

First announcement of ECO-PB 2006 Workshop on participatory plant breeding

ECO-PB together with Dominique Desclaux (INRA) is organising a workshop on Participatory Plant Breeding on June 11-13, 2006 in La Besse, in the south-west of France.

The aim is to discuss examples of participatory plant breeding or selection activities in the field of organic agriculture in industrialised countries, but also on training of farmers for seed saving, seed production or selection activities. There will be oral presentations and a poster session. Abstracts of max 300 words should be sent in before March 1, 2006. The ECO-PB workshop will be partly combined with the COST 860 SUSVAR workshop on cereal crop diversity at the same location from 12-14 June, 2006.

Further information will be soon given on the ECO-PB and COST 860 SUSVAR web site.

Implementation EU-regulation 1452/2003 on organic seeds in Belgium

Half December 2005, the competent Flemish and Walloon administration published a common directive for the implementation of the EU-regulation on organic seeds in Belgium in 2006. This directive can be summarised as follow:

Level 1 – National Annex

For a small number of species, the use of organic seed or organic plant material is obligatory. It concerns shallot (*Allium ascalonicum*), set onion (*Allium cepa L.*), red beet – subspecies long root (*Beta vulgaris var. conditiva*), turnip greens (subspecies of *Brassica rapa*), endives (*Cichorium endivia L.*), winter purslane (*Claytonia perfoliata*), cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus L.*), garden cress (*Lepidum sativum*) and summer purslane (*Portulaca oleracea L.*). Derogation is only possible for conservation varieties and for small field trials.

Level 3 – general derogation

For some 20 species, a general derogation is granted. So, for this species, conventional, non treated seeds can be used without request for derogation. In practice it concerns mainly species which are not cultivated in Belgium.

Level 2 - single derogation

For all crops which are not mentioned in the national annex nor in the list of species with general derogation, the farmers have to ask for derogation for every use of conventional non treated seeds or plant material. As level 1 and level 3 are concerning only a small number of species, this is the case for most species in Belgium. The control bodies are responsible to grant these derogations and have to take in account some guidelines or criteria that are imposed by the competent administration. Especially article 5, point 1c of the EU-regulation 1452/2003 (non of the registered varieties on the database is appropriate) has been more detailed.

The whole directive or more information is available at the Belgian database www.organicxseeds.be in Dutch or in French or by contacting the competent administration (see address data on database) or Lieven Delanote.

Summary by Lieven Delanote, PCBT; www.pcbt.be

Call for papers for the Organic Plant Breeding and Seeds sessions of the Joint Organic Congress 2006, May 30 and 31, Odense-Denmark.

In May 2006, researchers representing all aspects of European research in organic food and farming will present their work at a large, joint congress to be held in Denmark. During this Joint Organic Conference there will be a session with invited speakers on organic plant breeding, seed production and seed pathology (Theme 6). Next to this subplenary session there will also be a workshop with short presentations and a poster session on this theme 6. These issues of theme 6 are included in the Topic II: Improving quality of crops & soil. This topic II will mainly represent research done within the EU-funded projects QLIF, REPCO, ENVIRFOOD and INTERCROP with input from Organic Input Evaluation and SUSVAR. Besides, it is important that the congress also presents other relevant European research. If you are interested to present a paper or a poster to this theme, please send the submission form with the title of your presentation before February 15th. The deadline for the submission of the (full) two-page paper is March 1, 2006. More information on the guidelines for submission: see www.organic-congress.org.

More information: Claus Bo Andreasen: ClausBo.Andreasen@agrsci.dk

Seed workshop at Biofach

On Friday the 17th February the IFOAM EU Regional Group will organize a workshop on the use of organic seed in organic farming.

The one hour event starts with an update on the state of affairs regarding the EU requirements on organic seed, based on the results of the ECO-PB workshop in Vienna last November. After that there will be a panel discussion about the different ways to increase the use and production of organic seed. Each member of the panel gets two minutes to make a statement about the main bottleneck and suggestions for a solution. The workshop will start at 12.00 hour in the Helsinki room.

