

### **ECO-PB held second workshop on the new seed regime in Brussels**

In a follow-up workshop to the ECO-PB workshop held Frankfurt in April 2003 on the organic seed regime 2004, ECO-PB has organised a second workshop from 8 to 9 December 2003 in Brussels. The objectives were compare and discuss the various results of activities in several countries adopting the EU regulation 1452/2003 of 14. August 2003. Eight European countries were present and discussed and compared the various approaches and results of activities in different countries adopting the EU Regulation 1452/2003. A short report on the workshop can be found under [http://www.eco-pb.org/09/short\\_report\\_2nd\\_workshop.pdf](http://www.eco-pb.org/09/short_report_2nd_workshop.pdf)

### **News from different EU Member States concerning the new seed regime**

During a meeting organised by ECO-PB on 8 to 9 December in Brussels (see above) the attendees from eight European countries committed to report on the progress with regard to the application of the new seed regime and the development of the national organic seed database approaches in the ECO-PB Newsletter. In this issue we start with short reports of four EU-Countries.

#### **Derogation system in the Netherlands for 2004**

The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality has published their derogation system for organic seed in 2004. The crops are divided into three categories:

1. Crops which do not qualify for derogation because enough organic seed and appropriate varieties are available
2. Crops which may qualify for derogation because there are some organic varieties available, but not a sufficient range yet
3. Crops which do automatically qualify for derogation because no organic varieties are available.

Five expert groups on cereals, potatoes, greenhouse vegetables, outdoor vegetables and fodder crops have worked out an advice for the ministry. The expert groups consisted out of farmers, seed producers, and crop specialists. Policy makers of the organic umbrella organisation were appointed as observers of this process. The full press release with details on the crops division is given in the pdf file, <http://www.eco-pb.org/09/pressenglish.pdf>.

A second project was to establish a database for the Dutch supply of organic seeds. The Dutch Quality Service for Horticulture (Naktuinbouw) is commissioned to set up and manage the database. The database can be visited at [www.biodatabase.nl](http://www.biodatabase.nl)

By Louis Beijer, National Reference Centre for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (EC-LNV), Ede, the Netherlands

### **The Danish Database for organic seed and vegetative propagative material**

In Denmark the "Database for organic seed and vegetative propagative material" is constructed and updated by the Danish Agricultural Advisory Service, National Centre, situated in Aarhus, Jutland. The database is located on: [www.lr.dk/applikationer/oekosortsdb/index.asp](http://www.lr.dk/applikationer/oekosortsdb/index.asp).

Manager of the database and responsible for its contents is the Plant Directorate, under The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. The database will be opened for the public from the 15. January 2004. The total number of varieties available and the amounts (kg) of field crops which will be marketed in the database is still not clear. But we believe that at least the demand for cereal seed and grass seed will be covered by the organic seed marketed through the database. No general derogations from the use of organic seed can be granted before the 15. February 2004, as information on all available organic seed is not expected to be complete until this date.

By Rasmus Ørnberg Eriksen, Plantedirektoratet Sektor for økologi

### **The Spanish Database for organic seed and vegetative propagative material**

The Spanish data base for organic seed and vegetative propagating material (BASE DE DATOS DE SEMILLAS Y MATERIAL DE REPRODUCCIÓN VEGETATIVA DE PRODUCCIÓN ECOLÓGICA) can be found under

<http://www.mapya.es/alimentacion/pags/ecologica/introduccion.htm#art7>

By Maria Ramos

### **The German Database for organic seed and vegetative propagative material**

In Germany the 16 federal states are responsible for the national database. They agreed on having just one database for whole Germany and decided to use the organicXseeds of FiBL as the official database (see [www.organicXseeds.de](http://www.organicXseeds.de)). From the beginning of January the database is online and checks for variety availability can be carried out by growers. Derogations are giving on a crop group bases. Crop groups in the database are divided in two categories: Those for which general derogations are given and those for which growers have to seek authorisation by the inspection authority in a case-by-case application. At the moment are filling up the database with their varieties.

### **Overview on organic seed databases on the European Union Web site**

The EU Commission has published a web side with links to all members state organic seed databases (as far as available). It can be found under

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/qual/organic/seeds/links\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/qual/organic/seeds/links_en.htm)

### **Comparison of seed treatments of spring wheat against fusarium**

A trial on different seed treatments (see ECO-PB Newsletter March 2003) in the organic field of experimental station Rusthoeve in the Netherlands showed that soaking seeds for two hours in warm water (45° C) is very effective against infections with *fusarium* spp. Seed emergence was 40% higher than the untreated seed lot of the spring wheat variety Lavett. Laboratory analysis showed that the initial infection rate of the seed of 23% was reduced to almost 0%. Other treatments (e-dressing, adding the antagonist *Bacillus subtilis*, grading of the seeds) had no effect on the pathogen or on seed emergence. The warm water treatment also enhanced the development the wheat seedlings. However, the positive effects of the treatment could not be found back at harvest time: the trial did not show (significant) differences in yield between treatments. This probably was due to the favourable growing conditions in the year 2003, which allowed a recovery of the initial bad stand in the other treatments. We expect this to be different in more regular years. But even without a yield effect, the treatment has advantages for the farmers: because of the fusarium problem organic farmers are delaying sowing date and enhancing seeding rates. The warm water treatment allows them to save on seeds and increase yield by sowing earlier. Preliminary calculations of the costs of the treatment with facilities, which in the Netherlands are commonly used for "boiling" conventional flower bulbs and shallots, show that the treatment is economically viable. If the weather will collaborate a repetition of the trial in 2004 will show us the effects of the warm water treatment under more unfavourable growing conditions. The research was made possible with a contribution of the European Regional Development Fund.

By Aart Osman,

### **American Organic Seed Alliance held Seed Growers Conference**

In January of 2004, Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) hosted the 3rd "Seed Growers Conference" (previously hosted by Abundant Life Seed Foundation). Nearly one hundred organic seed farmers, breeders, university researchers, seed company representatives and activists were in attendance. Participants came from across North America - Cornell breeders from New York, Maine seed company owners, British Columbia seed farmers, and New Mexico activists. Topics included proprietary issues/breeders rights, the NOP seed rule and exceptions, research needed to improve organic seed quality and quantity, disease issues and economics. Although turnout was hindered by winter ice storms, the conference was a success in building new alliances amongst those of us concerned with organic seed. Grant proposals are already being crafted, partnerships formed and the working group will start planning the next conference when we meet as a group at the Ecological Farming Conference this week.

For more information: <http://www.abundantlifeseed.org/>