

NEWSLETTER

October, 2003

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Dear Reader,

Numerous journals, newsletters and other media have reported on the launch of ISOFAR. Its establishment has gained worldwide recognition. The participants can look back on an impressive launching ceremony and a great event at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities on June 20. Looking at the pictures of the launch and the excursion on our Internet site, the special spirit and atmosphere of these days still resonates. Within the next days, our organisation will be officially and legally enrolled at the local District Court in Bonn, Germany. It took a lot of time ...

Recently, I had the opportunity to show Professor Dr M. S. Swaminathan our experimental organic farm at Wiesengut near Bonn, and to give him an insight into our research work. When I handed him one of the last available conference binders of the ISOFAR launching ceremony, he immediately became aware of the importance of this step forward in developing organic agriculture research worldwide. M. S. Swaminathan is a most impressive personality - not only in relation to agriculture or India's success in averting starvation and hunger. The former director of the International Rice Research Institute in Los Banos/Manila (IRRI) is mainly known as a successful plant breeder as well as a personality bringing forward site-adapted, sustainable and efficient agricultural production combined with moral values. His biographer, Andras Erdelyi, reminds us that Time Magazine published a review of the most influential personalities of the 20th century, including three names from India: Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and – as the only living one – M. S. Swaminathan. During his visit to Bonn this Modern Gandhi (Erdelyi) underlined that “we need to spread the message that successful organic farming requires considerable scientific work ...” and affirmed his interest in becoming a member of our organisation. This statement should resolve all doubt and give us a clear signal to bring forward ISOFAR with our hearts and minds!

Indeed, ISOFAR's aims and principles need to be clearly outlined, just as organic agriculture needs to be clearly defined. No doubt the following statements are attractive:

“ improves the soil structure and enhances the soil organic status ...”

“ does not exploit soil but works in harmony with nature, enacting and embellishing natural systems towards improved soil quality with associated increased productivity, while reducing costs and inputs of fossil fuels ...”

“ is well capable of helping solve the world's hunger and environmental crises while improving the quality of life ... improving food quality, and conserving, preserving and enhancing the quality of natural resources and biodiversity while increasing farmer net income and competitiveness ...”

You may well think that these sentences describe the organic agriculture approach. In fact, these citations are from a draft of the extended version of the “Declaration of the 2nd World Congress on Conservation Agriculture” held in Iguassu Falls, Parana State, Brazil, August 11-15, 2003. Participating with the contribution: “Conservation Agriculture with and without agrochemicals use”, I found myself heavily criticised when outlining that (not only) in organic agriculture, at least under the conditions of temperate climate in the northern hemisphere, due to weed control and nutrient management reasons, as a general rule ploughing cannot be omitted and that combined strategies apart from conservation tillage or no-till are used to prevent soil erosion. No doubt, as I could observe over the past 22 years, no-till farming is currently the most successful approach to avoid soil erosion by leaving a permanent soil cover on the highly erodible soils in Parana and under similar site conditions, especially of the southern part of our globe.

Organic farming has to respond with a strategy that can compete with agrochemical-based efficient no-till farming, which dominates Conservation Agriculture. Only a few farmers have demonstrated efficient weed control by using allelopathy derived e.g. from *Avena strigosa* winter crop residues instead of using total herbicides. Again we have learned: Research is truly ruled by competition and challenges. We invite you to join in and work with us.

This newsletter will be carried forward and updated to enable interested readers to receive further information on ISOFAR. The future issues of the ISOFAR newsletter will be exclusively available for ISOFAR members. Then, I will address you not only as a reader but as a member of our joint scientific society.

Welcome!

Ulrich Köpke
President ISOFAR

Further Information about ISOFAR

Further information about ISOFAR is available via the ISOFAR Internet site at <http://www.isofar.org>, including the full documentation of the foundation ceremony and information about the working groups.

Membership Fee

ISOFAR membership is open to interested agricultural researchers, research managers, postgraduate students. The annual ISOFAR membership fee is

- 100 € for members in industrialised countries
- 50 € for members in countries in transition
Countries in transition are those listed in Part II of the DAC List of Aid Recipients (see <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/9/2488552.pdf>).
- 15 € for members in developing countries
Developing countries are those listed in Part I of the DAC List of Aid recipients (see <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/9/2488552.pdf>).

