

Dear ISOFAR - Members,

the European Joint Organic Congress ,Organic Farming and European Rural Development' with 285 papers and posters presented and over 1200 participants now lies behind us and it has been organised exemplarily by our Danish colleagues. More than 40 people participated in the the ISOFAR workshop 'Energy self-reliance In Organic Farming: Is It feasible?' All those who were unable to participate can access numerous presentations and impressions at http://orgprints.org/view/projects/int_conf_joint2006.html. and at <http://www.organic-congress.org/>.

The ISOFAR info booth offered the first edition of "Scientific Series" which was highly in demand. A short presentation of the book as well as reports on other ISOFAR working group activities can be read in this newsletter. All those of you who can read Italian will find a first, and very positive, review of the book at <http://www.greenplanet.net/Articolo15791.html>.

The info booth also offered the opportunity to chat with numerous visitors, many of which have decided to join ISOFAR.

All our board members, apart from Mohamed Ben Khedr who was unable to attend due to a lecturing commitment in Bari, Italy, attended the board meeting. The minutes of this meeting are enclosed with this newsletter.

I would like to take this opportunity to raise a few points concerning ISOFAR, its current position and structure as well as its future perspectives. I will refer to ideas of F. Malik, director of the Malik Centre for Management in St Gallen (<http://www2.malik-mzsg.ch/>) regarding size, capacity and future directions of enterprises and organisations.

The important point for an organisation such as ISOFAR is its capacity and strength, not its size. Its growth, for example, measured in terms of ISOFAR members does not enable us to draw conclusions about its capacities. Neither can we draw any conclusions regarding the quality of leadership in an institution based solely on its size. It is obvious that the size of an organisation does not tell us whether its growth is of a healthy or less healthy nature, whether the organisation is merely large but not strong. *Vice-versa*, we cannot deduct any assumptions regarding economic strength from smaller sized enterprises.

Therefore we do not conduct our work here at ISOFAR for the purpose of funding, gains, turnover or a strong rise in members only, but we strive for organic growth and other navigational factors which are well in advance of the afore mentioned parameters.

In order to judge the future position of ISOFAR in the framework of the further development of OF the following, to my mind, must be noted. It is a widespread assumption that opportunities for growth and development of our Society are dependant on the successful development of OF in general. It is, however, much more important for us which position ISOFAR will take in this future development. It will certainly be easier for

ISO FAR if the importance of OF increases globally. Yet, we need to assess whether this growth is a healthy one or not.

Hence, ISO FAR does not focus on growth in the conventional sense of the word, but on influencing the decisive factors of the market position. Successful organisations and enterprises always have an adapted strategy for qualitative growth. It is therefore important for ISO FAR's position which innovative force it possesses. In addition to the degree of its popularity, one question is of importance: Of what is ISO FAR the source, what does it generate? Most certainly the further development of OF on a solid scientific base together with stakeholders, i.e. a participatory approach; innovation also includes the accessibility of the methods and knowledge of others who do not yet belong to the ISO FAR organic scientific community. More mainstream scientists have to be recruited by and assimilated into ISO FAR. Personally, I consider the various publications and the book series on OF in tropical and sub-tropical regions which are currently in planning to be an important and necessary contribution to the successful development of OF in these countries.

Moreover, productivity and efficiency are indispensable for preserving a favourable market position. We therefore try to adhere to these principles in our work and in trying to locate sources of funding.

Growth inevitably leads to growing complexity, and this involves both dangers and opportunities. In nature, fast and organic growth and resulting complexity can be preserved through self-regulation and self-organisation. Adaptation and the ability to evolve are conditions for continuous and healthy growth and organic development. In our organisation, the latter is not based on a hierarchical structure, on the contrary the decentralised approach enables us to react to changes in the environment in a flexible, regional and site-related manner. Hence, the traditional entrepreneurial principle of trying to keep change rates in the enterprise higher than those of the market is adopted.

