

## Second announcement of ECO-PB 2006 Workshop on participatory plant breeding

ECO-PB together with INRA is organising an international workshop on *Participatory Plant Breeding: Relevance for Organic Agriculture?*, June 11-13, 2006 in La Besse (near Carcassonne), South West France. The focus will be on examples of participatory plant breeding (PPB) or selection activities in the field of organic agriculture, but also on training of farmers for seed saving, seed production or selection activities. There will be oral presentations, a poster session, film and a field excursion.

The ECO-PB workshop will be partly combined with the COST 860 SUSVAR workshop on *Cereal Crop Diversity: implications for production and products*, at the same location from 12-14 June, 2006, see for more information: [www.cost860.dk](http://www.cost860.dk)

**Programme:** The full programme can be downloaded here [www.eco-pb.org/00/program\\_workshop\\_ppb.pdf](http://www.eco-pb.org/00/program_workshop_ppb.pdf)

**Language:** English with French translations.

**Place and accommodation:** In pleasant surroundings in the middle of the country side at La Besse, south west of Carcassonne. Accommodation will be in 'chalets' and mobile-homes with single rooms. If you want to share a mobile home or chalet, you can indicate up to 3 persons.

**Time:** June 11 at 19.30. The ECO-PB program ends after the excursion on Tuesday 13, 2006 at approx 13.00 o'clock. (Susvar-workshop follows on the Tuesday)

**Registration:** see the link on the ECO-PB website [www.eco-pb.org](http://www.eco-pb.org), or directly <http://www.cost860.dk/activities/workshops/Production/RegistrationForm.htm>, deadline May 1<sup>st</sup> for cheap booking; after May 1<sup>st</sup> 100 euro extra. The participation fee for Sunday diner - Tuesday lunch are 190 Euros (including accommodation, meals, excursions and proceedings). You are welcome to stay also for the Susvar-workshop, for additional costs, see [www.cost860.dk](http://www.cost860.dk). The number of participants will be limited to about 60.

**Local organizers:** Max Haefliger and Dominique Desclaux

**Scientific organizers:** [Dominique Desclaux](#), [Edith Lammerts van Bueren](#) and [Hanne Østergård](#)  
Visit also the French website on participatory plant breeding: <http://selection-participative.cirad.fr>

## Workshop “Seed Treatments for Organic Vegetable Production”

The EU-project “Stove” (<http://www.stove-project.net/>) was started in early 2003 with the aim to evaluate and develop seed treatment methods for organic vegetable production. Since then, a great number of laboratories, greenhouse and field experiments have been performed, and valuable information on the subject has been obtained.

With the termination of the project in September of this year a workshop will be organised focussing on the topic of sanitation of vegetable seeds for organic farming. It is intended to serve as a platform where the results of the “Stove”-project will be presented, and also provide an opportunity for representatives of the seed industry, the organic sector, extension organisations/services and academia to discuss the current status and future developments in the field of non-chemical vegetable seed treatments. The workshop will take place September 13 and 14 at the Institute for Biological Control in Darmstadt (Germany). There will be no registration fee. Darmstadt is only 40 km away from Frankfurt/Main and can be easily reached by plane, car and train.

Contact: [Dr. Eckhard Koch](#), Institute for Biological Control, Heinrichstrasse 243, D-64287 Darmstadt.

Tel.: +49 6151 407 227

**EU Commission revised Web addresses for member states organic seeds databases**

The EU Commission has revised and updated the web addresses of organic seed data bases in the European Member States. An overview table can be found at the end of this newsletter.

**New Papers on the ECO-PB web site**

There are two new papers put on the ECO-PB web site. One deal with the adaptation and evolution of a composite cross population of wheat at Elm Farm Research Center (Newbury, Berkshire, UK) and one with organic cereal seed health tracking in the UK.

