM Organic Viticulture and Wine Conference. Accompanying events will include pre and post Congress tours, the World Exhibition and Organic Festival (an event for the general public of South Australia and all visitors for this week).

- Conference Homepage: <http://www.ifoam2005.info>

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