

# *Survey of organic seed use in selected countries*

## *Feedback from organic fodder crop seed dealers in Switzerland*

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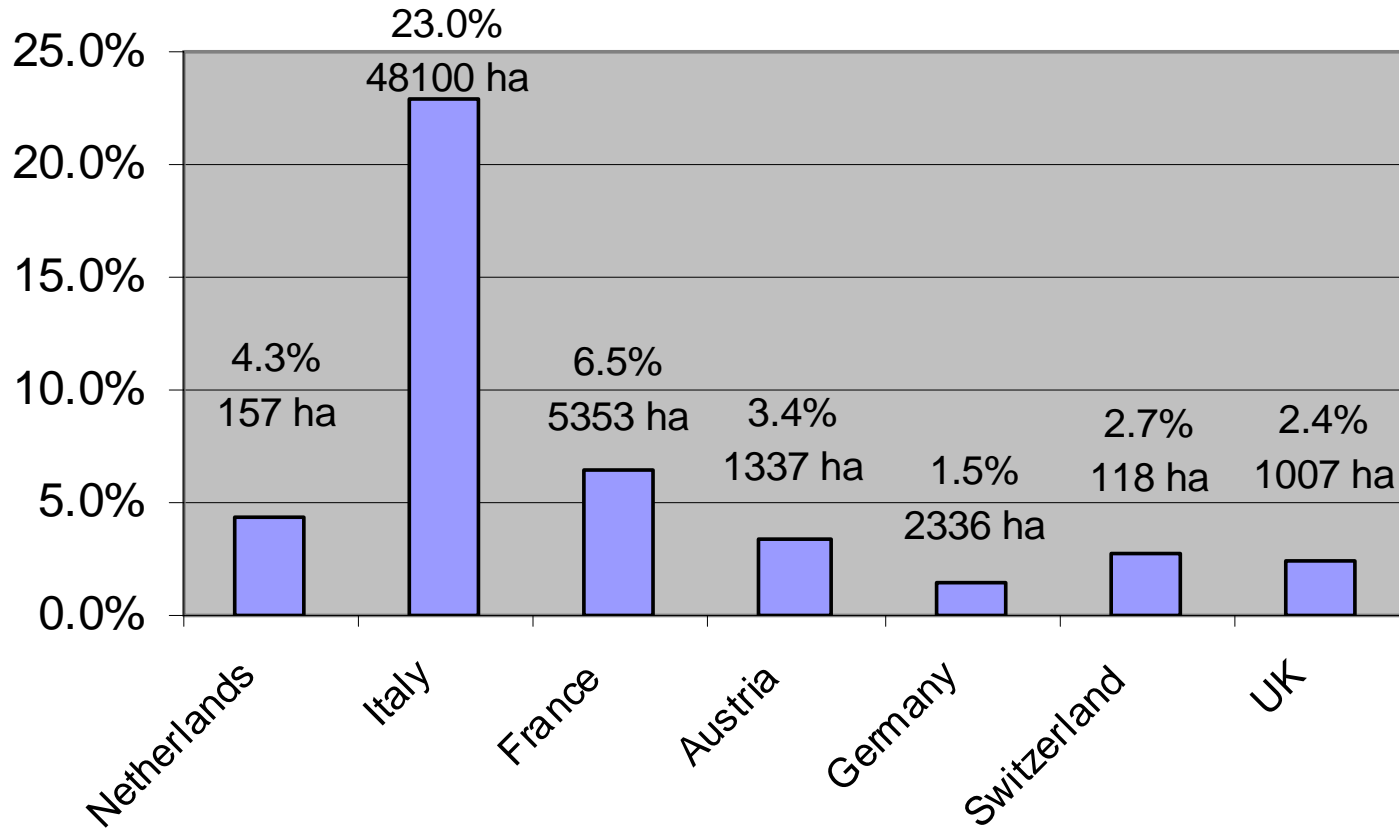
# Derogations reported for cereal seeds

State	Non-organic cereal seeds in tons	Number of derogations authorised	Mean area/ Derogation*
Netherlands	31	58	2.7
Italy	9'618	4187	11.5
France	1'071	1331	4.0
Spain	3010	1800	8.3
Germany	479	435	5.5
Denmark	26	24	5.3
Switzerland	24	27	4.4
UK	201	85	11.8

\*estimation based on an average of 200 kg seed/ha

# Use of non-organic cereals seeds

Area sown with non-organic seeds in 2004



# Conclusions

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**Arable crops (cereals, potatoes, leguminosae and oilseed) can be propagated quite easily  
Therefore:**

- **No general derogation for arable crops**
- **Derogations for arable crops 2006 less than 10% of total surface**
- **From 2007 on arable crops in Annex 1**
- **Single derogation for annex species, when there are nationwide problems with the planned seed production (drought etc.)**

# Feedback of swiss fooder crop seed traders

Table: Marketshare of organic seeds

Species	Under Expectation	According expectation	Better than expected	Sales in tons	Sales in relation to total sales volume	comments
<b>Maize</b>	<b>x</b>			<b>2.8</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>To much derogations given</b>
Rating	-1	0	+1			

# Results

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**Mean of fulfilled expectations= - 0.41 (N=52)**

**Marketshare of organic seeds:**

**3.41% of total sales volume (N=40)**



# Current situation regarding organic seed data bases in selected EU Countries

- Klaus-Peter Wilbois

# Organic Seed regime in the EU

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- **Regulation (EC) 1452/2003 of the Commission of 14 August 2003**

## **Art. 1 Maintenance of the derogation**

1. The derogation provided for in Article 6(3)(a) of Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91, ... is maintained after 31 December 2003 as regards species not listed in the Annex to this Regulation. For the application of the derogation concerning seed or seed potatoes referred to in the first subparagraph, procedural rules and criteria are set out in Articles 3 to 14.



# Organic Seed regime in the EU

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## ■ Regulation (EC) 1452/2003 of the Commission of 14 August 2003

### **Art. 3 Use of seed or seed potatoes not obtained by the organic production method**

Member States may ... authorise the use of seed or seed potatoes not obtained by the organic production method, provided that the seed or seed potatoes are:

(a) not treated with plant protection products, other than those accepted for treatment of seed in part B of Annex II, to Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91, unless chemical treatment is prescribed in accordance with Council Directive 2000/29/EC (1) for phytosanitary purposes by the competent authority of the Member State.....

