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Dear friends of IFOAM EU,

As always, important times for organic food and farming are on the horizon. First of all we have all the practical regulation topics that are decided on by the Commission, almost always in close cooperation with IFOAM EU as the representative of the organic movement from Norway to Malta, from Ireland to Romania, from farmers to processors. As we have experienced, for example with the regulation on organic wine, it is not always easy to find common positions that satisfy all within the organic movement. But the will is always there and in the end we find solutions that are taken over by the Commission. However, final compromises on organic wine making were reached, the controversial level on sulphites limitation in organic wine were adopted as proposed in the position of the IFOAM EU Group and EOWC and final implementing rules were published at the beginning of March.

Our cooperation in IFOAM EU and the expertise of the whole IFOAM EU team in Brussels is the key to representing the organic sector on the top-level and to find the right answers on difficult topics. So for the coming period many new regulation topics are on the table, the feed awaiting SCOF decision, organic processing and organic poultry production discussed by EGTOP, and organic greenhouse production planned for end of the year. Organic processing is on the agenda and many activities are ongoing to provide support for the organic processing companies. The IFOAM EU Specialist Group Organic Processors (IFOAM EU SGOP) provided numerous inputs on these topics the during the past years and are planning to discuss with the sector at different events, the main being the IFOAM EU Organic Processing Conference planned for autumn in Frankfurt, Germany.

It is expect that the Commission Report to the Council and the European Parliament on the application of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 will be published in the coming weeks. This is going to open the debate on the evaluation and review of organic regulations and the European Organic Action Plan.

However, the IFOAM EU does not limit itself to lobby work on regulation issues. In the meeting of a delegation of IFOAM EU with EU Agriculture Commissioner Cioloş at Biofach it became clear for me again how important our work is for the political process around the CAP reform. Cioloş is convinced of the value of organic agriculture in regards to the sustainability goals of the EU. He wants to connect 30% of the direct support in the first pillar to “greening”, the adoption of a set of three measures for more sustainability in farming. In this framework he acknowledges the proven overall sustainability of organic agriculture by making it automatically eligible for the so called “greening”. Cioloş also expressed his interest to work further with the organic sector on the credibility of organic food. The quality and legal framework for controls must be further improved, in order to ensure consumers trust also in the future. Furthermore, he mentioned the aspect of extension of sustainability topics, such as energy use and social aspects under the organic regulation. Personally I am convinced that we have to develop both aspects.

Regarding the sustainability topic, the proposal of DG Environment to introduce Eco-labeling on food products is expelled for a year and it is up to us to show that organic adopts other sustainability topics. There is clear evidence that the consumer would not understand the difference with organic. And we have good friends here: also the conventional food industry is not waiting for Eco-labeling on food.

So, besides the short term topics, more than ever we have to focus on the future developments of organic farming and food. The important IFOAM EU conferences in April and November give you the opportunity to take part in the co-creation of that beautiful organic future.

Bavo van den Idsert
Vice President
IFOAM EU Group
One week until the Congress!

The Congress is just a week away and everything is wrapping up for the final stretch. The Congress programme and workshop sessions are finalised and the excursion fully booked! High level speakers have confirmed their place at the 6th European Organic Congress. Jerzy Bogdan Plewa, the newly appointed Deputy Director General of DG Agriculture will review the European Commission’s CAP proposals towards 2020 during the high level policy makers panel on April 17th. Joining the panel will also be the EU-advisor from the Danish Ministry for food, agriculture and fisheries, who will discuss the Danish EU Presidency’s goals for the new CAP.

The 6th European Organic Congress “Smart change - towards a sustainable CAP” comes at a crossroads in evolving European policy landscapes with the current debate on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a health-check of the organic regulation three years after its implementation and the launch of a discussion paper on Sustainable Food Production and Consumption to be expected in spring 2012. These major events will be addressed during political and expert plenary sessions and six workshops on the first day of the congress (17 April) which will provide a great opportunity to the organic sector to feed in the discussions.

