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## The question of organic wild fish

**A**pproving the recommendation of its Aquatic Animals Task Force last October, the US National Organic Standard Board (NOSB) announced the feasibility of developing organic standards for the production of fish in aquacultural systems. While it will not develop standards in time for the implementation of the National Organic Program in October, 2002, the finding provides for the future development of aquaculture standards. The NOSB also found that wild fish capture systems do not sufficiently meet the criteria established by US federal organic legislation for the labelling of organic livestock. However, legislative politics are swimming around this matter and its final resolution is not decided (see box overpage). Finally, the NOSB concluded that mollusc aquaculture represents a synthesis of wild capture and aquaculture production systems, does not meet some of the criteria for organic livestock production, and is not eligible for the development of organic standards and labelling.

### Approaching the Task

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 identifies five elements of a livestock production system that must be addressed in every organic system plan under the National Organic Program. The NOSB and its task force assessed both aquaculture and wild fish systems for their consistency with these five elements. The elements with respect to aquatic animals are as follows:

#### A. *Origin of Livestock*

Organically produced aquatic animals must be raised in a discrete population, similar to a herd of cattle or flock of poultry. They must be kept under continuous organic management, beginning no later than the second day of the animal's life.

#### B. *Livestock Feed*

Organically managed aquatic animals must be provided with a total feed ration composed of agricultural products that are organically produced. The only exceptions are those substances included on the National List as feed supplements and additives. The feed ration must be consistent with the animal's natural dietary preferences.

#### C. *Livestock Health Care*

Preventive health care practices must be established and maintained. Required practices include an appropriate selection of species, provision of a suitable feed ration, establishment of living conditions to allow for natural behaviour and stress reduction, and use of allowed medicines and vaccines as necessary.

#### D. *Livestock Living Conditions*

Organically managed aquatic animals must be raised within a secure, defined production system that accommodates the animal's health and natural behaviour and minimises the risk of escape. Producers must maintain healthy water conditions with respect to temperature, oxygen concentration,

pH, and toxins including ammonia and carbon dioxide. Producers must maintain production systems, whether self-contained or located in open water, in a manner that does not contribute to the contamination of water or soil by nutrients, heavy metals, or pathogenic organisms. Producers should prioritise recycling of residual nutrients produced by the operation. Production systems located in open water must be sited and managed to minimise the potential for contact with prohibited substances, including environmental pollution.

### *E. Livestock Identification*

Producers must maintain records suf-

ficient to document the origin, feed ration, living conditions, and, as needed, health care practices applicable to each group of aquatic animals produced on their operation.

Using these criteria, the NOSB Task Force readily concluded that it is possible for aquaculturists to develop fish production systems that meet all five elements of an organic livestock production system.

Concerning wild fish capture, the Task Force considered two viewpoints. One approach considered organic production as a derivative of natural systems, and proposed that aquatic animals sustainably captured

in the wild, with reasonable assurance that they have not been in contact with prohibited substances, could be considered 'organic'.

The second approach was that organic certification must reflect an intentional management system in which a producer establishes and manages a distinct group of animals from the earliest feasible stage of production. This second perspective was adopted, and led to the assessment that wild catch systems and aquaculture of molluscs could not meet the criteria. ■

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## Tug-of-war at play on organic fish

The US National Organic Program will be implemented in October, 2002, without provisions for the certification and labelling of fish and other aquatic animals. The Organic Foods Production Act did not specifically address principles for aquatic animal production, nor did the NOSB and USDA consider this issue a priority for reconciliation prior to finalising the National Organic Program regulations. However, a veritable tug-of-war has developed between the US organic community and a prominent US Senator over the issue. Alaska Senator Ted Stevens would like to boost his state's sagging salmon fisheries by labelling the catch 'organic', thereby capturing new market segments and price premiums.

Over the past several years, the Senator's Alaskan compatriots have provided both standard and privileged public comment to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) on standards for wild caught fish. In addition to providing

standard public comment at NOSB meetings, Alaskan fishery representatives once presented a lengthy video on the Alaskan salmon industry in support of their position that wild caught fish should be eligible for organic labelling. But the NOSB and USDA were not the only routes taken by Senator Stevens in support of his goal. In early 2000, the Senator successfully attached a 'rider' provision to unrelated legislation, which budgeted funds for holding special public hearings on the feasibility of certifying aquatic animal production, including wild caught fish. As a result, the USDA was mandated to convene three public meetings.

Although these meetings elicited 71 written and oral comments, they failed to generate consensus on the issues. Recognising its responsibility to advise the USDA on the eligibility of aquatic animals for organic labelling, the NOSB then appointed six of its members to an Aquatic Animal Task Force and charged them with making a recommendation. The Task

Force convened working groups that included both organic community constituents and aquaculture and fishery experts, and finalised their recommendation in May, 2001.

Now that the NOSB has accepted the Task Force Recommendation not to develop standards for wild caught fish, Senator Stevens is once again at work in the US legislature, trying to find a new path to his goal. His proposition to require the US Department of Commerce, which regulates fisheries, to develop organic fishery standards was quickly rejected by some Senate colleagues. However, Senator Stevens is continuing to pressure colleagues on the Senate Agricultural Committee to include some type of labelling provision in the upcoming Farm Bill, which structures and funds agricultural commodity programmes. Representing the US organic industry, the Organic Trade Association has maintained pressure to rebuff Senator Steven's legislative maneuvers, and supports the NOSB process as the appropriate avenue for reconciling all national organic standards. ■

## news shorts...

### TWO MORE APPLY FOR ACCREDITATION

Two more certification bodies have recently applied to the IOAS for IFOAM Accreditation. They are Istituto Mediterraneo Di Certificazione s.r.l., generally known as IMC, from Italy and Gää e.v. Vereinigung Ökologischer Landbau Bundesverband, known in short as Gää, from Germany.

Their applications bring the total number of certification bodies in the programme to 29. The number of participating certification bodies in Germany now stands at four, with the same number in Italy. ■

For more information contact:  
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### NEW COMPETITION IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Organic Producers Association (SOPA) and SA Cert (the certification company of Soil Association) are now competing for the organic farmers in Scotland. SOPA has decided to sub-contract the management of its certification scheme to the Scottish Food Quality Certification. Scotland accounts for more than 50% of the organic farmland in the UK. ■

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# The development of the organic industry in China

## *A brief introduction*

For forty years, from the 1950s to 1990s, agriculture in China experienced a radical modernisation process, resulting in the gradual disappearance of sustainable and traditional agriculture in most areas of China. However, from early 1980s responsible governmental agencies, with help from research institutes, universities and local authorities, initiated an eco-farming movement throughout China. This new approach to farming developed rapidly, so by the middle of 1990s about 1,200 eco-villages or eco-farms had been established all over China.

In 1989, the Rural Ecology Division of the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Science (NIES of NEPA) which is active in research, and practising and disseminating information on eco-farming, joined IFOAM. This was China's first IFOAM member, now over a decade later there are more than 30 Chinese IFOAM members.

The first organic inspection, carried out by SKAL, took place in 1990. The application was made by Zhejiang Provincial Tea Import & Export Company and the ATTA (Amsterdam Tea Trade Agency). In the event, one tea farm and one tea processing plant in the Zhejiang province were certified.

In an attempt to ensure food safety the Ministry of Agriculture of China

established the China Green Food Development Centre (CGFDC) in 1992. The programme certified to two grades: the 'A Grade Green Food', which allows the use of limited and specified agro-chemicals at safe levels; and the 'AA Grade Green Food', which is quite close to organic food in terms of standards. By the end of 2001, more than 2,000 green food certificates had been issued to products produced by various farms all over China, among which 48 were certified as 'AA Grade Green Food'. The success of the green food sector, especially the 'AA Grade Green Food', provided China with a sound agricultural experience for the development of organic systems.

