ISOFAR Newsletter no. 4, 2018

Dear ISOFAR Members and Supporters

Thank you for your interest in ISOFAR Newsletters. We regularly publish a variety of information on our activities and how they are promoting the uptake of organic around the world. ISOFAR is now in its 15th anniversary, one in which it must open up a "golden age" of value-creating research and education in the field of organic agriculture and its related academic majors and disciplines. In order to help usher in such an age, ISOFAR is resolved to create, through the publishing 4issues of ISOFAR Newsletter in 2018.

The unchanging mission of ISOFAR is to foster and develop individuals capable of creating new values in whichever organic arena they are engaged; individuals who, irrespective of the age and nationality!

The ISOFAR Newsletter is an opportunity for us all – including our many international partners, both new and longstanding – to remember and reflect on our past, and imagine our future together. From research collaborations, academic partnerships, ISOFAR's global network is extensive and ever expanding. We thoroughly enjoy our collaboration and we are honored to have you as a valued member. Organic scientists work hard and achieve good scientific results and networking even with less available financial supports in compare with other scientific disciplines. We look forward to many more years of friendship and making members feel right platform; whether they are in their home country or in any part of the world!

The current newsletter issue has several interesting information and reports received from our members at different countries such as Canada, Italy, Poland, Nigeria, Norway and Morocco which could be considered as the reason for gathering and sharing our knowledge and experiences. Special thanks to all those who actively contributed!

All members have open access to our scientific Springer journal "Organic Agriculture" where is a nice place to publish your next peer-reviewed paper!

The ISOFAR website is also open for all ISOFAR members and supporters who want to publish News about events, projects, networks, a country report and you are welcome to get in touch by e-mail (mreza.ardakani@gmail.com) to agree about the details.

We do believe that, we had a well succeeds in different aspects in 2018 as already reported in ISOFAR Website and in summary; Many thanks for all excellent contributions during the year!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2019!

Professor M. Reza Ardakani, Vice President of ISOFAR

NEWS from ISOFAR:

Message from the president

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Indigenous Agroecology in the Canadian Context

This article explores the linkage between Indigenous cultivation principles and agroecology as a beginning for the development of an alternative agriculture and food system in Canada. We hope that it will provide a context for dialogue and change.

Highlights of 14th Annual OAPTIN Conference (ABEOKUTA 2018)

he 14th Annual Organic Conference of Organic Agriculture Project in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (OAPTIN) tagged “ABEOKUTA 2018” was held on Nov. 6 – 8, 2018 at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Nigeria.

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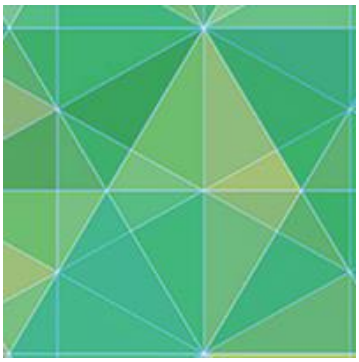
The Organic Innovation Days have become a tradition in late November, being arranged by TP Organics in Brussel to inform and grow networks between stakeholders linked to the organic sector.



Overview of organic livestock production

The work package LIVESTOCK from OrganicPlus European Project is in charge of searching alternatives for antibiotics, antiparisitics, synthetic vitamins and bedding materials for organic production. However, where are we now with this contentious inputs in Europe? What think the farmers about this issues? Are they interested in trying this alternatives?

Dynamic Developments in Organic Research strengthening Partnerships across Europe and beyond

6th International Conference on Organic Agriculture Sciences (ICOAS) in Austria, Eisenstadt, 7 – 9 November 2018. With the theme of “Dynamic Developments in Organic Research – strengthening Partnerships across Europe and beyond”.

4th African Organic Conference - SENEGAL

Despite all odds, especially the late change of host country from Cameroun to Senegal, the 4th African Organic Conference was successfully hosted byFederation Nationale d’Agriculture Biologique (FENAB) from 5th - 8th November, 2018.