Membership fees are to be paid to the following ISOFAR account:

- **Bank name:** Sparkasse Bonn, Germany
- **Account number:** 102 32 62 53
- **Bank code:** 380 500 00
- **Swift/BIC:** BONSDE33
- **IBAN:** DE53 3805 0000 0102 3262 53

Kindly note that the **foreign bank transfer fee charged by your bank** has to be paid in **addition to the membership fee**. Please ask your bank for assistance. Otherwise ISOFAR will not receive the full membership fee. **And please don't forget to fill in your name and country in the *reason for payment* line!**

Launch of the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research

On 20 June 2003 the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research ISOFAR was founded in Berlin, Germany, in the historic setting of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. The ceremony was attended by more than 100 scientists from all continents. The event had been organised by the two initiating institutions, the Institute of Organic Agriculture, IOL (Germany) and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, FiBL (Switzerland). It was sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (DEZA), the German Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture (BMVEL) as well as the Eden Stiftung foundation, Bad Soden, Germany.

The ceremony was opened by Urs Niggli, director of FiBL, who underlined that the launch of ISOFAR represented a major milestone in the history of Organic Farming research, fostering a new partnership among scientists which should enhance scientific and technical progress.

Wolfgang Reimer, representative of BMVEL, and Nadia Scialabba El Hage, Food and Agriculture Organisation FAO, both stressed the importance of international collaboration in the field of organic agriculture research and welcomed the founding of ISOFAR. Prabha Mahale of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) expressed IFOAM's commitment towards a close partnership between the two organisations.

Ulrich Köpke, IOL, announced ISOFAR's aims to give researchers a scientific home, tools and opportunities both to excel in disciplinary work and to develop interdisciplinary experience. Improved worldwide scientific dialogue should enable researchers to apply a more holistic view on agriculture. The interdisciplinary approach should be just as important as participatory research, on-farm observations and stakeholder dialogue.

The actual foundation meeting took place in the afternoon and was chaired by Urs Niggli. The main agenda points were the finalisation of the statutes as well as the election of the ISOFAR Board.

Hanspeter Schmidt, attorney at law, introduced the statutes to the audience and after a short discussion the proposal was accepted with some amendments. The statutes were then signed by the participants, who thus joined the Society as founding members. They then elected the Board of Directors, consisting of twelve members, who are introduced below.

The board held its first meeting and elected the Executive Board. Ulrich Köpke was elected as President; Urs Niggli is Vice President of ISOFAR. Erik Steen Kristensen, Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming DARCOF, will act as treasurer.

Following this meeting the first ISOFAR working groups were immediately suggested on the following issues (see descriptions below).

- Organic Farming and Regional Development Processes
- Long-Term Experiments LTE
- Organic Animal Husbandry
- Plant Protection
- Research activities supporting holistic, transdisciplinary and participatory research approaches
- Non Certified Organic Agriculture

On June 21 an excursion took the participants to historical places in the city centre (e.g. Humboldt University) and the surroundings of Berlin, such as Tegel Castle, the summer residence of the Humboldt brothers and the Cistercian Monastery in Chorin North of Berlin. Afterwards, a 2500-hectare organic farm, the estate of Temmen, was visited. The excursion ended with a tasty organic 3-course meal served in the estate's old sheep pen.

We look back on the foundation of ISOFAR as a successful event and starting point, showing the great need as well as enthusiasm for the future work of ISOFAR.

Helga Willer, FiBL

Members of the ISOFAR Board

At the launching ceremony 12 scientist from different countries and continents were elected to the board:

Lina Al-Bitar; co-ordinator of the master programme on organic agriculture at CIHEAM-IAMB in Bari (Italy). She is also a member of the co-ordination committee of the organic agriculture sector of CIHEAM-IAMB. Diploma degree as agricultural engineer at Lebanese University, PhD in environmental science in Italy.

