

■ table of contents...

Updates & reports

EU and USDA organic trade disruptions expected 1

Country focus

Argentina: a country with prospects 4

Certification & accreditation

A new solution to certification transference 8

Organic Guarantee System marks its thirtieth year 11

Who certifies inputs? 14

Updates & reports

Britain wants to harmonise standards 16

Japan's production process managers and grower groups 17

Notice of two conferences 18

EU and USDA organic trade disruptions expected

EU import authorisations for products from the US/USDA accredited certifiers will expire on 20 October 2002, the day before the US National Organic Program comes into effect.

How will this impact organic trade in the two regions?

In a letter issued to all UK importers the United Kingdom Register for Organic Food Standards (UKROFS), the UK certification authority for organically produced food, informed importers of the following:

- All current authorisations from the US/USDA accredited certifiers will expire on 20 October 2002.
- Authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies that are already or are about to become fully compliant with the National Organic Program (NOP) may be withdrawn earlier than 20 October.
- Authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies that will be fully in compliance with the NOP after 21 October will not be extended until the equivalency assessment of the NOP has been completed.
- New authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies that are fully in compliance with the NOP will not be granted until the

equivalency assessment of the NOP has been completed.

- Decisions about authorisations for produce inspected and/or certified by bodies accredited under the NOP but who have private standards as well, will be made on an individual basis.

This action by UKROFS is not unexpected, and comes in anticipation of the US National Organic Program coming into full effect on 21 October 2002. Accordingly, all products labelled as organic in the US or imported as such into the US must comply with the NOP. The EU similarly requires products labelled as organic in the EU to comply with Council Regulation 2092/91 or an equivalent system for imports. Equivalency of the US organic standards with EU standards is currently not established.

The USDA, according to UKROFS, has applied to the European Commission for recognition under Article 11(1) of Regulation 2092/91. The EU, it states, is taking the

All products labelled as organic in the US or imported as such into the US will have to comply with the National Organic Program.

news shorts...

ORGANIC SUPPLEMENTS FOUND TO BE IRRADIATED

Irradiated herbs were found in 42% of the herb supplements tested by the Food Standards Agency in the UK, according to Natural Products.

Irradiation is not approved for herb supplements in the UK, only for culinary herbs. In addition, irradiation should always be declared on the labels. Also organic supplements tested positive, which represents a double fraud, as irradiation is prohibited in all organic standards. The manufacturers claim that they did not know that their raw materials were irradiated. A result of this observation is that manufacturers must improve their audit trails. The survey sampled 543 different products. ■

Source: Gunnar Rundgren

CONSUMERS CONFUSED ABOUT ANOTHER CONTAMINATION SCANDAL

A Belgium company called 'Bioland Liquid Sugars' caused a new scandal in some European countries. The company sold glucose treacle that had been contaminated with MPA, a sexual hormone. The treacle was destined for the production of beverages and feed products.

news short continues on page 3

opportunity to go further and negotiate a mutual recognition agreement. Reaching an agreement, however, UKROFS cautions, is still some way off.

Besides recognition under Article 11(1) as having an equivalent production rules and inspection systems, organic imports into the EU may also come through a provision known as the importer's derogation, which allows competent authorities of the Member States to issue import authorisations to importers who provide sufficient evidence that the imported products were manufactured to production rules and under an inspection system equivalent to those in the EU. The latter is currently used when importing products from the US.

European wide action

As the US situation formally changes on 21 October 2002, EU Member States are required to re-assess the equivalence of their current import authorisations. In its letter, UKROFS express the expectation that all Member States will advise their importers that 'All import authorisations in the EU granted for imports from the US and from US certifiers will expire on 20 October 2002.'

According to UKROFS, work on the assessment of the equivalence of the NOP has already begun. UKROFS states it is working closely with the Commission and its European colleagues to complete the work as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, it appealed to importers to appreciate the complex and time-consuming task and expressed that 'although every effort will be made to expedite the re-

assessment of equivalency, importers should be aware that it will take some time'.

Importers, wishing to extend the validity of their authorisations beyond 20 October 2002, as well as those submitting new applications or requesting amendments to existing authorisations will be subject to a process to establish to which standards the organic produce was and will be produced. Amongst others, importers will be required to provide the following information about the work of their third country inspection and certification bodies:

- Details of the standards to which the products will be produced and inspected after 20 October 2002. Full details should be provided on whether the NOP standards will be applied or whether there are any other different standards to those laid down in the NOP.
- Details of any changes made to the standards in the last two years.
- Confirmation that the inspection and certification body has assessed the equivalence of their standards to the EU standards and has found them to be equivalent. Details should be provided of how this assessment was carried out and the main areas where the standards differ.

Impact on trade

Trade between the two major markets, EU and US, constitute a significant share of international trade in organic products. Up to 11% of EU import authorisation issued in the year 2000-2001 (reported in *The Organic Standard*, May issue) was for products

The warning lights are on for a potentially serious disruption in international trade. ■

news shorts...

news short continued from page 2

Thousands of farmers and companies were affected. 'Bioland Liquid Sugars' does not produce organic products and is unrelated to Bioland, the German certification body.

Hundreds of worried German consumers called the German certification body to get more information. Bioland distributed a poster to 2,200 organic shops to inform the consumers that there is no connection between Bioland and Bioland Liquid Sugars. ■

Source: Gunnar Rundgren

NEPAL HAS ITS FIRST EVER PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIC STANDARDS

Nepal has just got its first ever set of Nepali private sector organic standards. They were adopted at a workshop held in Kathmandu, Nepal for organic producers and consumers to establish a fair trade network. The workshop also requested the workshop organiser, the Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Nepal (INSAN), to be the local certification organization. According to Govinda Sharma, Executive Director of INSAN, shops have started retailing organic products in Kathmandu and Chitawan. Mr. Sharma thinks INSAN will require about US\$1,500 to start up their local certification system. ■

Source: IFOAM-asia@yahoo groups.com

news shorts continued on page 5

originating from the USA. The warning lights are on for a potentially serious disruption in international trade in organic products on the implementation of the NOP on 21 October 2002 and thereafter. It will affect the international organic industry far beyond both sides of the Atlantic.

Import restriction on the EU side will affect products originating from the US as well as outside of the US. US products exported to the EU also consist of raw material from outside the US. Operators worldwide certified under the NOP by an USDA accredited body, will also face restrictions into the EU.

The requirement to comply with the NOP on the US side will similarly affect exports from the EU into the US. Operators in the EU, as well as outside the EU certified by EU bodies not accredited by the USDA, will face restrictions getting into the US market.

Interestingly enough, the disruption, based on a quick analysis, may be worse for EU exports into the US than US imports into the EU. The five main US certification bodies, that have been granted EU import authorisations for 2000-2001, *i.e.* QAI, CCOF, OCIA, OTCO and ICS (FVO), all have private standards. In addition, all five are on the USDA accredited agents' list (31 July 2002). As noted above, authorisations related to bodies accredited under the NOP which have private standards will be made on an individual basis. Presumably, business will proceed as usual in their cases.