Message from the ISOFAR President 2018 - Organic is proved as “Plan B for Planet A”, global networking of researchers is necessary

The future challenges of global food and farming systems are severe: producing enough, healthy and affordable food for everyone, adapting to climate change, protecting biodiversity, soil, water and air, reducing pollution, establishing sustainable food chains, high food quality and fair play for producer, employees and consumers. Organic 3.0 is ready to deliver. Holistic system research developed in Organic Agriculture is nowadays available and necessary to make Organic even better. Conventional agriculture is taking many results for its own development.

The ISOFAR world board met twice in 2018, one time vis-a-vis. These meetings are important to have a good understanding of different regions and cultures, even in science. Our Journal “Organic Agriculture” with Springer as publisher is developing very well. In 2018 about 150 papers were submitted, of which 30 were accepted (20%). The downloads and recognition are increasing significantly. These scientific communications are relevant to get a better and reliable reputation in policy design and conventional organizations.

Our non-profit-organization, ISOFAR, has supported the 4th African Organic Congress with reviews and the proceedings. The African Food Sovereignty Conference, FAO meetings, agro-ecology and climate change in the Pacific islands were also attended. ISOFAR was visible throughout the world in 2018, even though all this work is done on a voluntary basis and beside the ordinary work.

I thank you all who did this important work for ISOFAR and the Organic Agricultural movement and related research! We have about 450 members in 70 countries, but we have very little money (the fees for members are very little). We are sorry that we cannot sponsor projects of other requested support. All ISOFAR work is done without administrative and board costs.

I wish you all a good shift into the next year 2019.

Regards,

Prof. Dr. agr. habil. Gerold Rahmann

December 2018

Indigenous Agroecology in the Canadian Context

Keynote presentation by Chief Byron Louis at the "Empowering Indigenous Communities and Seeding Agricultural Resilience by Revitalizing Indigenous Food Plant Production" transformative workshop. Left to right: Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Indian Band; Emily McAuley,Indigenous Liaison Scientist at Indigenous Support and Awareness Office; Jennifer Edwards, Science Program Analyst; and Dr. Brian Gray, Assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for Science and Technology.

This article explores the linkage between Indigenous cultivation principles and agroecology as a beginning for the development of an alternative agriculture and food system in Canada. We hope that it will provide a context for dialogue and change.

As of 2016, Indigenous Peoples represent 4.9% of the total Canadian population and manage reserve lands with an area of more than 3.5 million hectares. Locally harvested traditional foods are central to the cultural, spiritual, and physical health of Indigenous Peoples and communities. Access to traditional food has been hindered by many aspects of colonization including changes in land use designations, habitat loss, local extirpations, limited access to suitable land, the arrival of invasive pest and disease species, cross-pollination with commercial crops, the loss of traditional knowledge and the transition to a western diet. Additionally, most traditional foods are only accessible in certain geographic regions and climatic areas; however, Indigenous Peoples have been removed from their traditional territories and

the traditional foods located therein, due to generations of relocation through government policies, including the reserve system and Indian act, residential schools, and adoptions, as well as increasing numbers in urban centres. Knowledge of traditional foods have also been eroded through decades of cultural displacement due, in part, to such relocations, but also due to legislation outlawing traditional practices, knowledge sharing and language.

In addition, lack of access to traditional food and changes in lifestyle have contributed to higher levels of chronic respiratory disease, diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease among Indigenous Peoples than among the general

Canadian population. Many Indigenous communities are looking for ways to revitalize traditional lifestyle practices. Supporting Indigenous communities in managing their lands and promoting traditional foods production on their lands can greatly improve health, food security and sovereignty, employment opportunities and the economy in these communities and in Canada. It is also worth bearing in mind that Indigenous Peoples were the custodians and managers of biodiversity in what is now Canada for thousands of years, and their traditional knowledge of stewardship and cultivation of plants and animals may help today's society deal with some of the negative consequences of contemporary industrial agriculture and climate change. This article explores the linkage between Indigenous cultivation principles and agroecology as a beginning for the development of an alternative agriculture and food system in Canada. We hope that it will provide a context for dialogue and change.