(b) produced without the use of genetically modified organisms...

# Organic Seed regime in the EU

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## ■ Regulation (EC) 1452/2003 of the Commission of 14 August 2003

### Art. 5 Conditions for granting authorisations

1. Authorisation to use seed or seed potatoes not obtained by the organic production method may only be granted in the following cases:

(a) if **no variety** of the species which the user wants to obtain **is registered** in the database provided for in Article 6;

(b) if **no supplier is able to deliver the seed or seed potatoes before sowing** or planting in situations where the user has ordered the seed or seed potatoes in reasonable time;

(c) if **the variety which the user wants to obtain is not registered** in the database, and the user is able to demonstrate that **none of the registered alternatives** of the same species **are appropriate** and that the authorisation therefore is significant for his production;

(d) if it is justified for use in research, test in small-scale field trials or for variety conservation purposes....

# What is 'appropriate'

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- **Declaration at the ECP-Workshop in Frankfurt, April 2003 (ECO-PB Workshop)**

## **Criteria for appropriateness**

- **agronomic reasons**
- **market requirements**
- **ecological and climatic adaptation**

# Provision concerning the data base

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- **Regulation (EC) 1452/2003 of the Commission of 14 August 2003**

## Art. 6 Database

1. **Each Member State** shall ensure that a computerised database is established for the listing of the varieties for which seed or seed potatoes obtained by the organic production method prescribed in Article 6(2) of Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 **are available on its territory.**
2. ....

# **Demands on a organic seed data base**

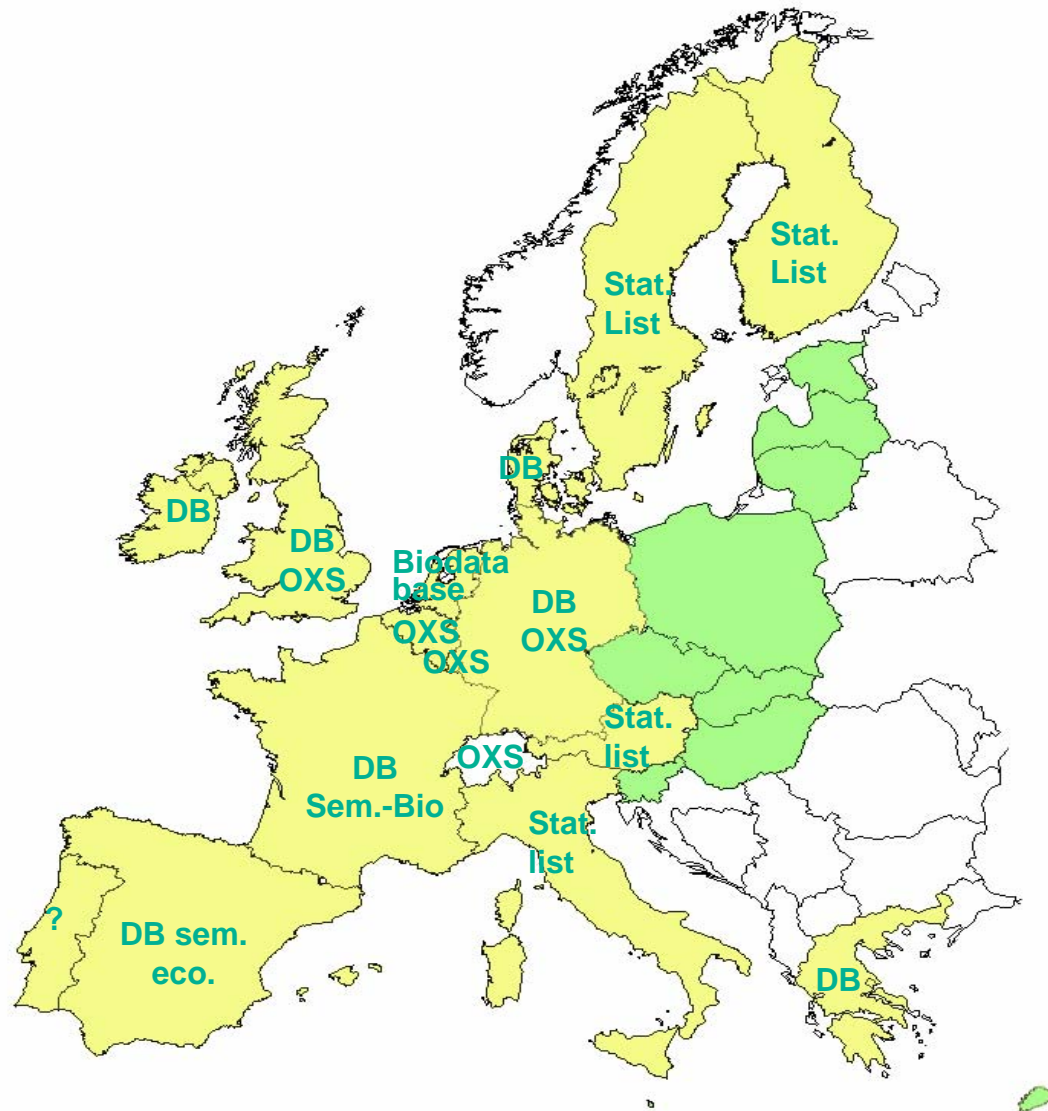
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## **■ Declaration at the ECP-Workshop in Frankfurt, April 2003 (ECO-PB Workshop)**

**In detail the database should fulfil the following criteria:**

- being up-to-date
- being reliable
- being easy to use for farmers
- being appropriate to the needs of the member states
- being comprehensive
- giving information on availability

# Overview EU Organic Seed data bases



# Data Base Examples

# Data Base Example: OrganicXseeds

	Number of varieties	Number of seed supplier	Number of seed entries
Potato	76	12	230
Maize	35	15	115
Winter wheat	32	14	142
Feeding peas	22	19	97
Perennial Ryegrass	21	11	71
Spring oats	18	18	67
Spring barley	18	17	59
Winter rye	15	15	69
Red clover	14	13	46



