

InterBioNOTES

by

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Foreword

Luigi Guarrera ()*

Within the InterBio project, these "Notes" want to be a point of updating and meeting among those working in the various "organic" networks, national and international: a tool for providing and sharing information not only among the sector stakeholders, but also among those who are interested in learning its development and progress. The coordination and preparation of InterBioNOTES has been entrusted to Antonio Compagnoni, one of the Italian "historic" organic names, from 1990 also ambassador of the national organic movement beyond the borders, beginning with its positions inside IFOAM, both global and Mediterranean. From November 1998 to 2008, Compagnoni was indeed a member of the IFOAM World Board, coordinating also the steering and program committee and of the last Organic World Congress "Cultivate the Future" held in Modena in June 2008. Today he is the elected representative of the Italian IFOAM members in the IFOAM EU regional Board. Surely the experiences and relationships gained by Antonio in his long organic voyage will help create a complementary tool to the already existing information tools: the news will come directly from the protagonists of the actions undertaken in

the national and international organic scene, like coming from friends who speak of shared passions and common interests.

Happy reading!

(*) *InterBio - IAMB Project Coordinator*

ORGANIC REGULATIONS

From Water to Wine: new EU rules on Organic Aquaculture, and progress on Organic Wine

Pino Lembo () and Antonio Compagnoni*

Aquaculture can be regarded as one of the food production activities with the highest growth rate worldwide. Conversely, despite the fishing pressure is increased almost everywhere, the overfishing state of the oceans has not determined any grow of production levels. According to the latest statistics published by FAO (2007), world production of fisheries, estimated at around 90 million tons, has remained essentially stable over the last ten years. The aquaculture production, estimated at 65 million tonnes, never stopped growing since the early '50s, and it is reasonable to assume that it will reach production levels of fishing in the next decade.

In the world, nowadays, more than 350 different species of freshwater and marine fish are bred, with most production concentrated in Asia. European production totalled some 2.3 million tonnes, of which more than one third is represented by salmon and trout. If we consider the Mediterranean aquaculture, the most significant productions are represented by sea bass and sea bream with approximately 250,000 tonnes.

Information relating to organic aquaculture production are much more fragmented and must be treated with prudence, both because there is no specific system of statistical surveys, and because the definitions and certification systems are not always compatible, in a broad context such as the World. However, it is estimated that organic aquaculture production in Asia and Europe would be, respectively, around 15,000 and 14,000 tonnes, while far behind follow the American continent with about 4,000 tons.

Organic aquaculture production is now only a small fraction of global aquaculture production. However, the approval of the "Reg. EC No 834 of 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products, repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91", which includes the discipline of organic aquaculture, has opened market opportunities in Europe which are extremely attractive. This step has enshrined, irreversibly, even at the legislative level, the importance of organic aquaculture, laying the foundations for a lasting development of the sector.

Currently, the most common European organic production, in terms of volume, is made of salmon. With reference to this species it is important to note that although there is still some possibility to optimize production processes, organic production has always market prices well above the production cost, contrary to what happens with conventional production of the same species. The production of sea bass and sea bream in the Mediterranean has very large margins of growth from the current 160 tons to a potential demand estimated at more than 10,000 tonnes over the next 5-6 years.

Pending enactment of Regulation 834 of 2007, European farmers had at their disposal a number of private standards generally based on some general principles, such as: environmental protection, the use of specially formulated foods, respect for animal welfare, appropriate medical treatment and the exclusion of any genetic manipulation. An important step towards the homogenization of the different standards was made in September 2005 in Adelaide, Australia,

when during the Assembly of IFOAM (*International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements*) Basic Standards were approved for organic aquaculture.

But the real change has occurred at the end of June this year, during the meeting of SCOF (Standing Committee on Organic Farming), which approved the text of the "Reg EC No 710/2009 amending Regulation EC No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation EC No. 834/2007 of the Council as regards the introduction of detailed rules concerning the production of animal and organic seaweed aquaculture." In Brussels, DG Agri, in cooperation with DG Mare, had long prepared the wording on how to apply for organic aquaculture, first through the work of a group of experts, which lasted from January to May of 2008, then through lengthy discussions with stakeholders and, finally, with the work of SCOF that started in June 2008 and ended exactly one year later. A long marathon to agree the representatives of 27 European countries.

