

### **Dutch Workshop on 24th of January on organic Seed and Planting Material "On the way to 2004" in Driebergen-NL**

On January 24 there will be a workshop on organic Seed and Planting Material "On the way to 2004" in Driebergen (NL) organised by Platform Biologica, Stichting zaadgoed, Louis Bolk Instituut and Plantum Netherlands. The aim is to get more clearness and commitment of all partners involved to move on with closing the organic chain: traders, farmers and seed producers. Among many speakers the minister of Agriculture will present the current draft for the Seed regime and on the derogations, ESA and PRI will present their survey on the availability of seeds and planting material, and also consequences for the cost price in the chain will be discussed. Many farmers and traders have been asked to react on the presentations and to give their concerns and but also their solutions for the discussion in the afternoon.

For more information contact [Edith Lammerts van Bueren](#)

### **Beeders-meeting in Gumpenstein, Austria**

Organic breeding was one of the main issues of the traditional, annual breeders meeting in Gumpenstein Austria, of November 2002.

At the traditional Gumpenstein meeting of the Austrian breeders one day was reserved for the issue "breeding for organic farming". An impressive audience gathered the meeting. Unhappily the organisers missed to invite some specialist as opening-speaker to give an overview on organic breeding. Although some very interesting presentations about grass seed production by Mr. B. Boller, Switzerland and by Mr. B. Krautzer, Austria, and a presentation of the new wheat variety Ökostar by Mr. H. Kempf, Germany, the consecutive discussion remained on a lamentable poor level. There was an endless confusion about the difference of organic breeding and organic plant propagation. Moreover, we heard some very harsh critics of Hofrat L. Girsch, who is responsible for seed quality in Austria. He warned of the well known evil spirits, that will occur, when organic seed production will increase: more plant diseases and guess what, ...epidemic disasters. Quality standards of organic seed are of course one main issue for the next decade. But the situation is much better than Hofrat Girsch would believe. Let's hope, that organic seed production in Austria is not hindered too much by his absurd cares for plant protection.

Another topic were special breeding aims for organic farming. The tenor of the attendant breeders was: "most of the purposes of organic breeding are already an issue of conventional breeding programs". Let's hope that there will be another occasion to convince Austrian breeders of the urgent need for independent organic plant breeding programs!

Andreas Thommen presented the seed database [organicXseeds.com](http://organicXseeds.com) in Gumpenstein (and swore, never again to leave the Institute for Organic Agriculture in Frick, Switzerland without some transparencies about organic breeding!)

By [Andreas Thommen](#)

### News on organic plant breeding and seed production in France?

ITAB , the French Technical Institute for Organic Farming, is involved as coordinator or partner in different programs of organic plant breeding. ITAB coordinate two variety screening networks:

- a 3 years wheat varieties screening network, in which different partners are involved as ITCF, Agriculture Chamber, INRA, regional organic centres and private bodies.
- a new vegetable varieties screening network, coordinated by ITAB and CTIFL, in which are 22 partners involved, e. g. regional organic centres, regional centres and private bodies. 14 vegetable species are potentially studied in organic or 2nd year conversion field: bean, cabbage, carrot, celery, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, leek, melon, potato, spinach, sweet pepper, tomato, zucchini. An annual winter report will be published each year in French.

ITAB is working on seed production and seed quality with FNAMS and SNES since 3 years. 8 technical records are or will be soon published on seed production (organic and seed regulations – carrot, cabbage, onion, zucchini seed production) and a seed disinfection technique with vinegar is proposed against *Alternaria dauci* seed born disease (for further information see ITAB website [www.itab.asso.fr](http://www.itab.asso.fr)). It is proposed to continue with the studies on weed control and seed born diseases.

ITAB is working with Lemaire Deffontaines company on wheat selection. Selection criteria were established by ITAB cereal committee (weed control, straw height, low inputs, yield, baker quality). One to three line could be proposed for variety registration. A new selection program began in 2002 with Michel 'Obtention (legume fodder) and Carneau (grass fodder) companies on fodder selection. The selection criteria are seed yield, fodder yield, livestock trampling, fodder quality and weed control. The financings are granted by Ministry of Agriculture, ONIFLHOR and ONIC ONIOL.

For more information, a November special edition of Alter Agri (ITAB publication) is presenting all the programs worked in France by ITAB and its partners. A national yearly seed production meeting is organised in June by ITAB and FNAMS. A document on selection techniques for organic agriculture conferences organised by ITAB and INRA (May 2002) is under publication. Some information is proposed too on ITAB website [www.itab.asso.fr](http://www.itab.asso.fr). See also [www.eco-pb.org/07/vegetablescreen.pdf](http://www.eco-pb.org/07/vegetablescreen.pdf) and [www.eco-pb.org/07/wheatscreening.pdf](http://www.eco-pb.org/07/wheatscreening.pdf).

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### Annual Wheat Newsletter Volume 49 – Call for contributions

Your contribution for Annual Wheat Newsletter Volume 49 is welcome.

Contributions may include:

- Current activities of your projects.
- New cultivars and germ plasm releases.
- Special reports of particular interest normally not acceptable for scientific journals.
- A list of recent publications.
- News: new positions, advancements, retirements.
- Wheat stocks, lines for distribution, special equipment, computer software, breeding procedures, techniques, etc.
- Meeting and book announcements.

The deadline for receipt of contributions is 1 March, 2003.

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