# Data Base Example: OrganicXseeds

	Number of varieties	Number of seed supplier	Number of seed entries
Tomato	65	7	87
Lettuce	37	7	58
Cucumber	33	7	48
Dwarf French bean	32	6	39
Carrot	23	6	42
Leek	21	8	48
Sweet pepper	21	4	32
Kohlrabi	15	7	31
White cabbage	15	7	31

# Problems of the Organic Seed Regulation

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- Not each Member state (EU 15) has got a database (no DB no derogation or no DB no derogation needed)
- The implementation of the provisions in the Regulation No. 1452/2003 are not equally carried out in the different MS
- The implementation of the Regulation is directly linked to functioning of the respective national data bases
- Seed suppliers consider the Regulation not stringent enough and therefore reluctantly register their seed offer
- Seed suppliers are not able/willing to register their seed in 15/25 different data bases
- Seed suppliers may give up producing organic seeds due to frustration caused by low organic seed portions used by organic growers
- There is an empty annex 1 which seems to remain empty for a rather long time

# Problems with MS's Data Bases

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- **Some MS have got a rather negligible seed offer in their data bases → minor significance for growers**
- **In some MS seed supplier refuse to list (or to get listed with) their organic seed supply since growers might buy cheaper conventional seed somewhere else**
- **Some DB leave out the most important crops (e. g. vegetables) → distortion of competition**
- **Some DB aren't really computerized data bases but static documents → little user friendly**
- **In some DB the data on organic seed supply are not up-to-date → little user friendly, of minor use for suppliers and farmers**

# How to overcome these problems

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- Organic growers shall commit themselves to use organic seed
- MS without a DB should keep up with implementation of the regulation 1452/2003
- DBs should be improved to be user friendly tools for growers, supplier and inspection bodies
- DB should be kept really up-to-date
- Find ways to allow suppliers to register their seed offer EU-wide
- Fill annex 1 of the Reg. (nat./reg. annexes as intermediate step)
- Considering a data base on Community level

# Experiences of Seedcompanies producing Organic Seed

Jan Velema

Vitalis Organic Seed

Voorst, Holland



# Conclusions

- 1st January 2004 was a good start, but not more than that.
- Present situation is no stimulation for more Organic Seed.
- Status quo could be fatally for Organic Seed Initiatives.
- Attainability of Annex proven on National scale.
- Conventional seed is comfortable for conv.seedcompanies.
- Demand for organic Seed must come from organic Sector.
- Regulation must facilitate and stimulate this proces.

Dear representatives/participants of the ECO-PB workshop on the Seed Regulation

Letter to Workshop participant sent with the invitation beforehand the workshop

In developing the use and the production of organic seeds in the Netherlands, we had a project on tomato, sweet peppers and cucumber. The aim of the project was to get more attuned to the demand of the growers, the availability of varieties from the seed-growers and the demand of greengrocers for the market. In this pilot-project we concentrated us on the use of organic varieties of tomato, sweet peppers and cucumber.

First we screened the use of varieties among the organic growers. Therefore we asked them:

1. What is the main variety you planted in 2005 and how large is the planted area?
2. What is your planning for 2006? Which varieties and cultivation area?
3. What is your planning for 2007? Which varieties and cultivation area?

12 growers out of 40 growers responded on our screening. The 12 growers represent the main growers in our Dutch sector.

The main varieties mentioned by the growers were:

## Cucumber

Main varieties 2005	Cultivation area m2	Main varieties 2006
<b>Conventional seed</b> <i>Armada Rijk Zwaan</i> <i>Euphoria Rijk Zwaan</i>	10.000 23.000	<i>Armada Rijk Zwaan</i> <i>Euphoria Rijk Zwaan</i> Carambole
<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Aviance Rijk Zwaan</i> <i>Cum Laude Rijk Zwaan</i> H Romita	53.000 10.500 8.500	<i>Aviance Rijk Zwaan</i> <i>Cum Laude Rijk Zwaan</i>

## Sweet Pepper

Sub crops	Main varieties 2005	Cultivation area m2	Main varieties 2006
Green/red	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Ferrari Vitalis</i>	72.000	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Ferrari Vitalis</i>
Yellow	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Chelsea Ruiten Seeds</i> <i>Fiesta Vitalis</i>	10.000 8.000	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Chelsea Ruiten Seeds</i>  <b>Conventional seed</b> <i>Derby Ruiten Seeds</i> <i>Rapido Syngenta</i>

## Tomato

Sub crops	Main varieties 2005	Cultivation area m2	Main varieties 2006
Cherry	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Suzanna Vitalis</i>	11.000	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Suzanna Vitalis</i>
	<i>Conchita Ruiter Seeds</i>	3000	<i>Conchita Ruiter Seeds</i>
Cocktail	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Aranca Vitalis</i>	8500	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Aranca Vitalis</i>
	<i>Sunstream Vitalis</i>	5000	<i>Sunstream Vitalis</i>
	<i>Aromata</i>	8000	
Roma	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Espino Vitalis</i>	10.000	<b>Organic Seed</b> <i>Espino Vitalis</i>
Round	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Anjolie Ruiter Seeds</i>	8.000	<i>Anjolie Ruiter Seeds</i>
Tros	<b>Conventional seed</b> <i>Vienna Rijk Zwaan</i>	40.500	<b>Conventional seed</b> <i>Vienna Rijk Zwaan</i>
	<i>Classy Syngenta</i>	28.000	<i>Classy Syngenta</i>
	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Cedrico Rijk Zwaan</i>	25.000	<b>Organic seed</b> <i>Cedrico Rijk Zwaan</i>

Later we had a meeting with the merchants of vegetables who buy and sell in Holland as well in the rest of the world in organic vegetables. The merchants prefer to be free in the choice of varieties. But they also prefer the use of organic seed. In the discussion they mentioned that we should not only concentrate on the market in the Netherlands, but also have to attune with other countries in Europe and even further (Israel, Egypt, Morocco) when we deal with tomato, sweet peppers and cucumber. The outcome of the discussion was that there are possibilities to coordinate the use of organic propagated varieties in Europe for sweet peppers and cucumber, because largely the same varieties are applied (according to the seed companies). But it was also concluded that it is far more difficult to do so for tomato, because of its too large diversity and regional differences.