In the workshop on promoting sustainable and healthy food, the European Commission will outline its upcoming Sustainable Food Strategy, due in 2013. The discussion will be completed by speakers from consumers’ and public health organisations providing good examples of information provisions and promotional measures. The second session of this workshop will examine how public procurement can contribute to increased sustainable food consumption with examples from Denmark, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

On 18 April, the Congress will be concluded with a final panel, kick-started by a key note speech from Ybele Hoogeveen from the European Environment Agency providing an economic outlook on the rentability of sustainable food systems towards society. Speakers from very diverse backgrounds, including the European Commission, farmers’ unions (Copa-Cogeca and European Milk Board), scientists, public health and environmental organisations, and the organic sector will give their insights on this topic.
**Political Hot Spot**

**Dear Commissioner, after more than 3 years negotiations the organic wine rules were finally approved. How do you feel?**

**DC:** I am delighted that we have finally reached agreement on this dossier, as it was important to establish harmonised rules guaranteeing a clear offer to consumers. I am pleased that we emerge with rules which make a clear difference between conventional and organic wine – as is the case with other organic products. As a result, consumers can be sure that any “organic wine” will have been produced using stricter production rules.

**What did you experience as the biggest challenge in the negotiations for organic wine rules?**

**DC:** Negotiations are frequently difficult, especially if it means that some producers have to adjust their existing practices. And naturally these were the most difficult issues. But this underlines all the more why it was important to define rules now rather than delaying it for a few more years – so that producers can now invest in greater security that they respect the harmonised EU rules. It was of extreme importance for me that we maintained the high production standards of the organic sector. Risking these would have meant risking the credibility of the entire sector as such.

**How would you react if some member states would provide evidence after a few years that they cannot cope with certain restrictions? Will there be a monitoring of the implementation of the new rules?**

**DC:** Firstly, based on the ORWINE study and other preparatory research, I believe that the new rules are realistic and possible to implement. The organic wine rules are a good, workable baseline for winemakers, but we know that some organic winemakers may even go further in their restrictions in producing special organic wines. Let me just add that the new rules contain a set of flexibility provisions for exceptional weather circumstances, which may help the wine-makers react in difficult times. As with all EU legislation, the rules are never written in stone, and can be adjusted in future if really needed. Certain practices and the use of some substances will be reviewed in 2015, this will allow to have a closer look on how the new rules are applied and what experience wine-makers will get in the next 3 years. Rules may also be improved and adapted when there is technical development in certain practices. However, we will remain absolutely firm on the importance of following the objectives and principles of organic production. On monitoring, the implementation of the new rules is the responsibility of the Member States, which will monitor and report to the Commission.

**You stated that we now have "... rules which make a clear difference between conventional and organic wine". Where do you see the most important differences?**

**DC:** Organic wine should be as natural as possible: and we have elements of that in all aspects of the new rules – in the use of organic grapes, sugar and must, but also now in the wine-making practices permitted. Whether in the level of heat treatment, the degree of filtration or the number of substances allowed, the organic rules are clearly stricter and more natural than in conventional wine making. Some reactions have paid particular attention to the ban on sorbic acid or the lower levels of sulphites – and the fact enzymes or yeasts derived from GMOs may not be used – but for me the most important thing is that we now have clear, harmonised rules, which will allow EU "organic wine" to find its rightful place on the market, not only in Europe, but worldwide.

*Interview continues on next page*
**1. News/ Updates of IFOAM EU Working Fields**

**Political Hot Spot**

*Interview with Dacian Cioloş continued...*

What will be the rules for wine produced outside the EU? Will they have to respect our norms? Looking in particular to latest agreement with US.