Martin H. Entz has been Professor for agronomy at the University of Manitoba in Canada since 1989. He is a plant scientist with a PhD in crop science and plant ecology from the University of Saskatchewan. His research explores the role of crop and plant diversity in sustainable agriculture. In 1992, Martin established western Canada's first long-term organic cropping system study. Martin Entz is member of the board of the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, an initiative in research and education, at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. He has received many awards and fellowships for research and teaching between 1989 and today.

Mohamed Ben Kheder, Professor at Centre technique de l'agriculture biologique, Ecole Supérieure d'Horticulture de Chott Meriem, Tunisia.

Ulrich Köpke, Professor for Organic Agriculture, University of Bonn since 1987. PhD in agronomy. Director of the Institute of Organic Agriculture (IOL) and of the organic research farm Wiesengut. Many international research, advisory and lecturing activities, partner in

several EU concerted actions and research projects on Organic Farming. On the board of various German research funds, of expert groups for agronomy, landscape and environment and of foundations committed to ecology. Editor of the Proceedings of the 9th International IFOAM Conference in Brazil (1992).

Erik Steen Kristensen, Chief Scientist and Director of the Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming (DARCOF) at the Danish Institute of Agricultural Science (DIAS) in Foulum. Collaboration in DARCOF currently involves about 150 research scientists working at 20 different institutes in 44 different research projects. Partner in several EU concerted actions and research projects on organic farming. Between 1982 and today, he has published more than 130 papers, of which 100 in scientific journals. Erik Steen Kristensen has been invited as keynote speaker to many international congresses.

Nic Lampkin, Senior Lecturer and Director of Organic Centre Wales, Institute of Rural Sciences, The University of Wales Aberystwyth. PhD in agricultural economics. Partner or co-ordinator in many EU projects on socio-economic aspects of organic farming (policy, marketing, financial performance, conversion). Editor of the book Organic Farming (first published in 1990), joint editor of the book Economics in Organic Farming (1994) and joint editor of the Organic Farm Management Handbook (4th edition). Member of the EU, English and Welsh working groups developing action plans for organic food and farming.

William Lockeretz, Professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University. PhD in physics. Editor or co-editor of the proceedings of three International Scientific Conferences of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (Boston 1982, Mar del Plata 1998, Basel 2000), and other readers of organic conferences. For twelve years he edited the American Journal of Alternative Agriculture, and until May 2002 was Chair of the International Committee of USDA's National Organic Standards Board. He was a member of the Steering Committee of the Scientific Congress on Organic Agriculture Research.

Prabha Mahale, Indian representative of the Naturland producer association since 2002. She is responsible for co-ordination with organic producers and processors, traders, inspectors and government representatives. PhD in Educational Anthropology. Lecturer at Queen's University of Belfast from 1976 to 1978, professor at Karnatak University in South India until 1993 and consultant from 1993 to 2002. Research focus: holistic perspective, community, gender participation and sustained rural development. Member of the State Social Welfare Advisory Board and the Dutch bilateral program on Women's Empowerment through Education. Executive director of India Development Society, a rural development NGO. Board member of IFOAM.

Maria Cristina Prata Neves, PhD in Crop Physiology at the University of Reading. Chief scientist and director of the National Center for Research in Agrobiology (Embrapa Agrobiologia), Brazilian Agricultural Research Organization (Embrapa), Ministry of Agriculture, from 1996 to 2003. Since 1979 distinguished with a fellowship from the Brazilian Research Council. Invited Professor of the Post-Graduation Course on Soil Science at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro since 1984. Coordinator or partner in several projects on Biological Nitrogen Fixation and Organic Agriculture. Member of the National Board for Organic Production at the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture and of several advisory and expert committees on agricultural research in Brazil.

Urs Niggli, Director of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL in Switzerland since 1990. PhD in plant physiology and ecology. From 1979 to 1989, weed scientist in

arable and horticultural crops at Swiss federal research institutes Zürich and Wädenswil. Partner in EU projects on organic agriculture, organiser of the 13th International Scientific Conference of IFOAM (Basel 2000) and co-editor of the proceedings. Lecturer for agroecology and organic farming at ETH Zurich, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. Peer in various reviews of research activities in European countries. Member of several advisory and expert committees on agricultural research in Switzerland and Germany. President of FiBL Germany (Frankfurt).

