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Risk based inspections lead to more sanctions in the Netherlands

SKAL, the non-governmental organisation given governmental authority as the only certification organisation in the Netherlands, has published its annual summary of inspection and certification.

The number of operators certified by SKAL is fairly stable, but the turnover of producers is quite large: 93 farmers left certification while 100 new applied, resulting in a net increase of just seven.

In total, 3,993 inspections were conducted, including some 15%

unannounced inspections. Most operators follow the standards, but the number of non-conformities has increased markedly, from 147 in 2005 to 400 in 2008. This is due to SKAL taking a more risk-oriented approach, cooperation with other control authorities and reacting to external complaints.

SKAL is staffed by the equivalent of 20 full-time workers and uses contracted inspectors, corresponding to nine full-time workers. The turnover was 2.6 million euros. ■

US NOP is now Taiwan equivalent

After its original announcement of the equivalency of its organic regulations in 16 nations earlier this year, the Taiwanese Government, through the American Institute of Taiwan (AIT), added the US National Organic Program to the list on 18 March (see TOS 94).

The AIT's Agriculture Trade Officer will reportedly work with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) on creating a standard USDA export certificate for Taiwan. This will allow US exporters to provide the information required by Taiwan's Council of Agriculture (COA). Details on the import documentation and the contents

of export certificates will be made available soon.

This equivalency is a consequence of the introduction of Taiwan's new Agricultural Production and Certification Act (APCA), which come into effect on 31 January 2009 and gives special emphasis on the quality and labelling of organic food products sold in Taiwan. Products made and labelled before the effective date will be allowed to be sold in the market until 1 August 2009. ■

Source: *Organic Monitor*

For more information please see www.organicmonitor.com/asia.htm#1