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Organic processing and quality low input food

The Quality Low Input Food Congress organised a meeting on 20 – 23 March 2007, in Stuttgart, Germany. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways of improving food safety when processing organic and other ‘low-input’ foods.

EU researchers attending the meeting also reviewed the progress of EU-funded projects set up to improve the sustainability of organic and low input food production systems.

Two underlying issues within existing organic processing standards were highlighted. These issues are:

- Many processing methods and additives are prohibited in organic standards, but some are permitted. As new processing technologies or additives are developed they have to be assessed for conformity with organic processing standards.
- The conflict between the desire to ‘minimally process’ food, in order to avoid negative effects on its nutritional and sensory quality, and processing considerations necessary for food safety considerations and to achieve a reasonable shelf life.

The overall aims of the EU projects are to improve quality assurance and supply chain management. How-

ever, the aims of specific projects are very variable, but include:

- Developing a working framework or code of practice that can be used to determine whether novel processing strategies are compatible with organic principles.
- Identifying whether consumer demands and expectations match organic processing standards and principles.
- Assessing processing technologies that may improve the nutritional composition of dairy products.
- Developing strategies to reduce costs along the food supply chain and a food safety protocol, manuals and training schemes for organic food production based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.
- Studying consumer perceptions, expectations and attitudes about the quality, safety and sustainability of low input food supply chains.
- Quantifying the effect of organic and ‘low input’ production methods on food quality and safety and human health. ■

Source: *FoodQualityNews.com*

For more information please see www.foodqualitynews.com

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