### Organic certifiers operating in China

In 1994, the National Environmental Protection Agency of China approved the reorganisation of the Rural Ecology Division of NIES in Nanjing. The organisation was re-named the Organic Food Development Center of NEPA (OFDC). The new OFDC started actively initiating the organic movement in China. With training provided by IFOAM and foreign organic certifiers and consultants the OFDC staff members were well trained and OFDC began to conduct its own organic inspections with its own organic inspectors. This was the

The success of the green food sector provided China with a sound agricultural experience for the development of organic systems. ■

first organic certifier ever established in China. So far, 22 OFDC branches have been established in 20 provinces and autonomous regions. Within the eight years since its establishment OFDC has actively participated in almost all the important IFOAM activities. The Executive Director of OFDC is a member of the Standards Committee of IFOAM. OFDC has a wide range of co-operative projects with organic colleagues from all over the world. Starting in 1998, the 5-year China/Germany joint project 'Development of Organic Farming in China' has made great contributions to the promotion of organic sector in the country. Presently, OFDC is an applicant for IFOAM accreditation.

In March 1999, on the basis of OFDC Tea Branch, the Organic Tea Research and Development Centre (OTRDC) was established in Hangzhou. It is affiliated to the Tea Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and specialises in inspection and certification of organic tea farms and tea processing plants as well as fertiliser for organic tea production. It was the second Chinese organic certifier and has been actively conducting organic tea inspections and certifications. In November 2001, through great effort, the OTRDC successfully hosted the Fifth IFOAM Asia Conference in Hangzhou of Zhejiang Province.

In addition to the two Chinese organic certifiers OFDC and OTRDC, there are also several foreign organic certifiers operating in China. The first to set up an office in China was OCIA (USA) in 1995. Later, ECOCERT (France), BCS (Germany), IMO (Switzerland) and OGBA (USA) established their chapters or representative offices in China. The box lists the contact details of domestic and foreign organic certifiers with offices in

China (OGBA is omitted as it no longer has an office). A number of other foreign certifiers also work in China, but do not have permanent offices.

Since the implementation of the JAS law in Japan, organic products certified by non-Japanese certifiers in other countries have had difficulties entering the Japanese market. Some Japanese organic certifiers such as JONA and NOAPA have sought possible cooperative approaches with Chinese certifiers, and some are also sending their inspectors to China to conduct organic inspections. No Japanese certifier has yet established an office in China, though some are currently considering this.

So far, no official organic certification regulations and national organic standards have been implemented in China. The relationships between the domestic and foreign organic certifi-

ers are, therefore, somewhat confused and a competitive rather than co-operative situation exists.

Recently, President Jiang Zemin and other top leaders of China have encouraged the development of organic agriculture and organic food in their important speeches. It is likely that organic industry will now grow rapidly in China, and more domestic organic certifiers will be established.

## Standards and regulations

The central government of China has not initiated any action on organic regulations and has not formally designated or authorised a governmental agency or department to be responsible for the administration of China's organic industry.

Early in 1995, the National Environmental Protection Agency of China (NEPA) produced the 'Organic Food Labeling Management Rule'

## Organic certifiers actively operating in China

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### CODEX TO REVISE CRITERIA FOR INPUTS AND MATERIALS LIST

Codex Alimentarius is reviewing the sections of the Guidelines for organic food that contain the criteria for inputs as well as the Annex 2 that contains the list of approved inputs. The draft (CL 2001/48-L) has been circulated to governments and international organisations with the deadline of 20 February. The proposal will be discussed at the next meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling that takes place in May. The plan is that these new guidelines will be finally approved by the Codex Commission in 2003. ■

### PUBLISHED CHANGES TO COUNCIL REGULATION 2092/91

The Commission Regulation (EC) No 2491/2001 of 19 December 2001, amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91, has been published in the European Official Journal of 20 December 2001. It is available as a downloadable pdf file under: [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/dat/2001/l\\_337/l\\_33720011220en00090017.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/dat/2001/l_337/l_33720011220en00090017.pdf). The regulation replaces Annex III of Council Regulation 2092/91 and enters into force on the sixtieth day after publication. For further details of Annex III revision see The Organic Standard, issue no.7, November 2001, page 16. ■

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and a draft of the 'Technical Criteria for Organic Food Production and Processing'. Then, starting in 1999, the State Environmental Protection Administration of China (SEPA, the former NEPA) invited experts from different fields such as agriculture, environment, forestry and fishery, to discuss and draw a 'National Organic Food Certification Management Rule' and to review and revise the 'Technical Criteria for Organic Food Production and Processing' (which are quasi standards). On 19 June, 2001, the Administrator of the State Environmental Protection Administration of China formally issued the 'Management Rule on Organic Food Certification'. The Rule is expected to be applicable to all the organic certifiers and operators working within China, including both Chinese and foreign organic certifiers. The Organic Certifiers Accreditation Committee, recently established by SEPA, is now ready to process the registration and accreditation applications of organic certifiers.

The 'Technical Criteria for Organic Food Production and Processing' has also been issued by SEPA in December of 2001.

It is expected that the issuing and implementation of those governmental rules and criteria will play an important role and contribute to the better management and orderly development of organic industry in China.

Until the implementation of the 'Technical Criteria for Organic Food Production and Processing', the domestic and foreign organic certifiers all used different organic standards; though basically they all were in compliance with IFOAM basic standards.

OFDC has its own comprehensive certification standards, which were the main supporting document for 'Technical Criteria for Organic Food Production and Processing'. OTRDC also has its own standards, the 'Organic Tea Certification Standards' (OTCS), which have been accepted by Zhejiang province as the standards of the province, and are presently under the evaluation by the national responsible agency with the possibility of being promoted to the National Standards level.

The EU country certifiers follow EU standards and the American certifiers conform to the NOP standards.

As yet, the Chinese government has not made or even initiated any recognition agreement with other countries. In addition, there are no special requirements on importing certified organic products from other countries or on the recognition of external/foreign certification. The relevant governmental agencies are in the process of making rules on these issues.

### Distribution of organic products

About two thirds of the provinces and autonomous regions in China have been involved in organic production, processing and trading. Zhejiang and Anhui provinces in the east part of China are the pioneers of organic farming.

So far, organic farming production bases are mostly distributed in east and northeast provinces. In terms of quantity the three provinces Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning are ranked as the best, while in terms of quality control the east provinces, es-

The EU country certifiers follow EU standards and the American certifiers conform to the NOP standards. ■

Organic farming has already been included in the ecology construction planning of many provinces, cities and counties.

pecially Shanghai, Shandong Jiangsu and Zhejiang, are in the leading place.

## Market and trade of organic products

Before 1999 more than 95% of the certified organic products of China were for export, especially to Japan, EU countries and North America. However, in the last two years food safety issues have become a growing concern in China, resulting in the domestic organic food market growing rapidly. The organic products supplied to the domestic market are mostly OFDC-certified except for organic tea. Since there is no government agency or private organisation responsible for the statistics of the organic business and sales, it is hard to estimate the total amount of organic products sold in domestic market.

Organic food associations and organic farmers' associations have been established in some provinces. They play an important role in promoting the development of local organic agriculture.

Organic farming has already been included in the ecological construction planning of many provinces, cities and counties.

The most popular managerial pattern for development of organic farming, processing and trade in China is a trading company being connected to a farm. Usually, the trade company makes a contract with the farm for organic produce. Most companies consider the best practice is to lease a piece of farmland and to hire experienced managing and technical staff to operate it organically. The company is responsible for an integrated manage-

ment of organic farming, processing and trading.

## Research, consultation and publicity

There are several research institutes involved in organic farming research. These include the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Science of SEPA, the Organic Food Research Institute of Nanjing Agriculture University, the Bio-control Research Center of Organic Farming of China Agricultural University. Furthermore, several non-governmental organic research organisations such as the Zhejiang Organic Agriculture Research Institute in Hangzhou etc. have been established all over China, especially in developed areas. The China/Germany joint project, 'Development of Organic Farming in China' (1998 to 2002), has been successful in various aspects, such as enhancing the organisational capacity of organic certifiers, providing policy and regulatory comments to different levels of governments, and establishing demonstrative organic farms in less developed and highly developed areas.

Organic consultants play important roles in the development of organic sector. They are experienced agricultural scientists and technicians, and according to the organic certifiers, applicants who have been helped by these experts are much easier to certify. The consulting organisations are now gradually entering into market information consultation.