**No more Separate Organic Wheat VCU Trials in Switzerland**

In Switzerland, from 2002 to 2005 organic wheat variety trials were given official VCU (test of value for cultivation and use) status. New varieties could be tested under organic conditions to enter the National Variety Catalogue. For three years, there existed two parallel networks of organic and “extenso” (without the use of fungicides, but mineral fertilizer and herbicides allowed) VCU trials. Together with the Netherlands, Switzerland was a pioneer in this respect. Now the results of the years 2002-2004 have been published<sup>1,2</sup> and it was shown that concordance between the two networks was very high. No interaction of variety with farming system was found except for precocity. A simulatin showed that the VCU test is more selective under organic farming conditions for all types of varieties.

These findings led to the consequence that from 2006 on there will only be one VCU trial network comprising 9 “extenso” sites and only one organic site (according to the percentage of organic farming in Switzerland). Lowering the costs was given as a reason for this decision, but the federal research station agroscope Reckenholz will still continue to conduct organic wheat variety trials for the recommended variety list on 8 organic sites (without VCU status). These trials are still important because they lead to the classification of baking quality which is essential for marketing. Only varieties from the national catalogue can enter these trials so that breeders and farmers loose two years before a new variety is tested in the organic network. FiBL and Biosuisse (label organisation) now try to achieve at least that new varieties can enter the organic trials at the same time as they enter the VCU trials. Contact: Andi Thommen, FiBL Switzerland

By Christine Arncken

**General principles and standards for certified organic plant breeding in Switzerland**

In Switzerland, from 2000 to 2002 efforts were made to elaborate general principles and standards for certified organic plant breeding. Now Biosuisse and FiBL want to resume this work and elaborate a draft control handbook for breeders. The aim is to discuss the issue from summer 2006 on and to vote on the plant breeding principles, standards and control guidelines in spring 2007. From 2008 on, “certified organic variety” could be a registered trademark. Contact: Andi Thommen, FiBL Switzerland

By Christine Arncken

### **News from the Canadian Heritage Wheat Project**

"The Heritage Wheat Project (<http://members.shaw.ca/oldwheat>) is pleased to announce that 'Red Fife' wheat, a Ukraine originating (speculation) variety that arrived in Canada in 1840, and fed Canada from 1860-1900 is back in commercial production.

Organic plant breeder Sharon Rempel ([slrempel@shaw.ca](mailto:slrempel@shaw.ca)) started with one pound of Red Fife seed in 1987 and is delighted to see the recommercialization of a significant 'living artefact' of Canada. Red Fife is a hard red spring wheat in Saskatchewan, a soft white winter wheat on the west coast of Canada and seems to adapt well between wet and drought conditions. 'Prairie Red Fife Organic Growers Cooperative' president Marc Loiselle states over 300 tonnes of this variety was harvested in Saskatchewan in 2006.

Thanks to the Slow Food Canada's nomination of Red Fife to the Ark of Taste, interest from artisan bakeries in Red Fife is growing. Awareness that Red Fife is a landrace and is able to adapt quickly to a diversity of changes in climate and growing conditions adds to its value with organic farmers.

By Sharon Rempel, For more information about the Cooperative contact Marc & Anita Loiselle 'Loiselle Organic Family Farm' 'Holistic Stewardship for Abundant Life', P.O. Box 25, Vonda, Saskatchewan S0K 4N0, tel: 306-258-2192, email: [loiselle@sasktel.net](mailto:loiselle@sasktel.net)

### **News from the USA: Organic seed issue is progressing**

Organic Seed Data Base in the US: The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) is currently at work building a database where seed companies can list their available organic varieties, and organic certifiers and growers can search for the organic varieties that would be equivalent to the conventional seed they desire to use. OMRI is expected to unveil this new database at the ASTA convention in Chicago on July 10, when the ASTA Organic Seed Committee has its next meeting.

Survey on potential organic seed use: California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), based in Santa Cruz, has expressed its interest in working with the organic seed industry on a survey to gather data on the conventional seed varieties California growers have been using instead of organic seed. This information could tell organic seed companies which seed varieties need to be brought out in organic versions to meet growers' demand. CCOF is the largest organic certifier in the United States. It certifies more than 1,000 California organic farmers and ranchers - accounting for 75% of the organic acreage in California.