So in the development of the use of organic seed in Europe and the forming of an European Annex, sweet pepper and cucumber could be used as a first pilot and case study.



To arrive at that point, the countries must do an inventory of the use of varieties and their cultivation area of those two crops (sweet pepper and cucumber) and the choice for organic seeds in the other countries of Europe. With this inventory we can start the discussion if cucumber and/or sweet pepper can be the first crops on the European annex?!

Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Coen ter Berg, Maaïke Raaijmakers

**Pilotstudy from LBI and Biologica  
on the supply and demand of organic seed for three glasshouse crops;  
tomato's, cucumber and (sweet) pepper.**

1. Why this pilot study?

The use of organic seed in glasshouse crops is relatively high, at least in the Netherlands, and the price of organic seed is no problem. Some *sub-crops*, for instance the 'cocktail tomato', are already on our National annex.

We wanted to know what the bottlenecks are to further increase the use of organic seed in these crops.

During the expert meetings it became clear that supply and demand are not geared to one another and that we need commitment in the whole food chain. Therefore we started this, government funded, project.

The aim is to get a better view on supply and demand of organic tomato, cucumber and sweet pepper varieties and to get some commitment from all members in the food chain (ketenpartijen.)

2. How?

We did an inventory among all organic glasshouse growers (about 40) and asked them what varieties (organic and conventional) they were using, on what surface, and what they were planning to grow the coming years.

Besides that we had two meetings with representations from farmers, seed companies and trading companies. We asked them what are the critical factors; to grow or not to grow; to propagate or not to propagate; to trade or not to trade, certain varieties.

3. Results

The summary of the inventory is already in your possession. The inventory was returned by 14 main glasshouse farmers. It shows that the percentage of organic seed used is high and that farmers often use the same (main) varieties. No major changes are expected for the next year. For 2007 most growers made no forecast. (*wilden geen voorspelling doen*)

From the meetings we concluded that:

Farmers have to use the most productive crop. Their financial margin is very small. They often test new organic varieties on a small scale. Some farmers use the varieties that are demanded by the supermarkets.

Farmers want some reward (in the market) for using organic seed. It has no added value yet. Finally; they need a level playing field.

Seed companies often propagate new varieties for the organic market at the same moment they become available for the conventional market. Sometimes they wait to see how successful a certain variety is conventionally grown, than there is at least one year of delay.

Seed companies need a 'critical mass' to make propagation of organic varieties economically worthwhile. Therefore they want a strict interpretation of the EU regulation and a level playing field.

Trading companies, especially those who supply for the international supermarket chains, deliver what the supermarkets want. The supermarkets just copy the demands from the conventional sector like an uniform size and colour. That is cheap and easy.

#### 4. Bottlenecks.

- the use of organic seed has no added value in the market
- no level playing field, the rules for derogation widely differ between countries
- the market is still too small for some (conventional) seed companies, they are withdrawing
- some seed companies (Syngenta) offer good varieties but refuse to invest in organic seed.
- Retailers don't think organic and traders accept this

#### 5. Conclusions and solutions

- The inventory is very useful for seed companies. It would be useful to make an EU wide inventory, for instance on the use of organic cucumber-seed. This would give us an idea on the attainability of putting cucumber on the EU-Annex.
- The variety in tomatoes is very big (some 80 varieties). Cucumber and sweet pepper are better candidates for the EU annex.
- In between, the most important selling countries could decide to an Annex.
- We have to make the use of organic seeds more attractive for farmers, and give it an added value in the market. For instance by connecting the use of organic seed to the EU logo.
- Traders have to join forces against powerful supermarkets
- We need more players in the field, meaning seed companies that make organic seed their core business.
- Seed companies will never propagate all varieties organically. Therefore farmers could grow certain varieties 'under license'.

Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Coen ter Berg, Maaike Raaijmakers



Workshop on the EU Organic Seed Regime  
Friday 4 November 2005, Vienna

**(Slide 1, Title)**

**Report on a stakeholder consultation process concerning implementation of the EU Seed Directive in Germany**

Ute Rönnebeck,

Ministry for the environment, nature protection, agriculture and consumer protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

In my talk today, I'd like to report on the outcome of a stakeholder consultation process concerning the implementation of the EU Seed Directive in Germany. I shall discuss this process in terms of the following issues:

**Slide (2) "outline"**

**Slide (3) "What steps..."**

**1. What steps have been taken since 1 January 2004 to implement EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 in Germany?**

EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 has been in effect since 1 January 2004. The Directive maintains the derogation with regard to certain species for which adequate amounts of organically

produced seed are unavailable, and lays down the procedural rules and criteria for this derogation.

### **Establishment and maintenance of a database**

Article 6 of the Seed Directive states that each Member State is required to establish a computerized database that lists the varieties for which seed is obtained by the organic production method. Application of the derogation is contingent upon setting up this database. In Germany, implementation of this EC regulation falls within the purview of Germany's 16 federal states.

The federal states have established a standardized nationwide database [www.organicXseeds.de](http://www.organicXseeds.de), which is administered by Germany's Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FIBL).

### **Authorization procedure (Slide 4)**

The organicXseeds database divides species into different groups: that means variety groups (subspecies / cultivars / types) that are used for the same application domain or variety groups that have the same sowing properties.

### **For example (Slide 5):**

Carrots (*Daucus carota* ssp. *sativus*)

Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)

Colza / Rape (*Brassica napus*)

The variety groups as shown in column 2 are classified according to the availability of organically produced seeds by individual authorizations and general authorizations.

These classifications define the conditions for granting authorization to use seed not obtained by the organic production method:

**(Slide 4 again)**

1. Individual authorizations

Article 5 paragraph 1 of the Seed Directive states that in individual cases a user can submit, to the authorizing bodies via the database, an application for authorization to use a variety of seed not obtained by the organic production method.

This regulation is frequently used in connection with vegetables.