With the help of GTZ of Germany, an Organic Consultation Experts Network is going to be established this year. It will make better contributions

to the development of organic sector in China.

Both Chinese and foreign media institutions are very interested in publicising the development of the organic sector in China. Increasing numbers of TV and radio programmes highlight organic farming and organic food. Reports and special columns related to organic agriculture and organic food have been published in newspapers all over China. More and more people are accepting organic concepts and are becoming interested in organic products.

Since 1994, national and local organic certification training workshops have been organised every year by OFDC and other organic certifiers or interested organisations. Inspector training is also conducted every year. It is estimated that at the end of 2001 the number of organic inspectors in China was about 60, including the inspectors registered and accredited by foreign organic certifiers.

## Prospects

The demand for organic food is increasing, not only in the developed countries, but also in some developing countries such as China. China has enormous capacity for further developing organic agriculture, but only when it grasps the opportunity, overcomes the existing problems and exerts its advantages will it really forge ahead. Within a few years the proportion of organic food produced in China could easily reach 1-2% of domestic food market and 3-5% of international organic market. ■

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## news shorts...

### BIOPARK MAKES A MOVE

Biopark, a German organic certifier, left AGÖL at the end of December. Biopark claimed that organic unity is necessary to act as a mouthpiece for all organic farmers in Germany. AGÖL has represented only one third of German organic farmers since Bioland and Demeter left in February 2001 and an increasing number of farmers are converting their farms without joining a private organic association.

Biopark has applied for IFOAM accreditation. In addition, Biopark announced that it will be more active in the Agrarbündnis, a 'round table' of organic and environmental initiatives who are involved in organic agriculture.

Despite the withdrawal of Bioland and Demeter, causing cuts to its services and staff, AGÖL was still accepted by the government ministries as the representative of organic farmers. The remaining organisations, Naturland, Gäa, Biokreis, ANOG, Ecovin and Ökosiegel, have announced that they will continue to work with AGÖL.

Most members of Biopark come from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, an east German region. Biopark certifies about 600 farmers with a total of 130,000 ha of organically-farmed land. This represents 7% of the farmers organised in organic associations and 30% of

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## Organic regulations emerging in Asia

*A survey of regulatory initiatives in Asia was carried out for the IFOAM Harmonisation conference. It discovered that a total of ten countries have governments that have either taken up administrative or legislative initiatives on organic agriculture or have implemented rules on standards and certification. A summary is given in the table, followed by the situation in individual countries.*

Country	Regulation in place	Stage of initiative implemented	No initiative/no information
Bangladesh	-	-	No initiative
Bhutan	-	-	No initiative
Burma	-	-	No information
Cambodia	-	-	No initiative
China	Yes	-	-
Hong Kong	-	Completed Protocol of Practice	-
India	Yes	-	-
Indonesia	-	Early consultation and drafting of regulation	-
Japan	Yes	-	-
Korea (North)	-	-	No information
Korea (South)	Yes	-	-
Laos	-	-	No initiative
Malaysia	-	Finalised standards	-
Mongolia	-	-	No initiative
Nepal	-	-	No initiative
Pakistan	-	-	No initiative
Philippines	-	Early consultations	-
Papua New Guinea	-	-	No information
Sri Lanka	-	-	No initiative
Taiwan	Yes	-	-
Thailand	-	Finalising inspection and certification system	-
Vietnam	-	-	No initiative

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the cultivated land. In the past Biopark always criticised the high cost of AGÖL membership. Another topic of dispute was that Biopark demanded more flexibility for the buying of conventional feed. ■

### MEDAL FOR EXTRAORDINARY VERDIENSTE FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Renate Künast, Germany's consumer minister awarded Jan von Ledebur the Professor-Niklas-Medaille'. This silver medal is for outstanding services to the support of organic agriculture. Jan von Ledebur was co-founder of ANOG and president of AGÖL from its foundation up to 2001. He was also a member of IFOAM World Board and manager of the Forschungsring für biologisch-dynamische Wirtschaftsweise, a branch of Demeter responsible for guidelines in bio-dynamic agriculture. In addition, he was involved in the development of the organic EU-Regulation. In 2000 he became ECO-Manager of the year, a prize awarded by the magazine *Capital and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature*. Throughout his career he has done his utmost to work towards the acceptance of organic agriculture by the public and in politics. ■

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## Japan

On 1 April, 2001, new organic regulations took effect, requiring all produce and processed foods (crop-based only) labelled as organic in Japan to carry the 'JAS' (Japan Agricultural Standards) mark. The competent authority is the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). In general, the regulation requires the registration of certification organisations and certification of four categories, Production Process Managers (PPM), Manufacturers and Sub-dividers (including foreign ones) and Importers, by Registered Certification Organisations (RCOs) based on the respective Technical Criteria for Certification.

Due to the lack of time for importers and certification bodies to prepare, an interim period of one year was granted, ending 31 March, 2002.

### Import access into Japan

There are currently three ways for agricultural products to get the Organic JAS mark.

1. *Certification by a MAFF Registered Certification Organisation (RCO) in Japan.*

A RCO in Japan certifies the production/processing in the exporting country. The certified foreign operator can affix the Organic JAS label for export to Japan.

2. *Certification by a MAFF Registered Foreign Certification Organisation (RFCO) in the exporting country.*

For registration as a RFCO, the foreign organisation must have its business establishment in a country that is deemed to have a system equivalent to that of Japan by MAFF. The RFCO certifies the product in the exporting country. The certified foreign operator

can affix the Organic JAS label for export to Japan.

**EU example** (*The Organic Standard*, issue 1, May 2001):

Agreement has been reached between the EU Commission and MAFF Japan about recognition of equivalence of the EU Regulation 2092/91 with the organic agriculture regulatory system in Japan. To register, EU control bodies have to submit an application and dossier to MAFF. Once registered the EU control body is allowed to grant the Organic JAS label to its certified operators exporting to Japan. The Japanese Authority will send inspectors to supervise some EU operators exporting to Japan.

RFCOs can also certify in countries other than the country of its business establishment (excluding Japan) provided the said foreign countries are included in 'the area where certification service is carried out' at the time of application of registration.

**Australian example** (*The Organic Standard*, issue 7, November 2001):

NASAA (an Australian certifying body) is registered by MAFF to certify in other Asia countries, *i.e.* NASAA can certify in Sri Lanka for exports to Japan.

### Use of contracted inspection services

RCOs may delegate inspections to certification bodies (CBs) in exporting countries; and RFCOs can delegate inspections to CBs in other countries (excluding Japan), through a 'trust contract of providing inspection data', provided a CB conforms to the following requirements:

- The organisation is recognised or registered as a certification body by the government of the country, the local government or an international

## news shorts...

### BIO-TECH GIANTS SUED BY CANADIAN ORGANIC FARMERS

A group of Canadian organic farmers launched a lawsuit against Monsanto Co. and Aventis SA. They are seeking compensation for damages caused by genetically modified canola they say is blowing into their fields.

'Organic farmers in Saskatchewan have said that the time has come for this legal challenge, and we're here today to let the world know that,' said Marc Loiselle, a board member of the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD), a group representing organic producers in the province.

Two organic farmers filed the class-action lawsuit in Saskatoon court on behalf of all organic farmers in the province, the heart of Canada's bread basket. The legal action is also aimed at halting plans to introduce transgenic wheat in the region. New legislation in Saskatchewan permitting class-action lawsuits paved the way for the action. It claims since genetically modified canola was introduced in Canada in the mid-1990s, it has been found growing on land for which it was never intended. Few, if any, seed suppliers will now certify their seeds as organic. The farmers also say that the introduction of modified wheat would doom their farms. The claimants are seeking millions in damages for what they allege is the loss of canola as an organic crop in Saskatchewan. ■

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organisation with an established reliability such as ISO and IOAS.