On the other hand, only five EU-

based certification bodies are on the USDA accredited agents' list, *i.e.* BCS, Ecocert, IMO (Germany & Switzerland) and SGS. The UKROFS's letter mentioned that a couple of UK sector bodies have applied for USDA accreditation and UKROFS has also applied on behalf of the UK Sector Bodies.

Impact on certification

Until mutual recognition between the EU and US is established, it appears that operators with markets in both the EU and US will need two certifications. The situation places such operators, certified by a certification body operating only on the basis of the EU regulation or NOP standards, at a disadvantage. Their certification cannot facilitate access to both major markets.

Such operators will have to either sign up with another certification body for a second certification or switch to a certification body that is both accredited with the USDA as well as approved or assessed to be equivalent with EU regulatory requirements. Interestingly enough, for US certification bodies, equivalent assessment to the EU for import authorisation will probably be achieved faster through having private standards, something the USDA attempted to do away with. ■

*Ong Kung Wai
kungwai@tm.net.my*

For more information on USDA list check the website www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Accreditation/ListofAccreditedCertifyingAgents.htm

Until mutual recognition between the EU and US is established, it appears operators with markets in both the EU and US will need two certifications. ■

Argentina

A country with prospects

Argentina, located in the southern most tip of South America, has a surface area of 2.8 million square kilometres (about one third the size of the United States) and a population of a little over 35 million. With more than half of the population concentrated around Buenos Aires and other big cities, much of the country is virgin land or land that has only ever been lightly cultivated, and could be considered as naturally 'organic'.

Organic production is thus a logic option for the country. Unfortunately, this advantage is also a disadvantage. The conventional agricultural industry and economic leaders are concerned that organic production might cannibalise the already buoyant production of 'natural' products – especially beef – for which Argentina is so well known. In addition, the natural untouched, fertile conditions present tempting conditions for farmers to apply conventional agricultural technology in order to rapidly obtain very large yields. Consequently, huge amounts of synthetic fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides are now being used, along with modern extensive irrigation and fumigation methods, resulting in an immense increase in exportable agrarian commodities. In a country that has always been strong in agricultural exports and is hungry for foreign currency this is a very attractive state of affairs.

Notwithstanding this drive for production, over the last few decades several organic movements have appeared in Argentina. Many have grown haphazardly then disappeared only for the members to regroup into

new organisations. In 1992 the government authorities, supported by private business, developed the first national organic regulations and shrewdly obtained the enviable status of Equivalent Third Country in relation to the European Community organic standards (EEC Reg. 2092/91). Private certification agencies then operating under the auspices of an intelligent official agency, constituted the main push for the organic industry, which started to grow vigorously and is still growing.

A wave of enthusiasm that swept the organic movement, and a strong delegation attending the 1994 New Zealand IFOAM World Congress, led to Argentina being elected to host the 1998 Congress and General Assembly. Returning from that trip, the main characters in Argentina's organic movement decided to form an organisation whose role would be to prepare for the world event in Mar del Plata in 1998. Consequently, the Movimiento Argentino para la Producción Orgánica (Argentine Movement for Organic Production) or MAPO was created.

Since 1998, MAPO has continued its active promotion of the organic industry by coordinating the different areas of action such as production, information, certification, and marketing. Another industry organisation Argentine Chamber of Certified Organic Producers (CAPOC) attends to mainly the commercialisation area, helping its members to attend world events where the Argentine organic production is proudly presented.

Organic production and markets

Argentine organic production includes nearly all kinds of crops and livestock, with tropical products being the only major exceptions because of Argentina's mild but rarely completely frost-free climate.

The main destination of the organic products continues to be exports, with an insignificant – although slowly growing – internal market. Exports in 2001 were 48,000 tons with a value of US\$ 32 million. The European Union (80%), the USA (9%) and Switzerland (9%) were the main destinations specially for grains, oil seeds and fresh fruits, as well as some industrialised products destined to the USA. Other lesser destinations in volume include Japan and South East Asia (see tables below and overpage).

Argentina's organic exports

Year	Total weight		Financial return	
	Tons	% growth	US\$	% growth
1995	5,000		2,000,000	
1996	7,400	48%	7,800,000	290%
1997	12,600	70%	12,000,000	53%
1998	16,500	31%	14,000,000	17%
1999	25,280	53%	20,000,000	43%
2000	30,650	21%	30,000,000	50%
2001	48,000	56%	40,000,000	33%
1995-2001		860%		1,900%

news shorts...

PLANS TO BOOST ORGANIC VEGETABLES PRODUCTION IN VIETNAM

The agriculture service of Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) has come up with a scheme to increase the area under organic vegetable cultivation in the city from the current 50 hectares to 400 hectares by 2005.

To aid in the organic drive, markets are to be established in each vegetable-growing district to facilitate trade, and farmers provided with technical assistance and awarded certificates if they meet the hygiene standards set by the HCMC Plant Protection Bureau. 'We aim to gradually replace those market gardens which fail to meet these standards', deputy Service Director Pham Thuyet said.

Since all outlets are equally important, the service is working with 20 supermarkets to promote the sale of organic vegetables in a city that consumes an estimated 1,000 tons of vegetables each day, some 60% of this coming from other provinces. ■

Source: *The Saigon Times Daily*

news short continues on page 6

The main animal products are beef and honey, although last year's exports of the former fell abruptly because of the European ban to Argentine beef due to Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks. However, the intrinsic quality of the Argentine beef and the absolute absence of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) in the country makes this an irreplaceable product especially for the UK and other European countries, and the ban has recently been lifted.

In the last two years huge sheep farms in Patagonia entered organic conversion. Patagonian lamb is well known for its lean meat and excellent flavour due to the natural desert grasses they feed on. Wool is also of excellent quality, with some organic farms raising Merino breeds and Merino crosses; the cold Patagonian climate favours production of long fine staple wool and excellent structure of the fleece.

Presently, there are 1,664 certified farms in Argentina. In 2001 the area under organic management 1 reached close to 3.2 million hectares, of which just 225,000 was for vegetable production. The area under animal production is much larger than the area

use for vegetables due to the extensive nature of livestock systems, especially in Patagonia, where the desert conditions mean stocking densities of one sheep per 2-5 hectares are typical and 60,000 hectare farms are not uncommon.

However, in areas of the country where there are no livestock and the main production is sugar cane, fruit and vegetables farms are tiny, often just 0.5 – 2 ha. These areas have 43% of the country's organic farms, although they contribute just 0.14% of the total certified organic production.

