
Dear Reader,

Summer greetings from ISOFAR's headquarters!

Indeed, it's harvest time on the northern globe and global thinkers know that either harvesting or sowing is happening every day at any place on earth. Maybe sometimes the sympathetic reader thinks that the ISOFAR head office is lost in a lazy summer break – well, that's not true! So this newsletter will give you some short information about those events which are important to know for our members.

Back from the 1st African Organic Conference in Kampala, organised with intensive input also from our Board Member Charles Ssekya, (see our website for details), we started to make all necessary negotiations and preparations for the contracts with the Springer Company for the journal '*Organic Agriculture*', as well as with our partners for ISOFAR's 3rd Scientific Conference that will be held in the Republic of Korea in September 2011.

Nevertheless, some things proceed under deep time pressure. ISOFAR is manifoldly cross-linked, such as it has supported the project proposal for the Organic Research Centres Alliance (ORCA - download: www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/organicag/files/orca-9july2009.pdf). This initiative, originally moved forward by the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), particularly in collaboration with ICROFS and FiBL, might build bridges to the established CGIAR institutions – a key aim that has been pursued by ISOFAR up from the beginning of its existence. With the same spirit, under the responsibility of our vice-president Niels Halberg, an internal workshop with invited participants will bring us together with EMBRAPA's organic research programme/team in Brazil from 16 to 19 September 2009. The workshop is entitled with 'Identification and prioritization of common research interests in Organic Farming and Food Systems (Europe/Brazil/international)'. We will keep you informed on the results on our website.

The ISOFAR/MOAN symposium, which was already announced previously, has been shifted to 23 – 24 March 2010. Currently, our Board Member Mohamed Ben Kheder is preparing the call for papers that will be published on our website in September.

As you may recognize, most of our activities are moved forward either by ISOFAR's head-quarters (special thanks to Daniel Neuhoff) or its Board Members at present. Citing Henrik Egelyng in ICROFS news 3/2009: 'ISOFAR is much needed as massive future efforts are required to document the multitude of bio-geo-physical and entropic aspects of the world's food and fibre system' (http://www.icrofs.org/pdf/icrofsnews/2009_3.pdf). In order to fulfil this aim, we would appreciate more and more members to perform appropriate activities within ISOFAR's aims in the future.

With warm personal regards,

Ulrich Köpke

(President ISOFAR)

Announcements

Launching of the new scientific journal 'Organic Agriculture'

We are pleased to inform you that on 29 June 2009 the Executive Board of ISOFAR has signed in Bonn a publishing agreement with Springer Science + Business Media B.V., Dordrecht, Netherlands. The Springer Company will publish a new journal (4 volumes per year) up from April 2010. '**Organic Agriculture**' will be the official journal of ISOFAR. All paying ISOFAR members will get a free electronic access to the journal. Fortunately, we succeeded in appointing an excellent Editor in Chief, Dr. Elizabeth Stockdale of the University of Newcastle. Here her message to the ISOFAR members:

I am Elizabeth Stockdale, recently appointed the Editor-in-Chief of ***Organic Agriculture***, which will be launched by Springer in 2010 in collaboration with the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research 'ISOFAR'. Let me introduce myself and the journal to you.

About me: I have been involved in research in Organic Farming systems since 1990, when I began my PhD study at SAC as part of a much larger project studying Organic Farming systems in the east of Scotland. Since then I have spent 10 years working at Rothamsted Research and now have a post as a lecturer at Newcastle University. The main topic of my research has been on agriculture–environment interactions, especially in Organic Farming systems, with a particular focus on nutrient cycling and losses. Recently I have been involved in studies on risks of nitrogen loss following outdoor pigs, soil biophysical interactions affecting microbial activity and the practical development of indicators for soil quality monitoring. During that time I have been publishing regularly and also been involved in refereeing and editing for other journals, so it felt like the right time to take on this new challenge when it became available.