Sang Mok Sohn, Professor at the College of Life Resources & Environment, Dankook University, Korea since 1986. PhD in plant nutrition. Director of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Dankook University, President of the Asian Research Network of Organic Agriculture (ARNOA) and Vice-President of the Korean Society of Organic Agriculture, and Director of the Korean Organic Farmers Association. He represented Korea in the delegation to the Codex Alimentarius Commission on organic produce. Since 1999 member of the Committee of Environmental Agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry, Seoul.

Charles Ssekya, Senior Lecturer at Uganda Martyrs University, Dean of Faculty of Agriculture from 2000 to 2003. PhD in agriculture. Many scientific papers on disease problems in vegetable growing, on bio control and IPM. African advisor and country coordinator Seeds for Africa Charitable Trust, UK, Chairperson of the interim steering committee for Establishment of a Horticulture Research and Development Network in Eastern, Southern and Central Africa from 1998 to 2000. Research work/study in USA, Kenya, Rwanda, Netherlands and Tanzania. Member of the National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda which is affiliated to IFOAM. Board member of the Equator Valley Farm, an on-farm research site of Uganda Martyrs University.

>> **Please find further information about the board members of ISOFAR at the ISOFAR Internet site <http://www.isofar.org>.**

Proposed Working Groups

So far six working groups have been proposed. If you are interested in joining one of these working groups, please contact the coordinator.

The working groups and task forces listed below are related to the ISOFAR structure which was first presented during the IFOAM World Congress in Victoria, Canada, August 2002. (See link to transparency no. 9 in the paper "Why founding an International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISOFAR)?" at <http://www.isofar.org/about.htm#papers>).

- **Organic Farming and Regional Development Processes**

Organic farming ranks among the most sustainable agricultural methods. Therefore, the question of whether organic farming is qualified as a form of broad-scale land use is important. Currently, however, practical experiences as well as scientifically based results of modelling broad-scale organic farming land use, including its implications on environment, society and economy, are rare. Except in a small number of countries, organic farms make up only a few percent of all farms. Broad-scale organic farming land use and human nutrition

opens a wide field of research questions. These questions need to be tackled by means of disciplinary as well as inter- and transdisciplinary approaches.

>> Contact: Prof. Dr Bernhard Freyer, Institute of Organic Farming IFÖL, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Gregor Mendel Straße 33, A-1180 Vienna, Tel +43-1-47654-3750, Fax +43-1-47654-3792, e-mail bioland@edv1.boku.ac.at, Internet <http://www.boku.ac.at/oekoland/>

▪ **Plant Protection**

Organic farming systems can apply only a very limited selection of chemical plant protection products. These products may only be used if the need is proven and preventive measures are insufficient to control the pests. The working group will compile extensive background information about the active ingredients which are listed as pesticides by IFOAM, including synonyms, application, toxicity, side effects on beneficial organisms, manufacturers and so on. The data will be collected on an international scale, and are intended as a basis for periodic evaluation and revision of IFOAM's list of inputs.

>> Contact: PD Dr habil. Stefan Kühne, Biologische Bundesanstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft BBA, Institut für integrierten Pflanzenschutz (Federal Biological Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry BBA, Institute for Integrated Plant Protection), Stahnsdorfer Damm 81, D-14532 Kleinmachnow, phone +49 33203 48307, fax +49 33203 48425, e-mail: s.kuehne@bba.de, Internet: <http://www.bba.de/oekoland/index.htm>

▪ **Organic Animal Husbandry**

Livestock is important on organic farms. However, only few scientists are working in this field. Organic breeding strategies, improvements in animal welfare, prevention of disease and maintenance of animal health as well as, last but not least, appropriate feeding for health and productivity are in need of scientific intervention and emphasis. Research has to consider the framework set by organic farming standards, and has to be done in a participatory system approach. The working group plans to:

- Identify scientists working in organic animal husbandry.
- Set up communication by e-mail newsletter to everyone in the network.
- Discuss the current status of organic animal husbandry research in the several regions of the world.
- Define standards for organic livestock research on a local farming system level.
- Organise a livestock section at the ISOFAR conference.