**DC:** As for all other organic production rules, the equivalence of wine production standards from non-EU countries will be assessed. Where it is concluded that standards are equivalent, the wine will be able to be imported into the EU as organic wine and carry the EU logo. Where it is concluded that standards are not equivalent, the wines from that third country will not be able to be imported into the EU with a reference to organic production. The Commission intends to assess the equivalence of the wine rules of the third countries that request it as soon as possible. At the same time, the Commission will seek to ensure that the third country accepts the equivalency of our EU organic wine rules. As a general rule, the labelling rules of the country of destination apply.

As regards the US, the equivalency arrangement was finalised before the EU had finalised its wine rules. Therefore the organic wine standards will be discussed between the two partners in the coming months.

Do you think that the new rules will result in an increase in wine sold as organic? What’s your estimation as to what the relation between organic and conventional wines in regards to quantities sold will be in the years to come?

**DC:** Yes. Based on the increase in vineyard conversion in recent years, we estimate that there will continue to be a rise in the volumes of organic grapes. Furthermore, there have been indications from the sector that some producers were holding back on new investment and marketing until they had the political and legal certainty about EU rules for organic wine.

From an EU perspective, there has been strong consumer recognition of the EU organic logo – introduced in July 2010 – and so we feel that this will also provide a boost to would-be producers.

I don't want to make any predictions for how the market might develop – other than to say that we need to improve the quality of the available statistics, so that we can genuinely quantify the growth in the coming years.

**New rules for organic wine making published!**

On the 9th of March 2012 the European Commission published new implementing rules on organic wine processing as REGULATION (EU) No 203/2012 allowing wine to be called organic and to be labelled with the new EU organic logo. These rules will be in force as of 1st August 2012.

Before that date, there have been rules only for grape cultivation but not for the organic wine processing. The wine made of organic grapes could be only labelled as “from organic grapes”.

It took harsh negotiations between stakeholders and policy makers before those rules were approved by SCOF (Standing Committee on Organic Farming). The process already began in 2006 with the ORWINE project whose experts managed to agree on technical details by 2009. That year, with the conclusion of the ORWINE project negotiations started with the European Commission. In June 2010 the proposal was withdrawn by the Commission due to controversy about sulphites level. After a call by the sector to restart work, processes were initiated in July 2011. Finally, the approved compromise on sulphites levels was taken up from the IFOAM EU Group and the EOCW (European Organic Wine Carta) proposal. The compromise outlined that sulphites reduction are dependent on the wine type and content of the residual sugar.
1.1 Organic Regulation

New rules for organic wine making published! (Continued)
These new rules certainly form the best possible political compromise. They give credible organic rules to the whole of Europe which prevents distortion of competition and allows the production of a wide range of organic wines in different climate zones.

Aquaculture
In 2011, the European Commission adopted proposals for new regulations on Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and on European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). For the first time ever, aquaculture plays a very prominent role in the European fisheries policy. The Commission recognises the insufficient development of European aquaculture production while EU fish consumption is increasing year after year. The proposed regulations should ensure aquaculture activities that provide long-term sustainable environmental, social and economic conditions and contribute to the availability of food supplies. Related to organic aquaculture, the Commission proposes to include support for organic aquaculture under the EMFF: the conversion from conventional to organic production, for the improvement of conditions for placing organic products on the market and investments in processing of organic aquaculture products.

On March 7, EU Commissioner on Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, presented the CFP proposal during the conference “Aquaculture in the CFP reform” organised by the European Parliament. She stated that sustainability will be the backbone of the new CFP and organic aquaculture should therefore be recognised and promoted as a good practice to achieve sustainability goals.

Commissioner Damanaki also responded to MEP Struan Stevenson’s proposal to introduce an EU Ecolabel for aquaculture products that comply with European standards stating that an EU Ecolabel is causing legal problems and referring therefore to the organic regulation. All presentations from the conference can be found here.

Furthermore, the IFOAM EU Group has been recently informed by several organic stakeholders about the improper use of terms referring to organic production in promotion campaigns of the aquaculture standard and labels (e.g. ASC - Aquaculture Stewardship Council). The IFOAM EU Group will further investigate this issue and is open for consultation when uncertainties or doubts on the status of sustainable food standards and their labels appear.