Indigenous Cultivation and Agroecology

About 550 different species of plants have been utilized in the traditional diets of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, which generated a wealth of ecological traditional knowledge amongst them. Ecological traditional knowledge, as described by Fikret Berkes (1999), is a knowledge-practice-belief complex with four interrelated levels: (i) knowledge based on empirical observations essential for survival (species taxonomy, distribution, and life cycles); (ii) understanding of ecological processes and natural resource management (practices, tools, and techniques); (iii) socio-economic organization necessary for effective coordination and cooperation (rules and taboos); and (iv) worldview or 'cosmovision' (religion, belief, and ethics). Indigenous Peoples in Canada have a long history of effectively managing food plant production and plant habitats using practices such as succession, regeneration, selective harvesting, pruning/coppicing berry bushes, controlled burn, habitat creation, and distributed use and harvest across landscapes and over time (seasonal rounds). Their social management strategies such as proprietorship, socially determined conservation, distributed seasonal access to resource areas, trade and exchange, feasting and sharing, and knowledge transmission enabled them to create and manage an efficient ecological food system.

Indigenous cultivation practices are intimately tied to agroecology and organic farming as they are based on the following common principles and values:

- Environmental sustainability, food security, self-sufficiency, stewardship, and food sovereignty;
- Subsistence-based model that requires resource conservation, preservation, and ethical management of the natural resource base;
- Mobilization of non-formal (and sometimes non-Western) knowledge that is often passed from one generation to the next through oral traditions;
- The use of local, context-specific, and place-based knowledge (and various forms of adaptation to environmental conditions and available resources) when engaging in agroecological practices. This principle stands in stark contrast to the elements of the "one-size-fits-all" model of contemporary industrial agriculture;
- The use of the entire subsistence base (and not just the agricultural plot) in establishing the biosystem in agroecology and Indigenous cultivation. Viewed through this lens, Indigenous agroecological practices must be understood in relation to their dimensions of social organization and social relations of production (it is a participatory enterprise that involves the entire community); and,
- A respectful and non-exploitative relationship to the land, which is often viewed in sacred and spiritual terms as a provider of all the necessities of life for plants and animals.

When thinking about the intersections between Indigenous cultivation and agroecology, the community's relationship to the ecosystem is worth emphasizing. Indigenous communities have co-evolved with their ecosystems and have generated a vast amount of intergenerational traditional knowledge that is now used in their cultivation practices. Indigenous cultivation and agroecology are frequently defined by their holistic qualities in which they imitate the natural environment, and the use of this method sometimes leads to the reduction of labour intensity and increases in plant productivity. Specifically, some of the agroecological characteristics of Indigenous cultivation include:

- Favourable rates of return on labour inputs/outputs due to the efficiency of the synergisms derived from the natural environment;
- Balanced nutrient flows that are achieved through intercropping, rotational cropping, and interplanting practices, which enrich the soil with organic matter;
- A biosphere that supplies natural pest control. The use of polycultures often replaces the need for agrochemicals because they serve as hosts to natural predators resulting in a more balanced micro ecosystem than those that monocultures are able to offer. Other methods of pest control include manipulating plot size, location, crop density, and crop diversity.
- Managing plant disease by incorporating organic matter into soil, making use of shade, and mobilizing the use of antagonistic plants (trap plants), as well as leaving fields fallow (in combination with rotations) and using flooding, fire and heat to eliminate disease.

Indigenous agroecology is an opportunity for informing and generating innovation in contemporary agricultural practices.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Activities for Supporting Indigenous Cultivation

The Government of Canada is committed to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through a renewed, nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown and government-to-government relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership; enhanced departmental capacity and Indigenous representation; and inclusive policies and programs. Through increasing awareness and greater appreciation of traditional methods and fostering partnerships with Indigenous communities, some of the potential benefits of AAFC's programs for Indigenous communities include increased food security, revitalization of Indigenous agricultural practices, revival of traditional knowledge systems, and empowerment of Indigenous businesses. AAFC has recently initiated, developed, and implemented several activities and programs to support Indigenous agriculture.

