

InterBioNotes

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With contributions from IFOAM EU

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ORGANIC REGULATIONS

PGS labelling: four cases

[extract from IFOAM <The Global PGS newsletter April 2010>]

Participatory Guarantee Systems are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based in active participation of stakeholders and are built in a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange.

PGS initiatives are by definition locally adapted and therefore very diverse. There is little point in writing about how things should be done in a PGS.

The issue of labelling is an important one when it comes to marketing organic products. In many countries, noticeably the EU and the US, organic claims on products are strictly regulated by an organic regulation which grants the use of the official organic logo only to those products certified according to the regulation. They exclude PGS-certified producers, not only from using the national organic logo but also from making any sort of organic claim.

But there are Countries in which regulations on labelling are more favourable to PGS, we can bring four examples:

BRAZIL

According to the Brazilian regulation, products can be sold as organic if they are produced according to the national standard and if they are third-party certified, or certified by a participatory certification body (PGS), or sold directly to consumers by producers members of organizations of social control (this term is defined in the regulation).

In the first two cases (third party and PGS), and provided that the PGS is registered with the competent authority, certified producers can use the national organic logo. In the last case, they can claim that their products are organic but not use the national logo.

EAST AFRICA

The East Africa Organic Product Standard (EAOPS) was developed through a public-private partnership involving several countries in the frame of an IFOAM and UNCTAD project. The standard has been approved by the East African Community (an intergovernmental body) as an official East African Norm. However it remains a voluntary standard, and has no associated regulation covering verification requirements. National Organic Movements in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya are managing the use of the logo. They decided that the logo be granted to all third-party certified organic products, as well as to PGS-certified products, provided the PGS uses the EAOPS and that it is approved by the national organic movement association.

INDIA

India has developed a well elaborated national regulation for organic products, which has even obtained equivalence with the EU and partial recognition by the US. Still, for the domestic market, the compliance with the regulation, and use of the associated national organic logo, is voluntary. Farmers can still make organic claim (but not use the national organic logo) without compliance with the regulation.

Voluntary regulations leave a space for PGS initiative to develop under the organic umbrella and make organic claims. In India, PGS groups are federated under a national PGS council, which has developed a national PGS organic logo that can be used by all PGS groups approved by the council.

PACIFIC COMMUNITY

Similarly to East Africa, the Pacific Community has developed a regional standard with the help of an IFOAM- IFAD project. A logo has been developed for those producers certified according to the

standard. The logo has been developed with two versions: the green one saying “certified” is available only to products certified by third party.

The brown version saying “Guaranteed by...” is available to PGS initiatives that use the Pacific standard and are approved by the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (PO- ETCOM). The POETCOM is a body that is housed in the inter governmental body *The Secretariat of the Pacific Community*. There is a space in the logo to include the name of the PGS system which guarantees the product.

Those examples show how in some standards PGS are foreseen, both allowing them to use the official logo or studying solutions created on their particular structure, which is actually different from a third party certification

ORGANIC EVENTS

“Piazze del Bio”: “Organic Squares”

Despite the bad weather which prevented some cities from participating, Sunday 18th of April in 20 Italian Regions “Le Piazze del Bio” took place, an event promoted by the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies in collaboration with Regional and Provincial Authorities, and association of organic operators, such a successful event, that in some places all the products on sale were sold already in the early afternoon.

80,000 people visited the booths of 700 organic operators and organizations; adults, young and children had the opportunity to get to know organic products as honey, jams, bread and pasta, fruit and vegetables, herbs, cured meat, wines and other processed products.

The number of available references for a lifestyle respectful of people and nature is large enough to cover all aspects of everyday life. Le “Piazze del Bio” offered the possibility to show a sector which has not been affected by economic crisis and in which Italy is the second European producer.

Since the event was so positive, the hope is that it will be replied with a greater number of cities and “piazze” involved.