We therefore aim for ISO FAR to be characterised by flat decision-making structures. 'Command' is located where the most relevant information in a given situation is found. This subsidiary principle of de-centralised decision-making and flexible action wherever possible will cater for the aforementioned developments. Self-regulation and self-organisation will also characterise future structures of ISO FAR. This subsidiary approach makes the transfer of fund recruitment to decentralised command locations necessary, or in other words: Competence of knowledge and decision-making is synonymous to competence of finance and funding. That way, the highest level of subsidiarity will be achieved. This does not mean that communication with the headquarters is dispensable. The most important information is gathered here, and from here links will be established and external relations be handled.

With best regards

Ulrich Köpke

Summary Minutes: ISOFAR Board Meeting, Odense, Denmark, Adelaide, 1st June 2006

Beginning: 1:30pm End: 5pm

Participants:

Niels Halberg (Denmark), Ulrich Hamm (Germany), Ulrich Köpke (Germany), Edith Lammerts van Bueren (Netherlands), William Lockeretz (United States), Urs Niggli (Switzerland), László Radics (Hungary), Sang Mok Sohn (South-Korea), Sseyewa, Charles (Uganda), Bertil Sylvander (France), Els Wynen (Australia), Daniel Neuhoff, (ISOFAR Head Office), Mohamed Ben Kheder (excused)

1. Welcome address by the president

Ulrich Köpke thanked the local organisers, in particular ISOFAR Executive Board Member Niels Halberg, for their personal contribution to the successful Joint European Organic Congress in Odense, Denmark.

2. Financial situation

Daniel Neuhoff gave a short overview of the financial situation of ISOFAR. There is a positive balance in the account of 11.000 Euros and additionally outstanding membership fees for 2005 amounting appr. 9.000 Euros. Costs for managing the Head Office at IOL in Bonn, e.g. hiring a student secretary, are currently covered by IOL funds thus disburdening the ISOFAR budget.

3. Statutes changes.

The Board Members signed copies with the changed statutes adopted during the General Assembly in Adelaide in September 2005. The documents will be forwarded to the German authorities.

4. Recent activities

- LTE book published:

The board congratulated the ISOFAR working group 'Long Term Experiments' (LTE) led by Joachim Raupp for having published the first volume of the ISOFAR Scientific Series. It was

recommended that future volumes will be numbered. A second volume on Long Term Experiments is currently in preparation. The costs of printing were comparatively low and will strain the ISOFAR budget only slightly. Future publications will have to be considered as projects with their own budgets to cover the costs. It was recommended to set up a transparent review procedure for future publications in order to give the papers sufficient status as peer reviewed publications.

- Publication of selected papers of the Adelaide proceedings in a refereed journal

This task has not yet been completed. A small editor group will establish the precise procedure and select papers and contact authors. Daniel Neuhoff, Niels Halberg and William Lockeretz volunteered.

5. Reports from individual Board member activities

- Edith Lammerts van Bueren (E.Lammerts@louisbolk.nl), Louis Bolk Institut, Driebergen, Netherlands, and Head of the ISOFAR Section 'Plant breeding and Seed production' informed us of a Symposium planned for 7-9 November 2007 at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. The Symposium will deal with the role of Genotype-Environment Interactions in Organic Plant Breeding Programmes and will be organised by the (regular) Eucarpia (European Association of Plant breeding Research) with support of ECO-PB and ISOFAR. Publication of 10-15 selected papers in a special issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Euphytica* is intended. Moreover, the First World Conference on Organic Plant Breeding organised by IFOAM and FAO with support of ISOFAR, ECO-PB and Seeds and Breeds/US is planned for 2008. ISOFAR will support the activities as proposed by Edith Lammerts van Bueren

Bertil Sylvander (sylvander@toulouse.inra.fr), Institut National pour la Recherche Agronomique, Castanet Tolosan, France, intends to organise a scientific conference towards the end of 2007 on topics which enhance communication between researchers specialised in Organic Agriculture and mainstream scientists in research areas of common interest, e.g. pasture management. ISOFAR will support the initiative by offering its networking facilities, establishing the scientific committee and other type of moral or practical support. Financial support will not be given.