In 2018, AAFC launched the Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (IAFSI), a five year (2018-19 to 2022-23), $8.5 million Initiative that will support Indigenous communities that seek opportunities in agriculture and the food system more broadly. This Initiative is implemented with support from the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) through the Strategic Partnerships Initiative (SPI). Through the IAFSI, AAFC aims to contribute to the Government of Canada's commitment to reduce barriers for underrepresented groups and focus on building Indigenous Peoples' capacity to succeed in agriculture. The Initiative also supports the development of partnerships between federal and non-federal partners, including Indigenous communities, provincial/territorial governments, and the private sector.

AAFC also launched an Indigenous Pathfinder service in 2018. This is a one-stop shop for advice and referral to help Indigenous Peoples and communities navigate the relevant information, tools and support available to start or expand activities in the agriculture and agri-food sector.

In October 2017, AAFC officially established an Indigenous Support and Awareness Office (ISAO), to enhance departmental capacity to support Indigenous cultivation by enhancing knowledge and awareness of the history, cultural contexts, and current barriers and opportunities for Indigenous cultivation through the development of an Indigenous Awareness Learning Series (IALS). The ISAO is also mandated to increase recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees, including by supporting the activities of the Indigenous Student Recruitment Initiative (ISRI), Indigenous Network Circle (INC) for employees, and the departmental Elder.

The ISRI gives Indigenous students experience and knowledge of the variety of careers available at AAFC and within the Public Service more generally, and encourages them to pursue an education and

career in the sciences. Through the ISRI, AAFC has met with over 3,500 high school and post-secondary Indigenous students across the country. In 2016, the first year of the ISRI, 21 summer students were hired. This grew to 55 Indigenous students in the summer of 2017, and 65 in the summer of 2018. Many ISRI students also stay on part-time throughout the school year.

AAFC Elder, Mervin Traverse, started in September 2016. AAFC is the first federal department to have a full-time Elder on staff. The Elder acts as the primary departmental liaison with Indigenous communities and provides support to the ISRI and INC, as well as build stronger cultural awareness within the Department.

The ISAO houses the Indigenous Liaison Scientist, whose role is to facilitate science collaborations between Indigenous partners, AAFC researchers, and external experts to explore ways to support Indigenous-led and defined participation in Canadian agriculture and to develop synergisms between Indigenous knowledge and western science.

AAFC also supports several Indigenous science projects:

Living Laboratories – Typically situated on privately owned land or, in this case, land held in trust by the government of Canada with First Nations people control, a Living Laboratory functions as a local innovation hub, where various participants explore, demonstrate, and adapt beneficial management practices and technologies within a working agricultural landscape. The Living Laboratory initiative will establish a national network of Living Laboratories situated in a variety of production systems and landscapes across Canada, including First Nations' lands. The establishment of the network will allow for the development of comparative studies, cross-sectoral collaborations, and sharing of lessons learned.

Three Sisters Project – Science and Technology Branch (STB) research to broaden the ancestral characteristics of maize, squash, and beans (traditionally called the "Three Sisters") to enhance the self-sufficiency of Indigenous communities and to develop a traditional polyculture cropping system in support of Indigenous food security. This collaborative research project could lead to improvements in the health outcomes of Indigenous communities, enhance agricultural land use in Indigenous communities, and facilitate the creation of local, community, and private Indigenous businesses.

Lingonberries project – An STB research project on the genetic and climatic conditions affecting lingonberry cold-hardiness and antioxidant content. This project explores how lingonberries, which are endemic to Canada and are a traditional food plant for many Indigenous groups, can be integrated into a supply food chain that would to engage Indigenous communities and establish partnerships with university, government, NGOs, and industry groups. The demand for lingonberries currently outstrips the supply from wild harvest; thus, there is a market opportunity for Canadian producers that could financially benefit Indigenous communities.

Labrador Tea project – STB research in collaboration with an industrial partner to carry out a controlled extraction of Labrador tea. Labrador tea grows wild in most regions of Canada and a number of Indigenous peoples use the infusion as a traditional medicine. In the short-term, a concentrate and a freeze-dried tea extract will also be produced on a pilot-scale for commercial operation purposes. In the longer term, the company plans to have its own facilities and become an autonomous producer.

