



International Society of Organic Agriculture Research

Newsletter No. 2, May 2004

Dear Reader,

About ten months after the launch of ISO FAR, with this logo-adorned newsletter we want to inform you about the next stages of its development. Currently, the Executive Board is developing the concept and programme of the first “International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture”, to be held in Adelaide, Australia, September 20-23, 2005.

This scientific conference will be the scientific central module of the IFOAM Organic World Congress, organised in cooperation with the local organiser the *National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia* (NASAA) and the *International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements* (IFOAM). We intend to combine a traditional structure of themes such as soil fertility, plant protection and habitat management, animal production systems, socio-economics and several others linked to ISO FAR’s sections, as well as topics and themes of common interest including research methodology, participatory research, dissemination of knowledge, genetic engineering in organic farming, etc.

The International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture will consist of high-quality, refereed contributions. Screened, reviewed and accepted papers will be edited in the conference proceedings in ISO FAR’s publication series. Details will be fixed during ISO FAR’s Board meeting in Rome on July 6-7, 2004. ISO FAR’s publication series will be launched at the end of 2004 with Volume No 1 “Overview of the long-term experiments dedicated to Organic Agriculture worldwide” (Working title). This publication will consist of more than 15 contributions and will be compiled by Joachim Raupp, head of the ISO FAR working group on ‘Long-Term Experiments’.

Apart from ISO FAR’s activities in the International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture, workshops and other horizontally oriented topics, such as knowledge transfer and pilot farm approaches, have to be planned. ISO FAR’s Vice President Urs Niggli, will represent ISO FAR as a member of the overall organising committee to insure close communication and planning of the IFOAM World Congress. A discount for ISO FAR members will be included along with discounts for IFOAM members. ISO FAR plans to promote a “package” for the congress, which will include membership in ISO FAR to entitle the registrant to the ISO FAR discount.

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Please note the first fixed date for all ISO FAR members coming to Adelaide is the General Assembly of ISO FAR on Saturday, 24th September, 2005 in the University Hall. Although the organisers are feeling the pressure of the event as if Adelaide will start the day after tomorrow, I will not yet call out to you “See you in Adelaide!”

Ulrich Köpke, President ISO FAR

Announcement of 1st call for papers International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture / IFOAM Organic World Congress, 19 – 23 September 2005, Adelaide, Australia

Due to logistic difficulties it is currently still unclear when the first official call for papers will be published by ISO FAR and its Australian partners. Nevertheless, we would like to announce that papers on Organic Agriculture research will be submitted to the respective section leaders after they have been nominated by ISO FAR’s Board in the beginning of July. We will inform you at the latest by mid of July on the responsible section heads, acting as referees and selecting papers and posters.

The first call will be released in our 3rd newsletter as well as on the ISO FAR homepage www.isofar.org.

ISO FAR’s worldwide activities

As announced in the editorial, the first International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture will be organised in close cooperation with NASAA, the Australian organiser, and IFOAM. At the moment, the question of whether the International Scientific Conference will always be linked to the IFOAM World Congress is still open. This decision has to be made after the Adelaide experience. ISO FAR’s activities certainly will not be restricted to tri- or bi-annual international conferences. As shown in the figure below, we are planning to arrange conferences and symposia on different scientific or stakeholder-oriented levels. A high scientific level of contributions and papers will be presented in the tri- or bi-annual international conferences and published in the proceedings/series of ISO FAR. The primary target of these conferences is scientists and researchers. Regional/continental conferences and symposia, focussing primarily on regional problems and topics, will have higher participation by non-scientist stakeholders. The participation level will increase the more the conferences focus on regional or local problems.



