

InterBioNotes

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by

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With contributions from IFOAM EU, AIAB ER

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Breaking news

I use this space to add some first-hand news and fresh - having even the freezing temperatures common to most of Europe these days...

IFOAM EU, Brussels November 18 to 19

Climate Camp RTOACC and IFOAM, Rome 22 to 23 November

IFOAM EU, Brussels November 18 to 19

In Brussels on 18 November the European Union launched the first official communication on the CAP 2020. Upon the occasion the main features of the common agricultural policy which will come into force after 2013 were summarized:

- The two existing pillars of direct aid (100% funded by the EU budget) and Rural Development (co-financed by Member States) will be retained. Nothing is decided yet on the total financial resources to be allocated and their balance on the two pillars. The "modulation" is not expected anymore, that is the chance at national level to move resources from one pillar to another.
- Direct payments will include "green measures" such as rotations, green manure etc., very functional to organic. Remarkably, the presentation of the Commission cited three times organic farming.

During the IFOAM EU board meeting in Brussels, the head of the Commission's organic unit - Jean François Hulot - reported on the ongoing negotiations for the equivalence of standards at international level.

The dialogue with Canada is reaching the final stages after the reciprocal visits. While with the United States, despite progress and interest shown by the USDA delegation on the possible development of the concept of equivalence, there remain some issues to solve, related to diversity in the standards. The Americans are still committed to visit some European Union countries over the next year, certainly including Italy and Spain.

Concerning the recognition of certification bodies operating in Third Countries in equivalency, Hulot spoke about the recent progress and aid required to the SCOF during the last meeting (23 and 24 Nov.) in order to finalize the examination of the dossiers.

Climate Camp RTOACC and IFOAM, Rome 22 to 23 November

The meeting in Rome of the Round Table on Organic Agriculture and Climate Change, hosted at FAO analyzed the results of interesting studies carried out by FIBL (CH), SEAE (ES) and ICROFS (DK). Respectively:

- The possibility to use different methodologies that are internationally recognized to sell on the carbon credit markets - the Kyoto agreement related ones, and the voluntary ones- among which

the effects of climate change mitigation of organic practices;

- The contribution of organic carbon sequestration in soils of the Mediterranean Countries;
- The opportunities and limitations of LCA methodologies (*Life Cycle Assessment*) to measure organic agriculture performances in terms of energy balance.

The RTOACC then discussed the priorities for the next activities in the field of scientific research and in terms of practical application of research results to develop policy positions and practical tools for the valorisation of organic practices (standards and certification systems). The IFOAM Climate Camp was hosted by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and included the participation of most members of RTOACC and of representatives of the organic movements from all over Europe. It did worth to be there to follow the passionate presentation by Urs Niggli (Director FiBL, IFOAM World Board member) who laid the foundations for a common vision for organic agriculture, starting with the argument of climate change, including biodiversity and social justice -which appear to be different problems, but intrinsically linked - . He pointed out the need of a serious discussion on which the movement must be urgently engaged: consistency of the organic standards with the principles of organic agriculture [Health, Ecology, Fairness and Care] and the ability to communicate and act, for the development of an industry that wants to be a movement for real change, urgent and indispensable for production and consumptions models in our fragile planet.

(Antonio Compagnoni)

SPECIAL: SANA 2010

The 22nd international Exhibition of natural products in figures

The 22nd edition of SANA, the International Exhibition of Natural Products, took place from September 9th to 12th at the Bologna Exhibition center.

The 45,000 sq. meters exhibition was attended by 989 exhibitors of the food and nutrition, health and wellness, and “living&environment” sectors.

This SANA edition has opened the discussion on some important issues in view of the Mediterranean free trade area starting in 2011, inviting a strong delegation of buyers from Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkey, but also from Brazil, China, Russia, Japan and the USA.

This particular international situation allowed SANA's organization to count over 700 “BtoB” meetings organized at the Buyers Lounge set up for exhibitors interested in exporting their productions.

The exhibitors had 30,827 trade visitors and over 350 accredited journalists.

Organic figures presented at SANA 2010

The opening conference presented for the first time quantitative and qualitative data on the Italian organic sector together: those of the SANA-GPF observatory on consumption (at its fourth year of activity) and the results of Sinab - National information system on organic farming of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies. A combined reading of the surveys was proposed to the operators, an approach useful to check all the aspects needed to operate successfully on the market.