STB Transformative Workshops - In recent years, STB carried out several transformative workshops related to Indigenous cultivation. The *Empowering Indigenous Communities and Seeding Agricultural Resilience by Revitalizing Indigenous Food Plant Production* workshop encompassed an STB initiative to capitalize on the collective expertise and creativity of leading government and academic researchers and First Nations Traditional Knowledge holders, community members, and leaders to identify the potential for collaboration on traditional foods production, and specifically, bridging Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and AAFC research. The 2017 *Transformative Workshop on Vertical Farming*, which was initially held as a general workshop 2016, focused specifically on northern greenhouses.

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Highlights of 14th Annual OAPTIN Conference (ABEOKUTA 2018)

Prof. M.O Atayese declaring open the 14th Annual OAPTIN Conference.

The 14th Annual Organic Conference of Organic Agriculture Project in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (OAPTIN) tagged "ABEOKUTA 2018" was held on Nov. 6 – 8, 2018 at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Nigeria. The theme of the Conference was **"Organic Agriculture: Food Security, Improved Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture"**.

The Conference was declared open by the representative of the Vice Chancellor of FUNAAB, Prof. M.O Atayese (Dean, College of Plant Science and Crop Production) (Pic. 1). The Conference was attended by 72 scientists, 22 graduate students, representatives of the Association of Organic Agriculture Practitioners of Nigeria and Ruchim Investment and Manufacturing Ltd. Picture 2 shows the cross section of participants at the Conference. The keynote speech on the Conference theme was delivered by Dr. O. AdeOluwa (Country Coordinator of Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative, EOA-I) (Pic. 3).

Two lead papers titled "Marketing of Organic Produce: Challenges and Lessons learnt" and "Building Capacity for Organic Agriculture in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs): A decade-plus of project experience" by Barr. Olushola Sowemimo (CEO, Ope Farms) and Prof. Isaac Aiyelaagbe (FUNAAB), respectively.

While delivering her lead paper, Barr. Sowemimo charged the young agriculture graduates to be organic agriculture complaint in order to meet the rising demand of the principles and practices of the organic sector (Pic. 4). Prof. Aiyelaagbe admonished the participants to strengthen the relatively weak non-crops subsector in organic agriculture, imbibe the spirit of enterprise, publish relevant textbooks on organic agriculture that can enhance learning, develop appropriate and affordable inputs for practitioners and strive to mainstream organic agriculture

into diploma and degree programmes in the HEIs ((Pic. 5). Prof. Victor Olowe used the opportunity to introduce ISOFAR to the participants and encouraged those who are yet to become members to join the association (Pic. 6). During the Annual Business meeting (ABM), the participants unanimously agreed to award the hosting right of OAPTIN 2019 Conference to Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro, Delta State, Nigeria and the contact person (Dr. Mrs. C.N. Atoma) while responding, pledged to organize a very good Conference in 2019 (Pic. 7). The high point of the ABM was the election of new Executive Officers to handle the affairs of the Association for 2018 – 2020.

On Day 2 (Nov. 27, 2018), 28 scientific papers were presented during plenary session and the papers covered the fields of agronomy, plant health, rural sociology, marketing, policy, postharvest handling of produce amongst others.

Cross section of participants at the Conference.

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Prof. Dr. Victor I. Olowe, Agronomist

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Phasing out pesticides in Brussels

The Organic Innovation Days have become a tradition in late November, being arranged by TP Organics in Brussel to inform and grow networks between stakeholders linked to the organic sector. The 4th event was one day arranged by TP Organics alone (Nov 27), followed by two days integrated in the larger event G-STIC, which was arranged for the 3rd time in Brussel. The Organic PLUS and Relacs projects were mentioned as important efforts to reduce the consumption of copper in organic growing. E.g. the scientific director of INRA (France), Christian Huyghe, gave an enthusiastic lecture about post-pesticide agriculture, where pesticides used in organic growing also need to be phased out.