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ISO FAR conferences, symposia & workshops

ISO FAR will perform these activities with three different levels of involvement:

i . “supported *by ISO FAR*“...means a scientific conference where all responsibilities (administrative, financial and scientific) are with the partner organisation. ISO FAR invites its members to participate. A board member of ISO FAR maintains all communication with the organisers and helps them with advice. For example, ISO FAR will support the 3rd International Conference of the Asian Research Network of Organic Agriculture (ARNOA) to be held in Yang Pyung/Korea, 8-10 September, 2004.

ii. “in *cooperation with ISO FAR* “... means a scientific conference where all responsibilities are shared between the partner organisation and ISO FAR based on an established and countersigned contract covering:

- establishment of a joint scientific steering committee
- services and funding provided by each partner
- responsibilities of each partner
- proceedings and communication / PR work.

Keynote speakers, speakers and chairs of sessions are proposed by both partners. ISO FAR chooses one or several members for the organising committee. The International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture as the scientific module in Adelaide follows this pattern.

iii. “Regional Conference of ISO FAR “... follows the pattern of ii, but with an even stronger commitment. These conferences might be entitled “The Colloquium of Organic Researchers (COR) - A Regional Conference of ISO FAR”.

Urs Niggli / Ulrich Köpke

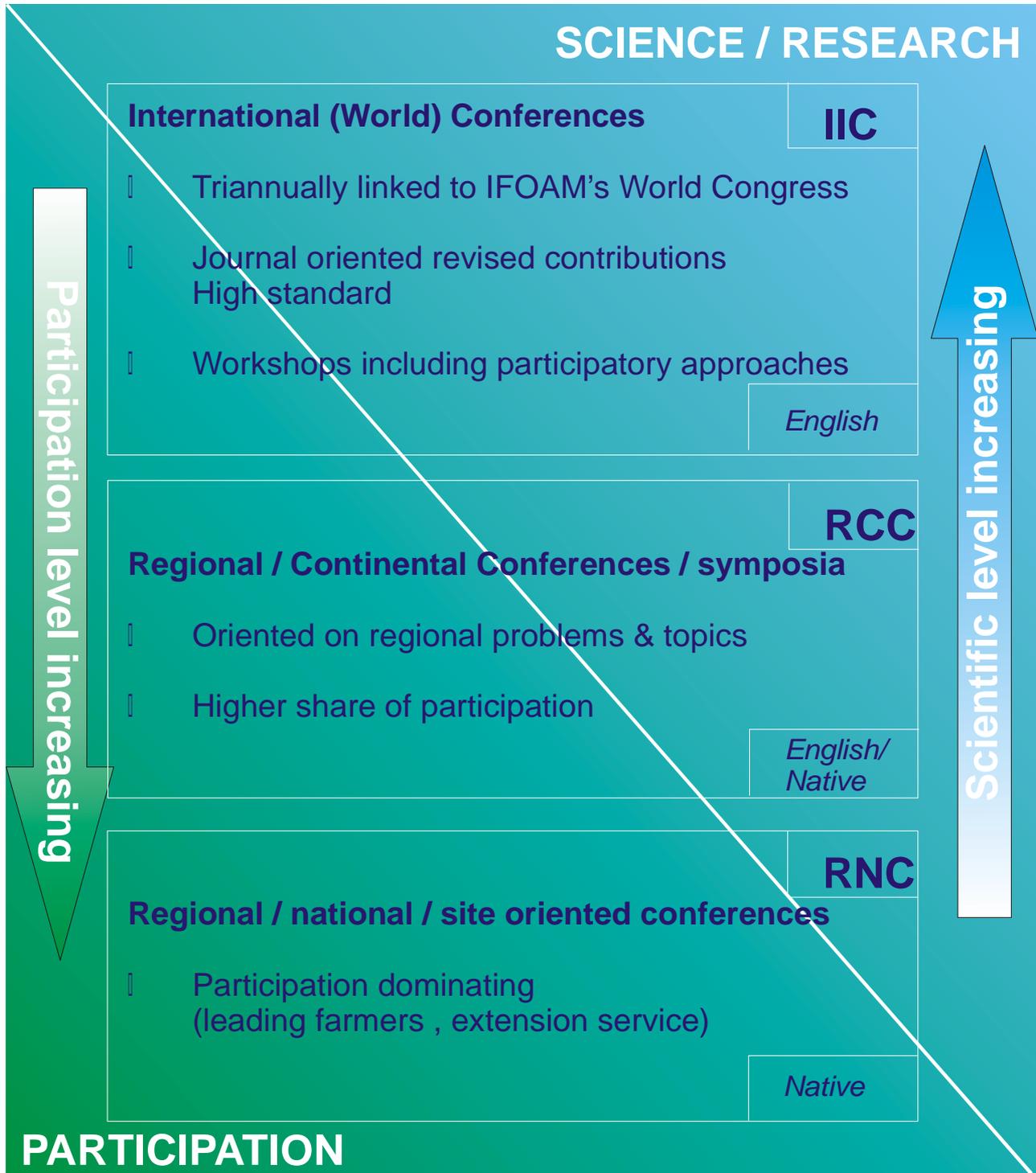


Figure: ISOFAR conferences, symposia & workshops

How to become an ISO FAR member

As in most well-recognised international scientific societies, membership is restricted. It is specified in the statutes of ISO FAR that individuals working as agricultural researchers and research managers, as well as post-graduate students and students of agriculture or related subjects who have finished at least the 4th semester, can register as members of ISO FAR by using the registration form available on our website. The application will be checked by at least two members of the Executive Board and the applicant is informed of the decision by e-mail as soon as possible. Confirmed members receive an invoice of their membership fee according to the OECD classification in the ISO FAR homepage. After receipt of payment members will receive an official confirmation letter signed by the President of ISO FAR. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact Anke Dunsche at the ISO FAR Secretariat (info@isofar.org).