Not all certified crops are harvested for the organic market. The reason is that a small internal market and a faulty export market chain often forces organic producers to sell their products as conventional. Fortunately this is now changing and a harvested area of 39,000 hectares in 2000 increased to 64,000 ha in 2001.

Cereals and oil seeds constituted 65% of the harvested area, industrial organic products (sugar, olive oil, wine, concentrated fruit juices and pulps) constituted 27%, vegetables and legumes including onions, garlic and asparagus were 3%, and organic fruits 4%.

Argentina's vegetable organic products exports (tons)

	EU	USA	Switzerland	Others	Total
Cereals and oil seeds	17,616.3	686.0	4,058.8	893.0	23,254.0
Fruits	12,316.3	2,601.0	0	20.5	14,937.5
Vegetables and legumes	2,819.0	69.2	0	13.4	2,091.6
Aromatics	17.6	1.4	0	0.4	19.5
Industrialised products	5,473.9	909.2	131.9	121.7	6,699.3
Others	180.9	0	0	0	180.9
Total	38,472.9	4,280.3	4,190.7	1,049.0	47,992.8

news shorts...

ORGANIC LIVESTOCK STANDARDS ON THE WAY IN JAPAN

The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) have announced that drafting activities for establishment of Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) for Organic Livestock Products and Organic Livestock Product Processed Foods started in July 2002.

People were invited to submit questions or comments on these activities to MAFF in July. Inquiries should be addressed to the Standards and Labelling Division of the General Policy Bureau, Tel: +81-3-3507-8592; FAX at +81-3-3501-0580. ■

Related Report: #5101-45 The Japanese Market for Organic Beverages

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan

MOST GERMAN CONSUMERS BELIEVE ORGANIC LOGOS TO BE CONFIDENCE-BUILDING

Two thirds of German consumers believe that the national organic logo 'Biosiegel' is a confidence-building measure, and 56 % trust the logos of the private certification bodies, according to a survey conducted by the

news short continued on page 8

Among the certified organic fruits, pears and apples take first place, followed by citrus fruits, grapes, plums, apricots and quince. Nuts such as black walnuts and almonds are produced in smaller amounts. The products that showed most export growth were the organic lemons, organic essential oils and organic grapes.

Among the organic arable products, the main crops are wheat, corn, oil sunflower and soybeans. There is a small but growing acreage of organic herbs and aromatic plants. Gathering of wild herbs also takes place, and in the last year the export of rosehips to Europe was an interesting activity in the organic field.

Up to now almost all of the organic olive oil has been exported to the USA. Recently, though, some has been distributed locally by a supermarket chain using its own brand.

Organic honey production showed a strong growth in the last year – 85% more beehives – supporting an active export market.

Standards and regulations

The first organic regulations for vegetables were set in 1992 by the application authorities, the National Direction of Quality of the Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Seguridad Agroalimentaria – SENASA (National Service of Agrifood Safety) inspired by and homologated to the European EEC 2092/91. In 1993 similar regulations for organic animal products were set and afterwards evaluated and homologated by the EU according to their (CE) Reg. 1804/99. Both regulations are periodically updated according to the new European additions and amendments.

Compliance with the organic rules is achieved through a combined private/public certification system. Certification agencies are private compa-

nies – both national and foreign – that must be registered with and accredited by the competent authorities and have an office and legal representatives and operational officers in the country. All certification bodies must have quality manuals and standards that satisfy at least the national regulations, and those authorised to certify exports must also prove compliance with the conditions covered by EN 45.011/ISO 65. Compliance with national regulations by both the operators and the certification agencies are constantly audited by the competent authorities. In turn, the country's compliance with the EU regulations is periodically audited by the European Commission. Being an EU Equivalent Third Country allows Argentina's registered and accredited certification bodies to issue certificates that are accepted directly by the European Union, and the products covered by them can be legally labelled 'organic' and circulate freely in all the EU countries.

Imported products must also be certified by the local certification system. This means that a product certified by a foreign certification company not accredited by the Argentine competent authorities must be recertified by a local registered company assuring that the national regulations are complied with.

At present there are thirteen certification bodies registered in and accredited by SENASA: nine for the certification of animal products, twelve for vegetable products, and some of them for both (although not all of them are active). All can certify for the internal market and for exports to non EU countries, but only three of them can certify for exports to the EU.

Two of the Argentine certification bodies are IFOAM accredited and signatory of the Multilateral Agreement, which means that their certificates are

accepted by all the other signatories. One of the two IFOAM accredited bodies is also waiting to be awarded ISO 65/EN 45.011 accreditation by an accrediting body member of the International Accreditation Federation (IAF). The reason for having both SENASA and IAF accreditations is that the former can only audit compliance with ISO 65 within the country, while the international accreditor can accredit compliance of the guide by the certifier beyond the national borders.

The Argentine government is applying through SENASA for equivalence to the US National Organic Program (NOP) rules and the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). Once these equivalencies are established, SENASA will be able to audit the local certifiers for compliance with their organic rules and regulations, and their certificates will automatically be accepted to allow the organic labelling of products covered by them in those countries.

Impact and perspectives

The future outlook of the Argentine organic movement is very good. Argentina has huge potential for converting large areas of land to organic production, and consumption of organic food in the developed world is constantly increasing. There are, nevertheless, some obstacles in the way.

First of all, the complications generated by the lack of an international harmonisation of organic standards creates a major impediment. For each particular political block to which organic products are to be exported, such as the EU, Japan, and USA, the corresponding equivalence must be proved and/or accreditation must be obtained. This is not only extremely expensive, but also particularly time and effort consuming.

Secondly, it is difficult to maintain a growing export business without the support of a healthy internal market. Together an internal and export market will encourage a fluid distribution chain, assuring an economy of scale that allows easy movement of products and funds to and from the adequate markets. For the development of Argentina's internal market a process of education of the local consumer is needed to make them aware of the benefits of organic products.

If Argentina's organic movement is to develop further it is also necessary for the present trend of producing just commodities to be overcome. It is imperative that Argentine organic operators become more involved with processing in order to generate added value. But for this it is necessary to have capital, an extremely scarce commodity in any developing country. Even if capital becomes available, it may be difficult to convince the developed markets to buy processed products; after all, the benefits of added value occur in whichever country does the processing.

Finally, Argentine organic producers and operators lack significant offi-

cial economic support to get into the business and start conversion. Some of the government offices supply minimal help through partially funding training and organising export missions. But there are absolutely no subsidies for converting to organic production or to lighten the burden of certification. Financial help for agriculture is not common in a country like Argentina where the political establishment is accustomed to making agriculture subsidise other activities. And to a government that is infatuated with first world technological advances, adopting production techniques that take a conservative approach to a self-sufficient and sustainable economy is not attractive.