In the afternoon, participants discussed in parallel sessions inputs to the revised strategic research and innovation agenda which TP Organic will present during 2019 to influence the upcoming frame program Horizon Europe, which will release the first calls in 2021. The first SRIA presented by TP Organics in 2008 was successful to prepare the ground for several large projects supporting the growth of the organic sector, but there is still a long way to go before organic farming is generally recognized as an important driver of change for increased sustainability. Th next chance for interaction in the SRIA will be the Science Day at Biofach 2019.

The Spanish company Polyfly, producing hoverflies for glasshouses and field conditions to increase pollinations, were the happy winners of the Organic Innovation prize in 2108.

For the two days linked to the G-STIC event, agroecology as a driver for increased sustainability was the headline. A range of success stories from around the world were presented, but no one mentioned organic efforts, standards, certification, labelling and marketing as a corridor for realising agroecology in practice, not least to ensure some fair premium prices for involved farmers. Agroecology is a reminder for organic farming that we should work a lot harder to realize biodiversity, e.g. by new approaches to crop rotation. Strip cropping is tested with success in the Netherlands. Whereas scientists involved in agroecology seem to appreciate the practical efforts from the organic sector, significant resistance towards certified organic farming still seems to be present on the political side.

Funded by other projects, Alev Kir (Turkey) and Anne-Kristin Løes (Norway) were present in Brussel from the Organic PLUS team.

During the G-STIC conference, Eldert van Helten and Rogier Schulte, Wageningen University (Netherlands) presented research to develop agroecology approaches, e.g. strips to replace traditional crop rotations.

Anne-Kristin Løes (NORSØK) participated in the G-STICK 2018 conference in Brussel, as a part of activities in Organic Innovation Days 2018, arranged by TP Organics. Agroecology was presented in several sessions.

AUTHOR

Dr.Anne-Kristin Løes
Senior researcher, Norwegian Centre for Organic Agriculture
ISOFAR Board Member

Overview of Organic Livestock Production in Europe

The work package LIVESTOCK from OrganicPlus European Project is in charge of searching alternatives for antibiotics, antiparisitics, synthetic vitamins and bedding materials for organic production. However, where are we now with this contentious inputs in Europe? What think the farmers about this issues? Are they interested in trying this alternatives?

Although there is a European regulation that stablishes the rules for all countries in the European Union, have the farmers in each country the same perception on the relevance of this topics? To answer all these questions, we are conducting a survey study across several countries with an on-line questionnaire.

Organic Livestock Production in Europe: some numbers to understand its importance

The organic livestock sector in the European Union has been experiencing a fast growth in recent years. The last report released from the European Commission (2016) based on Eurostat database showed that the most important species reared organically, with the exception of poultry which is by far the greatest one, are sheep (42%) and cattle (34%), followed by pigs (9%) and goats (7%). Pigs showed the lowest shares probably due to the difficulties to obtain organic feeds (i.e. internal supply and organically certified external supply), and the resulting high price for consumers. Between 2007 and 2015, the greatest increase was observed in the poultry sector (+108%), partly to the high demand for eggs, followed by beef and dairy cattle (+58%), pigs (+46%), sheep (+35%) and goats (+15%) (Lernoud and Willer, 2017). Moreover, organic milk production has almost doubled since 2007, from 2.7 to 4.7 million metric tons (Lernoud and Willer, 2017). The document elaborated by the European Commission (2016) reported that the largest producers of organic cattle are Germany, France, Austria, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy, the Czech Republic and Spain. Moreover, Austria (171 000 heads), Germany (150 000 heads), the United Kingdom (127 000 heads) and France (113 000 heads) are the ones with the greatest number of organic dairy cows. Organic pig production is mainly in Denmark (260 510 heads), France (219 812 heads) and Germany (190 471 heads). The organic pig sector still holds a very minor share in the European pig market. Ovine organic production is mainly in the United Kingdom (868 554 heads), Italy (785 170 heads), Greece (609 616 heads), Spain (600 000 heads) and France (450 000 heads). Greek and Italian ovine production is oriented towards cheese manufacturing, while the United Kingdom and Spain are focused on meat production. Goat organic production is concentrated in Greece (344 479 heads), Italy (100 852 heads), France (72 542 heads) and Spain (69 448 heads). The organic poultry sector has registered a 14% yearly increase between 2005 and 2015 and is currently led by France with >13 million animals, of which about 30% are laying hens.