Els Wynen (els.wynen@elspl.com.au), Eco Landuse Systems Pty Ltd, Canberra, Australia, mentioned that the Organic Federation of Australia is in the process of setting up a Trust, which is to deal with research and extension explicitly. Moreover, the Journal of Organic Systems will be launched in Sydney in July 2006, which will cater for publications on Organic Agriculture in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, and intends to include Asia in the future. ISOFAR will extend congratulations.

Sang Mok Sohn (smsohn@dku.edu), Dan Kook University, Cheonan, South Korea, will organise a conference on soil fertility in Nov. 2007 in Korea. A Well-being Organic Expo will be organized by Sang Mok Sohn in Nov 2009 in Korea as well. The preliminary programme was shown to all board members. Question of funding was raised as of possibility for leasing out logo for an exhibition. The proposal is accepted by the Board

6. Future strategies

6.1 Conferences

- The next QLIF conference will be carried out together with the German speaking organic conference in Hohenheim, Stuttgart in 2007. The English part of the conference will be arranged by H. Willer and T. Alföldi. The conference will be supported by ISOFAR (see also section Events of this Newsletter).

- DIAS (Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences) is considering to organise a European workshop on organic livestock production in 2007 in collaboration with the ISOFAR section 'Animal Production Systems' led by G. Rahmann (gerold.rahmann@fal.de).

- At the IFOAM world congress in Modena, Italy in the end of June 2008, ISOFAR intends to arrange a parallel scientific conference as done in Adelaide. Other parallel conferences e.g. from ongoing EU projects, may be integrated as well. The collaboration between ISOFAR and the Italian organisers of the IFOAM world congress is not yet specified. ISOFAR Vice President Urs Niggli is requested to continue negotiations with the Italian organisers for an optimal integration of all stakeholders (deadline report: 1st August 2006).

6.2 Textbook on Organic Agriculture in the tropics and sub-tropics

A first draft content was shortly presented by Charles Ssekyewa (cssekyewa@umu.ac.ug), Uganda Martyrs University, Kampala, Uganda. Board members were requested to suggest authors for individual chapters. For that purpose a revised draft will be sent to the board. Eventually the content of chapters will be adjusted to contributions proposed by competent authors. Aspects of easy and cheap availability of the publication will be considered when choosing a publisher.

6.3 Structural development

a. Regional representatives.

ISOFAR needs to find more active members in the different regions of the world, in particular in developing countries. Board members should take responsibility to look for potential members of ISOFAR in different regions and countries suitable to become a regional representative.

b. Board and section head activities.

The Board agreed that the role and responsibilities of section heads of ISOFAR will require further specification and restructuring. Board members are invited to look through the list of sections heads and to suggest changes before July 31, 2006. The E-board will then discuss the proposals for a revised structure and decide on changes.

The Board accepted the establishment of two new working groups, i.e. 'Knowledge systems and innovations', initiated by Prof. Dr. C Vogl (christian.vogl@boku.ac.at) and 'Energy use and self reliance', organised by Dr. Erik Steen Jensen and Dr. Niels Halberg (reports will be provided in the next Newsletter).

c. Member recruitment:

In order to recruit new members in particular in Eastern Europe including Ukraine, flyers will be sent to relevant board members. ISOFAR flyers are also available for all board members upon request.

Furthermore a personal letter will be sent to the co-authors of papers published in the ISOFAR proceeding of Adelaide inviting them to join ISOFAR.

All board members, working group coordinators and section heads are encouraged to recruit new members among their colleagues.

d. Newsletter N° 6

The next newsletter will be drafted and distributed very soon. Contributors from the board are kindly asked to send their texts to the Head Office.

e. Funding and member ship fees:

All board members should consider and explore funding possibilities to increase the financial possibilities of ISOFAR.