In conclusion, Argentina is a country with tremendous potential for the development of organic productions. However, a number of economic, political and psychological problems need to be resolved, and for full development the consuming world needs to clarify exactly what is meant when by organic production methods. ■

Jorge O. Casale
e-mail: internacional@argencert.com.ar

Useful contact details

SENASA: Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Seguridad Agroalimentaria (National Service of Agrifood Safety) *e-mail: dica@inea.com.ar; website: www.senasa.gov.ar*.

Relevant sections of SENASA.

- Animal products: Dirección Nacional de Sanidad Animal (National Direction of Animal Health) *e-mail: senasadnsa@mecon.gov.ar*;
- Plant products: Dirección Nacional de Sanidad Vegetal (National Direction of Plant Health) *e-mail: ecosen@mecon.gov.ar*
- General agricultural information can be obtained from the Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, *website: www.sagpya@mecon.ar*

MAPO: Movimiento Argentino para la Producción Orgánica (Argentine Movement for Organic Production), *e-mail: info@mapo.org.ar*

CAPOC: Argentine Chamber of Certified Organic Producers, *e-mail: info@organico.com.ar*

news shorts...

news short continued from page 6

University of Hamburg. Consumers would like to have more information on standards and inspections and how to recognise organic products.

According to the representative survey, which is part of a research project, 'Extension of organic agriculture; conditions, strategies, implications, political options', 80% of German consumers are ready to pay a higher price for organic products: 41% would accept an increase of up to 30%, and 52% of consumers would an increase of up to 10%. ■

Source: SÖL/ww.biogum.uni-hamburg.de

IAF SECRETARIAT CHANGE

Following an earlier announcement of the retirement of its Secretary, Noel Matthews, the International Accreditation Federation (IAF) announced the appointment of Mr. John R Owen as Corporate Secretary of IAF. John Owen is an Engineer with many years experience in standards writing, including the QMS and EMS standards. He has been the Leader of the Australian Delegation to ISO/CASCO, dealing with Conformity Assessment since 1991. John Owen will begin working for IAF on 2 September 2002. ■

Source: International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) Secretariat

news shorts continued on page 10

A new solution to certification transference

Transferring organic products from the surveillance system of one certification body to another is a necessary part of any label system that claims compliance to a set of standards. In a world that is filling up with organic standards and criteria for operating certification bodies, achieving this transfer in an orderly and practical way has become complicated. The International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) offers a new solution.

The IFOAM Accreditation Criteria for bodies certifying organic agriculture and processing (1998 and the 2002 draft criteria) requires that accredited certification bodies assess equivalence of ingredients used by their certified operators that have not been certified by themselves. The criteria provide two methods of carrying out such assessments. They are:

- Approval of the certification body that certified the original ingredients.
- Approval of the ingredient itself.

The former method is currently known as certification transference, the latter as product re-certification. Certification transference is based on a thorough evaluation of the other certifier's system and allows for a blanket approval of ingredients within the scope of the equivalence. Once established, this is the preferred option in terms of integrity and practicality. Re-certification exists, even though it provides less assurance of integrity and is patently less practicable, because the establishment of certification agreements between certifiers has been harder to achieve than perhaps first envisaged.

Under certification transference the IFOAM Criteria require that ac-

ceptance of the other certification body is based on one of the following:

- A recent and adequate evaluation visit and report conducted either by the body granting acceptance or by a third party.
- IFOAM Accreditation.
- Any other accreditation system deemed equivalent to IFOAM Accreditation.
- The Programme may accept other programmes in the process of evaluation by the IFOAM Accreditation Program. (This option has been dropped from the new draft criteria expected to be published later in 2002.)

The first of the above options will be covered by this article.

The IOAS has become aware that the evaluation visit and report method of establishing equivalency, as described above, does have certain limitations. Evaluation by the certification body itself is problematic. Certification bodies are not accreditation bodies and do not necessarily have the appropriate skills for this work. Moreover, the evaluated certification body is likely to be reluctant to provide access to all necessary information to a body that may, in reality be a competitor. Finally, a report produced

- Although the certification body is being evaluated against the IFOAM Criteria, it is quite distinct from IFOAM Accreditation.

by one certification body may not be available to other IFOAM accredited certification bodies. This leads to repetition and unnecessary burdens on the evaluated certifier.

The alternative, that of evaluations being carried out by a third party such as another accreditation body or a government agency, are generally inadequate for the purpose as they normally address the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 65 and not those of the IFOAM criteria. In addition the reports are often not detailed enough to provide the necessary information for establishing equivalency.

As a result the IOAS has decided to include such evaluations as part of its services, and it now offers the so-called Certification Transference Evaluation to non-accredited certifiers.

What a certification transference evaluation is

A certification transference evaluation is an evaluation by IOAS of a non-IFOAM accredited certifier whose operators wish to supply ingredients or finished products to operators of an IFOAM Accredited certifier for further processing or for sale. The evaluation involves both a document review and a site visit that includes operator visits. Documents may be supplied in English, German or Spanish.

The scope of the evaluation is confined to assessment of compliance with the current version of IFOAM Criteria for Programmes Certifying Organic Agriculture and Processing. Production standards are not included in the evaluation as the assessment of the equivalency of the standards must

be against the standards being used by the accredited certification body, and this should be conducted by the accredited certification body itself. The scope of the evaluation will therefore be the application of the IFOAM Criteria as applied to certification against the standards being used by the certification body. In addition, the evaluation is confined to the certification of own products. This means that certification of products containing ingredients certified by other certification bodies are not covered by this evaluation. Section 14 of the current IFOAM Criteria is therefore not applicable.

At the end of the process, the certification body will receive a summary report based on the document screening and visit that indicates any noncompliances in relation to the IFOAM Criteria. The report belongs to the certification body and may be submitted to IFOAM Accredited certifiers for their individual equivalence assessment.

What a certification transference evaluation is not

Although the certification body is being evaluated against the IFOAM Criteria, it is quite distinct from IFOAM Accreditation. The main differences are:

- The evaluation does not include assessment of production standards against the IFOAM Basic Standards.
- The evaluation does not include products, or products containing ingredients that have been re-certified by the non-accredited certifier.
- Although the certification body may voluntarily undertake corrective

FLOW CHART OF CERTIFICATION TRANSFERENCE EVALUATION



news shorts...

CONFLICT BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES

An international seminar on 'International Organic Markets, Regulations and Sector Development in the South' was held on 12 July, in Bangkok, Thailand. One of the issues brought up at the meeting was on conflicts arising between the public and private sector initiatives.

An example of such conflicts discussed at the seminar is the rift between the Thai Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Thai organic movement. The DOA, which is setting up a government certification programme, plans to offer its service free of charge. The Thai organic movement believes that will undermine the private sector organic certification currently offered by ACT, a non-profit foundation set up by the movement. Interestingly enough, all of this is happening under the Thaksin government, which is supportive of the development of organic agriculture, as well as public-private sector partnerships.