The figures showed that the consumer demand is concentrated above all in Europe and North America: between them they account for 97% of the total organic shopping. Asia, Latin America and Australia are important producers, but for the most part exporters. Europe is the largest

market in the world for organic products (followed shortly by the USA); the countries where the organic market is most significant are Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy, whereas those where consumption per capita is highest are the alpine countries (Switzerland, with over 100 euro spent per head each year, and Austria), followed by Denmark and Sweden.

European citizens, according to a recent survey, consume “better”, without however consuming “less”, and both organic and fair trade products are increasingly included among their preferences: ecology is translated into a concrete act, and now 38% of Europeans say that they have purchased organic products on more than one occasion (particularly women).

In the organic cultivation “league”, Australia is the leader, with 12 million hectares. Whilst Italy, with an organic surface area equal to about 1 million hectares, is at the eighth place in the world (behind Argentina, China, United States, Brazil, Spain and India) and at the second place in Europe. Italy is in a head to head with Spain (which beats Italy only in terms of greater surface area dedicated to pasture and woodland: as far as surface area dedicated to cultivations Italy is always in first place), in front of Germany, Great Britain and France. Italy is also in first place in Europe for the number of farms that have chosen to use organic methods.

Marilena Colussi, head of the Observatory, outlined the guidelines on consumers' perceptions of quality of life, acknowledgment and use of natural and organic products for health and beauty, the importance of the role of nutrition to health, the attitudes towards organic, sustainable consumption, common values and diversity in the Mediterranean area.

The results show that in Italy the understanding of organic is growing. About a quarter of the interviewees stated to be a consumer of organic products, even if with a variable periodicity. The data collected in 2010 are stable in relation to the previous year, which recorded a +3,4%. Such a stability during a crisis period is a sign of true interest.

Francesco Giardina, coordinator of the Sinab project, presented the numbers of the Italian organic sector: 1,106,684 hectares; 43,230 farmers growing without using chemicals; and 7,991 companies working in processing and distribution.

This picture gives Italy the world record for organic vineyards and olive groves, and the European record in organic vegetables; in addition, Italy is confirmed as the major world exporter of organic products, with a market value of about 1 billion euro.

The organic sector in Italy is characterized by quite unique data, when compared to the situation of the Italian agriculture in general: a very high percentage of female entrepreneurs (25%), and young people (50% are under 50), a high academic level (50% of organic producers have a secondary school certificate, 17% are university graduates) and a propensity to use new technologies (52% use the Internet).

Italy is the first producer of organic vegetables (with a surface area eight times that of Spain), cereals (with about 250,000 hectares), citrus fruits, grapes (with 38,000 hectares, double that of France) olives and in second place with rice. Across the nation a number of other organic products are being cultivated, excellent food products which are unique worldwide: over the years several Italian companies have won prestigious awards in international competitions dedicated to products such as wine, oil and cheese.

Selling a significant part of its organic production abroad, Italy is also a major world exporter of organic products (reaching shelves in Europe, United States and Japan) with a turnover of around 1 billion euro. This constant development of organic agriculture shows an ever increasing attention of the producers towards safeguarding environment and health as well as a growing awareness by consumers about the importance of buying natural food products which are guaranteed.

The Italian organic market is estimated to be worth 3 billion euro, with about 1.8 billion sales through specialist shops, supermarkets, direct sales from farms (oil, wine and fruit & vegetables in particular), home delivery and purchasing groups. The large distribution chains, whilst sensitive to

organic, still offer a limited range of products compared to their European counterparts: the new style Carrefour in France, for example, stocks 3,000 organic products, whilst in Italy they stock no more than 350, even if all chains have their own brand organic product line in response to consumer demand. In spite of the general crisis in consumption, the purchase of organic products made in Italy has continued to register a rise: in supermarkets it is worth about 400 million euro. As far as the different geographic areas of Italy are concerned, consumption is strongest in the North West and the North East.

The selling points specialized in organic products only (over a thousand shops throughout Italy, concentrated mostly in the north and central Italy) consistently show better performance than the big distribution chains, registering an average growth of 10% (independent shops), and up to 15% (selling points affiliated by franchise).

Farmers selling directly are having the same kind of positive experience (there are about 2,000 out of them selling their products directly to the public (in farm shops and at markets) and through consumers purchasing groups.