European Regulation for Organic Production: what it says about Organic Livestock Production?

Organic production and labelling of organic products in the European Union are regulated by the Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of May 30, 2018, and although the principles for organic farming seem easy to follow, the regulation is comprised of several exceptions since sometimes a compromise has to be taken to ensure animal health and welfare.

Regarding feeding, even though minerals, trace elements, vitamins or provitamins have to be of natural origin, products of non-natural origin can be used if no alternatives are available. Moreover, non-organic spices, herbs and molasses can be used when they are produced or

prepared without chemical solvents and limited to 1% of the feed ration (annual percentage in feed dry matter).

Regarding health care, chemically synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal products are prohibited for preventive treatment, along with substances to promote growth or production and hormones or similar to control reproduction; however, immunological veterinary medicinal products may be used. The first option for the veterinary treatment should be phytotherapeutic and homeopathic products, as well as minerals and nutritional additives allowed for organic production. However, when chemically synthesised allopathic medical products (including antibiotics) are prescribed, the withdrawal period should be twice of the withdrawal period adopted in conventional farming and at least 48 hours. Moreover, if an animal receives more than 3 courses of treatment with those chemically synthesised allopathic meds within 12 months, or more than 1 course if the productive lifecycle is <1 year, the treated animal (and their products) should undergo a conversion period in order to be considered organic again.

To help in fully achieve the principles of organic livestock farming, effective alternatives for the use of synthetic vitamins, anti-infective and immune-stimulators, and bedding materials have to be examined and developed.

The lack of the availability of statistical information about the use of synthetic vitamins, antibiotics, antiparasitics and conventional bedding materials (straw) supports the need for conducting a survey among organic livestock farmers to get a more accurate picture of the use of these contentious inputs in the organic livestock sector.

A Multi-Country Survey to focus our Research: Understanding Organic Livestock Farmers' Reality and Needs

Questionnaires are one of the most used tools to collect epidemiological data. Due to reasons such as shorter delivery time, lower delivery cost, additional design options, and shorter data entry time, web surveys have gained popularity in the last years (Fan and Yan, 2010). However, web surveys critical point usually is Internet access (Fan and Yan, 2010). Although rural areas usually lag behind in digital access (Basu and Chakraborty, 2011), nowadays farms are more connected than ever before. Moreover, demographic data suggest that organic livestock farms tend to be managed by younger people and better educated rather than conventional ones (Rigby et al., 2001; European Commission, 2016), which could suggest a better access to the Internet.

Therefore, an online questionnaire has been developed to collect information about farmers' perception of current contentious issues in organic livestock farming, and the use of alternative allopathic products (vitamins, antibiotics and antiparasitics) and bedding materials across the European Union and bordering countries.

The questionnaire has been developed in English and translated into several languages to reach the maximum number of participants. We are collecting answers since 1st of November, and we expect to arrive to a representative number by the end of the year. We offer to all participants a Certificate of Collaboration with the study and the possibility to include the link of the farms in the Organic Plus project website (www.organic-plus.net) because without their help this study could not be done.

So, if you are a farmer with livestock under organic, and you are reading this article, please complete our questionnaire at: https://goo.gl/forms/gqQvosdL0RAWj1Zd2

If you want to complete on a different language, please go https://organic-plus.net/2018/11/14/livestock-survey/ and select the available language that better fits your needs. We really appreciate your participation.

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“Dynamic Developments in Organic Research strengthening Partnerships across Europe and beyond”- Great discussions in ICOAS conference, Austria

6th International Conference on Organic Agriculture Sciences (ICOAS) in Austria, Eisenstadt, 7 – 9 November 2018. With the theme of “Dynamic Developments in Organic Research – strengthening Partnerships across Europe and beyond”. The conference was organized as a joint project by FiBL, Esterhazy Betriebe GmbH, Austrian Rural network and Austrian Ministry BMNT.