The seminar was part of the Grolink international course on Organic Agriculture Development sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). ■

Source: Ong Kung Wai

news shorts continued on page 12

actions for any noncompliance uncovered, there is no obligation on the part of the certification body to do so, nor is there any ongoing surveillance from IOAS as there is under an accreditation contract.

- IOAS has no investigative powers (complaints, *etc.*) over certification bodies subjecting themselves to the Certification Transference Evaluation. Under an accreditation contract IOAS does have these powers.
- Evaluated certification bodies are not able to become signatories to the multi-lateral agreement on equivalence signed by all accredited certifiers and which simplifies trade between them all.
- Evaluated certification bodies do not have the right to attend the biannual meetings of the accredited and applicant certifier group.

How long does it last

The report is valid for one year from the date of issue of the final report, but the validity can be extended to a

second year subject to a satisfactory annual report from the certifier.

The Certification Transference Evaluation offers non IFOAM-accredited certifiers an independent evaluation of their systems against IFOAM Criteria that can form the basis of recognition by IFOAM Accredited certifiers and others. Its main advantage will be to eradicate the workload of case-by-case approvals under recertification and offer a basis for closer working relationships between certifiers. As all accredited certifiers find, a by-product of the process will be a detailed 'health check' of the functioning of any certifier's operating system – a worthwhile goal in itself. ■

David Crucefix
david.crucefix@terra.es

For further details please contact: IOAS,
118_1st Ave South, Ste 15, Jamestown,
ND 58401, USA. Tel: +1-701-252-4070;
Fax: +1-701-252-4124; e-mail:
ioas@csicable.net

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wishes to thank all those individuals and organisations who have contributed their time and energy to creating the IFOAM Accreditation Programme and making it THE Global Organic Guarantee.



To the next 10 years and beyond.

IOAS
118_1st Ave South, Ste 15, Jamestown, N.D 58401, USA
Tel: 1 701 252 4070 Fax: 1 701 252 4124
E Mail: ioas@csicable.net

Organic Guarantee System marks its thirtieth year

Over the thirty years since its founding IFOAM has established a world-wide communication and education network. It has also provided an international system that supports the trade of organic products – the Organic Guarantee System.

In early 1970s organic agricultural communities were emerging in several countries on a number of continents. IFOAM's founding members recognised the need of a communication network among these communities, and in November 1972 established the organisation for that purpose. In its 30-year lifetime, IFOAM has come to provide not only a network for communication and education, but also an international system that supports the trade of organic products. This system is known as IFOAM's Organic Guarantee System.

The first element of this international system was the IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS). The initial seeds of the IBS were sown in 1978, but after a long period of growth and development, and guided by the work of a technical committee, it came to real fruition in the mid 1980s. Since then the IBS have undergone periodic revisions, each of which have been approved by the IFOAM membership at bi-annual General Assemblies. By 1986 organic certification organisations were operating in Europe and North America, and were being established in Oceania. Meanwhile organic agriculture was starting to develop in Third World countries, providing opportunities for the local farmers and entrepreneurs to grow and trade organic products. The demand for or-

ganic certification systems to spread into these countries therefore became quite compelling.

IFOAM recognised the need for an international oversight system for the certification bodies and realised it had the opportunity to provide it. Thus, in 1986 IFOAM launched the development of an evaluation programme for certifiers. This phase led to the development of the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria (IAC) for organic certification bodies. The IAC were developed from the best practices known in organic certification, and from ISO Guidelines. The IAC and the IBS (collectively known as the 'IFOAM Norms') are the foundation upon which IFOAM's Accreditation Programme is built.

The first IFOAM Accredited certification body (ACB) was announced in 1995. In 1997, IFOAM founded the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) as an independent organisation to administer the IFOAM Accreditation Programme. Marking its tenth anniversary in 2002, IOAS accredits 18 certification bodies to the IFOAM Accreditation Programme, and is evaluating a further twelve applicants.

Recent developments in the Organic Guarantee System

By 2000 the basic structure of IFOAM's Organic Guarantee System was well established. More recently, IFOAM and the IOAS have focused on improving programme quality, and on maintaining the relevance of the private guarantee system in light of emerging public sector regulations for the labelling and trade of organic products. IFOAM has instituted several new policies and procedures designed to enhance the efficiency and professionalism of the Organic Guarantee System.

The following is an account of developments in the Organic Guarantee System over the past two years.

Developments in the IFOAM Basic Standards: Over the years, the role played by the IFOAM Basic Standards has grown and changed. IFOAM now not only provides guidelines for the development of new regional standards in many countries, but also offers a benchmark for the development of international guidelines, most notably the CODEX guidelines for the labelling of organic products. In order to meet demands, the IBS have developed over time into 'standards for standards.' This transformation is especially evident in the draft 2002 IBS. In this version each core section contains principles and guidelines, written in consistent 'advisory' style. Following the principles and guidelines, each section includes comments on standards that are always preceded with the clause 'Standards shall require that...'. This language reinforces the idea that the IBS is not a

IFOAM recognised the need for an international oversight system for the certification bodies and realised it had the opportunity to provide it.

news shorts...

WORKSHOP ON PREPARING TECHNICAL GUIDELINES ON TROPICAL FRUIT

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in collaboration with the Tropical Fruit Network (TFnet) held an Expert Group workshop on preparation of *Technical Guidelines on Organic Cultivation of Tropical and Subtropical Fruits* on 22-26 July, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The lack of clear practical information on organic husbandry methods for many tropical fruit crops was stated as the reason for the initiative. The workshop participants, including experts from Bangladesh, Cuba, Sri Lanka and Malaysia as well as from Germany and IFOAM, worked on the content requirement and publication plan for a series of technical guidelines for tropical fruits. Work plans for mango, pineapple and papaya guides were accomplished and others such as those for citrus and banana are expected to follow in the near future. The objective of the publications is to inform producers about the crucial issues (standards and agronomy related) that they need to consider when con-

news short continued on page 13

certification standard itself, but rather a master plan for the development of certification standards. Other key changes in the IBS were covered in *The Organic Standard*, issue 13, May 2002. The draft 2002 IBS are scheduled for approval at the IFOAM General Assembly in Victoria, Canada on 27 August.

Revising the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria: A major revision of the IFOAM Accreditation Criteria is currently reaching a conclusion. Developed in consultation with stakeholders by an IFOAM task force, the revised Criteria are scheduled for approval by the IFOAM World Board at its meeting in August 2002. The Criteria have been significantly reorganised into a more logical topic sequence. While this sequence does not follow that of ISO Guide 65, significantly more of ISO 65's content has been incorporated, written in a language that is compatible with organic certification. Most, but not all of the points in ISO Guide 65 are included. The task force concluded that the 'product' certification orientation of Guide 65 renders some points – those not included – inappropriate to organic certification.