It should be said immediately that the final text adopted may be judged positively, although it is a compromise between the different views expressed by national delegations represented in SCOF. Ultimately, the belief prevailed that it was necessary to maintain and enhance the distinctive traits of organic aquaculture compared to the conventional one, while not endorsing extreme positions that would have relegated organic production to a mere witness, with little economic sense. The text proposed by the Commission has long been opposed by the delegations of France, United Kingdom, Sweden and Holland. The main technical points approved by SCOF, in disagreement with the proposals of these countries, focused on the non-eligibility of closed recirculation systems for the on-growing production, the refusal of stocking density too much like conventional aquaculture and the rejection of a transitional rule that would allow the non-application of the Regulation for a period of 10 years (sic!) in order to allow farmers a period of preparation to the new rules (see technical sheet).

Other items qualifying the new text of the Regulation are: a special attention to environmental issues through the assessment of the suitability of sites for organic aquaculture; the preparation of monitoring surveys; the affirmation of the principle that animals must be raised organically in all phases of their lives, although some limited exceptions are provided in the early stage of organic production; compliance with the needs of each animal species, that is the farming practices, management systems and facilities must meet the requirements of animal welfare. Furthermore: the feeding for aquaculture animals must meet the specific nutritional needs; meal and fish oils may be used if they come from trimmings and, anyway, in a context of certified sustainable fisheries; the management of animal health should aim primarily at preventing disease; the veterinary treatment should be considered as a last option and, however, more than two treatments per year are not allowed, with doubling of the withdrawal (in relation to the conventional) for species whose production cycle is longer than a year. Raw materials, products for cleaning and disinfection, etc. are allowed only if included in positive lists.

The next two years will be very important for the development of the sector. We must put a lot of attention to the problems of farmers that want to get closer to organic aquaculture and help them find the right solutions.

TECHNICAL SHEET

Closed recirculating systems

They are systems in which the outflow is recirculated after passing through systems of more or less complex purification, which require significant energy inputs. These systems were not considered admissible by the Commission: because they are farming techniques far away from the general principle of organic farming, according to which it is necessary to ensure compliance

during the rearing conditions as much similar as possible to the natural ones; because the increased management costs (eg. recirculation pumps, chemical processing, enrichment with liquid oxygen, etc.) have to be compensated by very high stocking densities (above 35 kg / mc) to ensure adequate levels of profitability.

Livestock density

Stocking density is one factor, though not the only one, that determines the quality of meat. In this sense, attention to conditions of animal welfare is not only an ethical principle, but an economic advantage to the producers, who can face the market with quality products. In conventional breeding, using continuous liquid oxygen can also maintain stocking densities above 50 kg / m³. However, the increase of stocking density results in greater problems in managing the effluents, a greater risk of illness, greater demand for health and veterinary treatments (eg. antibiotics and pesticides) and less muscle tone of the meat. Densities compatible with natural conditions, and therefore more suitable to an organic farm, which does not require using continuous liquid oxygen (which is not allowed in organic aquaculture) and do not involve high risks of diseases explosion, can fluctuate between 15 and 25 kg / m³, depending on the species and farming systems. The demands by some delegations would have allowed the committee to increase the density allowed up to 35-50 kg / m³, actually zeroing the differences with conventional aquaculture. The approved densities vary between 15 and 25 kg / m³.

Transition period

The French delegation, in particular, sought approval for a period of transition, which would allow the non-application of Regulation for a period of ten years, in order to allow farmers a period of preparation to the new rules. The amplitude of this period is clearly unusual, especially considering that a complete cycle of breeding does not exceed, in general, two years. The proposed mediation of the Commission then approved limits to the period of transition to three years.

() ICEA Organic aquaculture and sustainable fishery responsible; MIPAAF, UE, FAO and Ifoam organic aquaculture expert.*

European Regulation on organic wine: the Italian position in the debate. *Alessandro Triantafyllidis (*)*

After nearly 20 years of waiting and questioning, the 2010 vintage will perhaps finally give rise to organic wine in Europe. The process of Regulation has not been certainly neither simple nor quick: in fact primarily it had to be address the aversion to the idea of organic wine itself from conventional wine industry, then different viewpoints had to be managed far from consensus within the organic industry in Europe.