Organizer of ICOAS

ICOAS brought together scientists, advisors, entrepreneurs, policy makers, associations, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders to meet and discuss latest research results and developments in organic agriculture in Central and Eastern European countries. The 200 participants from 30 countries actively discussed the latest developments in the organic sector, making Eisenstadt a hub of the organic world. On the first two days of the ICOAS, speakers from 26 countries presented a wide range of current research results on organic production, which were discussed intensively from the most diverse perspectives. Special attention were on the below topics:

- Organic production
- Socio-economic challenges
- Consumers’ perspectives and expectations
- Knowledge transfer and dissemination
- Sustainability assessment
- Innovations for the organic sector
- Agricultural policy and law

Furthermore, the respective organic markets, regional marketing strategies and processes for increasing quality were examined. Innovative no-till methods were presented, as well as the latest studies on consumers’ behaviour and attitudes to organic products throughout Europe.

Following the two-day scientific conference on November 9, Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism Elisabeth Köstinger invited to the Organic Policy Summit. “Austria is the number one organic country – we are a model for many member states in the European Union. High-level political representatives from Austria, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic highlighted the role of organic agriculture and applied research in this area for a sustainable and sustainable agricultural system at the Organic Policy Summit.

Lunch in Esterhazy Palace

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4th African Organic Conference (SENEGAL 2018)

Despite all odds, especially the late change of host country from Cameroun to Senegal, the 4th African Organic Conference was successfully hosted by Federation Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique (FENAB) from 5th - 8th November, 2018.

The theme of the Conference was "*Ecological and Organic Agriculture Strategies for Viable Continental and National Development in the Context of the African Union's Agenda 2063*" and it was declared open by the representative (Mr. Arona Niang) of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment, Senegal.

Mr. Arona Niang (representative of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment) declaring open the Conference.

The Conference was attended by over 160 participants, including farmers, scientists, policy makers and organic business entrepreneurs from more than 30 countries. A cross section of some of the participants is shown in Pic. 2.

The International Society of Organic Agriculture Reserach (ISOFAR) jointly sponsored the Conference Proceedings of the Scientific Track with African Organic Network (AfrONet). At the plenary session, Prof. Dr. Gerold Rahmann (ISOFAR President) presented a paper tiled «Contribution of knowledge hub and Networks to EOA Development in Africa».

Prof. Dr. Gerold Rahmann (ISOFAR President) presenting his lead paper on Knowledge hub in Africa

In his opening remarks, he introduced ISOFAR to the participants and encouraged African scientisits to join the Society. He informed that the idea of Organic Knowledge hub was conceived at the 3AOC held in Lagos, Nigeria in 2015 and through the German Ministry of International Cooperation (BMZ), Germany has pledged to support four (4) regional hubs (North, West, East and South) with the sum of 10 million Euro from 2019-2023. The goal is to strengthen African non-profit Organic NGOs. The three expected key outputs of this intervention are gathering and validation of knowledge on organic agriculture, dissemination of locally adapted farming practices and strengthening of markets and comsumption of organic products. Three ISOFAR World Board members attended the Conference.

ISOFAR World Board members (Gerold, Khalid & Victor) at the 4AOC

Another high point of the Conference was the launching of the EOA Strategic Plan and Action Plan which was coordinated by Mr. Ernest Aubee, Principal Programme Officer Agriculture (PPO) Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Regional Steering Committee Chairman of EOA-I.

Mr. Ernest Aubee coordinating the launching of EOA-I documents

Thereafter, Mr. Ernest Aubee was honored by West African Organic Network (WafrONet) for his immense contributions towards the development of EOA-I in west African sub-region through ECOWAS.

Mr. Ernest Aubee of ECOWAS being honoured by WafrONet represented by Profs. Vodouhe Simplice (Benin) & Victor Olowe (Nigeria)

The epoch event was also attended by representatives of international organisations such as SWISS AID, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Inter-continental Network of Organic Farmers Organization (INOFO), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), IFOAM Organics International, Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau / Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and Recherche agronomique pour le dévelopement (CIRAD).

While rounding up the Conference, the stakeholders resolved to meet in Morocco or alternatively Rwanda in 2021 for the 5th African Organic Conference.

AUTHORS

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