For some of ISO FAR's members who have registered and/or paid their membership fee at the end of 2003 or at the beginning of 2004, the above procedure was not applied. Those members will receive an invoice (with the remark 'paid' where required) within the next few weeks.

ISO FAR's structure

Sections and working groups

The "vertical structure" of ISO FAR is made up of 12 sections and 5 working groups (currently). All sections may be divided into tropical and temperate. Sections will be lead by one head and two vice-heads, who will be nominated at the next ISO FAR Board meeting in Rome, 6th-7th July 2004. Contributions to the International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture in Adelaide will be categorised according to the different sections. Section heads will act as referees, reviewing the submitted papers. After having nominated the section heads, the sections are considered as officially established and can develop their own activities within the framework of ISO FAR's statutes.

- Section 1: Arable Cropping Systems (ACS)
- Section 2: Grassland Systems (GLS)
- Section 3: Perennial Cropping Systems (PCS)
- Section 4: Vegetable Production Systems (VPS)
- Section 5: Soil Fertility (SOF)
- Section 6: Plant Breeding and Seed Production (PBS)
- Section 7: Animal Production Systems (APS)
- Section 8: Animal Health and Welfare (AHW)

- Section 9: Socio-economics (SEC)
 - Sub-sections:
 - 9.1 Marketing
 - 9.2 Sustainability
 - 9.3 Farm economics
 - 9.4 Agro policy
- Section 10: Food Quality, Food Safety and Food Processing (FQS)
- Section 11: Environmental and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (EAS)
- Section 12: Crop Protection and Habitat Management (CPH)
- Working Group 1: Participatory and On-Farm Research (POR)
- Working Group 2: Organic Agriculture and Biotechnology (OAB)
- Working Group 3: Organic Principles and Research Methodology (OPR)
- Working group 4: Long-term Experiments (LTE)
- Working group 5: Organic Farming & Regional Development Processes (RDP)

News from the Working Groups

Working Group on Long-term Experiments

When ISOFAR was launched in June 2003, scientists representing about a dozen field trials in Europe and North America had already expressed their interest in collaborating in the Working Group on Long-term Experiments (LTE). Meanwhile, additional researchers joined in who also carry out either such experiments or farm studies monitoring the long-term development of an organic farm, frequently in combination with simple plot trials. Other colleagues in our group have been conducting LTEs in the past or just are interested in this issue. Currently 28 experts from Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, India, Norway, Russia, Switzerland and USA are on the distribution list.