School canteens, with a turnover of between 200 and 250 million euro, involving about 1,000 local councils, are supplying organic meals to 1 million children daily. These numbers are foreseen to rise in the coming school year (2010/2011), given that the Milan local administration (the only big city that did not yet take such a step) is coming into line with the legislation foreseeing the use of organic products in all school canteens.

Restaurants which offer organic options are on the rise: they are almost 500, particularly in central Italy and in the big cities.

“Orizzonte Mediterraneo” Meeting: opportunities and threats looking to the free trade area

SANA opened the discussion on the Mediterranean issues with a view to the free trade area foreseen to come into force in 2011, inviting delegations of buyers and experts, and EU, Italian and foreign representatives institutions in order to discuss the resumption of cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean shores in a meeting that addressed some key issues for the operators: the regulatory framework, the node of the certification equivalence, the opportunities offered by the halal certification, models of collaboration in supply chains and logistic platforms, the process of bilateral political decision to boost trade.

The speech by Charikleia Minotou, President of the IFOAM AgriBio Mediterraneo Regional group, was about the current situation in the Mediterranean and about her group, AgriBioMediterraneo (ABM) goals.

IFOAM ABM, said Charikleia, wants to create an active network between the various realities of this area, which is unique for its variety of climates, crops, cultures and mentalities, since it includes European countries, East Europe (Adriatic Eastern shore) and North Africa.

In total, this means 5 millions hectares and more than 140,000 companies involved in organic production; but 59% of the total turns out to be located in European Union Countries, the same countries that clearly have greater access to resources.

A lot of big challenges are on the table: from the markets, that should be developed locally (since local is considered as an added value to organic, as also mentioned by Dr. Lovato, ICE), to the environmental challenges; the fight to GMOs and the establishment of GMOs free regions, climate changes, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, establishment of protected areas, implementation of eco-agro tourism and med nutrition.

Patrizia Pugliese from the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, spoke about the MOAN

“Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network”, an institutional network consisting of 21 countries represented by their Ministries of Agriculture. The MOAN works as a permanent observatory which collect and distributes structural data on organic farming in the Mediterranean area, for example, collecting this area's statistical data for the IFOAM yearbook; in addition, the MOAN is working with the Organic Research Centers Alliance (ORCA), a FAO project that wants to strengthen and network the existing scientific institutions to make them more and more centers of excellence of the trans-disciplinary research in organic farming.

MOAN is in charge of monitoring the evolution of the political and legislative framework that supports organic agriculture.

For what concerns research, MOAN is also working with ISOFAR (*International Society of Organic Agriculture Research*) to organize events that want to rise awareness and to produce scientific evidence, creating a directory on the organic agricultural research institutions of the Mediterranean area, collaborating with ABM in the InterBio project. Therefore, the MOAN proposes itself as a permanent platform for dialogue, through various international meetings on annual basis. Those meetings usually last three days during which the theme of the year is presented and discussed, the situation of the organic production of the host country (which changes every year) is presented, and some technical inspection are carried out.

Ms. Pugliese showed how the development of the organic sector has different stories and paths in the development of every country, due to different national will to build on achieved goals, and to the will to affirm a common Mediterranean identity. Such a need is difficult to be identified in everyday development strategies, but it can emerge in those occasions with its potential and specific needs.

The Mediterranean area requires a balanced development of the sector, a development not only for export, but also focused on the development between institutions, associations, national and international markets, overcoming the purely private to private, profit-oriented relationship in order to achieve greater collaboration between public institutions (which will eventually turn into a market benefit).

Iginia Colagrossi, from the Ministry of Economic Development, works with ICE-Italian Foreign Trade Institute for the promotion of Italian companies working in the organic sector.

This promotion activity takes place through different instruments, such as missions abroad (system missions made up of discussion forum opened to institutions and of B2B meetings between Italian and foreign companies); program agreements signed between Italian regions in order to achieve working arrangements on projects to bring forward, projects that will be founded a half from the regions and a half from the Ministry; program agreements signed between trade associations and following the same system. In addition, a participation of Universities is provided involving students in specific projects, and ICE is present at all the main trade fairs.

The support provided to the companies doesn't concern only promotional aspects, but also the financial aspects.

This goal is pursued through the SIMEST (www.simest.it), the holding company for the development and the promotion of Italian enterprises abroad controlled by the Italian government, participating in the share capital of the companies that want to invest abroad. The website provides a review of the financial laws in favor of such a investments, and more information about the available tools. SIMEST is also active for scouting operations abroad in different fields of interest for Italian companies.