>> Contact: PD Dr Gerold Rahmann, Institute of Organic Farming of the FAL, OEL-FAL, Trenthorst 32, D-23849 Westerau, Germany, Tel +49 4539 1819-0, fax. -29, e-mail: gerold.rahmann@fal.de, Internet <http://www.oel.fal.de>

▪ **Long-Term Experiments (LTE)**

A working group for long-term experiments (LTE) in organic farming has been launched with the following objectives:

- Promoting fruitful international co-operation of researchers involved in LTE dealing with organic farming;
- Sharing experiences, knowledge, insights and positions on LTE with colleagues on an international level;
- Compiling present results of LTE;
- Developing common research questions and methods;
- Envisaging new projects with our experiments.

>> Contact: Dr Joachim Raupp, Institute for Biodynamic Research IBDF, Brandschneise 5, D-64295 Darmstadt, Germany, Tel: +49 6155 84210 Fax: +49 6155 842125, raupp@ibdf.de; <http://www.ibdf.de>.

>> Homepage <http://www.isofar.org/scientific-structure-commission-long-term.htm>

▪ **Holistic, transdisciplinary and participatory research approaches**

If organic farming is seen as a holistic and integrated activity it has to be supported by novel research methods which are in addition to monodisciplinary approaches. The goals of this working group are: to develop the scientific acceptance of novel research methods as experiential science, participatory action research and Goethean science; to stimulate the learning process of farmers and scientists based on these research approaches; to integrate formal scientific knowledge and the reflected experiences of experts.

>> Contact: Dr Ton Baars, Louis Bolk Institute, Hoofdstraat 24, NL-3972LA Driebergen, Tel +31 343 523860; Fax: +31 343 515611; e-mail: t.baars@louisbolk.nl

▪ **Non Certified Organic Agriculture**

According to FAO, non-certified organic agriculture refers to agricultural systems that use natural processes, rather than external input, to enhance agricultural productivity. About 60% of the world's agricultural area falls under this heading. These technologies can potentially be transferred to intensive organic farming, e.g. pest management, rainwater conservation etc. Activities of this group will include:

- Documentation of traditional organic farming systems of the world.
- Studies on sustainability, scientific evaluation of traditional technologies etc.
- Quantification of non-certified organic agriculture and role in desertification control, poverty alleviation and environmental improvement.

>> Contact: Dr Arun K. Sharma, Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Light Industrial Area, Near ITI, IND- 342003 Johdpur, India, e-mail aksharma@cazri.raj.nic.in

▪ **Further Working Groups**

Further working groups are planned. If you are interested in coordinating a working group on a specific theme please contact Ulrich Köpke.

>> Contact: Dr Ulrich Köpke, Institute of Organic Agriculture IOL, e-mail info@isofar.org

Task Forces (Temporary Working Groups) proposed by Urs Niggli

Most of FiBL's researchers - although 100 % committed to organic farming and alternative veterinary medicine - are members of conventional scientific societies, because they need the discussions with these colleagues in order to profit from the results and the methodological progress of cutting-edge research. These researchers are not very keen on having parallel traditional scientific structures within ISO FAR (soil science section, plant science section etc.). That is one reason why I think that a crucial focus of ISO FAR should be placed on commissions and task forces, because these kinds of platforms can deal with specific problems of organic farming research.

During the next years, organic farming research will face enormous challenges. ISO FAR will need to contribute to resolving them. Therefore, I would like put forward the proposal to set up the following task forces:

▪ **Organic Farming and Sustainability**

The first IFOAM Scientific Conference at Sissach in 1977 has as its theme "Towards a Sustainable Agriculture". In recent years we have received competition within this theme by conventional approaches to land use such as minimum tillage, integrated production, low external input agriculture and also pesticide reduction strategies using genetically modified plants and organisms. Somehow we have let the term "sustainability" be appropriated by conventional farming. In my view organic farming is more than only one of several strategies contributing to sustainable agriculture. Sustainable farming IS organic farming. What we need within ISO FAR is a high profile group of researchers working on all aspects of sustainability and advancing research in these fields (including the important topic of organic farming's contribution to reducing the impact of climate change).