By [Maaike Raaijmakers](#)

IFOAM and seed issues (from: IFOAM in Action 89- Dec 05)

IFOAM has long since underwritten the importance of seed as the beginning of the organic plant production chain. In its organic seed conference 2004, organized in cooperation with the International Seed Federation (ISF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, IFOAM has drawn international high-level attention for organic seed, portraying it as a professional sector.

To serve moreover the full diversity of the organic agriculture movements, IFOAM broadens its attention to farmers' seed saving and seed exchange. IFOAM will use its new intranet to connect those within its movement working already on seed, therewith providing an exchange and learning platform.

IFOAM plans to develop a leaflet for lobby purposes, showing the importance and beauty of seed diversity, explaining the current crises situation on plant genetic resources and expressing the contribution of organic seed and organic agriculture to (at least) slowing down the process of

agro biodiversity extinction.

The Standards Committee of IFOAM will work in this term (2005 - 2008) on finalizing standards for organic plant breeding, expressing which techniques are suitable for organic variety development. Currently IFOAM is developing a training manual on organic seed saving, showing the basic guidelines for seed saving, therewith giving potential for action on the level where it has most impact: the farmers.

To make IFOAM activities and activities from others on organic seed worthwhile, and to safeguard organic seed production, IFOAM plans to produce a manual on establishing GMO free regions. For this a project proposal has been submitted.

More information: [Louise Lutikholt](#)

Pre-announcement Eucarpia conference on organic plant breeding 2007

The first Meeting of the Eucarpia Working Group Organic Plant Breeding is planned for 2007, November 7-9 in Wageningen, the Netherlands. The leading theme will be *Genotype by Environment Interaction in organic breeding programmes*. See also: www.eucarpia.org.

More information: [Edith Lammerts van Bueren](#)

Call for papers for the ECO-PB workshop on Participatory Plant Breeding: relevance for organic agriculture?

This international workshop will be organized by ECO-PB in close cooperation with INRA, Biocivam and Réseau Semences Paysannes, June 11-13, 2006 in La Besse, in the south-west of France. The ECO-PB workshop will be partly combined with the COST 860 SUSVAR workshop on Cereal Crop Diversity at the same location from 12-14 June, 2006 (www.cost860.dk). The aim of the ECO-PB workshop is to discuss examples of participatory plant breeding or selection activities in the field of organic agriculture in industrialized countries, but also on legislation and on training of farmers for seed saving, seed production or selection activities. Keynote speaker will be Salvatore Ceccarelli, breeder-researcher from ICARDA-Syria and highly experienced in participatory plant breeding in the South.

There will be oral presentations and a poster session. Abstracts of max 500 words can be sent before March 1, 2006 to Dominique Desclaux. More details can be found on the ECO-PB web site under http://www.eco-pb.org/00/call_contributions.pdf.

More information: [Dominique Desclaux](#)

Seminar on 'Aspects of growing transgenic crops' in Denmark

The Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists (njf) organises a seminar in which aspects of growing transgenic crops and how to maintain coexistence within agriculture in the Nordic and Baltic countries shall be discussed. It takes place 7-8 March in Slagelse, Denmark.

Further information under www.njf.nu or contact directly [Birte Boelt](#).

New papers on the ECO-PB Web side

The report and presentations of the ECO-PB Workshop on the EU organic seed regime held in November 2005 in Vienna are now available on the ECO-PB web site and can be looked up under <http://www.eco-pb.org/09/rp.htm>.

A further paper on protoplast fusion and organic farming from Maaïke Raaijmakers of Biologica, The Netherlands has also been put on the web site and can be found under <http://www.eco-pb.org/09/protoplastfusion.pdf>.

“The reasons for rejecting genetic engineering by the organic movement” by Henk Verhoog of Louis Bolk Institute is the title of third paper which is newly put on the ECO-PB web site under http://www.eco-pb.org/09/reasons_reject_gmo.pdf.

The conception of man – approaches to bio-dynamic plant-breeding

was the title of the 6th Conference of the Foundation for Future Farming in which vegetable and cereal breeders presented their ideas and breeding approaches held on the 28th of January in Kassel. About 130 people participated in the conference. The full report will be available at the end of March.

For more information contact: Oliver Willing, Foundation for Future Farming - Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft, phone Tel. ++49 - 234/5797 - 141, Fax - 188,