2. General authorization

In view of the relative scarcity of organically produced seeds, Article 5 paragraph 5 of the Seed Directive stipulates that the authorizing bodies of the Member States “may grant to all users a general authorization for a given species” and that in such cases users may employ such seeds without submitting an application to the authorizing bodies.

It should be noted that 50 percent of all vegetable variety groups and 30 percent of all arable variety groups fall within the scope of this regulation in Germany.

In other words, a great many conventional seeds are currently used for organic farming.

The list of variety group classifications compiled by the authorizing bodies for the general authorization procedure is being updated on an ongoing basis, with the assistance of two panels of experts whose members are seed producers, product vendors (seeds companies), consultants, government officials and so on. These panels are regarding the need and potential for organically produced seeds.

### **Work being realized by the two panels of experts in Germany**

In early 2004, two panels of experts from the relevant sectors were established for purposes of supporting the German federal states' efforts to implement the EU Seed Directive.

One panel deals with vegetables, horticulture, spices and medicinal herbs, while the other group concerns itself with agricultural plants. *This division of labor allows for better coverage of the practical requirements (propagation, certification, availability, growing methods and so on) in these two domains.*

The membership of the two panels is as follows:

### **Membership slide 6 and 7**

<b>Garden vegetables, horticulture, spices and medicinal herbs</b>	<b>Agricultural plants Arable Crops</b>
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The spheres of responsibility of the two panels of experts are as follows:

### **Sphere of responsibility slide (Slide 8 and 9)**

- Revision of variety group lists
  - Estimate seed availability for the various variety groups
  - Estimate seed requirements for the various variety groups
  - Assess suitability of varieties for farming
  - Proposals for authorization procedure
- Promote development of the organic seed market
  - Quantification and definition of seed requirements
  - Informal exchanges amongst seed industry partners
  - Results used as a basis for providing growers and vendors with advice
- Optimization of the database and authorization procedure
  - User friendly navigation (website)
  - Taking into account the need for monitoring/controlling/inspection
  - Simplification of the authorization procedure
- Support for the Directive revision process
  - Practitioner feedback for purposes of implementing the Directive
  - Proposed changes

The panels meet twice yearly and communicate with each other between meetings by email for purposes of coordinating any clarification that is needed. The German state of North Rhine-Westphalia coordinates the work realized by the panels, as well as the agreements reached and arrangements made amongst



the 16 federal states. This approach allows for virtually standard implementation of the Seed Directive throughout Germany.

**2. What have we achieved since 1 January 2004? (Slide 10)**  
**A retrospective look at a two-year process.**

Apart from helping to implement the Seed Directive requirement that organically produced seeds be employed, the database also makes vital information regarding the supply and demand sectors more transparent for all stakeholders.

Supply side: The seed varieties of the seed companies in the database show for which species a broad range of quality seeds is available and where there are gaps in companies' product lines.

The database lists products from approximately 60 seed companies that sell a cumulative total of approximately 2500 products (varieties) and 250 species, two thirds (2/3) of which are for vegetables and one third (1/3) of which are for agricultural plants/arable crops. According to the information in the database, organically produced seeds are not available in equal numbers for all listed varieties. *For example, an appreciable number of potato and grain varieties are available, and there is also a wide choice of tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers and other varieties of*

*vegetable. However, apart from the diversity of the varieties available, quality is also an important factor, particularly when it comes to agricultural plants.*

Demand side: As for the demand sector, the farmer's derogation applications provide information as to which varieties are lacking. The reports and documentations made by the member States pursuant to Article 12 of the Seed Directive can provide clear information regarding the need for seeds that are currently not organically produced.

All this information sends a clear signal to seed companies, underscores the existing qualitative and quantitative shortfalls, and shows which varieties are in demand and are needed by farmers.

The consultation process with the panels of experts has been *and continues to be* productive. It is absolutely essential to integrate the various stakeholders into the process, and at the same time provide authorizing bodies with technical information so that they can make informed decisions.

### **Unresolved issues of fundamental importance (Slide 11)**

Despite the enactment of the Directive and a clearly regulated authorization procedure, conventionally produced seeds are still very widely used. Although some progress has been made in the

organic seed sector, the following issues remain unresolved in Germany:

- How can the stipulations of the Directive be made more binding?

Farmers are concerned that the Directive will restrict the range of varieties they can use.

- How can we ensure that farmers retain their freedom of choice for varieties?

Farmers' derogation applications are invariably approved if sound reasons for the derogation are provided. The following questions arise in this regard:

- How can we encourage farmers to pay higher prices for organically produced seeds rather than simply using less expensive, conventional products?
- Which criteria should authorizing bodies be provided with so that they can make informed decisions in regard to the granting of authorizations?
- Who should assume the cultivation risk and be liable for damages in the event an application is denied?

In some cases, seed growers do not use their best selling varieties by organic seed production. There is a particularly large shortage of seeds for perennial crops. For seed growers, the risk

incurred through the realization of lengthy processes before they are able to market their products is simply intolerable.

- What kind of incentives could be implemented that would encourage seed growers to produce their best selling seeds using organic methods?
- Which signals could be sent to seed growers via the Directive implementation process?

**3. What action should be taken with regard to the revision of EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 as at 31 July 2006? (Slide 12 and 13)**

Article 15 of EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 stipulates [and I quote]: "...the Commission will examine the availability and use of seed or vegetative propagating material obtained by the organic production method and the effective implementation of the present regulation and will, if necessary, make the appropriate amendments." [and I end quote].

The federal states of Germany and the panels of experts I mentioned earlier have elaborated technical proposals that will be transmitted to the EU for possible integration into the Seed Directive revision process.

Since implementation of the Directive on 1 January 2004 a need has emerged in some domains for changes, clarifications and unambiguous interpretations of the law.

The failure to apply the Seed Directive uniformly could result in distorted competition that would potentially have an adverse effect on the amount of available organically produced seed. Hence we are opposed to any tightening of the restrictions laid down in the current Seed Directive.

I would now like to briefly discuss the problematic aspects of the current EU Seed Directive situation and propose a solution to each of these problems.

### **Problem number 1: Member State databases**

Some EU Member States have yet to implement a database as required by Article 6 of the Seed Directive. Moreover, some databases that have been set up are deficient. For example, some do not list organically produced vegetable seeds.