Biol Prize 2010: International Prize on Organic Oils

The 15th edition of the Biol Prize was held in Bari, from 26 to 30 of April. This event is the most important festival on organic extra virgin olive oil worldwide, and it brings Italy and Apulia on this sector's spotlight.

This year's edition was held between the city centre and the periphery, through training courses, conferences, workshops, tastings and cultural event

Initiatives took place around the stand “Città dell'olio - Festival dell'Olivicoltura etica e dell'Agricoltura” (*City of Oil- Ethical cultivation of olives and agro-citizenship*): between Piazza del Ferrarese and La Vallisa Auditorium a series of meetings and workshops were held, with initiatives such as free oil analysis, workshops on taste and crafts, a workshop on bluefish tasting, a booth for the collection of worn-out oils to be turned into soap.

Among the different exposers some are to be pointed out: a Community of secular olive trees producers, the ethno botany of “In Puglia”, Landemed's sustainable urban green, critical consumption by EcoBioEquo and Ecopolis, educational farms of the Consorzio Puglia in Masseria, BiolKids day by ACU (a day dedicated to kids from Bari's schools tasting oil), the BiolFish cruise with fish, wine and oil dinner-tasting, the open meeting “BiolWine: from organic grapes to organic wine”. In addition, two more exhibitions were held: “Un mondo d'olio” (*A world of oil*), a wide selection of the oils in competition and tastings of extra-virgin olive oils from around the world, and “MastrOlivo” (*Olive master*), an international exhibition of master craftsmen working live with olive wood. In addition, other events for adults and children, and a review of shorts and

documentaries on this theme at the presence of the authors.

Within this event, a studies' section took place, with an International Forum on "Ethical Cultivation of Olive" and a Round Table promoted by Biol's International Centre. In addition, many appointments for technicians and professionals were held, ranging from seminars to updating meetings, basic courses for oils assessors, international course of EquoBio project on organic and fair trade for international cooperation for development, and two Landemed courses for sustainable ecosystems designers.

On this occasion, some data on organic sector's situation were presented. Italy turned out to be world leader for organic olives with 114.000 ha (26% of the dedicated world area); in particular, the leader region in Italy is Apulia, with 34.000 ha, which means approximately 30% of the national organic olive production, 29% of the total organic national production, 9% of the total organic production of Apulia.

The main prize was won by the Sicilian extra-virgin "Primo Bio" produced by Frantoi Cutrera from Ragusa, proved to be the best among 350 oils presented from 17 countries. Second place was an *ex-aequo* between another Sicilian oil, "Terraliva" from Cherubino di Siracusa farm, and "Risca Grande" from Portugal. For what concerns other important prizes, the BiolBlended prize (best oil bottled and commercialized with no manufacturer's mark) went to "Terra Olivata" from Bacci di Gualdo farm, Umbria; the Biolpack prize (best match label/packaging assigned by a specific panel of experts in communication and consumption sciences) went to "De Carlo", Apulia. The jury of children assigned BiolKids prize to the Californian oil "Lunigiana"; the BiolEthic prize (best ethical contribution) went to the Chilean cooperative Lolol, with the oil "Native", for the work they run in a small local community. Great quality for home oils as well: the "BiolPuglia" prize went to the slightly fruity "Masseriola" from Masseriola farm. (A full awards' list is published on line at www.premiobiol2010.it).

The announcement of winners took place in the morning of Friday, April 30 in the frame of the "Festival dell'Olivicoltura Etica e dell'Agricivismo" at Piazza del Ferrarese. "The international jury - said Biol Prize's coordinator, NinoPaparella" - noticed the great quality of all the last sixty oils, which had minimal gaps between each other. Results showed that the influence of climate and terroir are decisive for quality and biodiversity. For example, this year Sicily has been strongly facilitated by the climate, while Sardinia could not produce.

A list of winners and participants is published on the traditional Biol Catalogue, and will then be presented at the major international trade fairs, as BioFach in Nurnberg and Sana in Bologna.

