

## Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

# CAP Trilogues must consider potential of organic farming

Support for agro-industrial farming models cannot deliver real change

**Dublin, 24 April 2013** – Today EU Organic farming groups met in Dublin to discuss the CAP reform post-2013, new research and innovation frameworks and future Organic Action Plans in the public seminar (1) “A new green agenda for farming and rural areas in Europe” organised by the IFOAM EU Group (2), the Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association and the Organic Trust.

“The organic farming movement is demanding real change to the CAP reform” said Gillian Westbrook, Irish IFOAM EU Board Member and General Manager of the Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association “As the CAP trilogue negotiations continue we must remember that all over Europe organic farmers are already pioneering sustainable farming practices and driving the development of rural economies (3). In Europe alone the organic market is worth 21.1bn euro annually. This illustrates the opportunities open to farmers to innovate and emphasises why organic farming needs to be at heart of the negotiations”.

“Organic farming continues to deliver innovative approaches to sustainability, added Cristina Micheloni, TP Organics (4)”, and offers some of the best ways to confront societal challenges”. She continued by stating that “Through eco-functional intensification organic farmers are linking production with diversity in the fields and diversity in high quality food chains. These are approaches that respond to consumer demands for high quality food production, ensure environmentally sound farming practices and stimulate green job creation. With 5% of EU farmland under organic production ring-fencing 5%-10% of new research and innovation funding for the sector is clearly justified”.

Jan Plagge Chair of the IFOAM EU Farmers Sector Group stressed that “What we are looking for is agro-ecological intensification not agro-industrial intensification.” He continued by outlining the need for new Organic Action Plans, “As we move to converting 20% of EU farmland to organic production CAP and research and innovation policies are key to developing sustainable food production in Europe. This is where the organic sector can demonstrate its credentials that it delivers public goods.”

Marian Harkin, MEP reiterated that, “We need to make sure that we get 25% for agri-environment and organic farming schemes ring-fenced in the rural development budget” She challenged organic farmers to make their voices heard. At the same time she outlined that “Production methods such as organic farming and high nature value farming help to market all produce coming from Ireland as it delivers on the perception that all food coming from Ireland is clean and green”.

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NOTES:

- (1) The seminar is part of a 3-day “Sustainable Rural Development Training Days” looking at how Organic Farming, High Nature Value farmland and sustainable rural economies can be best supported under the new CAP Rural Development Programmes see <http://www.ifoam-eu.org/events/CAP/pdf/130423-IFOAMEU-IE-SRDTD-Draft-Agenda.pdf>
- (2) The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations include consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organizations.
- (3) Organic Food and Farming: A system approach to meet the sustainability challenge, IFOAM EU Group, 2010 [www.ifoam-eu.org/workareas/policy/pdf/IFOAMEU\\_dossier\\_organic\\_farming\\_system\\_approach.pdf](http://www.ifoam-eu.org/workareas/policy/pdf/IFOAMEU_dossier_organic_farming_system_approach.pdf)
- (4) **TP Organics** is the Technology Platform (TP) for organic food and farming research. It integrates views of the organic sector and civil society to represent a broad perspective on research and development priorities that can leverage organic food and farming’s potential to address contemporary challenges.



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