More information available here
EUEB postpones decision on EU Ecolabel for food, feed and drinks

On March 8, the European Union Ecolabelling Board (EUEB) decided not to support the development of EU Ecolabel criteria on food, drink and feed in the immediate future. The decision is based on the findings of a recent feasibility study on this issue that revealed the high costs and difficulties of an EU Ecolabel for food, including broad stakeholder opposition and consumer confusion. However, this does not mean that the EUEB will withdraw the idea of an EU Ecolabel for food. The EUEB believes that consumers need to be much better informed about the sustainability of their food. One approach that the EUEB considers is to extent the scope of the organic Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 to cover the whole life cycle of food products, including processing, packaging and distribution. Therefore, the EUEB calls to re-open the debate on the Ecolabel for food after the publication of the EU Commission Communication on Sustainable Food, due in 2013. Meanwhile, the EUEB stressed that this decision has no impact on the development of Ecolabel criteria for retailers and other food related services, such as restaurants and catering. The official position of the EUEB will be made publically available in April.

"Product from my farm"

On 15th March 2012, Dg AGRI - European Commission, organised a third and final working group workshop called, "Product from my farm" for experts within that field. Thomas Dosch, Vice-President of IFOAM EU Group, has been participating in this workshop as an expert from the IFOAM EU Group.

The main issue discussed was the construction of a label "product from my farm" to create better transparency of local products for the costumer.

The final findings have been discussed at the meeting of the Advisory Group on Quality Production on the 23 March, where our member Anamarija Slabe represented the IFOAM EU Group.

The topic will be also discussed at the Commission Conference on "Local agriculture and short food supply chains" in Brussels, Friday 20 April 2012.

Click here for more information
Organic Marketing Forum 2012

During the Organic Marketing Forum (OMF) in Warsaw, the IFOAM EU SGOP (Specialist Group Organic Processing) will organise a workshop on organic processing and pesticides Monday May 7th with the title “Let’s work together: Politics for organic companies in Europe - Cooperation in this expert group and discussion for the regulation of organic processing and pesticide residues”. The IFOAM EU Group approaches towards the development of the regulation for organic processing and the IFOAM EU Group “Guideline for Pesticide Residue Contamination for International Trade in Organic” will be discussed.

More information about workshop

Please register at OMF: www.organic-marketing-forum.org

New organic feed rules

The Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF) approved new organic feed rules on 30/31 March. The SCOF has approved the latest Commission proposal with minor changes. Approved rules include i.e. maximum percentage of 5% non-organic protein feed for pigs and poultry production applying retrospectively as of 1st January 2012, at least 60% of organic feed from the farm unit itself in the case of herbivores and 20% for pigs and poultry, special conditions for organic bees, reworded rules for feed labelling and updated list of feed ingredients.

Furthermore, the exceptional rule for using non-organic 18 week pullets for laying hens has been prolonged. Additionally, rosemary as food additive has been added to the organic implementing rules to be used only when derived from organic production without any further specification for production.

New rules await publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. More information on organic feed can be found on the IFOAM EU website, where final version of approved rules will be soon available here.

Expert Group on Technical advice on Organic Production (EGTOP)

In December last year the Expert Group on Technical advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) published two new mandates to provide technical advice to the European Commission. One mandate is on organic poultry production and is mainly related to housing conditions and stocking densities, while the other is on the inclusion of certain food additives and processing aids in Annex VIII of Regulation (EC) No. 889/2008, including e.g. steviol glycosides, bees wax, ozone, sodium carbonate and ion exchange. The EGTOP will now work in subgroups on both issues and adopt a report by 21 June.