Stefano Cinti, from the Directorate General for Agriculture, unit for Organic Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, described the current legislative framework for the European organic farming. European organic farming has a 26 billion dollars turnover, and it is a

dynamic field which is living a rapid growth. This growth, however, is uneven among member States, and it's characterized by a strong imbalance between supply and demand.

Describing Reg. 834/07, Dr. Cinti explains how this regulation, strongly wanted by stakeholders, is easily editable on attachments, in order to respond more quickly and effectively to the needs that can possibly emerge.

In this new scheme, the possibility to recognize an equivalence to Third Countries is foreseen: the first deadline to submit an application for equivalence to the control bodies was set in 31 October 2009, and at that time 73 candidates applied; the list will be published in 2011 and updated annually in October. To recognize the compliance, the same process will start from 10/31/2011.

In the future, a lot of work will be required to update the different lists. Anyway, equivalence will be privileged for import, since it allows a greater flexibility and adaptability to different situations, as well as being more collaborative.

A very interesting participation in this conference was the one of representatives of the southern Mediterranean shores in view of the future developments in the Mediterranean Area. The representatives were Houssein Mansour, adviser of the Ministry of Trade and industry for Food Safety and Head of the Management team of the Agency for Food Safety in Egypt, and Hamid al-Qadir Distefano, from the Halal Italy Association. In particular, the close relationship between organic and halal ("licit", allowed by Islam) was emphasized.

Houssein Mansour explained how a food, in order to be called halal, has to respond to a set of requirements involving all stages of the production chain, from raw materials to transport, technical processing and packaging.

These requirements are not arbitrary but well-coded (although different interpretations can depend on the different currents within Islam), and can be found in the Codex Alimentarius (CAG/GL 24-1997). In Egypt, halal is certified by the government agency EOS (*Egyptian Organization of Standards*) and by a third party organization, HFA (*Halal Food Association*). Basically, according to Mansour, these rules provide for the integrity of halal food through production methods designed to preserve the product from what is not natural (or not pure), a concept that actually largely fits with the principles of organic. This point of view should be of interest for the sector: the potential includes about over a billion potential consumers; in countries like Italy, France and Spain that could mean a sharp increase in the market, as much as a crucial point waiting for the free trade area.

Hamid Distefano confirmed the idea of halal as pure and respectful of the natural principles, and underlined how the Islamic presence in Europe is huge (in Italy it is the second largest religious community), representing a great potential growth for this industry of Italian quality products. He illustrated then how the strong contacts between halal and organic regarding quality, supply chain traceability, animal welfare and protection of the creation could and should be strengthened.

The conference was also attended by Roberto Corioni, from Pizzi Osvaldo&C, and Andrea Bertoldi, of the Brio S.p.A. They brought their experience as private enterprises concerning the issue of logistic platforms.

Roberto Corioni explained how Italy could potentially be considered as a very important logistic reference for Mediterranean trade. Pizzi is a case of study, a company that deals with fruit and vegetables (mostly organic) and works with supermarkets. Working with the retail trade means first and foremost to have a good monitoring system of the suppliers through an efficient management of the documents and through visits to the companies in order to test samples (in addition to those already provided by the certification system).

Speaking about his experience, Corioni explained how, unfortunately, his company had to deal with problems caused by suppliers from North Africa, among whom three major non-conformities

checked in three consecutive years, that caused serious consequences with its partners in the GDO. In this case he underlined how equivalences are important, but that in the meanwhile there still is a lot of work to do and it is important to develop serious relationships of cooperation. Speaking of equivalence, he emphasized that the required documentation, which is the first guarantee to trading partners, is not equivalent at all. Corioni recognized the great potential of free trade, provided that freedom has to be intended as freedom from red tape, but not from the rules underpinning the trade itself.

In his speech, Andrea Bertoldi highlighted the importance of local presence in order to have a solid foundation in business. The Mediterranean basin can bring many benefits to the trade in the countries involved: this would allow, for example, to extend the seasonality of the products, and it would also increase the importations from European countries like France, which would be strongly inclined to purchase from the North African countries. Bertoldi explained how a more efficient cooperation between Mediterranean countries and the opening of free trade can be considered as a mean to counter imports from countries such as Israel, and not as a threat to producers within the Mediterranean itself.

In this sense, the challenges for the sector are different: it will be necessary to work to overcome difficulties such as resistance to purchase products from other countries by customers and consumers.