Aware of the difficulty of the subject and of the need for extensive consultation, the European Commission funded a special research project on the subject before finalizing the Regulation. The project "Orwine" (www.orwine.org), coordinated by AIAB and including the participation of other 10 European partners has thus provided the basis for defining the technical and scientific organic wine, but it has also provided a wide debate through consultations on-line (last of which was attended by 900 organic producers and technicians in Europe) and through more conventional meetings and seminars.

In a nutshell, "Orwine" produced a first definition of what it is, for consumers and producers, organic wine, or better, what they expect from it. This definition includes an assessment of techniques and additives that could be used in the cellar, in order to identify what is acceptable and useful in organic production, including an extensive discussion on use and need for sulphur dioxide.

From the "Orwine" results, the Commission has drawn up the draft Regulation that went into the debate last summer and then changed significantly in the next two drafts. Certainly the current proposal, probably the final one, will not make anyone happy, but at least no one will be too unhappy to stop the process of approval. In fact the positions of some countries in Central Europe have threatened to "stop everything" and bring back the Commission on its steps, satisfied with just the term "wine from organic grapes."

A brief summary of the current proposal from the Commission: a list of positive techniques and additives used has been prepared; only enrichment with organic products (sugar and must) has been allowed, but no limitation in quantity than the CMO (Common Market Organization) in force; the limits of sulphites are not too demanding: a reduction of 50mg / l of SO₂ compared to CMO threshold is foreseen.

The Italian industry is among those who considered the proposal a bit 'too "simplistic", because they had requested: lower limits of sulphites (30-50% less); the possibility of using lysozyme; restriction on quantity of enrichment.

The discussion both in the Member States and inside IFOAM-EU was not however easy, and the results far better than the dreaded return to "wine from organic grapes." In fact all over Europe, but especially in Italy, the organic wine market is booming, and a clear and unambiguous legal definition can only facilitate an orderly development.

What surprised us a bit was the harshness of the battle within IFOAM-EU. The Italian position and usually Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece, Slovenia) was perhaps excessive in some countries, especially regarding the limits of sulphur dioxide, which has sought a position of mediation that was supported by the majority of producer countries still about 20-30% less SO₂. The agreement was reached with the exception of Germany and Austria, which were not available to any reduction. The final vote, after a process of much debate, has brought to endorse the Commission's proposal for a reduction of 50 mg/l for each category of wine. This can be considered satisfactory for Italian viticulture.

For the rest of the additives and techniques used, there was a good share of what to keep and what to exclude from the Regulation, except that lysozyme was the only weapon in the process of reducing SO₂.

What will happen now, if all goes as it seems? The Regulation will come into force for the time of harvest 2010, but in 2013 (???) there will be a revision to which we must get prepared to (scientific and production data at hand), and try again to improve for precisely those aspects that leave us now a little bad taste in mouth.

() Head of International Relations AIAB, alternate member of the IFOAM EU board*

Post Scriptum by Antonio Compagnoni

The argument of organic wine, as described above by Alessandro Triantafyllidis, was one of the hottest issues in the debate both within the SCOF (*Standing Committee for Organic Farming* of the EU Commission, composed of delegates from institutions of member countries) and within the European organic movement (IFOAM EU).

As a full representative in the Steering IFOAM EU Committee, to better represent them, I tried to collect the positions of the Italian organic movement, either with direct talks with wine producers or with experts in the industry, and by stimulating a specific debate among the Italian IFOAM

members. Especially on the issue of levels of sulphite allowed, positions were quite diverse: some (a minority) were sympathetic to the Teutonic colleagues, several saw a sharp reduction in the levels originally proposed by the Commission as an obstacle to the development of the sector, other supported them precisely as a mean to distinguish the market with a more marked differentiation with conventional wines. The Commission's original position (but rejected by most delegations in the first round of discussions) which included a double track, that of wine from "organic grapes" and the "organic wine", had the merit to satisfy both the proponents thesis with wine conventional non-discriminatory, and the advocates of greater distinction between organic and non-organic wine ... Ultimately from the discussions it emerged that a reduction of 25-30% could be agreed by many. So, bearing this in mind, the Italian delegation in the IFOAM EU moved: calling for a reduction, but available to treat ... At some point, soon after the meetings of SCOF and IFOAM EU last September, there loomed an strange situation where the divergence of a minority of the national delegations within the IFOAM EU was blocking all attempts to mediate on the issue of the amount of sulphites allowed, in fact not taking a position on the issue and leaving the decision to the SCOF.