The first step was to make a list of links with the web addresses of our trials. The list is available at <http://www.isofar.org/scientific-structure-commission-long-term.htm>. This way some basic information about our projects is made available to everybody. We also encourage those colleagues who have not yet done so to launch a website about their trials. It is not surprising to see that soil conditions and yield development are of major interest in our experiments. But it will be interesting to compile our results and experiences obtained under different site conditions. Moreover, aspects of fertilisation and crop rotation are also included in many projects. A Danish experiment is the only one carried out on three different sites.



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The next step was to start communicating our results and experiences. Each member of the group was asked three questions to be answered from a personal point of view:

1. What are the 2-3 most important findings of your trial?
2. What are the 2-3 most striking experiences that you as the researcher have learned from the trial?
3. What is your proposed input to and expected output from our network?

Based on these statements we can start an exchange on scientific results, relevant methods and parameters, as well as on research strategies and common interests. This may be the way to aim towards new activities, common investigations or other projects. For the moment, a rewarding activity can be to elaborate a state-of-the-art report on long-term experiments on organic farming worldwide.

For now our contact will be by email, as we are spread over different continents. Nevertheless, working together will probably be easier after a personal meeting. This might be not be possible, however, before an international ISO FAR conference is held.

>> Contact: Dr. Joachim Raupp, Institute of Bio-Dynamic Research, Germany, raupp@ibdf.de

Organic Research News from around the World

Tunisia: Promising results with the use of compost tea for disease control

At the Technical Centre of Organic Agriculture in Tunisia, several research projects are being conducted, including research on compost tea. Compost tea extracted for six months from a mix of composted organic materials (cattle manure, cheap manure, poultry manure and cereal straw) was tested against plant fungi. *In vitro* tests showed that the compost tea was effective against the following fungi: *Alternaria* sp, *Rhizoctonia solani*, *Phytophthora erythroseptica*, *F. solani*, *F. oxysporum*, *F. roseum* and *F. graniearum*. In a potato field, the compost tea, as foliar spray, reduced late blight damage but its effectiveness was slightly lower than the copper treatment. This effective treatment may be due to the various substances and organisms present in the compost tea. Field trials on vegetable crops and laboratory tests are being carried out with different compost tea sources to continue these studies with the goals of better plant production, better nutrient cycling and less disease.

>> Contact / Info: Prof. Dr. Ben Khedher, Technical Center of Organic Agriculture, P.O. Box 54, Chatt Meriem 4042, Sousse, Tunisia, Tel: +216 73 346 279; Fax: +216 73 346 277. E-mail: benkheder.Mohamed@iresa.agrinet.tn



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6th Framework Programme of the European Union: First projects started

The first organic farming projects funded under the first call of the European Union's 6th Framework have now started. A major project entitled "Quality Low Input Food" aims to improve quality, ensure safety and reduce costs along the organic and "low input" food supply chains through research, dissemination and training activities. It focuses on increasing value to both consumers and producers and on supporting the development of realistic business plans for all components of the food chain, using a farm to fork approach. The project is coordinated jointly by the Tesco Centre for Organic Agriculture, UK, and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL.

>> Contact Prof. Dr. Carlo Leifert, Tesco Centre for Organic Agriculture, Nafferton Farm, UK-Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7XD; Tel: +44 (0) 1661 830222, Fax: +44 (0) 1661 831006, E-Mail: tcoa@ncl.ac.uk, Internet <http://www.qlif.org>

Italy: Postgraduate Course in Mediterranean Organic Agriculture at Bari

The objective of the postgraduate Course in Mediterranean Organic Agriculture at the Mediterranean Institute of Agriculture Bari (Italy) is to prepare graduate agronomists and agricultural engineers for professional careers in organic agriculture. The goals are to develop agronomic skills related to practices and techniques of Mediterranean organic agricultural production and management (legislation, inspection, certification and labelling of organically produced food and fibres). Several research projects related to Mediterranean organic agriculture have been or are being carried out by students of the course, such as:

