

President of ECO-PB appointed as the first professor of organic plant breeding worldwide

Edith Lammerts van Bueren of Louis Bolk institute in the Netherlands and president of the European Consortium for Organic Plant Breeding has been appointed as professor of organic plant breeding by the Wageningen University and Research Centre (NL). Her appointment as professor of organic plant breeding is unique in the world and will be major step forward with regard to the recognition of organic plant breeding which certainly has a different scope compared to traditional breeding sciences.

Edith Lammerts van Bueren initiated many activities in the field of organic propagation and seed production both at the Louis Bolk Institute and in the framework of ECO-PB. She sees her professorship as an opportunity to reinforce the scientific underpinnings of organic concepts and strategies inherent to the organic sector - a task that necessarily needs to be tackled.

Congratulation Edith!

By Klaus-Peter Wilbois

Annual organic seed derogation reports published

According to Article 13 of the Regulation (EC) 1452/2003 (organic seed regulation) the competent authorities are obliged to compile a report on derogations issued in the year before which must be sent to the EU Commission by 31 March of each year. This report has to be also published in the respective national data bases and can be looked up there. For instance, for UK and Germany this report can be found at http://212.249.198.56/oxs/static/pdf/UK_Annual_Derogation_Report_2004.pdf and <http://212.249.198.56/oxs/do/Bericht> respectively.

By Klaus-Peter Wilbois

ASZITA and WIWA – Official registration for two new wheat varieties from bio-dynamic breeding

In March and April two new Varieties of bio-dynamic cereal breeder Peter Kunz from Switzerland were officially registered in Germany and Switzerland. The two new varieties have outstanding quality traits especially under conditions of organic farming.

ASZITA is a variety that is especially suitable for more extensive sites and was bred particularly for poorer soils and farms with little livestock. ASZITA reached highest quality marks when tested under organic conditions.

WIWA is TOP-Quality variety, suitable for broad range of sites. In tests under organic farming conditions it showed high yielding properties (108%) in combination with outstanding leaf and ear health (9 bonus points) and highest backing quality (131%).

For further information see: www.peter-kunz.ch

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New Consultation on the Directive on conservation varieties

A further round of consultations with the Member States of the European Union on the Directive "...regarding the certification and marketing of seed and seed mixtures in the interest conserving plant genetic resources" has been launched by the EU Commission. Background for the new consultations is a working document of the Commission of 17 March 2005. Although the conservation of plant genetic resources has become of paramount importance due to an enormous genetic erosion process it took quite some time for the commission to follow up in the law making process. It is now high time to stringently proceed with the work on the directive since most of the EU member states wait for it in order to fit their own provisions in the framework set by the Commission.

By Klaus-Peter Wilbois

IFOAM World Congress – Workshop Plant Breeding

IFOAM is going to carry out a workshop on "Plant Breeding" that is taking in the framework of the IFOAM Organic World Congress (20 - 23 September 2005 in Adelaide). Background for the workshop is work on the draft of IFOAM Basic with respect to plant breeding with the objective to lift those to full standards in future. Furthermore, IFOAM plans to employ a Sub Committee of the Basic Standards Committee which shall work on a new draft of plant breeding standards. The actual Congress Programme can be looked up under <http://www.nasaa.com.au/ifoam2005/>.

By Eckhard Reiners

France: National meeting on farmers seeds "What seeds and plants for a peasant agriculture?", organized by the network "Semences paysannes", ASPAARI and Culture bio

On May 21, at Guichen, near Rennes, a meeting will be organized for all the farmers who want to meet people already engaged in biodiversity conservation, organic breeding and participatory breeding. Each crop will be represented by an active organisation which has already a breeding and conservation experience: cereals, with Nicolas Supiot (ASPAARI), Jean-François Berthelot (CeTAB), vegetable productions with François Delmond (Germinance), fruits with Christian Sunt (Fruits oubliés), maize with Patrice Gaudin (Agrobio Périgord), vine with Guy Kastler (Nature et Progrès), forage with Steven Le Guyader (FRAB) and medicinal plants (SIMPLES).

In the afternoon the presentation of the network "semences paysannes" and the international and national regulations will be held by Guy Kastler (Semences Paysannes) and Jean-Pierre Delage (CNDSF). Then, we will present the initiatives in Brittany: participatory breeding for cauliflower organic farming (Véronique Chable, INRA SAD Armorique and Mathieu Conseil, IBB – PAIS), organic potatoes (Gilbert le Jeloux, Payzons ferme), wheat conservatory and baking (Nicolas Supiot, Aspaari and Paysan-boulangier), from the soil biodiversity to the animal (Steven Le Guyader, FRAB). The day will be ended by a public debate about: "For a GMO-free Brittany, from the seeds to the health", animated by Guy Kastler and Lilian Le Goff.

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The Association de Soutien aux Projets et Activités Agricoles et Ruraux Innovants (Association for support to innovative farming projects and activities and rural people-ASPAARI) was founded in the autumn of 1999 as an initiative of a small group of people, who were willing to help each other implementing their respective activity and life projects in rural areas. Four years after its foundation, the association had over 250 members.

The Réseau Semences paysannes was established in the spring of 2003 and is now constituted of national trade unions and national development organizations involved in supporting organic and farmers agriculture, craftsmen, seed producing farmers, associations of bioseed producers, associations for development, associations for biodiversity conservation.

The Association “Culture Bio” was created in 1999, to promote organic farming, food and gardening. It has organised an organic meeting (Ille et bio) for several years, in Guichen.

By Véronique Chable

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