With my direct intervention (*see extract below*) to the IFOAM EU mailing list, I was forcing the delegates to bring back the debate on the need to take a stand, albeit with a minority opposed. This happened at the IFOAM EU meeting in Brussels in early December, coinciding with the annual meeting with the EU Commission, where it was possible to communicate (in extremis) a common position of IFOAM EU support to the last compromise of the Commission itself, although notifying the disagreement of Austria, Germany and Holland delegations. The latter position, certainly not scientifically accurate (because it cut down equally to 50 mg / litre the sulphite content permitted, so penalizing more red wines than whites), has the advantage of being more "politically correct" since wines of Central Europe are in greater quantity whites ... Finally, this reduction resulted in a percentage going from 19% to 34%, fairly close to what we set as a goal.

Dear President and all,

I want to express my disappointment on how thing have evolved in this "hot" issue, representing, I believe, a quite unanimous feeling from all organic stakeholders in Italy. (...)

Although the President doesn't want to encourage further discussion on the issue, I feel some points are better to be outlined for further analysis. Trying to keep it short:

- 1. We had a full research project on organic wine with lots of emphasis on the sulphite issue and our position now divert from it, why?*
- 2. We are taking decisions that will effect thousands of present and future organic wine producers and millions of consumers, basically based on the positions of a very small number of organic wine producers from 2 countries, in those markets I believe there is more consumption of Italian, French and Spanish organic wines than of the national production.*
- 3. We are leaving the Commission and the SCOF to be leading the discussion and we're going to ask them to decide in our place. This is frankly a very bad move, eroding our most important capital: representativeness and relevance.*
- 4. If the reason of the extreme rigidity of our transalpine friends is to defend possibility to keep organic producers on the market and to insist on the main characteristic of organic wine being the organic grapes, why not to re-think on the opportunity to have in one side organic wine (with relevant sulphite reductions) and on the other - like it is right now: wine with organic grapes, limiting the use of the EU logo / front label only to organic wine.*

(...)

ORGANIC EVENTS

Anti Fraud Initiative Bologna September 2009

Fabrizio Piva ()*

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION AND GUARANTEES

The organic production market is growing steadily and continuously, with increasing success at international level in spite of the serious economic-financial recession; the topic of guarantees and credibility is therefore paramount. The marked internationalisation of the sector, plus the fact that Italy exports about 60% of its organic produce, led us to consider this issue with respect to international trade; that was the purpose of the third "Anti Fraud Initiative" (AFI 3) meeting, held in Bologna on 14 September 2009 in the offices of the Emilia Romagna regional government. It was as occasion, at the end of the SANA Exhibition, to focus on how the European organic sector can improve the level of guarantees offered to increasingly attentive and discerning consumers. More than 100 people from various European countries and representatives of institutions, including the Organic Agriculture Bureau of DG Agri at the European Commission, Jean-François Hulot, most of the Organic Agriculture Bureau of our MIPAAF (Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies), as well as its ICQRF (Central Inspectorate for the control of agro-food products and fraud repression) Department and Regional Governments, devoted this one-day theme workshops and sessions to talk in an open and friendly way about how to design strategies and means to contain possible frauds, giving value to all those – and they represent the vast majority of the sector - who wish to work in compliance with the organic standards and production methods.

As regards our Control System, we presented the data which emerged both from the work of certification organisations and from surveillance activities; the results are quite encouraging, in the sense that the non-conformity situations encountered both as regards private organisations and public surveillance work essentially coincide. Moreover, the same situation which was found in Italy also emerged in other parts of Europe with very similar values: our country is more subject to international scrutiny, in particular because of the high incidence of exports, which means that everyone should be all the more committed to reducing possible deviations from the standard. In this respect, almost 6% of the positive results from chemical analyses was close to the non-conformity rate measures in 2008 through surveillance work conducted by the ICQRF of MIPAAF (8.8%); this also includes irregularities which are not of a strictly analytical nature.