- Setting up a control and certification system for organic farming in developing countries: the case of Algeria
- Potential of Organic Agriculture in Syria: The case of olives and the olive oil sub-sector
- Copper reduction in the Mediterranean environment for *Plasmopara viticola* organic management
- Copper fungicides and the sustainability of organic viticulture
- Effects of organic amendments on changing the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the soil

>> Contact: Dr. Lina Al Bitar, Istituto Agronomico Mediterraneo IAMB, Coordinator of the Postgraduate Course on Mediterranean Organic Agriculture, Via Ceglie 9, I-70010 Valenzano, phone +39-080-4606204, E-Mail albitar@iamb.it, Internet <http://www.iamb.it/training/proreng.html>

European Union: 1st EISFOM Seminar: Official interest in organic farming data collection increasing

The seminar "Development of European information systems for organic markets" took place in Berlin, Germany on the 26th and 27th April 2004. The meeting was organised by the EU-funded project European Information Systems for Organic Markets (EISfOM). At the meeting, the issue of organic data collection



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and processing and the possibilities for improvements was discussed. It became obvious that the relevant authorities are highly interested in collecting and processing of statistical data on Organic Farming, but that there is a great need for harmonisation of data collection on both the national and the European levels.

>> Further information, including recent statistical figures on the current status of Organic Farming in Europe, is available at the EISfOM homepage at <http://www.eisfom.org>

Denmark: DARCOF Organic Agriculture in a global perspective

The Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming (DARCOF) has decided to initiate a so-called "knowledge synthesis" on the role of Organic Agriculture in a global perspective. The work will be performed by a group of Danish experts from a wide range of relevant fields in cooperation with international experts, and is to provide a basis for launching a new research effort in this area. The results of the work will be communicated at a concluding workshop in late 2004 and in a report in English.

>> Further information can be found at www.darcof.dk.

EU: Network on Animal Health and Food Safety

The project Sustaining Animal Health and Food Safety in Organic Farming (SAFO) is a European Commission funded Concerted Action with the objective of improving food safety and animal health in organic livestock production systems and contributing to the development of the EU standards on organic livestock production. The project started in March 2003 and will last for 3 years. It involves partners from 26 European countries.

During the project, five European workshops and a number of thematic meetings are being held. The third SAFO workshop will be held in Falenty, near Warsaw, Poland, on the 16th-18th September 2004. The workshop theme is "Enhancing animal health security and food safety in organic livestock production systems". The proceedings from the previous workshops are available at the SAFO website.

>> Further information is available at www.safonetwork.org

Germany: First results of the R&D projects of the federal programme now online

The reports of the projects carried out under the German Federal Organic Farming Scheme are available online via the database Organic Eprints, including an English summary.

>> Further information <http://orgprints.org/view/projects/BOEL.html>



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Germany, France and Switzerland: Increased coordination efforts of state-funded research on Organic Farming

In the past month, several coordination meetings on state funded research on organic farming took place in Europe.

In France the coordination role is being taken by INRA's Internal Committee on Organic Agriculture CIAB; in Germany the Institute of Organic Farming in Trenthorst coordinates research; in Switzerland a joint working group of FiBL and the state research stations has been established.

>> Comité Interne de l'Agriculture Biologique CIAB, Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique INRA; Internet http://www.inra.fr/Internet/Departements/ESR/UR/lemans/p_mission/mis_ciab.htm

>> Proceedings of the meeting of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the state research stations in Switzerland; Internet <http://orgprints.org/00002493/>

>> Institute of Organic Agriculture in Trenthorst / Germany; Internet <http://www.oel.fal.de/>

Denmark: New strategy for Danish research in Organic Farming

Many of the current research activities in the Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming (DARCOF) will conclude at the end of 2004. In order to create the basis for new research initiatives that will consider both the needs of society in general and the development potential in organic farming, the Board of DARCOF, together with the DARCOF user group, has prepared a draft strategy for future research. The draft is entitled "International research collaboration and integrity in Organic Farming" and builds on four central objectives. These are:

- to initiate and coordinate research based on organic farming principles that promotes integrity and efficiency throughout the whole production chain – from farmer to consumer
- to generate further knowledge on how Organic Farming may contribute to the sustainable development of society
- to ensure scientific research quality at a high international level and the maximum utilization of the research resources
- to contribute to strengthened European and international collaboration in research and research training in Organic Farming and food production

>> Further information: <http://www.darcof.dk>.