- The organisation has considerable experience as a certification body for organic foods.
3. *Re-certification (using data obtained by past on-site inspections) by a RCO in Japan for imports of organic ingredients destined for use as ingredients in finished products marketed as organic in Japan.*

Production and/or processing of organic raw material is certified by a CB in the exporting country. The Japanese importer is certified by an RCO in Japan. The RCO assesses conformity to organic JAS for organic ingredients to be used for organic processed foods. The certified Japanese processor (who is also the importer) affixes the Organic JAS label.

The RCO may use data obtained from a previous inspection if that inspection was carried out by an organisation that conforms to the requirements for use of inspection services (see above). Data obtained more than one year ago is not thought to be adequate.

**US example** (*The Organic Standard*, issue 3, July 2001):

On 23 May, 2001, the Japanese MAFF, as an interim measure, accepted a USDA proposal to permit certification of US organic ingredients to Japanese standards by organisations accredited by USDA. Under this agreement, USDA may accredit organisations under its ISO Guide 65 programme; these organisations are then permitted to certify organic products to JAS standards for use as ingredients. Only manufacturers certified by MAFF-registered certifying organisations (RCOs) may use these ingredients in finished products marketed as or-

ganic in Japan.

USDA and MAFF are continuing negotiations on equivalency between the US National Organic Program and JAS. In the meantime, Japan is accepting imports of raw organic ingredients and processed organic ingredients, but not finished organic goods, as long as the manufacturer in Japan is certified by a MAFF RCO in Japan, and a valid third-party certifier signs an affidavit that none of the ingredients being shipped are JAS-prohibited ingredients.

According to Kenji Matsumoto of JONA, a RCO, by this agreement, an RCO can assess conformity to organic JAS for organic ingredients made in US to be used for organic processed foods by a processor certified by the same RCO, based on an inspection certificate issued by a certification organisation designated by USDA.

*Do certified foreign manufacturers have to use raw materials bearing an Organic JAS Mark to manufacture and export organic products to Japan?*

**Not necessarily.** The JAS Law provides that organic products certified under the system of a country with an equivalent system are nearly equivalent to the organic products certified under the JAS System, and certified importers may attach an Organic JAS Mark to the products imported to Japan. Under the above, certified foreign manufacturers are allowed to manufacture or process organic products using certified organic raw materials from countries having an equivalent system to the JAS system. See page 15 for an update on JAS law.

*For more information see the MAFF English info page ([www.maff.go.jp/eindex.html](http://www.maff.go.jp/eindex.html)), section on organic agriculture.*

## news shorts...

### GERMAN GOVERNMENT ADDRESSES NECESSARY DEVELOPMENT

In a one-page memorandum, released in November 2001, the German government addressed six points of further development of EC Regulation No 2092/91. The revision is regarded as an essential development in order to safeguard the expansion of the organic market within a reliable legal framework. The six points addressed are:

1. To subject wholesalers who are trading organic produce to the Regulation
2. To legally require a whole farm conversion to be achieved within a given time frame
3. To legally require that the predominant share of animal feed originates from the organic farm or from cooperating organic farms
4. To revise the Regulation to temporarily grant exceptions concerning conventional animal feed that can be used in organic farming, with the aim of reducing it as soon as possible
5. To revise the provision concerning manure from conventional animal holdings so that chicken manure and slurry is no longer allowed
6. To adopt rules for aquaculture ■

For details of the memorandum in German see:

[www.verbraucherministerium.de/landwirtschaft/oekolog-landbau/memorandum-oekolandbau.htm](http://www.verbraucherministerium.de/landwirtschaft/oekolog-landbau/memorandum-oekolandbau.htm)

news shorts continued on page 13

### China

Whilst the central government has not initiated any legislative action, the Administrator of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) issued the No. 10 Order of SEPA 'Management Rule on Certification of Organic Food' on 19 June, 2001.

It is the first regulation regarding organic food in China issued by a governmental agency applicable to all organic certifiers or operators in China.

SEPA has finished drafting its first organic certification standards (presently named as Technical Criteria for Organic Food). The SEPA criteria is based on the Organic Standards (2001) of the Organic Food Development Center (OFDC), the official certification body established since 1994.

The central government has not formally designated a governmental agency or department responsible for the administration of the organic industry in China. SEPA, however, has been involved in the administration of the organic industry for a number of years. It was responsible for the establishment of OFDC. An accreditation committee has been established by SEPA to process the registration and accreditation applications of organic certifiers. Reportedly no certifier has applied so far.

In a parallel initiative, the Tea Research Institute in Hangzhou has developed 'Organic Tea Certification Standards' (OTCS). OTCS is presently being evaluated by the State Agency of Standards for consideration as National Standards.

There are currently no special requirements on imports of certified organic products from other countries, nor is there recognition of external/foreign certification.

Contact: Mr. Gao Zhenning, Director of the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences of SEPA, also Deputy Chairman of the Organic Food Steering Committee of SEPA.

Tel: +86-25-5412926; Fax: +86-25-5411611; email: yzheng@public1.ptt.js.cn

### Hong Kong

The Hong Kong government reportedly completed the Protocol of Practice for Organic Crop Production in October 2000. No legislative action or implementation has taken place.

There are currently no special requirements on imports of certified organic products from other countries or on recognition of external/foreign certification.

Contact: Mr. Stephen Lai, AFCD. email: [aacd@afcd.gov.hk](mailto:aacd@afcd.gov.hk)

For more information see website: [www.afcd.gov.hk/web/index\\_e.htm](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/web/index_e.htm) [go to 'Agriculture', select 'Organic Farming', then 'Whole Document PDF format' of the Organic Farming, chose 'Protocol' at the end of the page 3.]

### India

In April, 2000, the Government of India released the National Programme for Organic Production. The National Standards are apparently based on IFOAM Basic Standards, the EU regulation and Codex guidelines. Accreditation regulations followed in May 2001. Implementation has been in effect from 1 October, 2001.

Designated accreditation boards include Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), also the Tea Board, Coffee Board and Spice Board. Foreign certification bodies operating in the country must also be accredited. Certification bodies that are currently accredited by APEDA

include the Institute for Marketecology (IMO), Skal and Ecocert. More are in progress.

The regulations provide for export, imports and local trade of organic products. However at present, only exports are regulated. India currently does not have any recognition agreements with other countries. APEDA is reportedly working on this matter.

Contact: Mr. S. Dave (General Manager, APEDA). Tel (Direct): +011-653 4175; Tel: +011-651-3219/4572; Fax: +011-653 4175; email: gmffv@apeda.com

Mr. T. A. Vishvananthan (consultant). email: headq@apeda.com

More information refer to APEDA website: www.apeda.com

## Indonesia

The Indonesian government is said to be in the process of discussion and drafting its organic agriculture regulation. No information has been made public yet.

The Indonesian government has not initiated or complete any recognition agreements with other government related to organic import and export.

Contact: Pusat Standardisasi dan Akreditasi, Departemen Pertanian, Republik Indonesia,

## Korea (South)

In late 1998, the Enforcement Ordinance and the Regulation of the Environment-friendly Agriculture Promotion Act were enacted. The Regulation & Act were revised on 1 July, 2001. The regulations are reported to be very similar to Codex Guidelines.

The National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service (NAQS), a government agency, is in charge of the certification system in

Korea. According to the recently revised Act, it is now possible for a private organisation to be a certification body. Organisations are said to be preparing to apply to the government.

According to the regulation, anything imported to Korea as organic must be certified by NAQS or a private certification body that is accredited by NAQS. The Korean government does not have any recognition agreements with other governments related to organic import and export at this time.

Contact: Kwang-Ha Lee, NAQS. email: kwangha@naqs.go.kr

## Malaysia

The Department of Agriculture has finalised standards for organic food products. The standards are modelled on IFOAM Basic Standards and Codex guidelines. The Standards will be implemented on a voluntary basis. The Ministry of Agriculture is expected to be the competent authority. The Department of Agriculture and private bodies will be appointed as certification bodies. Growers abiding by the standards will be permitted to use the authority's logo on their product.