Biol Prize was organized by CIBi (Italian Consortium on Organic) and sponsored by IFOAM, the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Puglia Region, Bari Province, Municipality of Bari, in collaboration with various organizations of the sector, such as ICEA, Consorzio Puglia Natura, and sponsors such as Amenduni S.p.A. and Pieralisi Group.

Terra Futura, Florence May 28-30

Terra Futura is an important exhibition that provides a calendar of relevant cultural events which includes conferences, seminars, workshops, laboratories, moments of entertainment and shows.

Born from the common goal of ensuring a future to our planet, the event emphasizes issues and "best practices" of social, economic, and environmental sustainability, which concern all aspects of life, from everyday social relations, to economic system and administration of public affairs.

Terra Futura wants to introduce and promote those initiatives researching and implementing sustainable practices in social relationships, consumption, production, finance, trade. If those practices can be adopted they would contribute to guarantee the protection of the planet and its environment, and the protection of people's rights. It's an international event because it wants to broaden the sharing of good practices at a global level, and since its committee, topics, speakers, projects, experiences and exhibitors are international.

Important consents have been collected over the years. Over 87,000 visitors in 2009, 600 exposition areas with over 5,000 organizations represented, 200 scheduled events, 800 speakers, experts of different topics at international level.

In this edition there will be the conference “A new role for agriculture in climate change” which will give birth to a National Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change. This Table is the result of the interest raised at the meeting on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change organized by ICEA last April 9: it will be a Table which will start collaboration and discussion activities linked to the international initiative RTOACC - Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change. [See *Special Edition InterBioNotes on Climate Change* and article on this edition in the *Organic Research section*].

For further information on Terra Futura: www.terrafutura.it

Prize “Organizations towards Social Value”

“Valore Sociale” (Social Value - the organism founded in 2006 which created the eponymous standard on corporate social responsibility) and “Terra Futura” present the first edition of the Prize “Organizations towards Social Value”. At Terra Futura this recognitions will be received by those organizations which show objective evidence of having adopted policies, criteria and practices identified as significant steps towards a path of corporate social responsibility.

The competition can be entered by any organization public, private or non-profit, working on industrial or service sector, which will then be evaluated by a qualified jury through a specific questionnaire based on “good practices criteria” contained in Social Value standard. For this first edition, participation in the competition is free, and awards ceremony will take place in Terra Futura.

BioFach China 2010, Shanghai, 27-29 may 2010

The representatives of the international organic sector will meet at the fourth edition of BioFach China, taking place at the International Exhibition Centre INTEX of Shanghai. NuernbergMesse China, which organizes the event, foresees an increase of exhibitors (300 against the 238 last year). Besides a large exposition of products, this fair offers good prospects for the creation of networks and a series of conferences to learn more about a growing reality as that of the Chinese organic market.

More information at: www.biofach-china.com

3rd European Organic Congress - IFOAM EU Group, Madrid, 7/06/2010

The European Organic Congress to be held in Madrid in June will demonstrate the ability of the organic sector to contribute to sustainable development strategies to reinvigorate European farming, increasing competitiveness and creating jobs. Political changes necessary for sustainability-oriented activities will also be discussed, starting from the new CAP (Common Agricultural Policy), a central tool to get ready for challenges of future agriculture.

For More information:

http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org/3rd_Congress_Madrid.aspx

Summit on Sustainable Food, Amsterdam, 10-11 June 2010

The second edition of the Summit of Sustainable Food will take place in Amsterdam on 10 and 11 June 2010. The goal is to treat the most important issues which food industry is facing regard to sustainability and eco-labelling as organic, fair trade and related issues.

This second Summit will focus on sustainable sourcing and fair trade, ethical partnership, traceability, round tables, distribution and trade. Cases of study of companies that have

successfully faced the challenges of sustainability will be presented. The Sustainable Food Summit is organized by Organic Monitor. As previous events organized by Organic Monitor, there will be meeting opportunities between key stakeholders of the food sector and chances for debates on those important topics, in a high quality international forum.