Outstanding member ship fees will have to be recovered by sending out mails to defaulting members. Payment modalities may require some improvement and will be checked by the Head Office. Advantages of the ISOFAR membership, e.g. publications for reduced prices, reduced fees at ISOFAR conferences, Newsletters etc. should be outlined more clearly.

f. ISOFAR regional network for research in organic farming in Africa.

It is intended to establish a research network for Organic Agriculture in Africa. Charles Ssekyewa (cssekyewa@umu.ac.ug) is interested to be the contact person for this project. The Board and all ISOFAR members are encouraged to suggest other researchers potentially interested to participate in the project.

7. Financial plan

ISOFAR intends to build up a strategic financial reserve that will allow to establish regional networks of expertise in Organic Agriculture and to improve services for the members.

Report from ISOFAR Working Group activities

- **ISOFAR Scientific Series, No. 1 'Long Term Field Experiments in Organic Farming' released in Odense, Denmark in May 2006.**

A number of cultivation methods in Organic Agriculture, such as diversified crop rotations and the application of organic manure, have a long-term effect, especially on the physical, biological and microbial parameters of soils. It often takes decades for the quantity and quality of soil organic matter to reach a new dynamic equilibrium. Long-term experiments are thus essential to investigate the effects of crop rotations and organic fertilization on soils and, as a result, on crops. The continuation of long-term experiments is therefore of particular importance to Organic Agriculture.

This volume contains a selection of 12 long-term experiments conducted under different site conditions in Germany, the USA, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria and Israel. Each experiment has a unique concept and scientific approach, but share the objective which is to investigate characteristics of Organic Agriculture regarding key parameters of soil fertility, crop yield and quality. Many also examine environmental and economic parameters.

This volume is the first comprehensive publication of that kind, based on the activities of ISOFAR's working group for Long-Term Experiments (LTE). ISOFAR members can order the book for the 50% reduced price of 12 at the Head Office via e-mail (info@isofar.org).

Membership services

In our last Newsletter N° 5 we asked all members to give us information on their personal areas of research expertise and interest thus supporting and facilitating future international research collaboration and networking by establishing a member linking service.

In order to make the tool efficient we need relevant information on all members. Many of you have already answered to our request. Those of you who have not yet sent us the relevant information are kindly asked to do this now.

What you have to do:

Send an e-mail to info@isofar.org with your individual:

- 1) Key word list: areas of expertise
- 2) Key word list: areas of interest

The ISOFAR Head Office would greatly appreciate to receive the information as soon as possible.

Events

- 18-20 September 2006, Edinburgh UK, COR 2006, Colloquium of Organic Researchers, 'What will Organic Farming deliver?' The LTE working group will meet parallel to the colloquium. <http://www.aab.org.uk/contentok.php?id=25&basket=wwsshowconfdets>

- 23-25 August 2006 The 1st IFOAM International Conference on Animals in Organic Production, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/IFOAM_Animal_Production_Conference.html

- 20-23 March 2007, 9th Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture, University of Hohenheim, Germany.

Call for papers: <http://www.isofar.org/events/documents/call-for-papers-wita2007.pdf>

Announcements

- **New Book on Organic Farming Research in 11 European Countries**

On May 29, 2006 at the Joint Organic Congress in Denmark a workshop of the ERAnet Project Core Organic (www.coreorganic.org) took place. Core Organic aims at the coordination of national funded research programmes with the ultimate aim to launch a common call. At the congress the German Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food, BLE presented a book with the country reports prepared by the projects partners. These country reports give an overview of the organic farming research situation in the participating countries. The book can be ordered free of charge at the German Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food, BLE (geschaeftsstelle-oekolandbau@ble.de). The PDFs of the reports are



available for download at the Organic Eprints Archive at
<http://orgprints.org/view/projects/eu-coreorganic.html>.

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