▪ **Ecological Goods and Services of Organic Farming**

We all know that organic farming provides many ecological, social and ethical goods and services to society. Unfortunately, the broad knowledge and the many results we have within the organic farming community is not disseminated and implemented sufficiently among macro-economists and policy makers. I therefore propose creating a task force on this very important issue.

▪ **Molecular Biological Methods in Organic Farming Research**

Among the spin-off effects of genetic engineering are many novel analytical methods already in use or soon coming on the market which offer powerful tools for non-destructive and very fast analyses. These methods can be used in plant and livestock breeding, for biodiversity assessment, for habitat analysis (e.g. to characterise the balance between noxious organisms, antagonists and beneficial organisms), in crop health research (induced resistance etc.), in food quality and human health research etc. What is the position of the organic farming community on using such methods in research? Do we introduce them into our lab practice without consideration of possible consequences for the ongoing debate on GMO and organic farming? Again, I propose setting up a task force on that issue.

Colleagues who are interested in participating (or running) one of these task forces are kindly asked to contact Urs Niggli.

>> Contact: Dr Urs Niggli, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL; e-mail urs.niggli@fibl.org.

News

- **Organic Eprints Database <http://www.orgprints.org>**

Organic Eprints is an international open access archive for papers related to research in organic agriculture. The archive contains full-text papers in electronic form together with bibliographic information, abstracts and other metadata. Currently the archive contains 900 papers on organic farming. The Organic Eprints archive has been developed by the Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming, DARCOF, since 2002. In 2003 the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, FiBL joined the project as its first international partner with editorial responsibilities for the German language region and responsibility for the German language version of Organic Eprints. The project is funded under the German Federal Organic Farming Scheme BÖL. The Organic Eprints Archive is an excellent tool for information about results of organic farming research. Researchers can register for free and deposit their information.

>>Further Info: Hugo Alroe, Administrator of the Organic Eprints Database, Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming (DARCOF), e-mail hugo.alroe@agrsci.dk

>>The archive can be viewed and used at <http://www.orgprints.org>

- **German Federal Organic Farming Scheme: First research studies published**

The first results of research carried out under the German Federal Organic Farming Scheme BÖL have now been published. The full texts of the studies are available via the international database Organic Eprints. Even though the texts are available in German only the title and the abstract will be provided in English. This task is carried out by the project research platform of the central Internet portal, funded by BÖL and carried out by FiBL.

>> Further Info: Helga Willer, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL; e-mail helga.willer@fibl.org

>> Homepage <http://orgprints.org/view/projects/BOEL.html> and <http://forschung.oekolandbau.de>

- **First workshop of the European network 'Sustaining animal health and food safety in organic farming' held**

In early September 2003, the first workshop in the EU-funded network project 'Sustaining animal health and food safety in organic farming' – SAFO – was held in Florence, Italy. Approximately 70 experts from 19 European countries participated. This workshop focused on socio-economical aspects of organic animal production. Issues connected to these aspects, both on farm level and on society level were discussed. SAFO is funded by the European Commission. The objective is to improve food safety and animal health in organic

livestock production systems through the active communication of research results and conclusions. Furthermore, the project supports the development of European standards on organic livestock production. The proceedings of the workshop as well as other information is available via the project homepage.

>> Further Info: Mette Vaarst (project co-ordinator), Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences (DIAS). e-mail: Mette.vaarst@agrsci.dk

>> Project Homepage <http://www.safonetwork.org/>

▪ **UK: Food Standards Agency seeks views on organic research**

Views on proposals for research into organically produced food are being sought by the British Food Standards Agency. The aim is to identify areas of study most likely to produce information that would be useful to people when they buy food. The Agency is planning to commission new research comparing the nutrient value and pesticide residue content of key organically and non-organically produced fruit and vegetables.

>> Comments and views should be sent to: Andrew Stephenson, Food Labelling and Standards Division, e-mail: labelling@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

>> Internet <http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/organicresearch.pdf>

▪ **Australia: First national survey on the organic industry**

The Australian Government is providing more than 36 000 Euro for a study designed to boost the growth of Australia's organic agriculture industry. The project will collect the latest information on organic production, consumption, sales, promotional activities, prices, imports and exports. The project was initiated by the Organic Federation of Australia and is conducted by Darren Halpin, one of the co-authors of a recent study into the European market for organic food (Hamm / Gronefeld / Halpin, 2002: Analysis of the European Market for Organic Food, Aberystwyth).