According to the Regulation, this means that no organically produced varieties are available (because they are not listed in the database), and that therefore, pursuant to Article 5 paragraph 1a of the Directive, authorization to use non-organically produced seeds can be granted without further ado.

This failure to implement the Regulation or failure to implement it compliantly is extremely detrimental to competition since farmers in other Member States, whether these countries have deficient databases or not, will invariably use inexpensive conventional seeds.

The solution here would be to implement the database requirements of the Directive promptly and more uniformly, and possibly to set up a single database along the lines of organixXseeds at the EU level, so as to optimize the transparency of the available information.

**Problem number 2: Member States' reporting requirement pursuant to Articles 12 and 13 of the Directive**

The reports that the Member States are to have submitted to the Commission by March 2005 differ greatly from each other and are not qualified to reciprocal comparison. Nor do the reports allow for any general conclusions to be reached regarding the EU organic seed market.

The solution here would be to implement the reporting requirements of the Directive promptly and more uniformly. This is important because these reports are the only resource which – in conjunction with the various databases – can provide information regarding the availability of organically produced

seeds in the Member States, pursuant to Article 15 of the Directive.

### **Problem number 3: Annex of the Directive**

According to Article 1 of the Seed Directive, the Annex of the Directive lists species for which authorization to use conventionally produced seed is prohibited. The Directive stipulates that organically produced seed is to be available in sufficient quantities and for a significant number of varieties in all parts of the Community.

The Annex contains no entries.

The elaboration of a list containing species that users are required to employ would represent a major step toward achieving transparency, as well as a stable and dependable planning framework for seed companies, growers, farmers and government agencies alike.

Defining a series of deadlines that are mandatory for all stakeholders would help to ensure that a ready supply of seeds for perennial crops becomes and remains available.

A sufficiently broad selection of varieties will only be durably achieved, particularly for perennial and difficult to cultivate crops, if clear regulations are elaborated and implemented – for example by putting species in the Annex of the Directive.

I would recommend the following remedies here:

- A stagger timing of entries: *The EU Member States should define a series of deadlines for adding specific numbers of species to the list in the Annex. The number of species that are to be added should increase each year.*
- A stagger regional implementation of entries: *Annex requirements should vary according to regional particularities, particularly since climatic differences make it unfeasible to attempt to compile a uniform Annex for the entire Community. Hence, consideration should be given to devising an Annex that distinguishes among the various Member States or EU regions, whereby a number of countries would be classified as a single region.*

The Annex could be compiled on the basis of recommendations from a panel of experts.

Proposals should also be developed at the EU level that define procedures for the inclusion of species and variety groups in the Annex, as well as mechanisms that build flexibility into the Annex in the event weather-induced crop failure has an adverse effect on seed availability.



But: Without the possibility of derogation for the species and variety groups or varieties that are listed in the Annex, seed quality criteria such as threshold values and testing methods must also be elaborated that exceed the scope of the parameters used to approve seed varieties, since such criteria are of central importance in organic farming (e.g. for seed pathogens).

#### **Problem number 4: The problem arising from basic seeds**

Owing to the current lack of organically produced seeds, organic seed producers are forced to cultivate seeds using non-organically produced basic seeds. Since these basic seeds are propagated in using organic farming methods, they receive certification and are then planted by organic farmers.

If the seed certification has been revoked, the products cannot be marketed as organic foodstuffs for animal or human consumption, because of using conventional seed. If organic seed growers are forced to market their revoked seeds as conventional products, for economic reasons the growers are forced to stop producing organic seeds.

Germany has enacted a regulation to solve the problem and to help seed producers in the event the certification of seeds is revoked.

The solution here is for the EU to adopt a Community-wide regulation that simplifies the regulations governing the use, for organically produced human and animal food, of seeds whose certification has been revoked.

**Problem number 5: The problem of seeds propagated in conversion fields**

Seeds that are propagated in conversion fields cannot be certified as organically grown seeds. These seeds, which are deemed conversion products, do not fall within the scope of the Seed Directive, which means that they are not listed in Member States' databases and cannot be included in the derogation procedure.

Under these circumstances, it is impossible to persuade growers of conventional seeds to convert to organic methods, since these growers cannot afford to go two years without selling their output.

The solution here would be to regulate the use of seeds from conversion fields throughout the Community in such a way that the seed market and seed propagation activities are not adversely affected.

Seeds from conversion fields should be integrated into Member States' databases and labeled accordingly, and they should be

used wherever possible in lieu of non-organically produced seeds.

*Moreover, in stipulating that Member States should list in their databases the varieties for which organically produced seeds are available, Article 6 of EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 does not explicitly rule out the listing of conversion seeds.*

*This is also related to growers' practice of resowing proprietary conversion seeds on fields that are certified for organic crops. EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 should allow growers to resow proprietary conventional seeds in the first conversion year, as well as to realize proprietary resowing of proprietary conversion seeds in the first year following certification.*

### **Problem number 6: Seed mixtures**

Some seed mixtures currently contain at least some conventional seeds, owing to the relative scarcity of organically produced seeds.

In Germany, seed mixtures can be included in the organic seed database if organically produced seeds account for 70 percent of their content. Conventional seeds can account for a maximum of 30 percent of such mixtures only if organically propagated seeds are not available for the varieties represented by that 30 percent, and providing that the vendor has only used seeds for which a

derogation has been granted. These Seed mixtures included in the database can be used by farmers without applying for a derogation authorization.

The EU should adopt a regulation that governs the use of seed mixtures for the entire Community. Moreover, the allowable proportion of organically produced seed in seed mixtures should be clearly defined so as to avoid distorted competition, and should be a minimum of 70 percent at the outset.

## **Outlook for the future**

The Directive makes dealing with the EU organic seed regime an extremely technical undertaking, and – owing to the authorization procedure – a task fraught with red tape as well.

However, be that as it may, I would like to conclude my talk today by making the following general observations on the subject of organic farming:

The pioneers that invented organic farming many years ago saw this method as one that should be realized within a closed cycle. Exceptions to this cyclical model should not become the rule. In the EU, we are currently engaged in a process of gradually reducing the number of exceptions in all domains, ranging from animal husbandry to the materials used in manufacturing processes, with a view to achieving transparency and safeguarding consumers' health and safety.

