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## Synabio replaces Setrabio-Bioconvergence

*On 15 January 2004 the Setrabio-Bioconvergence association was placed in official receivership. It is the sad end of a historical amalgamation of organisations of processors and distributors of organics products in France.*

**B**ioconvergence was created in 1998 through the union of three associations (UNITRAB, ABF and GET-ECO-BIO). SETRAB, renamed Setrabio in 2000, was created in 1983. All these not for profit organisations were organic certifiers before the EU Regulation 2092/91 and its implementation in France in 1993.

Merging in 2002, Setrabio and Bioconvergence was the only representative of the downstream of the organic chain, including small, medium and big companies. With eight employees, Setrabio-Bioconvergence conducted several activities within the organic movement:

- Promotion of organic agriculture and associated organisations. This task was conducted through press relations, exhibitions, web site, documentation, conferences, the informative operation 'Printemps Bio' (Organic Spring).
- Quality assurance development services, such as the implementation of studies on hygiene and traceability, and collaboration with labo-

ratories to develop methods of analyses, detection thresholds and control plans. In particular, for the last three years the organisation developed and managed Tracerbio, an important database for organic grain traceability via the internet.

- Active participation in the French 'Bio Agency'<sup>1</sup> and in the National Commission for Organic Regulation (Section Bio, CNLC). Setrabio-Bioconvergence has been associated with the development of many organics standards (rabbits, fish breeding, pet food, hygiene) and many reports (pesticides in organic products, mycotoxine).

The recent bankruptcy of Setrabio-Bioconvergence was caused by a combination of internal management problems, a cessation of public funds, and an insufficient number of members (in 2003 only 150 out of 5,000 certified processors were members). The situation was made even more difficult by an audit on France's organic sector, which was carried out last year<sup>2</sup>, that questioned the usefulness

The situation was made even more difficult by an audit on France's organic sector that questioned the usefulness of specific organic associations in France. ■