On an international level, Italy requested – and obtained at the end of the meeting - a more consistent approach from a European perspective, which would allow us to highlight with greater precision any apparent non-conformity situation, thus marginalising those who act outside the control system. At the end of the meeting, emphasis was laid on the need to make sure that possible irregularities are immediately reported to the Control Organisations in charge, not only as a result of a complaint which runs the risk of being a merely commercial initiative; there should be a more harmonised approach as regards sample-taking through the definition of a common procedure for all countries. Moreover, the "OFIS" document where non-conformities are reported should contain more detailed information with respect to traceability, to make sure that the national control system has more room to manoeuvre, with a clearer definition of the analysis methods used and the adoption of detection limits which are the same in all countries; this also includes the indication of a deadline to respond to the claim received, and – last but by no means least – a greater exchange of information concerning licensee companies and certified products using the "intranet".

The exchange of information is undoubtedly the measure that allows for a more rapid response both at domestic and Community level because production systems are often complex and subject to controls by different certification entities which are obliged to exchange a large amount of information.

In conclusion, our national Control System has shown great determination in improving its results, with a view to giving more and more certainties to a market which continues to reward our best organic products.

() Coordinator of the Section of Certification Organisation Members - Federbio*

ORGANIC RESEARCH

“CERTCOST”, the first EU scientific analysis on organic control and certification

Samanta Rosi (), Matthias Stolze (**)*

CERTCOST (Economic Analysis of Certification Systems for Organic Food and Farming at EU level) is a European research project on certification of organic food, supported by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme, started on September 2008, and will last until August 2011.

The scenario behind this type of project consists of the ongoing growth of the organic sector, the spread of organic production across the EU and, as a consequence, the fact that the organic certification world has become a maze of competing labels and logos, involving different private and public standards - in addition to European law. This diversity reflects the specific conditions for organic operators in countries or regions, but can also lead to confusion for both consumers and producers and may ultimately create a variety of costs. That's why CERTCOST is conducting a comprehensive economic analysis of the variety of existing certification systems and their impact on the internal European market for organic goods.

The objective of this project requires that researchers get detailed and in-depth insights in organic certification systems in Europe. While usually research project address this researcher's "learning phase" by employing empirical studies asking questions to practitioners, this research project follows a different path: it has gathered as partners two organic certification bodies, the Italian ICEA, and the German IMO. Matthias Stolze, from the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Switzerland (FiBL) who is responsible for the analysis of certification costs, stresses *'This is how research should be organised! Already after a few months working together with the experts from ICEA, the benefit of this way of doing research became obvious: such profound and detailed insights in the organic certification are only possible running a dialogue with partners. Therefore, we are more than happy to co-operate with ICEA.'* However, the CERTCOST researchers do not only expect improvements with respect to the system understanding. They experience also advantages by tailoring the research approaches leading to better results. Last not least, the co-operation with ICEA and IMO is essential to make the results more valuable for the organic sector as the transfer of the lessons to be learnt from this project will not be done solely through the perspective of scientists but in a dialogue with the experts from ICEA.

The overall objective of the project is to evaluate organic food certification systems in Europe, in order to provide research-based recommendations on how to improve these systems in terms of efficiency, transparency, and cost effectiveness. The reason for this is the need for a strengthened competitiveness of the European organic food sector by means of reducing incidence of non-compliance, and thereby increase consumers' trust. By combining the experience and knowledge

of both researchers and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), the project seeks to fulfil the following objectives, corresponding each of them to one work package:

WP1 To provide a comprehensive review of organic certification systems and standard setting procedures, including a database on key data, a review of relevant international regulations, an overview on publicly available certification prices, and an estimate of the size of the certification sector (www.organicrules.org);

WP2 To analyse the implementation of organic certification systems and assess all relevant expenditure and transaction costs for different certification systems along the organic food supply chain;

WP3 To investigate the main benefits of certification systems, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in terms of consumers' recognition and willingness to pay for different organic logos and trademarks.