This cyclical model also encompasses seed production and use. Sooner or later, all organic farming will have to be based on organically produced seeds.

However, seed production begins with breeding, and hence varieties are needed for organic farming that are suitable for this type of cultivation, particularly in terms of nutrients, plant health and regional conditions

Consequently, organic seed breeding projects and programs should be supported separately.

But this kind of policy cannot be implemented through legislation. The key to implementing this type of practice is for all stakeholders in the organic farming community to engage in an ongoing dialogue. The dialogue that has been initiated should continue. Only in this way can we move forward.

Thank you for your attention.

# Third Workshop on the EU Organic Seed Regime Friday 4 November 2005, Vienna

## **Report on a stakeholder consultation process concerning the implementation of the EU Seed Directive in Germany**

Ute Rönnebeck,  
Ministry for the environment, nature protection, agriculture and  
consumer protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

## Presentation overview

### 1. What steps have been taken since 1 January 2004 to implement EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 in Germany?

- Establishment and maintenance of a database
- Authorization procedure
- Work by panels of experts in Germany

### 2. What have we achieved since 1 January 2004?

- A retrospective look at a two-year process

### 3. What action should be taken with regard to the planned review and possible revision of EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 as at 31 July 2006?

- Members States' databases and reports
- Annex of the Directive
- Basic seeds
- Seeds originating in conversion fields
- Seed mixtures

Outlook for the future



# 1. What steps have been taken since 1 January 2004 to implement EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 in Germany?

- EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 has been in effect since 1 January 2004.
- Directive is being implemented in Germany by the 16 German federal states
- Establishment of the [www.organicXseeds.de](http://www.organicXseeds.de) database
- Database managed by Germany's Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FIBL)
- Authorization procedure
- Establishment of two panels of expert with stakeholders from the various sectors

# Authorization procedure

- Classification of the species into variety groups:  
variety groups that are used for the same application domain; variety groups that have the same sowing properties
- Classification of variety groups according to seed availability as shown by
  - Individual authorizations (Art. 5, par. 1)
  - General authorizations (Art. 5, par. 4)  
50% of the variety groups are vegetables  
30% are agricultural plants / arable crops

## Examples

Species	Variety group	Example of varieties
Carrots ( <i>Daucus carota</i> ssp. <i>Sativus</i> )	Early	Jeanette F1, Enza/Vitalis
	Industrial	Interceptor F1 / Rodelika Rothild
	Summer	Nectar F1 / Robila
	Cleaned carrots/ warehoused carrots	Miami F1 Yellowstone, Bejo
Barley ( <i>Hordeum</i> <i>vulgare</i> )	Malt barely	Barke / Danuta Neruda
	Feed barley	Eunova / Orhega Peggy
	Two-line/edible barley	Hanna / Passion
	...	...
Colza <i>Brassica napus</i>	Summer colza	Ability
	Winter colza	Essex

## Composition of panels of experts in Germany (1)

<b>Garden vegetables, horticulture, spices and medicinal herbs</b>	<b>Agricultural plants</b>
Consultants from various associations and government agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bioland NRW</li> <li>• Bioland Baden-Württemberg</li> <li>• Oekoplant e.V.</li> <li>• Dienstleistungszentrum Ländlicher Raum Rheinland-Pfalz (DLR)</li> </ul>	Consultants from various associations and government agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ökoring Niedersachsen</li> <li>• Bioland</li> <li>• Landwirtschaftskammer NRW</li> <li>• Dienstleistungszentrum Ländlicher Raum (DLR)</li> <li>• Kompetenzzentrum Ökologischer Landbau</li> </ul>
Bundesverband Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producers</li> <li>• Nurseries</li> <li>• Seedling nurseries</li> </ul>	Bundesverband ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (BÖLW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seed producers</li> <li>• Naturland Marktgemeinschaft Süd-Ost</li> <li>• Öko-Korn-Nord</li> <li>• Bioland-Markt Bayern</li> </ul>
Protection and national listing of new plant varieties	Protection and national listing of new plant varieties
Bundesverband der Deutschen Pflanzenzüchter (BDP)	Bundesverband der Deutschen Pflanzenzüchter (BDP)

## Composition of panels of experts in Germany (2)

Assoziation biologisch-dynamischer Pflanzenzüchter e.V. (ABDP)	Assoziation biologisch-dynamischer Pflanzenzüchter e.V. (ABDP)
Private sector stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Hild Samen GmbH</li> <li>•Enza Zaden Deutschland GmbH &amp; Co. KG</li> <li>•RIJK ZWAAN</li> <li>•bejosamen GmbH</li> <li>•Bingenheimer Saatgut AG</li> </ul>	Private sector stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•KWS SAAT AG</li> <li>•Deutsches Maiskomitee</li> <li>•Deutsche Saatveredelung Lippstadt-Bremen GmbH</li> <li>•Camena</li> <li>•Norddeutsche Saat- und Pflanzgut AG</li> <li>•Feldsaaten Freudenberger</li> <li>•Advanta GmbH</li> <li>Bayerische Futtersaatbau GmbH</li> </ul>
Officials from federal state governments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Regional council of Giessen</li> <li>•Sächsische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft</li> <li>•North Rhine-Westphalia ministry for nature protection, agriculture, and consumer protection</li> </ul>	Officials from federal state governments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lower Saxony ministry for rural regions, food, agriculture and consumer protection</li> <li>•North Rhine-Westphalia ministry for nature protection, agriculture, and consumer protection</li> </ul>
Authorizing bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Konferenz der Kontrollstellen für den Ökologischen Landbau (KdK)</li> </ul>	Authorizing bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Konferenz der Kontrollstellen für den Ökologischen Landbau (KdK)</li> </ul>
German ministry of consumer protection, food, and agriculture	German ministry of consumer protection, food, and agriculture
Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FIBL)	Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FIBL)
	Working group from seed authorizing bodies