Managing the development of IFOAM Norms: Late this year, IFOAM will implement a new structure for administering and continually improving the IFOAM Norms. A permanent Criteria Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the Accreditation Criteria and guide their periodic revision. A five member Norms Management Committee (NMC) will be also added to IFOAM's structure. This committee will set the agenda and schedule for

the revision of the IFOAM Norms, as well as oversee the work of the IFOAM Standards and Criteria Committees. The NMC will also monitor a number of new processes and procedures, which are described below.

Adding new work items for the IBS: IFOAM now has a formal policy and procedure for requesting expansion of the IBS to include into new areas, such as personal/body care products or pet food. Included in the procedure is a checklist of criteria for determining the worthiness of a new area for development within the IBS. Only IFOAM members may petition for a new area of interest to be added.

Interpreting the IFOAM Norms: IFOAM Accredited Certification Bodies (ACB) and the IOAS itself often have to grapple with situations in the accreditation process that require an examination of a specific certification standard or practice in the context of the more general IFOAM norm. The resulting interpretation of the standard can have significant consequences to an ACB and its certified clients. Formerly, requests from the certification bodies for interpretations had been handled by IOAS; however, the IFOAM Standards Committee was also often involved in cases involving the IBS. The authority for the final interpretation was not clear. The installation of the Norms Management Committee established a body that can undertake the final decisions on interpretation of either the IBS or the Accreditation Criteria. Once it is operational, the NMC will administer all requests from the certification bodies for interpretation of the IFOAM

The Criteria have been significantly reorganised into a more logical topic sequence.

news shorts...

news short continued from page 12

templating organic conversion of their estates/orchards or smallholdings. This is something that has been lacking for a long time, according to Cuban expert, Arnaldo Correa Martinez from the Instituto de Investigaciones en Fruticultura Tropical (IITF).

A public seminar on developing the organic horticulture industry, held in conjunction with the workshop was well attended by over 150 people from government as well as private sector bodies in Malaysia. ■

Source: Ong Kung Wai

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE CONTINUES TO GROW IN GERMANY

In 2001 organic agriculture grew by 15% in Germany. According to the *EU-Regulation on Organic Farming*, 14,703 farmers cultivated 632,165 ha of organic land. In addition, 802 companies were registered for processing of organic products in 2001, which is an increase of 21% compared to the year 2000. ■

Source: Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Nutrition and Agriculture (BMVEL)

The evolution of IFOAM's IBS into 'Standards for Standards' continues.

Norms, and working in consultation with IOAS and the IFOAM Standards/Criteria Committees, will be responsible for making the final decision.

Approving other standards: As the evolution of the IBS into 'Standards for Standards' continues IFOAM has been fielding requests for a very broad type of interpretation. This is illustrated by the question 'does our set of standards (when considered in their entirety) qualify as equivalent to the IFOAM Basic Standard?' In order to support the harmonisation of organic standards internationally, IFOAM has developed a policy and procedure to approve other national or regional standards as equivalent to the IBS. The final piece of this policy was recently set into place with the approval of criteria under which other standards will be judged as equivalent. According to this process the IOAS will identify the differences between the two sets of standards, and the IFOAM Standards Committee will evaluate the differences in standards against the Criteria for Variations. IFOAM is ready to implement this process and is accepting applications for approval of other standards.

Proposing to Improve the IFOAM Standards Setting Process: IFOAM members are currently considering a proposal to make some changes to the standards setting process. At present, the IBS may be changed only by a vote at the bi-annual General Assembly, or through an emergency standards setting procedure, which must be ratified by the next General Assembly. In 1998, the General Assembly directed the World Board to investigate

an alternative to the General Assembly process for standards setting. A subsequent proposal by the IFOAM World Board at the 2000 Assembly was only partially approved, resulting in the addition of the emergency procedure. The current proposal by the World Board incorporates enhanced procedures for consultation during the development of the standards, and provides for member motions and dialogue prior to a direct and final vote on standards via a ballot sent to the membership. A revision to the current procedure is becoming more important since the General Assembly will be moving to a three-year schedule after 2002. The 2002 General Assembly will decide whether to accept this proposal.

Prospects for the future

IFOAM's private organic guarantee system has been followed by the development of organic standards and accreditation schemes in the government sector. The question of how these systems should co-exist and how they might be harmonised is central to IFOAM's strategic planning. The IFOAM Harmonisation Conference, which was held in February 2002, introduced ideas and possibilities that will be further developed by IFOAM in cooperation with governments and other stakeholders. IFOAM remains committed to maintaining and strengthening the private organic guarantee system while opening itself to potential new roles and cooperative arrangements. ■

Diane Bowen
Organic Guarantee System Manager,
IFOAM
D.Bowen@iffoam.org

Who certifies inputs?

Intereco: The Spanish solution

How do organic farmers know which inputs they can use and which they cannot? Both private standards and government regulations publish generic lists of inputs that are allowed for use in organic farming. However, in most cases the ingredients of an input are not transparently declared. A fertiliser can be sold with just the declaration that it is an organic fertiliser and a biological control agent may only quote one active ingredient. In both cases the input may contain components unacceptable to organic farming. Companies are often not keen to disclose the exact contents of their products, and agents selling them may not know. So how can the organic producer find what they really contain or that they can be used in a certified production system? The ways of dealing with this problem are many. In some cases certification bodies seem to turn a blind eye to the issue and accept the unknown factor. Other certification bodies, such as the Soil Association (UK) and KRAV (Sweden), have comprehensive input verification or certification programmes, which allow inputs to be sold with their marks. OMRI in the US and FIBL in Switzerland offer another solution where the review of inputs is made by specialised institutes servicing a number of operators and certification organisations. Such a solution has now also been developed in Spain.

(For a better understanding of this piece, it is recommended to refer to the Country Focus article on Spain, published in *The Organic Standard*, issue 14, June 2002.)

Organic producers in Spain, as in many countries, have a problem finding out whether an input is acceptable for use in organic certified production. In Spain any product used as a fertiliser or pesticide must be registered by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture (MAPYA). However, MAPYA, which keeps separate registers for fertilisers and similar products and for pesticides, makes no distinction between products used in organic or conventional agriculture.

The process of registering a new product is expensive, prohibitively so for many products that are not sold in large amounts or have not been commercialised by a large company. This is particularly the case for pesticides. Registering a product as a fertiliser in Spain is not so expensive, but the whole process can take a long time, and certainly a minimum of six months. Consequently, products may

be listed in Annex II, A or B of the EU Reg. 2092/91 as permitted but will not be on the official register in Spain and are therefore unavailable for use by Spanish farmers. For example, there are currently only three micro-organisms, *Bacillus thuringensis*, *Granulosis virus* and *Beauveria bassiana*, that are registered for pest control in Spain; which means only these are available for use to all farmers, organic or otherwise.

There are some inputs listed in Annex II that do not need to be registered. However no list has been published informing growers which they are, and it appears MAPYA prefers interested parties to check the register first, then if the product is not included to ask MAPYA what its status is.