>>Contact: Dr Darren Halpin, Centre for Social Research at Edith Cowan University, e-mail d.halpin@ecu.edu.au

>> Internet Information <http://www.affa.gov.au/ministers/troeth/releases/03/03050t.html>

▪ **First workshop of the European Concerted Action Organic Inputs Evaluation held**

The concerted action "Organic Inputs Evaluation" held its first workshop at FiBL in Switzerland in September 2003. The objective of this project is develop recommendations for a harmonised and standardised procedure for evaluation of plant protection products, fertilisers and soil conditioners allowed for use in organic agriculture according to Council regulation EEC 2092/91, Annex II. The proceedings of this workshop will be published in December 2003.

>> Contact: Dr Bernhard Speiser (Scientific Coordinator), Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, e-mail: bernhard.speiser@fibl.ch

>>Project Homepage <http://www.organicinputs.org/>

- **European Research Project EISfOM to collect statistical data on organic production**

The concerted action European Information Systems for Organic Markets (EISfOM) aims to build up a framework for reporting valid and reliable data for relevant production and market data about the European organic sector. European markets for organic products are growing rapidly, with organic production now accounting for 4% of European Union agriculture, but the market information available in most European countries is seriously limited. The EU is therefore funding the three-year project to analyse the current situation in 32 countries and to develop proposals for a comprehensive statistical system to support the development of the sector.

>> Further information: Dr Nick Lampkin (Programme Co-ordinator), Institute of Rural Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, e-mail: nhl@aber.ac.uk

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

- **Further News**

Should you have any news related to organic farming research please send the relevant information to Helga Willer at helga.willer@fibl.org.

Organic Farming Research under the 5th Research Framework Programme of the European Union

Under its 5th Framework Programme (1998 to 2002) the Commission of the European Communities funded 15 projects related to organic farming research with a total amount of 36 million Euro. The most important projects including links to the project homepages are listed below.

- **Project List**

>> QLRT-2001-00917: Further Development of Organic Farming Policy in Europe, with Particular Emphasis on EU Enlargement (EU-CEEOPF)
Projekt Homepage <http://www.irs.aber.ac.uk/EUCEEOPF/>

>> QLK5-CT-2002-02541: Sustaining animal health and food safety in organic farming SAFO
Projekt Homepage <http://www.safonetwork.org/>

>> QLRT-2001-02245: Recommendation for improved procedures for securing consumer oriented food safety and quality of certified organic products from plough to plate (Organic HACCP)

Project Homepage http://dbs.cordis.lu/cordis-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&SESSION=287162003-6-14&DOC=2&TBL=EN_PROJ&RCN=EP_RCN:69966&CALLER=EISIMPLE_EN_PROJ

>> QLRT-2001-02565: Harmonised and Standardised procedures for evaluation of plant protection products, fertilisers and soil conditioners for use in organic agriculture (ORGANIC

INPUTS EVALUATION)

Project Homepage <http://www.organicinputs.org/>

>>QLRT-2001-02400 European Information System for Organic Markets (EISfOM)

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

>>QLRT-CT-2000-01843: Worm control in organic production systems for small ruminants in Europe: towards the implementation of non-chemical, sustainable approaches (Wormcops)

Project Homepage <http://www.wormcops.dk/>

>>QLK5-2000-01124: Organic Market Initiatives and Rural Development (OMIARD)

Project Homepage <http://www.irs.aber.ac.uk/OMIARD/>

>>QLRT-1999-31065: Development of a systems approach for the management of late blight in EU organic potato production (Blight-Mop)

Project Homepage

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/agriculture/project_showcase/organic_potato.html

>>QLRT-1999-31418: Strategies of weed control in Organic Farming (WECOF)

Project Homepage <http://www.wecof.uni-bonn.de/>

>>QLK1-1999-0098: Safe organic vegetables and vegetable products by reducing risk factors and sources of fungal contaminants throughout the production chain: the carrot - Alternaria model

Project Homepage http://www.dlo.nl/wageningenseedcentre/safe_organic_vegetables.htm

▪ **Background information on EU-funded research**

is available at the Internet site of the General Directorate Research of the European Commission.