By Richard D. Siegel

Web addresses for member states organic seeds databases – 22.03.2006	
MS	Database
Austria	<a href="http://www7.ages.at/institut/saatgut/bio-datenbank/bio_db_kulturarten.htm">www7.ages.at/institut/saatgut/bio-datenbank/bio_db_kulturarten.htm</a>
Belgium	<a href="http://www.organicXseeds.be">www.organicXseeds.be</a>
Cyprus	<a href="http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/da/da.nsf/All/EA60CAD9F9D572BBC2257131004005A2?OpenDocument">www.moa.gov.cy/moa/da/da.nsf/All/EA60CAD9F9D572BBC2257131004005A2?OpenDocument</a>
Czech Rep.	<a href="http://www.ukzuz.cz/index_oos.php?id=osivo">www.ukzuz.cz/index_oos.php?id=osivo</a>
Denmark	<a href="http://www.lr.dk/applikationer/oekosortsd/index.asp">www.lr.dk/applikationer/oekosortsd/index.asp</a>
Estonia	<a href="http://www.plant.agri.ee/default.asp?lng=eng&amp;s=menu&amp;ss=sisu&amp;id=964&amp;news=1256">www.plant.agri.ee/default.asp?lng=eng&amp;s=menu&amp;ss=sisu&amp;id=964&amp;news=1256</a>
Finland	<a href="http://www.kttk.fi/data/sto/uusi_netiti_taulukot/luomu_taulukot/Lisaysaineistorekisteri2005.pdf">www.kttk.fi/data/sto/uusi_netiti_taulukot/luomu_taulukot/Lisaysaineistorekisteri2005.pdf</a>
France	<a href="http://www.semences-biologiques.org">www.semences-biologiques.org</a>
Germany	<a href="http://www.organicXseeds.de">www.organicXseeds.de</a>
Greece	<a href="http://www.minagric.gr/greek/sp.biologikh.html">www.minagric.gr/greek/sp.biologikh.html</a>
Hungary	?
Ireland	<a href="http://www.organicseeds.agriculture.gov.ie">www.organicseeds.agriculture.gov.ie</a>
Italy	<a href="http://www.ense.it/biologico-indice/biologic.htm">www.ense.it/biologico-indice/biologic.htm</a>
Latvia	<a href="http://www.vaad.gov.lv/default.aspx?tabID=12&amp;lang=1&amp;id=586">www.vaad.gov.lv/default.aspx?tabID=12&amp;lang=1&amp;id=586</a>
Lithuania	<a href="http://www.vic.lt/ris">www.vic.lt/ris</a> (and go to Seklu sektorius, Ekologisku seklu duomenu bazes and Lietuvos ekologisku seklu duomenu baze).
Luxembourg	<a href="http://www.organicXseeds.lu">www.organicXseeds.lu</a>
Malta	No database
Netherlands	<a href="http://www.biodatabase.nl">www.biodatabase.nl</a>
Poland	<a href="http://217.153.130.11/cms/upload/akt/wykaznasion.pdf">http://217.153.130.11/cms/upload/akt/wykaznasion.pdf</a>
Portugal	?
Slovakia	<a href="http://www.uksup.sk">www.uksup.sk</a> (and go to “bioosivo”)
Slovenia	<a href="http://www.mkgp.gov.si/fileadmin/mkgp.gov.si/pageuploads/ssk/Podatkovna-zbirka-ekoloskega-semenskega-materiala.pdf">www.mkgp.gov.si/fileadmin/mkgp.gov.si/pageuploads/ssk/Podatkovna-zbirka-ekoloskega-semenskega-materiala.pdf</a>
Spain	<a href="http://www.mapya.es/app/EcoSem/ListadoSemillas.aspx">www.mapya.es/app/EcoSem/ListadoSemillas.aspx</a>
Sweden	<a href="http://www.sjv.se/ekoutsade">www.sjv.se/ekoutsade</a>
UK	<a href="http://www.organicXseeds.co.uk">www.organicXseeds.co.uk</a>