About the journal: ISOFAR and Springer have worked closely together in the design of this new journal and we expect that it will become a widely used and valued platform for the sharing of knowledge on all aspects of Organic Agriculture and food systems globally and by researchers, policy-makers and practitioners alike. The journal will be strongly rooted in the systems approach of Organic Agriculture and so will predominantly focus on original interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary papers that accord with the principles of Organic Agriculture. The status of Organic Agriculture in particular regions/countries and technical notes, which draw together the results of a number of research studies in a format suitable for wider application. The list of topics suitable for submission is at least as long as the list of ISOFAR groups and we hope that all ISOFAR members will become involved with the journal. That journal will also include scientific reviews, invited papers on topical issues, overviews of the readers, authors and reviewers. We expect that the website and the electronic system for submission of papers will be launched in September, watch out for the information and please get involved.

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Third Scientific Conference of ISO FAR in the frame of the IFOAM Organic World Congress in the Republic of Korea in September 2011

From 28 September to 1 October 2011 the 17th Organic World Congress will be held in Gyeonggi Paldang, South Korea. Following the tradition of Adelaide 2005 and Modena 2008, the Third Scientific Conference of ISO FAR will again be part of the IFOAM Organic World Congress (OWC). For reasons of better integration of the scientific part in the overall programme, the Programme Steering Committee of the OWC for the first time also includes an ISO FAR delegate. A first meeting of the PSC took place in Seoul from July 13 -15, 2009.

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The National Platform of Organic Farming in Hungary

The kick-off meeting of the National Platform of Organic Farming took place on 29 April 2009 in the courtroom of Mr. Zoltán Gógös, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The State Secretary Mr. Zoltán Gógös has favoured the kick-off meeting with his presence and salutation, too. Mr. Zoltán Gógös highlighted the relevance of Organic Farming in his speech, which in his opinion may be a breakout point of agriculture. This farming method can have an important role from the aspect of regional development of agriculture and regional food supply. He underlined that MARD intends to support and promote the development of Organic Farming.

The kick-off meeting was hereafter conducted by Head of Department Professor Dr. László Radics (Board Member of ISO FAR, Corvinus University of Budapest Department of Ecological and Sustainable Production Systems) together with Executive Director Dr. Péter Roszik (Nonprofit Biocontroll Hungaria Ltd.).

The attendance agreed upon the main objectives of the platform namely to integrate those who intend to promote Organic Farming (organic farmers, processors, traders, consumers, sympathizers, non organic farmers who see the future in Organic Farming). Accepting the modification proposals of the attendance they agreed on the managing system of the platform. Dr. József Ángyán, Director of the Institute of Environmental and Landscape of Management Szent István University, Member of Parliament, underlined in his comment that an organic turn of agriculture should be realized and a National Strategy of Organic Farming should be worked out. The operation of the platform will not modify in any way the original activity of the joining organisations, just combine their forces in order to achieve common objectives if the tasks of the platform require and the members agreed on it. Participants (private persons, institutions, associations, federations, growers, members of parliament; 15 persons) who were invited to the kick-off meeting as founding members unanimously agreed on the establishment of National Platform of Organic Farming and declared it established.

The next session of the National Platform of Organic Farming will probably be held in the middle of June 2009.

Prof. Dr. László Radics and Dr. Péter Roszík

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Training programme for supervisors on organic agriculture management in India.

Organic Farming is becoming increasingly popular worldwide and the global demands for organic products are growing. In many ways, it is an eminently preferable model for the development of agriculture in India. This is because Organic Agriculture offers multiple benefits that include economical aspects like price premiums, high demand for safe foods; natural resource conservation like improved soil fertility and water quality, prevention of soil erosion, preservation of natural and agro – biodiversity; and social benefits like generation of rural employment and corresponding lower rate to urban migration, improved household nutrition and local food security, reduced dependence on high cost of external inputs. Organic Farming not only is expected to increase the income of the farmers but also helps in moving towards sustainable agriculture and environmentally friendly and healthy food production process. However, farmer's knowledge on practical Organic Farming is still low. Currently, India is having an acreage of 1.7 million hectares under organic management. The organic market in the country is valued at Rs.100 crores (1 crore = 10 Million Rupees) with an annual growth rate steadily going up from 35 percent, which will further expected to grow 50 percent by 2010. India is fast becoming a major base for production and supply of organically produced agricultural products to the world market. The global market for organic products is expected to touch US\$ 100 billion by 2010. In the years to come the focus will be on methods of safe food production and hence there is huge expansion of the Organic Farming sector. Concurrently, there will be a higher requirement of trained man power in this area from the point of production to marketing and value addition.