More information at: www.sustainablefoodssummit.com

SusCon - International Conference on Sustainable Business and Consumption, NuernbergMesse, 15-16 June 2010

This will be the second edition of the Conference on Sustainability, and it will build on the success of the first taking its momentum a stage further. SusCon 2010 is connected with the "UN Year of Biodiversity", but in addition to its thematic focus the conference will also tackle a broad range of highly relevant sustainability topics. Such topics will include new business models, social entrepreneurship, climate change, consumption and lifestyle, verification and certification and finally, offset programs and biodiversity protection. Attendance is expected to be greater than last year, attracting even more international participants and bringing together all relevant stakeholders from multinationals to small enterprises, key international institutions and NGOs, politicians and media.

More information at: www.suscon.net

4th European Organic Congress – IFOAM EU Group, Rome 21-22/06/2010

The 4th European Organic Congress invites the European organic sector to evaluate and discuss the European legislative framework for organic farming.

The congress sets out to evaluate the first year of the new organic regulation, assessing the current situation, and providing a platform for an outlook on further elements to be added to the regulation. With the new EU Regulations for organic food and farming now in place for more than a year and a half, IFOAM EU Group invites the organic sector to the Italian capital to evaluate the performance of the regulatory framework - what are the bottlenecks and challenges, which areas need work now and which will need attention in the future.

The Congress is organized by the IFOAM EU Group in conjunction with IAMB (Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari) in the frame of the "InterBio" project which is financed by the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies.

http://www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org/4th_Congress_Rome.aspx

ORGANIC RESEARCH

RTOACC: Meeting on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change at ICEA's national office, Bologna

On April 9th, at ICEA national office, a meeting was organized on the relationship between organic agriculture and climate change.

In this occasion many personalities representing important Italian research institutes met, organizations such as ARSIA (Regional Agency for Development and Innovation in the Agricultural and Forestry, Tuscany), Chimica Verde, IBIMET CNR (Bio-methereology Institute of the National Research Institute), CRA CIN (Commission on Research and Experimentation on Agriculture of the research Centre on Industrial Cultivation), University of Florence's DIAF (Department of Agricultural and Forestry Engineering), University of Pisa's DAGA (Department of Agronomy and Agroecosystem Management), University of Udine's DISAA (Agricultural and Forestry Science Department), Biotech Unity of ENEA (National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development), ICEA (Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification),

and ISPRA (Superior Institute for Environmental research and Protection).

The meeting started with a brief presentation of the organization's activities, carried out or/and in progress, regarding the relationship between agriculture and climate change. The result was a presentation of a wide range of actions, ranging from long-term researches conducted by DAGA-UNI PI on a comparison between minimum tillage and zero tillage in relation to organic content in soils, to IBIMET CNR's studies on Biochar, and the development of green technologies for the territory.

In addition, many of the initiatives represented are aimed to develop methodologies to verify and quantify energy efficiency and environmental impact of the different farming systems, with researches on energetic efficiency and use of LCA to evaluate agricultural system's sustainability, researches on the development of an x-farm platform, the creation of the So.Fi.A. software which allows the calculation of climacteric greenhouse gases and the quantification of CO₂ sequestration in soils (carbon sink) resulting from different agronomic practices. Then, ICEA presented the RTOACC (Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change), an initiative born from a series of meetings started in February 2009, which led to the institution of the Table in Copenhagen in December 2009 and of the Action Plan for 2010. In addition there has been a presentation of the terms of reference on which RTOACC is founded. According to P. Smith, 89% of the mitigation potential of agriculture on climate change is in carbon sequestration of soils.