Contact: Robert Williams, Department of Agriculture, Tingkat 6, Wisma Tani, Jalan Salahuddin, 50632 Kuala Lumpur

## Philippines

A series of consultation meetings have been taking place with the Department of Agriculture (DA) as lead agency. A task force on organic certification has been set up with members comprising of mostly government personnel and a few from NGOs. The DA has produced a draft Organic Protocol that stipulates DA's

role in accrediting organic certifiers, establishing standards for organic production, and promoting organic products. The protocol is still in draft form subject to comments from members of the task force.

## Taiwan

No law on organic agriculture has been passed. Administrative measures, however, are implemented on the basis of the following documents:

- (1) Guidelines for Production of Organic Agriculture Products,
- (2) Management Guidelines for Bodies Operating Organic Agriculture Certification
- (3) Monitoring Task Force to Manage Certification Bodies.

There is currently only one officially approved certification body by the Council of Agriculture (COA) in Taiwan. No information is available at this time on recognition agreements with other governments related to organic import and export.

Contact: Mr. Wen Der Lin, COA. email: lml@mail.coa.gov.tw

## Thailand

At the end of 2000, the Department of Agriculture (DOA) announced the completion of the National Organic Standard Guideline for Crop Production. The standards intended for accreditation are claimed to be in line with IFOAM Basic Standards and Codex guidelines. The DOA has yet to finalise its inspection and certification system. ■

Contact: Mr Vichien Petpisit, Director, Botany and Weed Science Division, Department of Agriculture. Tel/Fax: +66-2-6713445; email: vichpet@doa.go.th

## A look at the differences between three international standards

### Comparison of EU-Regulation 2092/91\* and Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for organically produced food 1999/2001 with IFOAM Basic Standards 2000

*The following is a summary of an internal IFOAM study on a comparison between the EU Regulation 2092/91 and Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for organically produced food 1999/2001 with IFOAM Basic Standards 2000. The study was prepared for the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS). The summary highlights the main areas where differences between the standards occur.*

#### Results and conclusions of the comparison

In some sections the EU Regulation and occasionally the Codex Guidelines, are more detailed than the IFOAM Basic Standards

**Conversion period:** EU and Codex have conversion periods of two years, and three years for some perennial crops. IFOAM requires one year.

**Labelling:** EU and Codex do not allow mixed products with less than 70% organic ingredients to make a reference, even not on ingredients list, that the product is organic. This is possible with IFOAM despite very restrictive conditions.

**Fertilisation:** EU does not allow the use of human faeces, whereas under strict restrictions IFOAM and Codex allow this practise.

**Special standards:** For some product groups EU as specific detailed standards, e.g. mushrooms and special animal categories. IFOAM and Codex do not.

**Conversion time for milk and eggs:** EU and Codex have conversion times of six months for milk and six weeks for eggs. IFOAM requires only 30 days for both.

**Veterinary treatment:** EU and Codex require an exclusion for organic labelling after two courses of treatment. All three standards have a withdrawal period of double that required by the product licence.

**Tethering of animals:** EU excludes tethering after a period of ten years (except for small farms). IFOAM and Codex allow animals to be tethered; however permanent tethering systems with no pasturage and outdoor-run with regular exercise is not allowed by IFOAM.

#### Different Role of the Standards

To make any valid conclusions from the comparison, it is important to be clear of the different roles of the standards:

**EU:** The text acts as direct production standards with the aim to equalise the market in the EU. It has the status of a law.

**Codex:** These are world-wide guidelines for country states and others to develop their standards or regulations, they are not for certifying products directly.

**IFOAM:** These are world-wide standards for standards, they also act as a guide to others, e.g. what accredited certifiers have to fulfil.

As a result of the different nature or purpose of the standards, the content of Codex and IFOAM are more general, tending to have less detail than the EU standards. The former outline the principles and criteria that have to be fulfilled.

**Poultry regulation:** EU has more detail regarding poultry housing compared to IFOAM and Codex.

**Bees:** EU is more specific with regard to the feed collection area (3 km) than IFOAM and Codex.

**Cleaning agents:** EU has a list of permitted agents. IFOAM and Codex do not have such a list.

\* Including Commission Regulation (EC) No 1804/99 about animal husbandry.

## news shorts...

### NEW PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT DYNAMIC GROWTH

'With the first call for tenders our new Federal Programme Organic Agriculture has started', announced Germany's Federal Consumer Minister, Renate Künast, in Berlin. 'Anyone who has good ideas and projects can apply and will find the current information on our new website'. The internet site ([www.Bundesprogramm-oekolandbau.de](http://www.Bundesprogramm-oekolandbau.de)), which will serve as central platform, was specifically furnished for the new programme. It includes all the information and dates of the programme. The call for tenders can be downloaded. It is also possible to subscribe to a newsletter that has information on the latest changes and timelines. The programme has a budget of 35 million Euro in 2002 and the another 35 million in 2003. It is intended that it will support a dynamic growth of supply and demand for organic products at all levels from production to the consumer. ■

### STANDARDS COUNCIL OF CANADA ACCREDITED FIRST ORGANIC CERTIFICATION BODY

OCP/Pro-Cert Canada Inc of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, became the first Canadian certification body for organic agriculture to be accredited by the Standards Council of Canada. ■

*news shorts continued on page 15*

**Stocking rates:** EU limits stocking rates (170 kg/ha). IFOAM and Codex set only the general principle of maintaining appropriate stocking rates, based on national levels.

**Detailed minimum areas for outdoor runs:** EU has a set detailed minimum surface area for outdoor runs. IFOAM and Codex require there to be sufficient size, which is not specified as this might be different depending on the kind of national breeds and the risk of environmental problems in humid areas.

In other sections the EU Regulation, and occasionally the Codex Guidelines, are less precise than the IFOAM Basic Standards:

**Criteria for new inputs:** IFOAM has detailed criteria and a description of the evaluation procedure. Codex has precise criteria but no evaluation procedure. EU has no precise criteria for new inputs.

**Wild harvest:** IFOAM is more precise with regard to sustainability and the possibility of inspecting than Codex and EU.

**Free range area for fattening cattle and pigs for meat:** IFOAM requires animals to have access to an outdoor run during the fattening period.

Exceptions with time limits can be made in individual cases. EU and Codex allow the final fattening phase to take place indoors.

**Conventional feedstuff:** From 2002 IFOAM will allow 10% conventional feedstuff for ruminants and 15% for non-ruminants. EU and Codex are less strict, allowing 10% for ruminants and 20% for non-ruminants (for five years).

**Feed self-sufficiency:** IFOAM requires a minimum fodder self-sufficiency (50% from the farm or

from the region), at least for ruminants, whereas EU and Codex do not such a restriction.

**Mutilations:** EU and Codex are less strict than IFOAM.

**Feed components:** IFOAM and Codex have more detailed and clear criteria for feed ingredients, feed additives and processing aids. EU has a detailed list of feed

**Transport and slaughter:** IFOAM and Codex have more detailed transport and slaughter rules than EU

IFOAM requires accredited organisations not only to follow the IFOAM Basic standards, but also to further elaborate certain issues and to implement their standards. When considering the requirements for an inspection a comparison should be made between the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria and the inspection requirements of the EU Regulation.

Any decisions concerning equivalence must be made between the EU Regulation and private or governmental national standards. ■

*Otto Schmid, FiBL, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, CH 5070 Frick, Switzerland.*

#### Source:

*Schmid, O. (2002): Comparison of EU-Regulation 2092/91 (including Commission Regulation (EC) No 1804/99 about animal husbandry) and Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for organically produced food 1999/2001 with IFOAM Basic Standards 2000. Study on behalf of International Organic Accreditation Services. IFOAM. Tholey-Theley*

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# Integrity of conformity assessment programmes questioned

*IAF address a troubling problem*

**O**n 17 January 2001 the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) issued a statement reiterating its requirement of a high standard of integrity from its members. The statement expressed concern at recent public statements that question the integrity of the conformity assessment programmes operated by accreditation bodies. An example is the ISO press release issued on 30 November 2001 (see box).

According to the statement, the IAF is aware of the commercial pressures on certification/registration bodies, and the suppliers they certify, which may lead them to act inappropriately. Consequently, it requires its accreditation body members to apply rules that are designed to identify and stamp out any such inappropriate behaviour.