Realizing the above facts, the Training Service Scheme of Kerala Agricultural University developed a year long supervisors training programme on "Organic Agriculture Management". The programme is supported by the State Horticulture Mission, Kerala. Twenty five student trainees in the age group of 18 to 25 with Vocational Higher Secondary certificate qualifications were selected. These trainees are from the rural and backward areas with low socio economic status. The programme has started on 12th January 09 and will continue for a period of 12 months.

The objective of this training is to strengthen human resource for the development of Organic Agriculture in the state

The specific objectives are:

- to impart knowledge on the basic principles and objectives of Organic Farming
- to impart knowledge and practical skill for supervising & managing of organic farms, organic production practices, certification process and marketing of organic produces
- to gain understanding of the importance of animal husbandry in Organic Farming
- to obtain practical experience of cultivating different crops organically



Curriculum and syllabus of the course are available via ISOFAR Board Member Dr. Sherief.

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Events

Please check also the ISOFAR - website for further information and updates.

The Ecofruit Conference in Stuttgart-Hohenheim, 22 - 24 February 2010

International Conference on Cultivation Technique and Phytopathological Problems in Organic Fruit-Growing

The biennial conference represents a continuation of thirteen meetings, starting from 1990. It is intended to bring together researchers working on topics interesting for organic fruit growing to discuss latest results with regard to the improvement of organic fruit production systems. At the last meeting on 18 - 20 February 2008, nearly 100 fruit experts from 11 different countries met at Weinsberg for this purpose. The intention is also to pool the information through publication of proceedings and to make it available for a great number of researchers, consultants and interested fruit growers. The official language of the conference is English. For more information on 'Ecofruit' please visit the homepage www.ecofruit.net

The main topics of the conference are disease and pest control, fruit quality, copper use reduction, storage treatments and soil management in pome fruit, stone fruit and small fruit cultivation. Further topics include cultivar choice, crop regulation, sustainability and economy of organic fruit production.

The 14th International Conference on Organic Fruit-Growing will take place from 22 to 24 February 2010 at the University of Hohenheim, Germany. The deadlines for the submission of contributions are as follows: submission of **abstracts 15 November 2009**, submission of **papers 15 December 2009**. The registration of participants will be until 15. January 2010. Contributions – all written in English – will be reviewed prior to acceptance.

If any ISOFAR member is interested to act as reviewer, he is welcomed and asked to contact Markus Kelderer, member of the organising committee of the Ecofruit Conference and member of ISOFAR.

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Review: First African Organic Conference in Kampala, Uganda

From 19 - 22 May 2009 some 200 participants had the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality and the inspiring atmosphere at the First African Organic Conference in Kampala, Uganda. The conference was hosted by NOGAMU (National Organic Agricultural Movement of Uganda) and UMU (Uganda Martyrs University) and supported by international organisations including ISOFAR. Dr. Charles Ssekya, ISOFAR Board Member, served as the

Chairman of the Organizing Committee. The participants were able to benefit from an interesting program, which included excursions to organic farms and research institutions as well as a range of topical issues in the various sessions of the conference. The programme, the book of abstracts, as well as selected presentations are available at the ISO FAR website. Here some individual impressions and reflections:

Organic Agriculture, whether certified for the export market or just principle guided for the home market, attracts increasing interest in some African countries. In Uganda, for example, Organic Agriculture is supported by the Government and benefits from a well organised private sector. However, the percentage of certified organic land is still far below 1 % of the total agricultural land. From an agronomic point of view it is important to develop and investigate sustainable organic systems with a sufficiently high level of productivity. Organic systems have to compete not only with 'no input systems' but also with 'flexible input systems'. The increasing interest paid to the potentials of OA for Africa should be supported and accompanied by the international organic research community.

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