WP4 To improve risk-based certification systems and to increase cost effectiveness of certification, through the application of economic models;

WP5 To develop recommendations for the EU Commission, national competent authorities and private actors in organic food and farming on how to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of organic certification;

WP6 To include stakeholders' views in the assessment of organic certification systems and to share the project results with them and the public.

The partners involved in the project are the following ten institutions from seven different European countries, that established a consortium :

- University of Hohenheim (UHOH), Institute of Farm Management, Stuttgart, Germany, - Stephan Dabbert
- Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Socio-Economics/International Cooperation Department, Frick, Switzerland - Matthias Stolze
- Polytechnic University of Marche, Dipartimento di Ingegneria Informatica, Gestionale e dell'Automazione (DIIGA), Italy – Raffaele Zanolli
- University of Kassel, Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences, Department of Agricultural and Food Marketing, Germany – Ulrich Hamm
- Institute for Marketecology (IMO), Switzerland – Elisabeth Ruegg
- University of Ege, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Economics, Turkey - Bulent Miran
- Danish Research Centre for Organic Food and Farming - Aarhus University, Denmark – Lizzie Melby Jespersen
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Faculty of Economics and Management, Czech Republic – Michal Lostak
- Institute for Ethical and Environmental Certification (ICEA), Italy – Antonio Compagnoni
- Aberystwyth University, Institute of Rural Studies, United Kingdom – Susanne Padel

This choice of the above mentioned partners ensures that the project has the advantage of particular expertise in a wide range of fields relevant to this study, including: previous experience with all aspects of organic certification and policy, comprehensive knowledge of economic modelling and analysis, as well as experience in consumer and market research, participatory methods, dissemination and stakeholder involvement.

The project is innovative and useful for the organic sector for several reasons : it is applying a multidisciplinary and truly international and European approach, bringing together leading practitioners of organic certification ("stakeholders") and academics; it is focusing on how the organic certification system can be optimised in relation to quality, efficiency and costs; it is creating an updated public database with user-relevant information on the public and private

actors involved in organic standards setting and certification in Europe and associated countries; it is reviewing the international legal basis (EU and Codex), studies and agencies influencing organic standards setting and certification. But not only: it is also conducting the first determination of the cost structure of organic certification (based on the transaction cost economic approach), producing empirical estimates of the costs of organic certification system along different parts of the supply chain, investigating key questions regarding the benefits of different standards and certification systems in terms of consumer perception and willingness to pay. It will contribute to the development of an optimised risk based inspection system, using an innovative modelling approach in order to better understand and optimise the organic standard setting and certification system.

During the next Biofach, on the 19th February 2010, from 14 to 16,30 in the Hongkong Room, the project partners will present the CERTCOST project and the findings from the first part of the project, specifically about:

- administrative costs of organic certification systems across Europe
- consumer attitudes towards the new EU labelling and the existing organic logos
- supervision of the organic control system in Europe
- database on European actors involved in organic standard setting and certification

For more info about the project, visit the webpage www.certcost.org



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NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

by Ifoam EU



Organic EU Regulation – revision of technical annexes

IFOAM EU Group asked in the middle of September for a revision of the technical annexes related to the new Organic Regulation 889/2008. In a letter to the European Commission, the Group points out to the need for reconsideration and update of Annex IX of the Regulation, authorising the use of non-organic substances in organic food, and brings to the attention of the Commission a list of products which are now available in organic quality and should therefore be removed from Annex IX. *More at: [IFOAM EU – Letter on processed food, 14/09/2009](#)*

Competition for the EU organic logo still underway

Around 3,000 contributions have been submitted in the competition for a EU organic logo. The European Commission has published the three proposals for a new EU organic logo and opened a public vote for the selection of one of them. Around 11,000 votes had been entered by the end of 2009. You can vote via the website until 31st January 2010:

<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/logo/index.htm>

According to the EC, the objective of the new logo is to enhance consumer protection and the promotion of organic farming. Unlike the current logo, the new logo will be mandatory for all packaged organic products which are produced in the EU and meet labelling requirements. This requirement will entry into force from 1st July 2010. During its annual meeting with the Organic Unit in DG AGRI, the IFOAM EU Group handed over a [letter](#) on the importance of the timely publication of a new logo to the Head of the Unit, Jean-François Hulot. There has been dissatisfaction from the organic sector with the options proposed. The IFOAM EU Group is coordinating further discussion on the issue.