The IAF is concerned that unsubstantiated criticisms are made too often, publicly without any evidence. When this happens the IAF refer concerned parties to its complaints procedure. It assures all parties that if any information is provided that suggests inappropriate behaviour by an organisation accredited by a member of IAF, or certified by a body accredited by an IAF member, it will be acted on aggressively. Complaints may be filed either to the IAF itself or to any accreditation body member of IAF.

The IAF, however, has no legal authority to act against accreditation bodies or certification/registration

bodies that are not members of IAF, or accredited by members of IAF, or one of the IAF regions. In the statement the IAF warns consumers and the industry against using the services of these organisations.

In response to a question about the number of actions taken on complaints in the past three years, the IAF secretary, Noel Matthews, responded that the IAF has dealt with five or six complaints itself and about twice as many have been referred to the respective accreditation body for action.

The IAF requires all its accreditation body members to have in place an effective complaints procedure and most complaints are dealt with by the accreditation body that accredited the certification body involved.

When asked whether the recent criticisms include some made against organic certification the IAF secretary responded that, to the best of their knowledge, it is in the area of ISO9000 and ISO 14000 certification. Nevertheless, the IAF Secretary warns, 'the organic standards industry should not be complacent – if there is money in it, someone will cut corners!' ■

*Ong Kung Wai  
The Organic Standard*

*For further information contact: The Secretary, International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF).  
e-mail: secretary@accreditationforum.com*

## ISO press release 30 November, 2001

**A**t the opening of the 17th meeting of ISO/CASCO Committee on Conformity Assessment, held in Geneva on 29-30 November, ISO Secretary-General, Dr Lawrence D. Eicher, declared ISO 9000 certification bodies, and the accreditation bodies that approve them as competent, need to do a better job of policing their community. He said they need to weed out malpractice and dishonest operators.

'We regularly receive complaints about certificates being awarded undeservedly to companies that have not been properly audited, or about certification bodies who offer to write the quality manual for the company and then sell them a certificate, or about others who claim to

have been approved by ISO. No one at ISO has ever approved such certification bodies.'

The ISO Secretary-General also said that the conformity assessment community was facing a serious challenge caused by a certain number of certification bodies that acted without integrity.

Although ISO itself does not audit companies and does not issue ISO 9000 certificates nor control the certification bodies that do so independently of ISO, these bodies base their business on ISO standards and guides. 'Therefore, when certification bodies act without integrity, many people believe that it is ISO's fault', Dr Eicher said.

## news shorts...

### NO GERMAN ORGANIC SEAL FOR ORGANIC FISH

Since German Minister for Consumer Protection, Renate Künast, presented the new national organic seal 'Biosiegel' on 5 September, 2001, a rapidly increasing number of organic products can be seen decorated with it – but none are fish! Although there is certified organic fish on the German market it is not allowed to put the Biosiegel on it's labelling. The German Biosiegel is bound to the requirements of EC Regulation No. 2092/91 that rules organic production in the European Union. Consequently, as the Regulation does not yet recognise aquaculture products, organic fish cannot be labelled with the popular German seal.

Resolution of this problem seems to be under way. For a start, consideration point (4) of Council Regulation No 1804/1999, published in 1999, ruling organic animal production says that organic aquaculture production rules 'should be developed as soon as possible'. In addition, in November 2001, the German government has put forward a memorandum asking the European Commission to further develop the provisions laid down in EC Regulation No. 2092/91, including those for organic aquaculture (see news short on page 10). ■

*news shorts continued on page 19*

## A year on from JAS law

### Where are we now?

**Y**ear 2001 was the start of a new century, and also the start of the JAS Organic Rule in Japan. Even if Japan's economy is poor, the organic industry has been a really hot issue since MAFF decided to execute this new regulation.

JOIA (Japan Organic Inspectors Association) has been keeping a count of the number of organic inspections since 1998. The change in the last four years has been particularly large.

The table shows the number of the JAS organic certified entities released by MAFF last December. The category, Production Process Manager (PPM), includes single farmers as well as a farmer groups. The number of PPM is 1,271 (1,167 in Japan and 104 in foreign countries). However, as there are many cases, especially in China, where many farmers belong to one PPM, the actual number of certified individual farmers is 3,944 (3,190 in Japan and 754 in foreign countries).

It appears that the number of certified farmers has increased by at least five times since the days before the JAS Organic Rule was enforced. This is due to an increase in the number of certified vegetable farmers. This trend is illustrated by the recent proliferation of vegetables on Japan's store shelves with 'organic under conversion period' labels.

The number of manufacturers has increased three and a half times. In Japan, organic certification started in the soya product's industry. So it is not surprising that soya product's manufacturers, such as Tofu, Natto, Miso and Shoyu processors, continue to have organic certification. Other types of manufacturers that are now certified are tea, coffee and seasoning manufacturers.

Under JAS the new category of 'Subdivider', was established. Many warehouses have applied registration as Subdividers.

Several importers have become JAS certified, but at present, the work of JAS certified importers is limited. Most of them have got certification in anticipation of their future business opportunities.

The total number of Registered Certification Organizations (RCOs) is 52, and there are now four Registered Foreign Certification Organizations (RFCO). All the current RFCOs are located in Australia, they are NASAA (National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia); BFA (Biological Farmers of Australia); BDRI (Biodinamic Research Institute); and OHGA (Organic Herb Growers of Australia).

*Mutsumi Sakuyoshi  
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### Number of the JAS organic certified entities

	Manufacturer	PPM	Subdivider	Importer	Total
Japan	585	1,167	313	77	2,142
Foreign countries	127	104	30	0	261
Total	712	1,271	343	77	2,403

*8 December, 2001, MAFF HP*

## Consultation talks on the organic seed regime after 2003 in the EU

The article 6 of EU-Regulation No. 2092/91 refers to the 'organic plant production method'. The reference implies that the mother plant (in the case of seeds) and the parent plant(s) (in the case of vegetative propagating material) have been produced under organic conditions for at least one generation or, in the case of perennial crops, for two growing seasons. By way of derogations, seeds and vegetative propagating material not organically produced may be used when appropriate material is not obtainable on the market. However, this requires the explicit approval of the competent authority of the Member State. The derogation was granted to take into account that organic seed markets are not sufficiently developed. Initially, the derogation was set to expire on 31 December 2000, but deadline has now been extended for another three years to end on 31 December 2003. Meanwhile, the availability of organic seeds has improved considerably but is still insufficient with respect to certain crops, e.g. some vegetables and fodder crops. Hence, it is expected that even after December 2003 or-

1. Usually, the Council, as the principal law-making body in the EU, adopts law based on drafts submitted by the Commission. With respect to certain parts of the Regulation No 2092/91 the Council delegated the right to the Commission to adopt rules. In this case the commission has to involve Member States representatives in a way that is laid down in Article 14 of the Regulation.

ganic seed of certain crops will not be available in sufficient quantities to satisfy the farmers' demand.

As stated in Article 6, 3b of the Regulation the Commission of the EU is granted the right to set up procedural rules for handling exceptions for the use of conventional seeds after 2003 by the Article-14-procedure<sup>1</sup> without having a Council decision.

Against this background, the Commission held a consultation round with the EU Member States and with invited experts from the IFOAM EU Group. The aim of this first EU consultation round was to discuss and to define the conditions of a future organic seed regime. The consultation was held on the basis of an internal concept paper prepared by the Commission. To handle the situation after 2003 the following idea was outlined: each Member State should have a database compiled, either by its competent authority or by a private body, designated for this aim by the Member State. For every item listed in the database the relevant seed producer must have demonstrated that:

- (i) The offered seed is certified organic
- (ii) The variety concerned is appropriate, and
- (iii) The delivery of such material is ensured.

Permission for not using organic seeds displayed on the database may be granted when the grower that seeks seeds can demonstrate to the inspection body or competent authority that:

- (i) There is no appropriate variety registered in the database or the holder of the registration cannot deliver it in the area of the grower
- (ii) The required material is far too expensive, or
- (iii) The required variety is not available.