Experiences from New Caledonia: the PGS (Participatory Guarantee System) evolution

This edition of SANA was also an opportunity to meet and to take the stock of the situation with the representatives of organic farming organizations in foreign countries.

It is the case of our meeting with Ludmilla Guerassimof, representative of “MFC Que Choisir NC”, a consumer's association active in new Caledonia.

She works with the Association Bio Caledonia, created in August 2009, which follows the PGS with 87 members, including 54 producers and 33 consumers.

Among the association strengths there is the presence of the Kanak indigenous community, whose knowledge and methods are very close to those of organic farming; in addition, New Caledonia has a lot of different crops, cultivated with different agricultural systems: this combination of facts plays in favor of natural quality and of the value of their production. The opportunities for the development are many: the domestic demand for organic products is strong, especially since 2007, when some local associations engaged in media campaigns denouncing the use of pesticides that in Europe are forbidden by law in conventional crops; in addition, organic methods allow social benefits, since also Kanak indigenous can get their access to the market (unlike in conventional farming and most of the economic sectors); advantages are found on economics as well, as the use of local resources is increased rather than the use of expensive chemical inputs imported from abroad; the environment takes advantage especially for what concerns water pollution, which in some areas is particularly critical.

But the development of organic in New Caledonia also addresses complex challenges.

First, the support provided by the government is actually non-existent: the development of agriculture is seen as a lower priority compared to development of other sectors, such as the powerful mining industry, but also when it comes to agriculture, institutions are more likely to support major producers of corn and potatoes, and research institutes are more focused on conventional than on innovation, that is for the organic. All this leads to a low technical level and resources, putting off local farmers from converting to organic with the risk of not being supported by the government and not being able to address crop diseases.

For all these reasons, PGS are an ideal solution for the certification of organic products in this area: PGS provides a structure capable of bringing together all those that are involved in the production and the consumption of organic products, providing them with a platform for the exchange of technical knowledge and the improvement of agricultural practices.

PGS is not only more accessible (economically and bureaucratically) than third party certification, but it also helps to increase the level of confidence in the product involving consumers in the process. In fact, the consultation process had been extensive, manufacturers and consumers have been involved in working groups whose aim was to define the working outline for the PGS and for the certification system.

The institutions in New Caledonia have recognized such a system, since it also includes an external control.

Short supply chain projects in Emilia Romagna

AIAB E.R. (*Italian Association of Organic Agriculture of Emilia Romagna*) was very active to promote organic agriculture to all the visitors of SANA 2010. The Association, by statute, works to promote an ecological culture with environmental protection through the application of organic farming as a method of agricultural production. It includes around 400 organic farms belonging to the territory of Emilia Romagna, and it also works in collaboration with other associations to support and promote organic farming.

The three-year project (2009-2012) "Il Bio sotto casa" (organic close to home), financed by Italy and European Union, has as main objective the growth of knowledge and promotion of the organic agriculture through information and promotion in countries like Italy, France and Germany. Emphasizing the most direct relation possible between producer and consumer, it is extremely important to valorize the local organic products. The project includes actions to promote organic in collective catering, school canteens, food stores, through information and promotion material, organization of meetings, participation in events.

At SANA 2010, AIAB organized two meetings in the stand of the MIPAAF (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies) explaining to the public the importance of organic products and offering an exposition and tasting of organic products such as bread, pasta, vegetable condiments, apple juices and wines. Hopefully, more people could get into the slogan "AGRICOLTURA BIOLOGICA, *fa bene alla natura, fa bene a te*" (ORGANIC AGRICULTURE, good for the environment, good for you).

At the same time during the week of Sana 2010, in the context of the MIPAAF project "*Filiera Corta Bio*", AIAB Emilia Romagna organized practical meetings offering the producers the opportunity to exhibit their products and interact directly with the final consumers.

Finally PRO.BER (*Association of Organic and Biodynamic Producers of Emilia Romagna*) organized a workshop with the participation of different groups of producers (associations or consortia), and S.P.G. (Solidarity Purchasing Groups) to involve the good practices of "*Filiera Corta*" (Short Supply Chain) in this new model of consumption. The products and producers have as a fundamental basis the respect for the environment and the solidarity among the members of the group, the traders and the producers, leading to the choice of local organic products, fair-trade goods, and eco-compatible goods.

The participation of the visitors of SANA 2010 to the initiatives was very good, confirming the growth of curiosity and the opportunities of the consumption chains of organic fair trade stimulated by AIAB Emilia Romagna.