Organic Flavours

The IFOAM EU Group submitted a letter to the European Commission, pledging that flavours should be considered as foods, and as such can be certified as organic. *More at: [IFOAM EU – Letter on organic flavours, 15/10/2009](#)*

Poultry position

The Commission has announced that it wants to look more closely at the poultry paragraphs in the Regulation in the course of 2009. To proactively react to this, the IFOAM EU Group is currently working on a position paper on poultry production.

Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production: call for applications open until 12th February 2010

The EC is recruiting members for the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production, and has published a call for applications. The application period is running until 12th of February 2010. The text of the call and the relative application forms are available in the Official Journal of the European Union series C and via the European Commission Organic Farming website at www.organic-farming.eu.

The Expert Group is to provide the EC with “independent, excellent and transparent technical advice” from a wide range of fields related to organic farming. In particular, the Commission will consult it regarding the evaluation and systematic updating of the EU Organic Standard.

Labelling of origin

The IFOAM EU Group called for more consistency in labelling of origin in a [letter on 13th November](#) to the EU Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel and a [letter on 12th November](#) to Jean-François Hulot, Head of Organic Farming Unit in the EC’s DG Agri.

IFOAM EU Second European Organic Congress

The Second European Organic Congress of 1st December 2009 attracted more than 200 participants from over 30 countries within and outside Europe. Discussions focussed on how to make better use of organic farming to address the big global challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss and food crises. They were also directed towards developing the rationale for giving organic food and farming more prominence on the EU policy agenda.

Following an address by Maria de los Angeles Benitez Salas, Director for Sustainable Development, Quality and Rural Development in the European Commission (EC) DG Agriculture, IFOAM EU President Christopher Stopes said, “*I’ve never heard a representative of the Commission make such a clear statement in favour of organic agriculture.*” The Congress enjoyed further high-level political representation from the Swedish Minister for Agriculture (EU Presidency) **Eskil Erlandsson** (by video address) and **Julien Mousnier** from the Cabinet of the EU Commissioner for Agriculture Mariann Fischer Boel (replacing Commissioner Boel who had to cancel her participation in the last

moment). Other contributors included **Prof. Dr. Manfred Edelhäuser** from the Ministry for Food and Rural Areas of the German region Baden-Württemberg; **Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker**, Co-Chair of the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management; **Hans Herren**, President of the Millennium Institute; and **Niels Halberg**, Director of the International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems. At an evening event held in the European Parliament, a speech by Canadian farmer-activist **Percy Schmeiser** on the politics of GM crops generated strong interest from the audience. More at: www.organic-congress-ifoameu.org

Conference on the new Organic Regulation in Rome 21-22 June 2010

Within the context of INTERBIO project, IFOAM EU Group will organise -in conjunction with the Istituto Agronomico Mediterraneo di Bari- a conference on the further development of the new Organic Regulation. The one and a half-day conference will take place in Rome 21-22 June 2010. The Ifoam EU conference program committee is the following: Camilla Mikkelsen, Dorota Metera (PL), Alex Beck (D), Antonio Compagnoni, Patrizia Puglese, Marco Schlüter, Sabine Eigenschink (A)

TP Organics

TP Organics – the Technology Platform for organic food and farming – opened a new round of on-line consultation. It is addressed to SMEs, industry and of course the TP Organics' members in order to collect understanding on their priorities for organic research and select points to be included in the second draft of the Strategic Research Agenda – a document that will contain proposals for organic research. TP Organics invites you to vote and comment via the TP Organics' website at www.tporganics.eu

Future role of the European Technology Platforms

The European Commission invites comments and ideas about the future role of the [European Technology Platforms](#) (ETP) within its preparation of an 'ETP 2010' conference which is to take place in May 2010. 'ETP 2009' was held this October, connecting Platform and Member States representatives who met to explore the potentials of technology platforms to address societal challenges. All presentations from the event were made available on the [ETP website](#).