>> Organic Farming – Supporting the new demand:

(http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/agriculture/research_themes/organic_farming.html)

>> Seminar: Organic Farming in Europe; held September 2002, including a major report on the current status of European Organic Farming Research

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/agriculture/events/organic_farming.html

Events

▪ **13–14 November 2003: 1st European Conference on the Co-existence of Genetically Modified Crops with Conventional and Organic Crops**

13.-14.11.2003 the 1st European Conference on the Co-existence of Genetically Modified Crops with Conventional and Organic Crops will take place in Denmark. The conference should stimulate the scientific discussion of aspects for co-existence in the agricultural production at a European level.

>> Conference homepage at <http://www.agrsci.dk/gmcc-03/>

- **13–14 November 2003: European Conference "New Approaches in Food Quality Analysis"**

From 13. to 14 November 2003 a European Conference "New Approaches in Food Quality Analysis - On the Development and Validation of Concepts and Methods in Food Quality Analysis" is taking place in Berlin, Germany. The conference is organised by the Department of Organic Food Quality and Food Culture of the University of Kassel and the Institute of Organic Farming of the German Federal Research Institute FAL. Conference themes are: product quality analysis for process control; comparison of product quality from different farming systems; validation of analytical and holistic methods.

>> Information: PD Dr Gerold Rahmann, Institute of Organic Farming of the German Federal Research Institute FAL

>> Conference homepage

http://www.oel.fal.de/index.htm?page=/conference_food_quality/conference_food_quality_analysis.htm

- **29–31 March 2004: First World Congress on the Safety of Organic Foods**

From 29. to 31 March 2004 the First World Congress on the "Safety of Organic Foods - Meeting the Challenges of Safety and Quality for Fruits, Vegetables, and Grain" is taking place at Michigan State University. Abstracts must be received by December 5th 2003. The congress is organised by the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center.

>> Conference homepage at <http://www.foodsafe.msu.edu/Organics/index.htm>

- **3–5 February 2004: 11th International Conference on Cultivation Techniques and Phytopathological Problems in Organic Fruit-Growing**

This conference, which will take place in Weinsberg, Germany, represents a continuation of ten previous meetings and is intended to bring together active researchers and advisers involved in organic fruit growing to discuss latest results and methods. The main object is the coordination of research and to organise joint research projects. The conference is organised by Fördergemeinschaft ökologischer Obstbau e.V., Staatliche Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Wein- und Obstbau and EUGROF – the European Group of Researchers on Organic Fruit-Growing. Abstracts may be handed in by November 15th 2003.

>> Conference homepage <http://www.foeko.de/ecofruit.htm>

- **20–22 April 2004: Conference on Organic livestock and cropping**

From the 20th to the 22nd April 2004 the conference "Organic Farming - science and practice for profitable livestock and cropping" will take place at Harper Adams University College, Newport, Shropshire, UK.

>> Further information: British Grassland Society, e-mail: bgs@i-way.co.uk

>> Conference Homepage : <http://www.organic.aber.ac.uk/research/call.doc>

▪ **Further Events**

Should you know of any events related to organic farming research please send the relevant information (date, title, organisers, contact, conference homepage) to helga.willer@fibl.org.

Positions

▪ **Fellowship Organic Vegetables**

The World Vegetable Center (AVRDC) in Taiwan is offering a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Organic Vegetables.

>> Contact: AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center, P.O. Box 42, Shanhua, Tainan, 741 Taiwan ROC, phone +886-6-583-7801, fax 886-6-583-0009, e-mail: avrdocbox@netra.avrdc.org.tw

ISOFAR Information Turntable

In order to build a good information turntable for services for ISOFAR members, we need your input, and it would be good if you could send us the following type of information:

- Positions (Sabbaticals, Fellowships, Post-doctoral fellowships)
- Trainee Programmes
- Scholarships
- Events
- News
- Etc.

>> Contact: Helga Willer, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, helga.willer@fibl.org.

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