

EU seed regime after 2004

In Brussels meeting rounds started in November last year on how to handle possibilities of granting derogation for non-organic seeds and transplants after 1st Jan. 2004. Delegates from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom discussed a proposal from the EU commission. From the private sector two IFOAM-experts were invited.

After the 31st of December 2003 according to EU Regulation 2092/91 the use of organic seed and vegetative reproductive material will be mandatory. However, after that there might be still some derogations granted but only under restrictive conditions. Due to Article 6, 3b the commission is granted the opportunity to develop their own procedures without having a council decision. The aim of this first EU consultation round was to discuss and to define the conditions of a future Organic Seed Regime.

A first internal concept paper prepared by the commission propose a procedure based on Art. 6, 3b which might be applied. But there are further possibilities.

The main ideas of this paper are the following:

In each member state a database should be utilised, either by the competent authority in the Member State or by a private body designated by the Member State.

A seed producer or dealer should demonstrate that:

- the organic seed is certified organic
- the variety concerned is appropriate,

- and the delivery of such material is ensured.

- The following derogations for not using seeds available on the data bases are proposed, if the user can demonstrate to the inspection body or competent authority that:

- there is no appropriate variety registered in the data base

- or appropriate varieties but the holder of the registration cannot deliver it in the area of the user,

- the respective material has a much too high price

- the variety is no more available or cannot deliver the material at the holding of the user.

Decisions on the subject are not made by the meeting group but only by article-14 committee.

There was opportunity to give a presentation of [OrganicXseeds](#) to the meeting. The presentation was received with interest.

In January a new round will take place on the 23rd. For those from the above mentioned countries able to contact their delegate at the ministry it will be good to give a sign to promote as much as possible the use of organic multiplied seed! (by [Louise Luttkholt](#))

News on conservation varieties

The EU Permanent Committee for seed and planting materials is going to elaborate standards for 'conservation varieties', as mentioned in EC directive 98/95. It will deal with the preconditions for bringing into the market plant genetic sources, including seed mixtures from species, among those

which are mentioned in EC directive 70/457, article 1. These species are associated with specific natural and semi-natural habitats, and are threatened by genetic erosion. An expert group will work on this subject at January 24th. People interested in this subject should contact their national representative at the ministry.

(by [Louise Luttkholt](#))

German Seed trade law adopted

The German government has adopted the new seed trade law (Saatgutverkehrsgesetz). The official promulgation is expected soon. The seed trade law shall safeguard consumers rights, namely farmers rights against poor quality of the propagating material. The adoption was necessary because of the EC directive 98/95 that requires that all member states of the EU comply with requirements laid down the directive. The directive requires rules for the trade with plant genetic resources (PGR) and varieties suitable for organic agriculture next to the handling of GMO seeds. That is why the adoption is of major importance for the organic seed sector as well (see above). Still a matter of debate both on EU level as well as on national level are the implementing orders ruling the trade with plant genetic resources also referred to as conservation varieties.

Dossier on organic plant breeding techniques

Seeds form the basis for agricultural production, but most organic growers know little about how their seed

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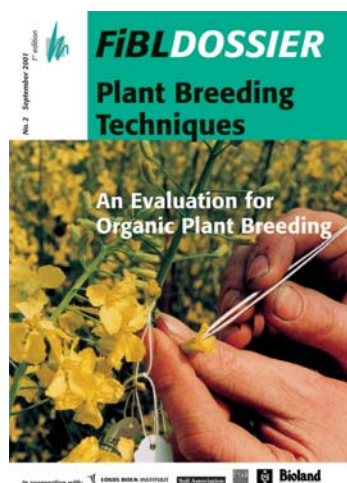
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stocks have been produced. Within the organic movement the discussion on the compatibility of plant breeding techniques has been accelerated by the public discussion on genetic engineering. This decision-making is important to develop a framework for organic plant breeding and facilitate investment by breeding companies.

This dossier explains all standard techniques used in modern plant breeding and why they have been developed. The consequences of not allowing certain techniques for organic plant breeding are outlined, along with suggestions for alternative techniques that could be adopted.



This dossier is a co-production between the Dutch Louis Bolk Institute, the French Institut Technique pour l'agriculture Biologique, the German Bioland, the Swiss FiBL and Soil Association. It is available in [German](#), [French](#), [Dutch](#) and [English](#). 24 pages; Price 5 €, ISBN: 3-906081-13-3.

New Green Seed list in Netherlands

In the Netherlands Louis Bolk Institute and Stichting Zaadgoed have edited a second edition for 2002 (2e Groene Zadengids 2002 - Biologische akkerbouwen tuinbouwgewassen voor de beroepsteelt), announcing the actual availability of Dutch organic propagated varieties for the professional organic farmers. The Dutch control organisation is using the list when farmers ask for use of certain conventional propagated varieties. This booklet can be ordered by paying or sending a cheque for 9 euros to Postbanknumber 3530591 for Louis Bolk Instituut, Hoofdstraat 24, in NL 3972 LA Driebergen.

Contribution to ICC-Cereal Conference

The Dutch Louis Bolk Institute together with ECO-PB made a contribution in the field of research and development concerning cereal breeding for organic agriculture. The conference will take place in Vienna, March 6 to 8. For further information see [ICC Web Site](#) or contact [Edith Lammerts van Bueren](#).

Annual report available on Peter Kunz' Web Site

Biodynamic Cereal breeder Peter Kunz has published his [annual report](#) with promising results of VCU testing for his spelt varieties Alkor and Sirion and wheat varieties Pollux and Atar. For further information visit his Web site [www.Peter-Kunz.ch](#).

Organic Agriculture and plant breeding

The Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft has announced a conference: "Organic agriculture and plant breeding" to take place on January, 26 in Frankfurt am Main, Ka Eins near train station Frankfurt West. The main topic will be an holistic approach to plant health. For further information contact [Oliver Willing at Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft](#).

Green Genetic Engineering and Organic Agriculture

During the Green Week, taking place January 11 to 18 in Berlin, the results of a project carried out by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture ([FiBL Berlin](#) and [FiBL Frick](#)) and the Institute of applied Ecology ([Öko-Institut](#)) are presented in a hearing on January 16, 9 to 12 o'clock at the [ICC Berlin](#). The research project has been asked by the German [Umweltbundesamt](#).

During the hearing experts put forward proposals for the legal handling of the protection of organic crops from pollution of GMO, mainly by pollen drift. They are giving scenarios of a possible legal basis within the national and community's legal system to employ rules for protection distances between GMO and organic crops.

The conference is open to anybody; admission is free. For registration contact [FiBL Berlin e.V.](#) Berlin@fi-bl.de, Fax ++49(0)30/27581759, reference "Fachgespräch Gentechnik". The conference language is German.

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