Based on EGTOP’s advice the European Commission recently sent a working document to the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF) on amending Annex I (fertilisers and soil conditioners), Annex II (plant protection products) and Annex XII (documentary evidence to the operator) of Regulation (EC) No. 889/2008. The EGTOP reports on these topics and other information can be found at the IFOAM EU Group website.
1.1 ORGANIC REGULATION

NATRUE Conference on fragrance allergens
On the 21st March, the natural cosmetics label association NATRUE organised a membership assembly and seminar about fragrance allergens in Brussels. NATRUE is the biggest European natural cosmetics association and also works together with IFOAM EU Group in order to exchange opinions and achieve common goals.

During this conference the impact of the SCCS (Scientific Committee of Costumer Safety) opinion on Fragrance allergens has been demonstrated. There has been an exchange of facts on allergens provoked by cosmetics and discussions about further policy steps to support the market of natural cosmetics.

The IFOAM EU Group is very happy about the concise discussion with the NATRUE members and wishes to strengthen our relation with the aim of bringing out a satisfying European regulatory framework for both producers and consumers.

1.2 ORGANIC POLICY
Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

A strong second pillar for the new CAP
“The CAP represents around 40% of the EU budget, paid by taxpayers of Europe. These funds must be invested in the future”, said Danish Minister Mette Gjerskov at the March 2nd conference “The new CAP: the right path to sustainable farming?” organised by EEB and Birdlife. The conference took place in Copenhagen in cooperation with the Danish EU presidency, and speakers presented policy demands, insights into the debates taking place in the Council and Parliament as well as concrete examples of best practices on farms. IFOAM EU policy manager, Antje Kölling, emphasised in her speech that the CAP needs a strong second pillar, a clear focus on environmental targets within the rural development programmes as well as ambitious support, using a set of measures to make the best use of synergies, to support conversion to and maintenance of organic farming. During the event, a short video on the greening of the CAP setting the facts as to why European agriculture must move towards more sustainable farming practices in order to ensure long-term food security was launched.

Emphasis on key bilateral trade agreements at new CAP advisory group
Bilateral trade agreements were the main topics for discussion at the first meeting of the advisory group on international aspects of the CAP which took place on the 12 March. While Commission officials took the opportunity to outline the interplay between the CAP and EU Policy Coherence for Development, trade agreements remained the key points of discussion. The new advisory group, attended by IFOAM EU, is welcome recognition of the need to continue to address the impact of EU farming policy in developing countries and take in account the views of all stakeholders including members of civil society.
Next 50 Years of the CAP must link sustainability, fairness and health

The future CAP must clearly connect direct payments with the delivery of environmental public goods, according to the President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Staffan Nilsson. Speaking at the 2-day EESC conference, which brought together key representatives from EU institutions, stakeholder organisations and members of civil society to mark 50 years of the CAP and its role in the future, Nilsson contended that environmental measures must take a dual approach to enhancing environmental and economic performance. He also questioned the acceptance of cheap imports from third countries which may not meet comparable standards. The conference, attended by the IFOAM EU office, also included a presentation by Robert Pedersen of the European Public Health and Agriculture Consortium who called for an integrated approach to food and farming which reconnects consumers with agriculture and taking into account equity, health and sustainability in order to build more resilient food systems. Pedersen will speak on the promotion of sustainable and healthy food consumption at the 6th European Organic Congress in Copenhagen.

NGOs call for CAP to promote the cultivation of leguminous crops

A group of environmental and development NGOs and food and farming organisations, including IFOAM EU, have called on MEPs in the European Parliament’s Agriculture and Rural Development committee to support measures to increase the cultivation of protein crops for animal feed in the EU. The co-signed letter sent by the Belgian NGO Wervel, outlines the need for CAP reform to confront the EU’s reliance on the imported protein crops, which impact negatively on the environment and to promote leguminous plant cultivation in order to help reduce production costs for farmers and increase environmental performance.

Effective implementation lacking on environmental legislation

With effective implementation identified as a key priority for the next 7th Environmental Action Plan (EAP), the Commission has called on member states to ensure that all environmental law is carefully and comprehensively implemented at national, regional and local levels. In a communication published on the 7 March, the Commission outlined that poor or non-implementation of existing environmental law costs the EU about 50 billion euros annually and that more needs to be done to enhance knowledge on implementation in order to improve the delivery of benefits derived from environmental measures.