As an example of such an organic seed database, a presentation of the OrganicXseeds, which is already on the internet ([www.organicXseeds.com](http://www.organicXseeds.com)), was given at the meeting. The participants regarded the database as a significant tool and showed interest in a closer co-operation with the private sector. The next round of consultation talks with the commission was held on January 23. ■

Klaus-Peter Wilbois  
Klaus.Wilbois@fibl.de

### Sources:

Newsletter on organic seeds and plant breeding by Louise Luttkholt.  
Websites: [www.ECO-PB.org](http://www.ECO-PB.org) and [www.organicXseeds.com](http://www.organicXseeds.com)

Initially, the derogation was set to expire on 31 December 2000, but deadline has now been extended for another three years to end on 31 December 2003. ■

## Latin American certification agencies meet in Costa Rica

Countries are increasingly developing national legislation to ensure the integrity of organic products sold in the country in order to protect their consumers. However, this has meant that certification bodes hoping to export to several countries to have to deal with several different standards. This is especially hard for small certification bodies from developing countries.

A certification body from outside the European Union must comply with the EN 45011 or its equivalent ISO 65, if it is interested in exporting to the EU. As this process can be very costly several Latin American agencies agreed to investigate this issue.

The project was financed by the Dutch funding agency Hivos and coordinated by Pedro Landa, from OIA, Argentina.

The project reviewed a total of ten Latin American certification agencies: CERTIMEX (Mexico), Mayacert (Guatemala), Eco-LOGICA (Costa Rica), Biotropico (Colombia), SCPB (Uruguay), BOLICERT (Bolivia), CCO (Chile), PROA (Chile), AAO (Brazil), and the OIA (Argentina). It evaluated their programmes and helped them fulfil the requirements of compliance with ISO 65. Eight of these agencies met in Costa Rica on 16–17 November 2001 to review the results.

The consultants concluded that all the agencies had an adequate structure of independence and impartiality, although most of them originated from farmers' organisations. In addition, all have well-trained local inspectors.

Even though ISO 65 accreditation was the main objective of the meetings, other issues were discussed. These included ideal structures for certification bodies, collaboration among Latin American certification bodies, group participation at organic fairs, etc. 'Mutual collaboration and sharing of information and promotion costs can be useful tools to develop local certification in Latin America', said Geovanny Delgado, General Director of Eco-LOGICA. ■

Gabriela Soto  
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## Update on USA National Organic Program

*With almost a hundred applications now on file the USDA has received nearly twice the number it originally expected. USDA says it is still committed to the April deadline for announcing the first round of accredited certification agents, and it has assigned additional staff to the application review process.*

While announcing that no changes will be made to the conflict of interest language in the Rule for the National Organic Program, USDA is also stating that it will provide examples on its website of certification schemes that are and are non-compliant with the provisions. These examples will come out of NOP review of accreditation applications. A strict interpretation of

the language would mean that no person representing an entity that is certified by a particular certification agency may be an employee or a member of the Board of Directors of that agency. In response to the conflict of interest provision of the Rule, several US farmer-based organisations have formed subsidiary certification corporations with separate and distinct boards of directors. Others have

created additional structures within their organisation to maintain a 'firewall' between the management of the certification programme and the general governance of the organisation by the board of directors. A few farmer-based organisations have closed their certification programmes altogether, choosing instead to focus on farmer assistance and community education.

### **Interim provisions for apiculture, greenhouse and mushroom production announced**

National Organic Standards for apiculture, greenhouse production and mushroom production are expected to go through the federal rulemaking process this year, and to be finalised by 2003. In the meantime, the National Organic Program has announced that products from these

*continued on page 18*

# UKROFS

## *Closing down?*

In the UK a special governmental body, UKROFS (United Kingdom register of organic Food Standards), was installed to act as the competent authority under the EU regulation, i.e. to supervise and approve certification bodies, approve imports *etc.*

The Quinquennial review of UKROFS, by the Britain's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), recommends that UKROFS is abolished. The review recommends that:

- The inspection system should continue to be operated by the private certification bodies but the role of

UKROFS in approving these bodies should cease. Instead, it is recommended that the certification bodies should be accredited by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS), which would act as the authority responsible for the approval and supervision of the bodies as required by EC Regulation 2092/91. UK Agriculture Ministers would retain responsibility as the Competent Authority.

- UK Agriculture Ministers should retain the Competent Authority function with respect to import authorisations and other issues such as ingredient derogations. The ad-

ministration of these tasks should be undertaken by DEFRA officials rather than UKROFS Secretariat on behalf of the UK but with as much of the day-to-day work as possible being undertaken by the certifying bodies.

One of the aspects where the review finds that UKROFS has not performed well is in relation to imports. Approvals have been delayed and perishables have been wasted while waiting for the official approval. With the new rules the certification bodies would take over most of the responsibilities.

Regarding standards development, the review proposes that a new forum, made up of producers, certification bodies, consumers, retailers and food processors should be established.

The review noted the influential role of the accreditation standards set by IFOAM. Although it was not in the recommendation, when considering the possibility of using other accreditation providers other than UKAS, the review noted only one other contender, the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS).

In response, Patrick Holden, Director of the Soil Association said: 'We strongly disapprove of the recommendation that UKROFS' role is taken over by UKAS. This body is a general accreditation organisation without specialist knowledge of organic standards, which are highly technical. Organic inspections require a thorough understanding of organic principles, and the control of organic inspections requires an equally thorough understanding. Furthermore, UKAS is already overstretched.'

Other industry representatives also expressed concerns and think that UKROFS should be kept, but be reformed. ■

*continued from page 17*

types of operations may be labeled as organic, if they meet certain conditions, including but not limited to the following:

1. The production or handling operation, or specified portion thereof, must be certified by a USDA- accredited certifying agent in compliance with that agency's standards.
2. The products of such production

methods shall not display the USDA seal, but they must identify the certification agent.

There are also restrictions on the use and labelling of these products as ingredients of multi-ingredient finished products. ■

*Diane Bowen*

*DianeBowenxx@aol.com*

*Additional details are posted at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop).*

### Breakdown of USDA applications

#### Applications from within USA: 57

- 15 State government certification programmes
- 42 Private organisations

#### Applications from other countries: 35

- 0 Government certification programmes
- 35 Private organisations from the countries listed opposite:

Argentina (2)	Guatemala (1)
Australia (2)	Israel (1)
Bolivia (1)	Italy (2)
Brazil (1)	Mexico (1)
Canada (5)	Netherlands (2)
Chile (1)	Peru (1)
China (1)	Switzerland (1)
Costa Rica (2)	Thailand (1)
Germany (8)	Turkey (1)
Greece (1)	

news shorts...

**ALL THINGS ORGANIC™ WILL INCLUDE BIOFACH AMERICA PAVILION**

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) and Nürnberg Global Fairs have signed an agreement to create a BioFach America Pavilion at OTA's 2002 All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade Show planned for 8-11 May, 2002, in Austin, Texas. Under the agreement, the international pavilion will be an integral part of the trade show, and will include a minimum of 25, and up to 50, booths featuring buyers and suppliers of organic products and services from around the world. Geared for the organic community in North America, OTA's All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade Show made its debut in May 2001. The 2001 conference and trade show drew 1,200 attendees, 180 booths, and standing-room-only attendance at conference breakout sessions. ■

*For more information about All Things Organic™, see OTA's web site ([www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com)).*

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## Another opinion on the development of the US legislation

*The letter below refers to an article printed in The Organic Standard, issue 5, September, 2001, pages 9-12, called History of organic legislation in the US. Suzanne Vaupel, the author, was unable to respond in this issue as she is recovering from an illness.*

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article in the September issue of The Organic Standard by Suzanne Vaupel, entitled 'History of organic legislation in the US.' Having been involved with organic certification since 1977, and having served on the National Organic Program staff from 1994-1999, I feel obliged to correct some of the misleading information presented in this article.