A further problem for organic producers is that the items listed in EU Reg. 2092/91 Annex II are referred to by their active ingredient, while prod-

ucts sold to the farmers often use just a commercial name. Thus, it can be quite confusing trying to identify what a product actually contains, and hence whether it is permitted. In addition, the EU Reg. 2092/91 is written in a language style that can be difficult to understand. For instance, it states 'Coming from extensive husbandry and only in the sense of Article 6 (5) of Council Regulation (EEC) 2328/91, as last amended by Reg. (EC) 3669/93 (2)', when referring to the type of manure that is permitted as fertiliser.

In Spain none of the Inspection Authorities (IAs) have a programme in place for certifying inputs, although they are obviously responsible for controlling the use that their licensees make of those products. Each IA is responsible for a specific region, and is therefore limited to that region with no opportunity to grow. This means

that there are many activities that the small regional IAs, often working with a minimum of staff, cannot undertake. In addition, sorting out all the queries from the licensees about what products they can or cannot use, and trying to control their use properly, has become a very demanding activity that takes up a lot of time. In an attempt to alleviate the problems several IAs set up 'Intereco'¹, a non-profit organisation open to all public IAs. Currently, ten of Spain's IAs are members, but several others are applying to become members. Although at its creation it was envisioned that Intereco would deal with several certification issues, it quickly became apparent that the certification of inputs had to be its first priority.

Certification of inputs by Intereco is voluntary, but it has been agreed that in the future the IA members will oblige their licensees to use certified inputs. Intereco has started creating all the necessary documents for certifying fertilisers, but it soon plans to be able to organise a certification pro-

gramme for pest and diseases control products as well. At the moment they have around a hundred applicants, ranging from farmers producing a bit of extra compost or manure that they want to put on the market, to companies specialised in the production or importation of agricultural inputs. Most of the applicants, however, are factories producing fertilisers. Intereco certification procedures are similar to the ones undertaken by the IAs. They are based on: application, inspection visit, contract, correction of possible non-compliances found, certificate and annual revision. There are other two main items that define the Intereco certification system: The Internal Quality Control System, which all potential licensees of Intereco are obliged to present, and the Technical Standards and Regulations, which must be followed by licensees. Products certified by Intereco must be on the MAPYA register and must also comply with the EU Reg. 2092/91. Intereco adds its own rules regarding labelling and pre-

cautionary measures for fraud control, plus any other additional measure or specific standard that Intereco may add in the future.

Originally, Intereco was depended upon annual contributions of the member organisations – there has been no financial support from the government. Due to these scarce resources, Intereco had to rely on voluntary work provided by some of its members. However, since its certification programme started the fees paid by the licensees have provided a new source of income. Intereco is a non-profit organisation, so fees are kept as low as possible, based on the turnover of the applicant and on the nature of the input certified, such as the number of products it is used in.

The aim of Intereco's certification programme is to certify inputs so that they are recognised by all the IA Intereco members as being acceptable for organic production. It is likely that the IAs that are not yet members of Intereco will also accept Intereco certified inputs. It is also possible that certified products will be recognised by organisations in other countries, and to facilitate this Intereco is willing to provide all the necessary information if requested by any IA from another country. Conversely, Intereco may accept the certification of inputs by other organisations; each one will be studied on case-by-case basis, initiated when an applicant presents a request. ■

*Nuria Alonso Villalón
nuria_alonso44 @ hotmail.com*

For further information, please contact the author or Javier Gutiérrez at Intereco, Artana 4 bis entlo B, 12005 Castellón de la Plana, Spain. Tel/Fax: + 34-964-32827; e-mail: jgutierrez2000 @ terra.es

¹ The full name of Intereco is Coordinadora de Certificación y Promoción Agroecológica – Intereco' (Certification Co-ordination and Agroecology Promotion – Intereco)

List of the Spanish Inspection Authorities that are current Intereco members

Name	Control Code	Region
Comité Aragonés de Agricultura Ecológica	ES-AR-AE	Aragon
Consejo de la Produc. Agraria Ecológica de Asturias	ES-AS-AE	Asturias
Consejo Balear de la Produc. Agraria Ecológica	ES-BA-AE	Balearic Islands
Consejo Regulador de la Agr. Ecológica de Canarias	ES-CA-AE	Canary Islands
Consejo Catalán de la Produc. Agraria Ecológica	ES-CT-AE	Catalonia
Comité Andaluz de Agricultura Ecológica	ES-AN-AE	Andalusia
Comité de Agricultura Ecológica de Madrid	ES-MA-AE	Madrid
Consejo de Agricultura Ecológica de Murcia	ES-MU-AE	Murcia
Consejo de la Produc. Agraria Ecológica de Navarra	ES-NA-AE	Navarra
Comité de Agricultura Ecológica de Valencia	ES-VA-AE	Valencia

Britain wants to harmonise standards

On 29 July 2002 a 21-point Action Plan to help the British home-grown organic food and farming sector was published. 'This is an excellent example of the whole food supply chain working together to develop a long term sustainable action plan for the organic sector,' said Elliot Morley, the British Organic Farming Minister

The action plan has been developed by a stakeholder group. Its primary objective is to stimulate the British organic sector. A particular concern in the UK is that only around 30% of the organic products sold in the shops are British as compared to around 70% for conventional foods. Not only is this contrary to organic aspirations for a closer consumer-producer relationship, it also means that British producers do not benefit from the increasing demand for organic food.

The Action Plan's major recommendations relating to standards, certification and regulation changes are:

A new Advisory Committee on Organic Food and Farming will be established by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) by April 2003. Its purpose will be to advise Ministers on EC organic standards, their application in the UK, the approval of organic certifying bodies and the on-going implementation of the plan. This new Advisory Committee that will replace UKROFS, the current public body in charge of UK standards, import approval, approval of certification bodies, etc. A further, more detailed, announcement regarding this committee will soon be made. This recommenda-

tion follows a similar recommendation made after a recent review of UKROFS. The decision regarding approval of certification bodies will be made by DEFRA, acting on advice of a 'certification committee', which should be understood as an accreditation committee, and which will not include any representatives of certification organisations.

There have been discrepancies between the EU regulation and UK standards, regarding both the public UKROFS standards and some private sector standards, such as the Soil Association. The Action Plan group recommends more harmonisation with the EU regulation. The public standard should only elaborate on issues that are not regulated clearly enough in the EU regulation. The plan acknowledges that organic certification bodies may want to have higher standards than the legal level but private certifiers will be obliged to offer certification to the base line standards. In addition, they may operate schemes with higher standards.

Most of the recommendations in the Action Plan are related to market development, research and general

policy. An enhanced Organic Farming Scheme, new research funding, and an undertaking by the major retailers to work with producers to increase the UK organic market are other components within the Plan. The Organic Farming Scheme should offer ongoing payments to organic farmers who have completed conversion, and should increase the conversion aid for top fruit production. It is coupled with an undertaking to develop new specific support measures for organic farming within the new agri-environment scheme (the agri-environment schemes are part of the EU Common Agriculture Policy).