Climate Change

Plans announced to bring food and forestry into the EU’s Climate Change policy

The Commission has announced plans to integrate the agriculture and forestry sectors into the EU’s Climate Change policy. A Communication published on the 12 March, led by DG Climate Action, identifies the development of common accounting rules, as the first step to incorporate the sector into the EU’s climate commitments. A proposal for a decision has also been put forward to build a dedicated legal framework outside the European Emissions Trading System (ETS). Accounting rules would require farmers and forest managers from 2013 to report changes in land management that could lead to the release of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Furthermore, member states will be obliged to adopt action plans setting out how they will maintain or increase the removal of carbon and reduce GHG emissions in the called so land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector. The decision also refers to the important role the CAP post-2013 can play in providing adequate tools and incentives.
Concerns raised about the spread of maize pest and pesticide use
IFOAM EU and a number of environmental NGOs have called on the European Commission to take decisive action to prevent the spread of the maize pest western corn rootworm, Diabrotica virgifera virgifera Le Conte. In a press release responding to moves by DG Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) to get rid of the current plant health protection system, NGOs stated that such a decision would be more likely to accelerate the spread of the pest and increase the use of pesticides. Instead the EU must take proactive approaches to confront this pest by introducing mandatory crop rotation under the new CAP, moving towards integrated pest management as set out under the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive and effectively developing and applying appropriate agronomic measures through the new European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Agriculture.

New studies confirm neonicotinoid pesticides affect bee health
Neonicotinoid pesticides subtly affect bee development and may be responsible for falling bee populations according two separate studies called out by researchers based in Scotland and France.

Public hearing on GMO monitoring
Current GMO monitoring is not sufficient to evaluate the broader impacts of GMO cultivation, was the conclusion of the more critical voices on the European Commission hearing on environmental monitoring of GMO crops on 29 March. The session video is available online.

The Current GMO monitoring is not sufficient to evaluate the broader impacts of GMO cultivation on landscapes, extra costs of non-GMO farmers and beekeepers, as well as on consumers, were some critical remarks. The IFOAM EU Group representative asked the representative of Monsanto how they can claim that 3000 ha MON 810 maize would grow each year in Poland, while the Ministries in charge do not know about this fact, but at the same time state that they do proper monitoring of all GMO crops they release in the EU. To know where GMOs are grown is not only a minimum requirement for monitoring, but also for organic and other GMO free farmers in order to prevent contamination. The speaker of Monsanto rather went around a clear answer, whereas some voices from Poland suggested that the number of 3000 ha was extremely exaggerated. The Commission is now working on an assessment of options and will come up with a recommendation for a harmonisation of national registration systems probably by the end of 2012.
1.3 EU Research Policy/ TP Organics

**ITRE Committee Hearing on Horizon 2020**
*(20.03.2012 at the EU Parliament):*

*TP Organics was there!!*

European public research for 2014-2020 will be funded under the framework programme Horizon 2020, which will invest 86 billion euro on different areas and priorities. In addition to the agricultural sector per se, some funds lines of Horizon 2020 specifically focus on sustainable and organic agriculture. Indeed, in the category "Societal Challenges", Horizon 2020 provides research priorities on "Efficient use of resources and climate change" and "Food security and sustainable agriculture", priorities that affect the agro-ecosystems such as the organic.