Nevertheless, the effect of carbon sink has been largely ignored by policy makers because of the inadequacy of currently available methods for emissions' and mitigation' potential accounting, but also underestimated on the grounds that, even if measures to promote carbon sequestration were implemented, the amount of sequestered carbon would tend to decrease (in a period between 20 and 100 years) due to saturation effect and non-permanence effect. This underestimation appears to be not acceptable since, with the current constant decline of organic matter in soils, CO₂'s increasing potential would be extremely significant in the short and long term, at least until when a new balance will be reached, contributing to an important reduction in GHG emissions. Moreover, according to data collected by PICCMAT Consortium (see www.climatechangeintelligence.baastel.be) organic farming can achieve high rates of carbon sequestration through practices such as the use of organic fertilizers, rotation, cultures interlayer, crop coverage and composting techniques.

Assessments on the soils' content of CO are normally excluded from LCA (Life Cycle Assessment of Products) applied for the evaluation of agricultural activities' impacts, and are excluded from existing Carbon Labelling initiatives (such as PAS2050, developed by BSI, DEFRA and Tesco); therefore, it's considered appropriate to engage and support the development of a methodology for the measurement of GHGs emissions and of carbon sequestration through the different stages of the process.

During this meeting was discussed the possibility to start a national initiative concerning the relationship between organic agriculture and climate change, with particular reference to European countries' situation, involving other organizations and research institutes working in this area. This national initiative should be linked to the RTOACC, but that does not mean that individual organizations cannot directly join the RTOACC. The goal of this initiative would be to facilitate meetings, information and experiences exchange, and to promote cooperation between the different actors involved. In addition, this national initiative's aim is not to act as an organic sector representative, but to work as a coordination table between institutions and organizations having different purposes, but sharing the urgency of actions according to the RTOACC objectives, and recognizing the important role that organic farming could exercise in this regard.

During this meeting it was pointed out how Italy ruled out Crop Land Management activities provided by Art. 3.4 of Kyoto Protocol and introduced by COP 7 in Marrakesh, and consequently, how carbon changes will not be counted until at least 2012.

Despite the stop of Copenhagen, discussions on post 2012 are open and will be an area of reflection and work for both the RTOACC and the national initiative.

The RTOACC recently met (10-11 May) in Frick (CH) at FiBL's headquarter in order to define some strategic lines and to give itself a minimal organizational structure. In this regard, there will be an update as soon as the final report of the meeting will be available. Meanwhile, a National Table (which is closely linked to the international one) is beginning to work in order to coordinate activities in Italy. Its formal constitution will be on May 28 at Terra Futura, during a conference organized by Legambiente and Chimica Verde on these issues.

News from Bruxelles

by IFOAM EU

– *GMOs' situation in Europe*

The GMO potato Amflora has been approved by the European Commission on 2 of March. The IFOAM EU Group criticized this undemocratic step, emphasizing that farmers and food processors will have to face even higher costs in order to keep food production chains free from GMOs.

While the revision of the EU legislation is ongoing, the EU Commission is planning to adopt large parts of the European Food Authority's (EFSA) guidelines on the risk assessment of genetically engineered plants as an official part of EU regulations (www.testbiotech.org/en/node/334). Moreover, applications for cultivation for at least two GMO maize varieties are in the pipeline (Bt11 and 1507).

High time to come together for action: The [6th European Conference of GMO Free Regions](#) will take place in Brussels and Gent on 16 -18 September 2010. All kind of organizations and initiatives that are committed to GMO free food and farming are invited to support this conference with ideas, organizational help, donations, etc. Please contact the IFOAM EU office for further information.

Two on line actions were launched to collect supporters for the maintenance of GMO free food and farming. The first by [AVAAZ](#), calling on the Commission to ban GMOs until the research is done. With [Stop the Crop](#), you can send a letter to your minister in charge to call on your national government to take a responsible role in protecting GMO free food.