BIOREGULATIONS

IFOAM EU launches consultation on the Organic Aquaculture Rules

Through its Organic Aquaculture Expert Group, the IFOAM EU Group has launched consultations aiming to collect information about acceptance, realization, interpretation and critical issues around the specific rules for organic aquaculture production. The reference Regulation is the No 710/2009, part of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, establishing the criteria for the organic aquaculture production, applying as of 1 July 2010).

For more information on this please contact IFOAM EU Group at: info@ifoam-eu.org

IFOAM EU held talks with the Commission on „greening the CAP“

In order to present the IFOAM EU's position for a sustainable and smarter CAP and to discuss the role organic farming can play in the future CAP, representatives of IFOAM EU Group met with several European Commission officials on 20 of October. Issues discussed were the possible “greening of direct payments” and its implications for organic farms as well as the potential of organic farming to contribute to meeting aggravating global problems, especially climate change. The possibility of setting incentives for the member states to establish comprehensive programs for organic farming support (according to the “organic model” in the IFOAM EU Study on Rural Development Programs) was also on the discussion table.

Regarding the CAP discussion, one step further has been made in the meantime as the Commission Communication on the Budget Review has been adopted, suggesting that CAP should move away from income support and give priority to environmental and climate change objectives. The Commission now plans to adopt its Communication for a “CAP towards 2020” on 17 of November. A draft version of the Communication on Future CAP was leaked in the end of September, outlining three options for the further development of the CAP. The paper may now be subject to changes within the so called “inter-service-consultation”, giving chance to the Commission's Directions General beyond the one in charge of agriculture to comment on the paper. After November 17, European Parliament and Council started working over the outlined options and are expected to issue official opinions in early spring 2011. Meanwhile, the Commission is working on an impact assessment of the three outlined options for the new CAP. Legislative proposals are expected to be released in summer 2011 and will then for the first time be handled through the co-decision procedure. IFOAM EU is following on and participating in the ongoing CAP discussion with high priority.

Review of EU Organic Action Plan discussed in DG AGRI

In order to discuss the progress in the implementation of the European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming from 2004, the IFOAM EU Group met with Commission officials from the Organic Unit of DG AGRI on October 19. The review of the Organic Action Plan has been initiated by the former EU Agriculture Commissioner Marian Fischer Boel. While evaluating positively the efforts of the Commission to accomplish major goals of the plan, the IFOAM EU Group at the same time reiterated at the meeting that new developments have to be taken into account due to a changed policy context since 2004. Further, it has to be noted that certain areas were poorly implemented and need to be reflected in current discussions, such as the discussion on the CAP and on the EU research funding for organic farming. Specific attention was also put to the Report on the Organic Regulation, which the Commission is obliged to present to SCOF next year, on whether to include e.g. mass catering in the scope of the regulation.

BIOEVENTS

Video chat with the Alternative Nobel Prize: a meeting for the 30th anniversary of the Prize

The Right Livelihood Award (www.rightlivelihood.org), better known as “Alternative Nobel Prize” since 1980 award people and initiatives that have provided a practical but representative response to global challenges.

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of this international recognition, the conference of this year gathered in Bonn about 80 of the awarded people, and IFOAM took the opportunity to organize a meeting with eleven of them, and to allow 300 activists of the organic world to interact with them. The discussion table was on wide-ranging themes, launched by key speakers such as Vandana Shiva (India), Melaku Worede (Ethiopia), some representatives of the Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra Movement and other who have worked in order to put ecology, social justice, environment and sustainable development at the center of the modern paradigm. In direct line with these scientists and activists, several organizations from all over the world have been invited to participate to the seminars and to the plenary session through internet.

The participation has been extremely wide, and it included (just to make some examples), research institutes from Tunisia, farmers' associations from Zambia, organic promotion centers from China, researchers from Argentina, organic certification bodies from Switzerland and Germany. From Italy, the participant has been ICEA, wired from the international relationships office in Bologna.

The themes of the videoconference, the contributions and the conclusions were discussed with a simplicity and immediacy that overcame any technical difficulty, each time zone, and any diversity of views on organic farming, farmers associations and rural systems: this is a demonstration of how IFOAM continues to create a common language to gather together the different organic stakeholders in any part of the world.