The budget for each research area is already proposed, but the European Parliament is still discussing the criteria to guide funding within the individual sectors and priorities. Regarding this debate Cristina Micheloni (vice president of AIAB-Associazione Italiana per l’Agricoltura Biologica) and Claudia Neubauer (Science Citoyennes Foundation) both member of TP Organics (European Technology Platform for the organic food and farming), yesterday attended the hearing of the ITRE Committee (Industry, Research and Energy European) at the European Parliament as speakers, submitting requests and proposals of the organic world on the use of funds for research and innovation in agriculture. This has been an important goal for TP Organics and the whole organic sector!! Our speakers have outlined that public funding for agricultural research should be spent to meet the challenges of collective interest. On this regard, organic farming is the agricultural model that can better respond to needs such as the efficient use of natural resources, the agro-ecological balance and the adaptation to climate change. Therefore, the achievement of food security through sustainable production models should have special attention from public research, focusing on biological and agro-ecological systems, rather than agro-industry. With this aim, TP Organics is also continuing to meet the rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs of Horizon 2020 in order to convince them to support the “organic cause”.

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Dr. Claudia Neubauer, Fondation Sciences Citoyennes  
Cristina Micheloni, AIAB vice-president
2. IFOAM EU Group Internal Updates

IFOAM EU Group Goes to Rio +20
The IFOAM EU Group office is taking part in the IFOAM campaign "Organic without Borders - A global journey to sustainable livelihoods" in support of sustainable development and an united organic world as RIO+20 approaches.

The IFOAM EU Group office took part in the ceremonial event by sending off a lantern from the Brussels office. Numerous partner organisations also took part in the event and can also be found on the IFOAM campaign blog.

To view photos and videos of the event visit the IFOAM EU Group blog contribution of the IFOAM website.

Click below to view the video!

Presentation of new Scientific Coordinator
Bram Moeskops holds a PhD in Applied Biological Sciences and an additional master in International Relations and Diplomacy. The topic of his PhD was the impact of organic and conventional agriculture on soil quality in Java, Indonesia. After leaving university, he worked as a staff member sustainable agriculture at the Flemish Platform on Sustainable Development and afterwards as a staff member sustainable development at 11.11.11, the umbrella of the Flemish North South movement.

Bram will take on the role of Scientific Coordinator beginning in April and will be responsible for assisting in the conception of positions in the area of EU research policies, raising the scientific profile of IFOAM EU and TP Organics and coordinating the activities of the research technology platform.
IFOAM WEB: Company of the month

Aloja Starkelsen

Founded in 1991, Aloja Starkelsen Ltd. is a Latvian-Swedish joint venture company and the first food enterprise in Latvia with foreign capital. Potato starch factories have been operating in the Northern part of Latvia close to the town of Aloja since 1937, and Aloja Starkelsen has inherited the valued traditions, knowledge and expertise from the region. Today it is the largest potato starch producer in the Baltic States.

Lyckeby Culinar is a Swedish company that owns a Latvian subsidiary, Aloja Starkelsen, a supplier of dry and liquid seasonings and blends; natural and modified starches; and potato fibres.

In 2009 Aloja Starkelsen began producing organic potato starch, and during the past few years the production has grown rapidly. This is connected to strong relationships between the factory and the organic farmers in Latvia and Estonia. At the moment, Aloja Starkelsen is the second largest producer in Europe, exporting products within the EU and to the USA.

There are about 50 employees at Aloja Starkelsen Ltd and turnover was 2.1 million (Lats) in 2010.

Product of the Month

Aloja Starkelsen Organic potato starch is produced exclusively from potatoes grown on organic farms within the Baltic region – Latvia and Estonia!

Gluten-free organic potato starch is ideally suited to use in the food industry, as its water binding capacity is superior when compared to other starches. Potato starch is made through an extensive process of washing and then separating the starch present in the potato cell walls so that it can be produced into a powdered form.

For more information on organic potato starch produced in Aloja Starkelsen, visit the website: http://www.baltorgpotato.com/product

Why we support IFOAM EU Group

We believe in the future of organic farming and connect our future development with it very closely. As IFOAM EU demonstrates the competence and organises a wide range of fruitful activities, we fully trust and highly support IFOAM EU’s work for the development of the organic mindset within the European community.

Mr. Janis Garancs
Managing Director
Aloja Starkelsen Ltd.