Right at the start the author asserts that the USDA regulations had their origin 'when a few organic farmers requested help from Congress to establish legal protection for the organic label.' There might have been a few farmers involved, but by and large the request came from processors and manufacturers on the one hand, and from consumer and environmental groups on the other. Farmers got involved in a defensive action when they realised that the definition being proposed would restrict the meaning of organic to a simplistic and unrealistic 'no synthetics' rule.

The article's first major inaccuracy occurs in discussing 'the politics of writing organic regulations' when she repeats a common misstatement that 'None of the USDA programme staff had previous experience in organic agriculture.' This is blatantly untrue. Even before I came onto the staff, two others had some experience in organic

agriculture. Specifically recruited because of my extensive background as an organic farmer, author, and certification program developer, I found that my expertise was respected by the rest of the staff.

Several misconceptions, which have entered popular consciousness as accepted fact, were then reinforced in the article. Among them the most persistent is that USDA's first proposal allowed genetic engineering, irradiation and sewage sludge – known as 'the big three' – in organic production. In fact, each of these practices were deliberately not mentioned in the proposed rules. Precisely because accepted organic practices prohibited them while various USDA agencies (and EPA) considered them to be safe and beneficial, they had been identified as controversial issues, for which public comment was invited. The notion that 'the interests of large US corporations with huge investments in these policies' and 'many federal agencies and special interests' had influenced the regulations in opposition to the interests of the organic community is unfounded. The implication that such corporate interests had 'taken precedence over organic principles' completely contradicts my daily experience of struggling – with the support and encouragement of my USDA colleagues – to write regula-

## news shorts...

### ORGANIC MATERIALS REVIEW INSTITUTE ESTABLISHES ORGANIC SEED REGISTRY

To aid the organic community toward implementation of the US National Organic Program, the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) has established a list of certified organic seed and planting stock. OMRI requires proof of organic certification for all seeds and planting stock to be listed. ■

*The list is available at [www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org). OMRI's list is modeled on a similar registry established last year by FiBL, which is published at [www.organicXseeds.com](http://www.organicXseeds.com).*

### REGISTER NOW FOR IFOAM CONFERENCE ON ORGANIC GUARANTEE SYSTEMS

On 17-19 February, 2002, linked with Biofach, Nuremberg will be the place to be for experts and stakeholders in Organic Guarantee Systems. IFOAM, in cooperation with FAO and UNCTAD, is organising a conference on 'International Harmonisation and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture'.

Pre-register for this conference at the latest by 11 February, although last minute registration will be possible at the IFOAM booth at Biofach, 1-332, Hall 1.) Please see the IFOAM website for the conference programme and registration form: [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org) ■

Admittedly, the law contains problems and contradictions, but it has helped to introduce some key organic principles into our most powerful agricultural institution. ■

tions that could reflect organic principles as closely as possible. While the higher echelons of the administration were more concerned about consistency with the policy of other agencies, there was and is no evidence of large corporate interests having input beyond the public comment process.

Although described as 'greatly improved', much of the second USDA proposed rule was unchanged. This includes the provision characterised in Ms Vaupel article as 'Private certifiers, but not state certifiers, were prohibited from certifying to standards that were higher than the USDA standards.' This is another misconception that has generated public confusion. The provision in question says nothing of the kind, and certainly does not 'extinguish the role of the private sector from updating organic standards.' The law itself gives to State and not private certifiers the authority to establish 'additional restrictions', which is intended to apply only in cases where, for example, a particular State may require two annual on-site inspections instead of just one, as mandated by the law. The regulations still allow certification to standards other than USDA's, but prohibit certifiers from using their organic logos to represent compliance with those standards.

Finally, I take issue with the claim that the finalised national organic regulations 'closely resemble the standards developed by the pioneering organic farmers.' The rules that have emerged are far more restrictive than those originally developed by farmers, and erect higher barriers to entry

into organic production by new producers. This is one reason why 'eco-labelling' has begun to proliferate in competition with the organic market.

Working through the regulatory process inevitably results in compromises that one group or another dislikes – including those who have had the most say in creating the rules. In the case of the National Organic Program this group has, without question, been the organic industry, including organisations such as the Organic Trade Association and the NOSB. Although the original NOSB recommendations were hard to recognise when translated into regulations, the first proposed rule diverged in only a few instances from the substance of those recommendations. Admittedly, the law contains problems and contradictions, but it has helped to introduce some key organic principles into our most powerful agricultural institution. No regulation is written in stone, and the opportunity to improve the existing rules remains open as long as those concerned continue to communicate and cooperate with the staff charged with managing and implementing this programme.

Sincerely,

Grace Gershuny  
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Barnet, Vermont, USA  
Faculty, Institute for Social Ecology,  
Plainfield, VT  
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## ORGANIC GUARANTEE SYSTEM CO-ORDINATOR

The Organic Guarantee System Coordinator (OGSC) will work as part of the IFOAM Head Office team in Tholey-Theley, Germany.

TASKS include, but are not limited to:

- Acting as secretary for the IFOAM Standards Committee and the Criteria Revision task force and ensuring proper communication and consultation with the membership
- Preparing board decisions in regard to standards and the IFOAM Accreditation Programme (IAP), including working up background reports in order to present written proposals to the IFOAM World and Executive Board,
- Being the resource person in IFOAM for all issues and requests related to standards, certification, accreditation and organic labelling regulations.
- Assisting members in the field of standards, certification and regulation (in particular in developing countries)
- Co-ordinating all kind of communications regarding standards and IAP
- Organising outreach and lobby activities regarding standards and IAP with NGOs and governmental authorities
- Organising standards and accreditation related events within and outside IFOAM
- Responsibility for producing materials and publications related to standards

## SKILLS & REQUIREMENTS

### Required

- Experience in standard setting, inspection, certification or accreditation, preferably related to organic agriculture
- Experience in lobby work
- Skills in administration (*e.g.* minute keeping, email communication, etc. )
- English and preferably another language (French, Spanish, German, ...)
- Computer experience, software knowledge (MS Winword, Excel, Access)
- Personal integrity & stability
- Writing skills

### Recommended

- Relation to an IFOAM member organisation/ IFOAM background

## CONDITIONS

- Full time position, based in the IFOAM Head Office
- Salary and other conditions will be negotiated depending on the background of the applicant; in the range of 40,000 Euro (gross) per year is foreseen
- Insurances through the German Social System (20% of the salary has to be paid for insurances, depending on the personal situation, another part is deducted for taxes), or equivalent
- The work should start as soon as possible.

IFOAM plans to move the Head Office within a year to a more prominent place within Germany, *e.g.* Bonn or a similar location

## Application

Applications should reach the Head Office by 15 February 2002.

The addresses of two referees should be submitted with the application.

IFOAM HeadOffice, Oekozentrum Imsbach, 66636 Tholey-Theley, Germany  
Phone +49-6853-919890 Fax: +49-6853-919899 Email: HeadOffice@ifoam.org

## *IOAS makes two appointments*

### **Assistant Programme Manager**

The recently advertised position of Assistant Programme Manager has been filled by Stephanie Goldfinch. Stephanie worked as the Certification Co-ordinator for National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) in the 1990s and was responsible during the initial evaluation of NASAA for IFOAM accreditation.

For the last few years Stephanie has worked with a team of environmental consultants, working throughout south-eastern Australia. Most of her work in this field has been programme evaluation for government bodies in agriculture and natural resource management. One major ongoing project is the development of an environmental audit and certification scheme for irrigation best management practice in the Murray-Darling Basin, Australia's largest river watershed.

### **Accreditation Officer**

Amaia Gondra has been appointed to the position of Accreditation Officer. Amaia is from Spain and trained as an 'Agrarian Engineer'. She studied in Spain, then completed her studies in Germany with her thesis on 'Consequences of the Council Regulation (ECC) No. 2092/91 in the development of the Organic Farming in the developing Countries'. Amaia has worked for certification bodies in Peru and Germany, and on an organic farm in Ireland. In addition to Spanish, Amaia has a good command of both German and English.

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All enquiries should be directed to the main office.

*The Organic Standard* is a monthly journal, available on the first week of every month. Copy deadline for initial enquiries is on the 15th of the preceding month.