– *Malta declaration: IFOAM calls for a moratorium in the cultivation of GMOs*

The board of IFOAM EU Group, representing the organic food sector from 27 Member States, called on the European Commission to ensure the maintenance of GMO free farming in a declaration agreed at its board meeting in Malta in end of March. The declaration insists on a European wide moratorium on GMO approvals and cultivation of GMOs in the EU. Moreover it calls on the European Commission to recognize the socio-economic impacts of placing on the market and the cultivation of GMOs and to assess long-term effects of GM plants on the environment.

– *EFSA public consultation on risk assessment of GM plants open until April 30*

The European Food Safety Authority has been carrying out two public consultations related to GMO - one on its draft scientific opinion on the assessment of the potential impacts of GM plants on non-target organisms, and second on a guidance document for the environmental risk assessment of GM plants. The aim of this was to draw up a comprehensive scientific review of the current guidance document of the GMO panel for Environment Risk Assessment (ERA), in response to demands from stakeholders including the European Commission and Member States. See <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en> under Scientific Panels and Units

– ***Liberate (agro-bio) diversity***

The European initiatives for seed diversity have met in Graz, Austria, on 25-27 March. The challenge to maintain and further develop diversity of plant varieties under current and future legislation was discussed; ideas for action were exchanged and a declaration that calls on politicians to defend farmers' rights to sow seeds from their own harvest, to breed them, to pass them on and to maintain diversity was adopted.

www.liberate-diversity-graz2010.org

– ***Directive for the protection of soils***

No agreement has been reached again on the directive for the protection of soils did again not advance at the Council of Environmental Ministers on 15 March due to opposition from Germany, France, the UK, Austria, the Netherlands and Malta. The Commissioner for the Environment, Janez Potocnik, promised to “talk to ministers from the so-called blocking minority about what are behind their real concerns” to find a way out under Belgian presidency”.

– ***Animal Welfare***

The IFOAM EU Group sent on March 15 a [letter](#) on the Marit Paulsen’s [draft report](#) (see also [amendments](#)) on evaluation and assessment of the Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010. The report was voted by the European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on 17 March. It asks the Commission to propose “without delay” an Action Plan on Animal Welfare for 2011-2015, provision of sufficient resources from the EU budget for inspections by the Commission and ensuring the implementation of the current legislation. The report also asks support for the establishment of a European Reference Network for animal welfare, insisting on the use of existing structures. The final version was voted in plenary on 19 of April.

– ***Health and Nutrition Claims***

Seminar “Health and Nutrition Claims: National Implementation of the Regulation” was held by DG Sanco of the European Commission on 9 of March. The IFOAM EU Group took part in the seminar; the Group wants to ensure that the integrity of the organic product is not threatened by inappropriate nutritional and health claims. There are different approaches in the Member States towards national implementation of the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation. The need for further harmonization was pointed out during the seminar.

– ***Learning AgriCultures: new educational series on small-scale farming sustainability***

ILEIA, based in the Netherlands Center for Learning on Sustainable Agriculture, made available interim versions of the first two modules of its Learning AgriCultures educational series, dedicated to understanding small-scale (family) farming and how it can become more sustainable. ILEIA will complement these learning series with five more modules. As the series is work in development, interim versions of each module will be presented first. ILEIA invites feedback and suggestions for improvement on the package in its current form. This will help to produce the final publications in the course of 2010. See: www.ileia.org (go to the “Learning” page) and send feedback to educators@ileia.org

– ***New GOMA's website and newsletter***

FAO, IFOAM International and UNCTAD announced the Global Organic Market Access Project’s new website and the first issue of its newsletter, which is called Harmonization and Equivalence. The newsletter will be published 3 times annually and made available through the GOMA website,

which is also equipped with a blog-type News and Views section, information on regional projects, and useful tools. The Global Organic Market Access (GOMA) is a project of FAO, IFOAM and UNCTAD which seeks to simplify the process for trade flow of organic products among various regulatory and/or private organic guarantee systems. GOMA focuses on harmonization and equivalence of organic standards and certification performance requirements as mechanisms for clearing trade pathways. More at: www.goma-organic.org