Uganda

In Uganda, because of limited funding, very limited formal research work currently is going on that has a specific focus on Organic Farming. Apart from tomato variety evaluations and observation trials on indigenous vegetables going on at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), there are two NGOs doing some



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applied/on-farm research. The National Organic Agriculture Movement (NOGAMU) intends to work with UMU's Faculty of Agriculture to improve on organic research by doing the following:

- documenting constraints limiting the organic production of major organically grown crops.
- prioritising these constraints.
- conducting applied/on-farm research to address these problems.
- documenting relevant information that may already exist on the shelf and making it available to farmers.

Contact: Prof. Dr. Charles Ssekya, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture. Uganda Martyrs University, P.O. Box 5498, Kampala, Uganda.

Events

5 - 7 July 2004 First World Conference on Organic Seed - Challenges and Opportunities for Organic Agriculture and the Seed Industry, Rome, Italy

Conference goals are to create a platform for international information and knowledge exchange between the organic movement and the "conventional" seed sector, scientific/technical aspects related to organic seed issues, evaluation of regulatory requirements and related issues for organic seed, platform for networking and cooperation.

>>Conference Homepage <http://www.organicseedconf.org/index.html>

7 - 11th September 2004: 6th Scientific Conference of IFOAM Asia, supported by ISOFAR

IFOAM-Asia holds its Scientific Conference and General Assembly every 2 years with the objectives of providing a forum to all IFOAM members and non-members for exchanging and sharing information, knowledge and experience on organic agriculture. The focus of the 6th conference will be on safe food and a benign environment for the Asian community.. The venue is Yangpyung county, Republic of Korea. The conference is supported by ISOFAR.

>> Conference Homepage <http://www.rioa.or.kr/ifoam/main-eng.htm>



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16 - 18 September 2004: 3rd SAFO Workshop

The third workshop of SAFO (Sustaining Animal Health and Food Safety in Organic Farming) will be held in Falenty, near Warsaw, Poland, on the 16th-18th September 2004. The workshop theme is "Enhancing animal health security and food safety in organic livestock production systems".

>> Project / Conference Homepage <http://www.safonetwork.org/workshops/ws3/index.html>

11 – 12 October 2004, International scientific conference „Ecological stock-raising: The present and the future“

The goal of the conference is pread of results of European scientific research of ecological stock-raising to Lithuania and to stimulate tighter international scientific communication.

>> Further Information : Department of Social Sciences, LVA, Tilžės 18, 47181 Kaunas, Lithuania, E-mail www.lva.lt, socmok@lva.lva, zoohig@lva.lt . The registration form can be downloaded from the ISO FAR-Homepage

14- 15 October 2004: Quality of Organic Production and its Improvement. International Conference to Mark the 80th Anniversary of Lithuanian University of Agriculture.

>> Contact: Institute of Environment, LUA, Studentų g. 11 – 259a, LT – 53067, Akademija, Kauno r., Lithuania, tel. +370 37 75 22 02, E-mail ai@nora.lzuu.lt

1 - 4 March 2005: 8th Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture in the German Speaking Countries, Kassel, Germany

The 8th Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture in the German Speaking Countries (8. Wissenschaftstagung zum Ökologischen Landbau“) will be organised jointly by the Federal Institute for Organic Farming (OEL-FAL), the Faculty of Ecological Agricultural Sciences at the University of Kassel, Germany, and the Foundation Ecology & Agriculture (SOEL). The conference takes place every two years.

>> Conference information at <http://www.wissenschaftstagung.html>

19 - 23 September 2005: 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress, Adelaide, Australia

The 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress will take place in cooperation with ISO FAR. A central module of the Congress, the “International Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture” will be organised by ISO FAR in cooperation with the local organisers NASAA and IFOAM.