Visit the Aloja Starkelsen presentation as Company of the Month on the IFOAM EU Group website

For more information regarding IFOAM EU Companies of the Month, please visit our webpage or contact us at communication@ifoam-eu.org

Visit the Aloja Starkelsen presentation as Company of the Month on the IFOAM EU Group website
2.1 Sponsorship

Support IFOAM EU Group!

Next to membership fees, **sponsoring** is the only other financial input that can guarantee the carrying out of independent advocacy work and a proper presentation of the organic movement in Brussels.

To gain a wide number of sponsors, the IFOAM EU Group offers a variety of sponsorship options – there is at least one that fits to your needs.

All sponsor possibilities are summarised in a sponsor flyer, available in **English**, **German**, **Italian**, **Spanish**, **French** and **Polish** languages.

IFOAM EU Group will be pleased to jointly develop with you the best sponsoring option with you. Get in contact with us for the fine-tuning of your sponsor ideas:

**LenaWietheger@ifoam-eu.org**
Tel: +32 2 808 79 91

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**Key Sponsor Presentation**

**IFOAM EU key sponsors 2012:**

**ARIZA, CAAE and ICEA/FECD**

ARIZA, CAAE and ICEA/FECD show their support for the work of IFOAM EU by a financial cooperation with IFOAM EU throughout the year 2012. Their money will be used to co-finance IFOAM EU events, projects and publications and is a highly valued contribution to our work.

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**IFOAM EU Sponsorship in Action!**

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5th European Organic Congress

Processessing Conference
3. Events

**Ekoloji Izmir 2012 - The sole Organic Fair in Turkey**
Ekoloji Izmir is the only Organic sector fair held in Turkey. It will place between 12-15 April 2012 for the 11th time. The fair hosts many companies producing organic food, textile, cosmetics, cleaning materials, eco-decoration, packaging, eco-tourism.

*Click here for further information*

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**Conference on Organic Sector Development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asia**
4th International Conference on the Organic Sector Development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asian countries, Izmir, Turkey. 13th to 14th April 2012.

*Click here for more information*

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**Biostyl - Prague**
*Biostyl*, the trade fair for organic products, healthy nutrition and natural cosmetics in Eastern Europe will enter its 7th year from 20th to 22nd April 2012 in Prague-Holesovice.

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**7th Organic Marketing Forum 2012**
IFOAM EU Group is a patron of the upcoming **7th Organic Marketing Forum 2012**. The OMF will take place on the 7th -9th of May in Warsaw. The conference is an excellent place for business development, initial business contact and knowledge transfer. There will be pre-conference-workshops and excursions to organic farmers, processors and traders in the region outside of Warsaw.

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**12th Congress of the European Society for Agronomy**
The Congress will take place on 20-24 August in Helsinki, Finland. The call for proposals is still open. Visit the [website for more information](#).

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*Ekoloji Izmir 2012 - The sole Organic Fair in Turkey*

*Conference on Organic Sector Development in Central/Eastern European and Central Asia*

*Biostyl - Prague*

*7th Organic Marketing Forum 2012*

*12th Congress of the European Society for Agronomy*
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>12-14 April 2012</td>
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<td>17-18 April 2012</td>
<td><strong>6th European Organic Congress</strong> Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
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<td>3-6 May 2012</td>
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<td><strong>7th Organic Marketing Forum 2012</strong> Warsaw, Poland</td>
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<td>12-14 September 2012</td>
<td><strong>2nd IFOAM Animal Husbandry Conference</strong> Hamburg, Germany</td>
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This newsletter exists to inform IFOAM members about the work of the IFOAM EU Group and its liaison and coordination office in Brussels. The IFOAM EU Group is the European Regional Group of the worldwide umbrella organisation IFOAM and is responsible for all matters related to organic farming with a Europe-wide scope. Information IFOAM EU Group: http://www.ifoam-eu.org

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The IFOAM EU Group office taking part in the IFOAM campaign "Organic Without Borders"

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