An annex to the plan also contains an overview to what extent organic farming is superior to conventional systems in regard to environment protection. The conclusion is that in a typical situation organic systems are generally better, but there are a number of issues where there is not sufficient data to make any clear judgments and in regard to methane emissions conventional systems are thought to be better. ■

*Gunnar Rundgren
gunnar@grolink.se*

*The full report is found on
www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2002/organicahead.htm*

Members of the Organic Action Plan Group

Elliot Morley (Chairman): Organic Farming Minister; **Peter Melchett**: Soil Association (SA); **Lawrence Woodward**: Elm Farm Research Centre (EFRC); **Dominic Dyer**: Food and Drink Federation; **Catherine Fookes**: SUSTAIN; **Robert Duxbury**: UKROFS and British Retail Consortium; **Peter Whitehead**: IGD; **Tim Lang**: Centre for Food Policy; **Hannah Bartram**: Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); **Oliver Dowding**: National Farmers Union (NFU); **Oliver Harwood**: Country Landowners Association (CLA); **Julian Wade**: Organic Food Federation; **Christopher Stopes**: Organic Consultant and UKROFS; **Nic Lampkin**: Organic Centre, Wales

Japan's production process managers and grower groups

Inspection methods for Grower Groups have been the focus of many discussions as well as the topic of several workshops organised by IFOAM. In Japan the Organic JAS Law (Japan Agricultural Standards) has approached Grower Group inspections in a similar manner. As it is only two years since the Organic JAS system was introduced discussions regarding interpretation of law are still ongoing.

Production Process Manager and Grower Groups

In Organic JAS, certified entities are divided into the following four categories:

Production Process Manager (PPM): organisations that produce organic agricultural products

Subdividers: organisations that subdivide or re-pack organic agricultural products and organic processed products

In the future, there may be a need to harmonise the inspection requirements for JAS Organic PPMs with Grower Groups as done outside of Japan.

Manufacturers: organisations that process organic products

Importers: organisations that handle organic products from the countries that MAFF officially approved as having an organic certification system equivalent to Japan's JAS system

'Production Process Manager' or PPM, therefore, is the term for organic producers. Any PPM is recognised by Organic JAS as an organisation, and there are many cases of individual farmers applying for certification as a PPM. The proprietor of a PPM, even where it is a single farmer, is required to prepare an internal standard for 'Organisation Management'.

In Japan, the average farm size is about 1.5ha. Organic JAS does not require farmers to convert their whole property to organic, and many farmers have registered just a proportion of their fields for organic certification. For these farmers the financial burden imposed by the registration and the annual organic audit is very high. In response to this problem there is an obvious trend for Organic JAS to accommodate applications from groups rather than from individuals, thus decreasing the individual cost of certification.

Many of the groups applying for

certification were formed a long time ago, and their characteristics differ considerably. Some already had production standards, others were just gatherings of individual farmers that got together to reduce transport costs and to help with production. Considerable effort is required to build these latter groups into organisations that can be certified. They needed to prepare production standards within the organisation, build a communication management system, etc. Considering all the work necessary, in some cases it would have been more practical for the individual farmers to apply on their own.

Members of groups registered as PPMs are considered to be 'farmers' rather than 'growers' as described by IFOAM in its discussions on 'Grower Groups'. The inspections of PPMs differ to Grower Group inspections in that during an inspection of a PPM all farmers are interviewed and documents reviewed very carefully. However, PPMs from overseas applying for Organic JAS certification tend to be referred to as 'Grower Groups', made up of several hundred farmers. The inspections of these Grower Groups are based on Internal Control Systems, and in many cases not all the farms are actually checked by the inspector. In the future, there may be a need to harmonise the inspection requirements for JAS Organic PPMs with Grower Groups as done outside of Japan. ■

■ The proprietor of a PPM, even where it is a single farmer, is required to prepare an internal standard for 'Organisation Management'.

Mutsumi Sakuyoshi
RXH05004@nifty.com

Notice of two conferences

14th IFOAM Organic World Congress

21–24 August, 2002

Victoria, Canada

At the end of August the international organic community will be welcomed to Victoria in British Columbia, Canada for the 14th IFOAM Organic World Congress. The event will be hosted by Canadian Organic Growers and will highlight the role of organic agriculture in sustaining healthy, vibrant communities. The central theme of the congress is 'Cultivating Communities'. This will be divided into sessions on:

- Redesigning food systems
- Organic production methods and

- environmental responsibilities
- People and the process of change

The schedule of events is:

16-21 August: pre-congress tours.

20-21 August: 7th International Congress on Organic Viticulture and Wine.

21-24 August: 14th IFOAM Organic World Congress

24-25 August: 4th IFOAM Organic World Exhibition

26-28 August: IFOAM General Assembly.

The Registration Brochure and further information can be found on the Congress website: www.cog.ca/ifoam2002 or obtained from IFOAM 2002, c/o Building 20, 8801 East Saanich Road, Sidney, British Columbia, V8L 1H3, Canada. e-mail: ifoam2002@cog.ca

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Ecolabels and the Greening of the Food Market

7–9 November, 2002

Boston, USA

The conference will cover all aspects of ecolabels for foods and other agricultural products. The term 'ecolabel' will be interpreted broadly, meaning any label, such as 'certified organic', intended to convey that a product is preferable regarding either environmental protection, biodiversity and wildlife, animal welfare, social justice, local origin, or any other aspect of ecological and social sustainability.

The conference has been organised

in response to the rapidly growing use of ecolabels, which has raised several questions: How credible are they? How can labels motivated by *bona fide* environmental concern be distinguished from those that are just a marketing ploy? How well do consumers understand them, and how much confidence do they have in them? What are the appropriate roles of government and private organisations in setting standards and enforcing compliance?

For information on registration and hotel rooms, visit <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/conted/ecolabels>. For questions on registration or other logistical matters, please send an e-mail to ecolabels@tufts.edu. For questions regarding the program, please contact the conference chair, Willie Lockeretz (willie.lockeretz@tufts.edu).

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Main Office:

Grolink AB
Torfolk, 684 95 Höje, Sweden
Tel: +46-563-72345
Fax: +46-563-72066
e-mail: office@organicstandard.com

Editorial Office:

Sea Spring Farm, W. Bexington,
Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9DD
United Kingdom
Tel: +44-1308-897892
Fax: +44-1308-897735
e-mail: editor@organicstandard.com

Commissioning Office:

80 Lintang Delima 4,
11700 Penang
Malaysia
Tel: +60-4-6565873
Fax: +60-4-6563787
e-mail: assignment@organicstandard.com

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	1/8 page	100

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