>> Conference Homepage <http://www.nasaa.com.au/ifoam/>

October 2005: 2nd Seminar of the European Information Systems for Organic Markets (EISfOM)



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The second EISfOM seminar will take place in October 2005 in Brussels. It will define a framework for a European Information System for Organic Markets. The seminar will be organised in order that the proposed framework can be subjected to full consultation with national/international agencies and stakeholders. Where necessary, the issues identified will be subject to further consultations with relevant agencies/stakeholders, so that full support for the final proposals can be achieved.

>>Further information: www.eisfom.org

Positions

Assistant Professor at the Institute of Organic Agriculture IOL, University of Bonn, Germany, www.iol.uni-bonn.de

Location: IOL headquarters, Faculty of Agriculture, Bonn, Germany

Duration: The contract is for an initial period of 3 years, renewable/extendable to 5 (6) years. Start: Autumn 2004 or early spring 2005.

General information: The successful candidate will be part of a research team working towards developing and optimising strategies in Organic Agriculture. They will work towards improving our knowledge in a special field of Organic Farming. Reporting to the director of IOL, the successful candidate will develop and maintain an individual research programme in close contact with the research team. They will provide leadership, guidance, accountability and profile to their projects. They will share responsibility for lectures held for students of agriculture, nature conservation and landscape ecology. The teaching load consists of no more than four to six lecture hours per semester week.

http://www.iol.uni-bonn.de/pdf/p_assist.pdf

Deadline for applications: 15 June, 2004

Books and Resources

Organic Eprints

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. DARCOF, the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and BLE, the state agency that runs the German Federal Organic Farming Scheme use it to document their publications. Other institutes and organisations are asked to join DARCOF and FiBL in managing and developing this service.



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They encourage other institutes, organisations and individual researchers involved in organic research to utilise and contribute to this service, even if they do not wish to become formal partners. Deposited documents can be categorised according to country, organisation and project, and new categories will be added as needed. The more papers that are made available, the more useful the archive will become.

>> Internet: <http://www.orgprints.org>

New Book on Animal Health and Welfare in Organic Agriculture

The rapid growth of organic farming has been amongst the most remarkable changes in global agriculture in recent decades. Initially, more attention was paid to the crop side of organic systems, but that has now changed and there is greater recognition of the need to understand animal health and welfare better.

This book will further the understanding of organic animal husbandry, demonstrating practical solutions and innovative methods, and drawing mainly on research and practical experience with organic farming in Europe.

Edited by M Vaarst, Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Tjele, Denmark; S Roderick, Duchy College, Cornwall, UK; V Lund, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Skara, Sweden; and W Lockeretz, Tufts University, Boston, USA, Publication Date: December 2003, Number of Pages: 448 Pages Binding: Hardback, ISBN: 085199668X, Price: £65.00 (US\$120.00)

Details at http://www.cabi-publishing.org/bookshop/book_detail.asp?isbn=085199668X

US: On-line Service Organic Ag Info

The internet site Organic Ag Info has been developed by the Organic Agriculture Consortium (OAC)/Scientific Congress on Organic Agricultural Research (SCOAR). The site contains information on production, economic data, research results, farmer anecdotes, certification information, transition strategies, as well as many other subjects related to organic agriculture.

>> Internet <http://www.organicaginfo.org/> .

Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems

Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems (formerly known as *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*) was launched in 1986 by the US-based Institute for Alternative Agriculture (known as the Henry A. Wallace Center for Agricultural & Environmental Policy at Winrock International since January 2000). CABI Publishing took over publishing the journal in 2002.

RAFS publishes original research and review articles on the economic, ecological, and environmental impacts of agriculture; the effective use of renewable resources and biodiversity in agro-ecosystems; and the technological and sociological implications of sustainable food systems.

Contributions are welcomed from conventional agriculturalists striving toward more sustainable systems, as well as those working in organic, biological, biointensive and natural systems agriculture, and other alternative approaches.

Internet <http://www.cabi-publishing.org/Journals.asp?SubjectArea=&PID=21>



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