

### **Successful ECO-PB meeting on organic Seed regulation**

On 25/26 September 2008 some 40 experts from 13 different European countries participated in the round table meeting on 'International Attuning of the Assortment, Supply and Demand of Organic Seed in vegetable production of North-West Europe' at the location of Bejo Seeds, Warmenhuizen, The Netherlands. The participants represented: seed companies involved in organic seed production, agricultural advisors, scientists, database managers, control bodies managing the derogation system, representatives from the national ministries of agriculture of which some were also members of the Standing Committee Organic Farming (SCOF) in Brussels.

The aim of this ECO-PB meeting was to facilitate an international attuning of variety assortment and derogation policies between countries of the same climatic conditions and with a certain overlap in variety requirements (e.g. NW Europe) to gain more level playing field.

The questions on the agenda were: Are there (sub)species for which an agreement on attuning of derogation policy could be possible between a number of countries within the next 2-5 years? Which countries could collaborate on which crops and on what kind of time schedule? If so, what steps (national or international) are required to come to such an agreement? How can countries communicate on this issue? Do we need to create a special committee for this? Who will take the lead? Can members of the SCOF see a role for them in this issue? How can we further increase the commitment of member states?

The report will soon appear on the ECO-PB website and contains a summary of the discussions and recommendations for further steps by the stakeholders involved.

More information: Edith Lammerts van Bueren

### **European preparation workshop in anticipation of the IFAOM Conference on Breeding**

The French Institut Technique de l'Agriculture Biologique (ITAB) and ECO-PB are going to organise a preparation workshop in anticipation of the IFAOM conference on breeding (see announcement below). The workshop is being held on April 27 and 28 2009 in Paris. The meeting aims to determine, discuss and adjust the positions between European countries with regard to the renunciation of certain biotechnological methods and techniques of plant breeding (e.g. cyto- and protoplast fusion, cis-genesis) that might be used at present or in future to produce seed and propagation material used in organic farming. Participations is open for all people involved in organic plant breeding and seed production and organic farmers organisations in Europe.

For more information or workshop registration contact: [Frédéric Rey](#)

### **1<sup>st</sup> International IFOAM Conference on Animal and Plant Breeding: BREEDING BIODIVERSITY**

is the title of the conference being held August 25 - 28 2009 in Sante Fe, New Mexico. Both, organic plant and animal breeding are in early phases of development, although they share a great deal in common, primarily socioeconomic aspects, but also genotype-environment interaction, genetic diversity and robustness. Each field can inspire the other to develop and

build upon successful strategies. Even though technical aspects may differ dramatically, organic farms ideally utilize integrated systems, and bringing both animal and plant breeding together in one international conference explicitly highlights the important interdependences and holistic approach of organic agriculture, while maximizing the use of limited resources to bring together a diverse constituency that shares common goals.

The conference will be divided into three sections for both animal and plant breeding:

**1. Methods**

- Technical aspects
- Breeding techniques
- Genotype environment interaction
- Selection criteria
- Breeding for farmers and hobby gardeners

**2. Socio Economic aspects**

- Participatory approach
- Financing
- Indigenous knowledge
- Gender related aspects

**3. Legal aspects**

- Registration
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Farmers Rights

**Target Groups**

- Animal and plant breeders and seed savers
- Governments and intergovernmental agencies
- Researchers and universities
- The organic sector
- Like-minded organizations
- Foundations and funding agencies

**Conference Venue and Location**

The conference will take place in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the central part of the US. Santa Fe is easily accessible from anywhere in the World, via a major airport only 40 minutes away (Albuquerque, NM). This city has a very active Slow Food, Farmer Market, Gardening, Organic breeding and farming and Culinary movement. There is also a very strong traditional agriculture movement amongst the northern Native American tribes of New Mexico, who have an active traditional agriculture movement and seed sovereignty plan. More: <http://www.santafe.org/>

**Conference Tours and Side Events**

The Santa Fe area offers many possibilities for tours and side events including the following:

- New Mexico State University Extension Station across the river from Seeds of Change where they are doing breeding research with an emphasis on herbs, fruit trees and greenhouse production.
- An active Native American seedbank and preservation movement with the native groups in northern New Mexico.
- The Santa Fe Farmer's Market is considered one of the top 10 in the U.S. There are also a number of working organic farms in the area dedicated to organic seed.

IFOAM's partner is "Seeds of Change". Celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2009, this is in fact the oldest organic seed company in the United States of America and it will act as the ongoing and on-site local organizer. More: <http://www.seedsofchange.com/>

For more information:

[http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam\\_conferences/2009\\_Animal\\_and\\_Plant\\_Breeding/animal\\_plant\\_breeding.html](http://www.ifoam.org/events/ifoam_conferences/2009_Animal_and_Plant_Breeding/animal_plant_breeding.html)

**Preliminary announcement: Workshop on the role of Marker Assisted Selection in breeding varieties for organic agriculture**

A workshop on the role of Marker Assisted Selection in breeding varieties for organic agriculture will be organised from 25 (13.00h) – 27 February 2009 (13.00h) in Wageningen, the Netherlands.

The workshop is organised in cooperation between the EU-project BioExploit and the EUCARPIA Section Organic and Low-input Agriculture. We invite the following stakeholders as participants: Breeders and researchers involved and/or interested in plant breeding for organic agriculture with or without detailed knowledge on molecular techniques as well as opinion leaders, e.g. from organic or conventional umbrella organisations focusing on breeding and seed production for the organic sector. There will be a maximum number of 60 participants. The aim of the workshop is to facilitate a broad discussion with invited speakers on the state of the art and progress in relation to whether, when and how breeding programs for organic agriculture can benefit from Marker Assisted Selection.

The workshop is a follow-up of the discussion on MAS in plant breeding programs for organic agriculture, organised by COST SUSVAR and ECO-PB in January 2005 in Driebergen, the Netherlands. In the meantime, science has made progress, practical breeders have got more experience with MAS, and questions for breeding for organic agriculture may be more articulated. So now it is time for an update and further deepening of the issues involved. The workshop will discuss basic selection principles as well as contrast breeding strategies according to organic principles and MAS in a few crop and trait cases. Next to proceedings, the workshop will contribute to a policy paper identifying and clarifying key issues based on an analysis of role of MAS in breeding for organic agriculture.

A detailed program and registration forms will soon be available on the websites of BioExploit, Eucapia, ECO-PB and Cost 860 Susvar.

More information: [Edith Lammerts van Bueren](#) and [Hanne Østergård](#)

**New functionality on the French database « [www.semences-biologiques.org](http://www.semences-biologiques.org) »**

During the last experts meeting, the producers' representatives complain on the database updating by the seed suppliers. So, French Ministry ask the GNIS to set in place a special function.

When a farmer notes that a variety, which is still considered as "available" in the database, is in fact not available, he can send a message to the GNIS, giving his name and explaining the problem. The message is on the same time, delivered to the supplier, who must correct his mistake immediately. The new function will permit a better updating of the database in due time.

More information: [jean.wohrer@gnis.fr](mailto:jean.wohrer@gnis.fr)

**Farm Seed Opportunities – Opportunities for farm seed conservation, breeding and production**

On project web site of Farm Seed Opportunities there is a public discussion forum on topic related issues: <http://www.farmseed.net/phorum/>