International “Salone del Gusto” and “Terra Madre 2010”: Food and Places, a new geography for the Planet

The eighth International “Salone del Gusto” was held in Turin, Italy, at the Lingotto Fiere exhibition center on October 21-25, together with “Terra Madre”, the world meeting of food communities.

These two biennial events, though different in character, have by now become two inseparable and interconnected halves, in constant dialog with each other.

The international market and exhibition is not only about showcasing quality artisan food and wine production - it also has a strong educational focus, with emphasis on raising awareness and stimulating debate. It is held parallel to and in close contact with Terra Madre, the world meeting of food communities. Terra Madre brings together protagonists from the food and agricultural production sectors of 150 countries who are committed to defend and promote production models that respect the environment, safeguard natural resources and biodiversity, and advocate social justice.

The theme of the 2010 edition of the Salone del Gusto was expressed by two words, food and places, to highlight how there could be no food without the places it comes from, food which is expression of the land, of the climate, and of human capabilities; that it is through food that each place expresses its distinctive, recognizable characteristics. Food as edible and concrete part of our identity, as the element that shapes the landscape, as an expression of culture. Places here mean the territory that belongs to the people who were born there or live there now, that take care of their space and know it well.

Place in its plural form though: to highlight the diversity of spaces, cultures, knowledge,

cultivations, practices. The cultural layers present us a contemporary - gastronomic - reality in its continuous development between past and present. Places also as sites of exchange, because there can be no identity without relation to and confrontation with the other. A new geography of the planet is thus sketched out, a map of food, its colors and tastes.

The exhibition space of the Salone del Gusto will be organized in a new way this year, according to territories: there are no more theme lanes or separate spaces for the Presidia, instead every region or country will present its own products, projects and cuisine. In coherence with their general concern for the environment, Salone del Gusto and Terra Madre 2010 continue with their long-standing commitment towards a reduced environmental impact. The initiatives developed by the Industrial Design Department of the Turin Polytechnic and Slow Food, in collaboration with the University of Gastronomic Sciences, are based on sustainable and efficient planning for everything from venue fixtures, transport of goods, communication and waste management to water and energy use.

IFOAM and IFOAM EU organize a Climate Camp in Rome

Organic key multipliers have developed organic climate strategies on November 22-23 as part of the Climate Work Camp, organized by IFOAM EU Group, IFOAM and the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies. The event has taken place in Rome in conjunction with the Round Table on Organic Agriculture & Climate Change (RTOACC)(see a comment on the *InterBio Notes issue*, NdR). Targeting at stakeholders that are already involved in climate change topics in their countries, its objective was to develop a strategy for how to place organic farming in climate discussions.

BIORESEARCH

TP Organics meets SMEs, develops action plan, participates in Commission stakeholder meetings

TP Organics is in preparation of a meeting with SMEs which is to take place in the European Parliament in Brussels on December 7. The aim of the meeting is to present the TP Organics' Research Action Plan and to identify obstacles of SMEs' participation in research. TP Organics intends to initiate discussion between researchers, the EC representatives and entrepreneurs to determine ways how to facilitate knowledge transfer from researchers to research users.

The process of developing the TP Organics Research Action Plan started in February with a workshop at BioFach and continued throughout the year thanks to the devoted work of a core group of experts. The plan highlights with examples that past organic farming research has focused not only on technological but also on social and societal innovation and the generation of open knowledge. The document also points to solutions for the future and brings focus to new ways of knowledge generation through participatory research integrating the innovative potential of farmers and other experts into a framework of sharing instead of top-down knowledge transfer.

A draft of the Research Action Plan will be soon available on www.tporgancis.eu for a public consultation (foreseen for middle of November 2010). The final draft will be presented during the December 7 event in the European Parliament

Other recent activities of TP Organics include its participation on October 6 in the SCAR foresight workshop, co-organised by the European Commission, DG RTD-E4, and the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR).

USDA announces over \$18 million in organic agriculture research and extension projects.

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded on October 27 thirty grants to enhance the ability of organic producers and processors grow and market high quality organic agricultural products. "More and more farmers are adopting organic agriculture practices to produce quality food and boost farm income," said Roger Beachy, Director of NIFA. "These research and extension projects will equip producers with the tools and resources they need to operate profitable and sustainable organic farms." NIFA awarded more than \$18 million through the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). Research at USDA increasingly focuses on the science that supports development of sustainable practices in agriculture and forestry, including organic farming, to both reduce negative impacts on the environment and keep the American farmers competitive.