# Spheres of responsibility of the panels of experts in Germany (1)

- Revision of variety group lists
  - Estimate seed availability for the various variety groups
  - Estimate seed requirements for the various variety groups
  - Assess suitability of varieties for farming
  - Proposals for authorization procedure
- Promote development of the organic seed market
  - Quantification and definition of seed requirements
  - Informal exchanges amongst seed industry partners
  - Results used as a basis for providing growers and vendors with advice

# Spheres of responsibility of the panels of experts in Germany (2)

- Optimization of the database and authorization procedure
  - User friendly navigation (website)
  - Taking into account the need for monitoring/controlling/inspection
  - Simplification of the authorization procedure
- Support for the Directive revision process
  - Practitioner feedback for purposes of implementing the Directive
  - Proposed changes

Twice yearly meetings

Apart from this, matters clarified by email

State of North Rhine-Westphalia coordinates the activities of the panels of experts and arrangements/agreements amongst the 16 German regional states

## 2. What have we achieved since 1 January 2004?

### A retrospective look at a two-year process

- Greater transparency for both the supply and demand sides of the seed market
- Supply side: available range of varieties are shown in the database
- A few facts and figures about organicXseeds
  - Products of approximately 60 seed companies are listed
  - Approximately 2500 products (varieties)
  - approximately 250 species of which
    - 2/3 are vegetables and 1/3 are agricultural plants / arable crops
- Demand side: derogation applications provide information as to which varieties are lacking



# Unresolved basic issues

- More binding implementation of the Directive
- Retain freedom of choice for varieties
- Promote purchase of more expensive products
- Optimize authorization criteria for authorizing bodies
- Cultivation risk and liability in the event an application is denied
- Promote organic production of best-selling varieties
- Implement Directive in a manner that sends a strong signal to the private sector

## 3. What action should be taken with regard to the revision of EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 as at 31 July 2006? (1)

### 1 Member State databases

- Prompt and more uniform implementation of the Directive

### 2 Member States' reporting requirement pursuant to Articles 12 and 13 of the Directive

- Prompt and more uniform implementation of the Directive

### 3 Annex of the Directive

- The Annex contains no entries
- Stagger timing of entries
- Stagger regional implementation of entries
- But: Seed quality criteria (threshold values, testing methods) must be developed and implementation of these criteria must be assured

### 3. What action should be taken with regard to the revision of EC Regulation no. 1452/2003 as at 31 July 2006? (2)

#### 4 Basic seeds

- Community wide uniform use of seeds, whose certification has been revoked, for organically produced food for human and animal consumption

#### 5 Seeds propagated in conversion fields

- Seeds from conversion fields should be included in Member States' databases and labeled accordingly, and wherever possible should be used in lieu of non-organically produced seeds

#### 6 Seed mixtures

- Community-wide regulations for mixtures
- Define the proportion of mixtures that must consist of organically produced seeds

# Outlook for the future

- Seed production begins with breeding
- Varieties are needed especially for organic farming
- Breeding projects and programs for organic farming should receive special support
- The dialogue that has been initiated should continue.

## **Dutch National annex process: a way towards an EU Annex?**

**Louis Bolk Institute 2004-2006**

Edith Lammerts van Bueren  
Coen ter Berg  
Esther Bremer



# Task

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- **Project on behalf of the Dutch ministry of Agric.**
- **Run by Louis Bolk Institute**
- **Yearly from September to end of November**
- **With help of expert crop groups**
- **Product: commonly agreed advice to the ministry on**
  - **The criteria for a national annex 2006**
  - **Identification of (sub)species on national annex**



# Time schedule

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- End of July: announcement to the seed suppliers;
- End of Aug: format in excell to seed suppliers to fill in available varieties per (sub)species;
- Sept 15: deadline to send in the lists of org.prop varieties;
- Sept 15: formation of expert crop groups;
- 30 Sept: send all information to expert groups;
- 1-21 Oct: 3 weeks preparation for experts to gather info on variety requirements among farmers;
- Oct 24-28: the expert crop group meetings;
- Nov 4: send draft report to the experts;
- Nov 11: deadline to react on drafts;
- Nov 14: report with advice to ministry;
- Dec 1: final decision on Annex by ministry of Agri.



# Expert crop groups (1)

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## **Expert crop groups:**

- Potatoes
- Cereals, fodder crops, greenmanures, grasses
- Greenhouse crops
- Open field vegetable crops.





# Expert crop groups (2)

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## **Composition:**

- Users: 3-5 growers (specialists and representing a regional farmer group etc), umbrella organisation
- Suppliers: the most important ones; umbrella org.
- Nurseries: 2
- Government: database provider.

All members agreed by umbrella organisations.

# Expert crop groups (3)

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## **Status experts:**

- Responsible to cover information on variety requirements of specific crops;
- Information along with advice will be used by derogation body;
- Representatives can be ask for advice by specific questions on derogation requests;
- Ministry pays the farmers a day and travel fee for attending expert meeting



# Criteria for annex

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## A (sub)species can go on the national annex, if:

- Enough main varieties are available and are inter exchangeable to a reasonable extend;
  - Assortment covers all cultivation segments (is division in subsegments desirable?);
  - There are 2 suppliers;
  - Only one supplier for a small crop, but with the appropriate varieties.
- 
- If the assortment is not sufficiently appropriate, which varieties are needed for next year?

# Derogations (1)

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- Cat 1: National annex, no derogation for conventional seed of (sub)species on annex;
- Cat 2: no derogation for varieties available with organic seed on database; written derogation request needed for conv. seed.
- Cat3: general derogation given for (sub)species with no organic seed at all.



# Derogation (2)

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**Derogations on Cat 1. annex species, is given:**


- **When supply of whole annex species has run out;**
- **In very specific growing conditions;**
- **In very specific market conditions;**

**Derogation of cat 2. is always given if org. seed of that variety is not mentioned on database, but written request is always required.**



## Proposal Dutch expert groups for EU Annex 2008:

- Potato
- Green pepper
- Green, long cucumber
- Onion set
- Endive
- Red beet
- Koolrabi



# Challenges faced by the new EU Member States adopting the EU organic seed provision Case study – example of Latvia

*Zinta Gaile*

*Institute of Agrobiotechnology*

*Latvia University of Agriculture*

*Summarized Opinions of LAOA and Control body  
SPPS*

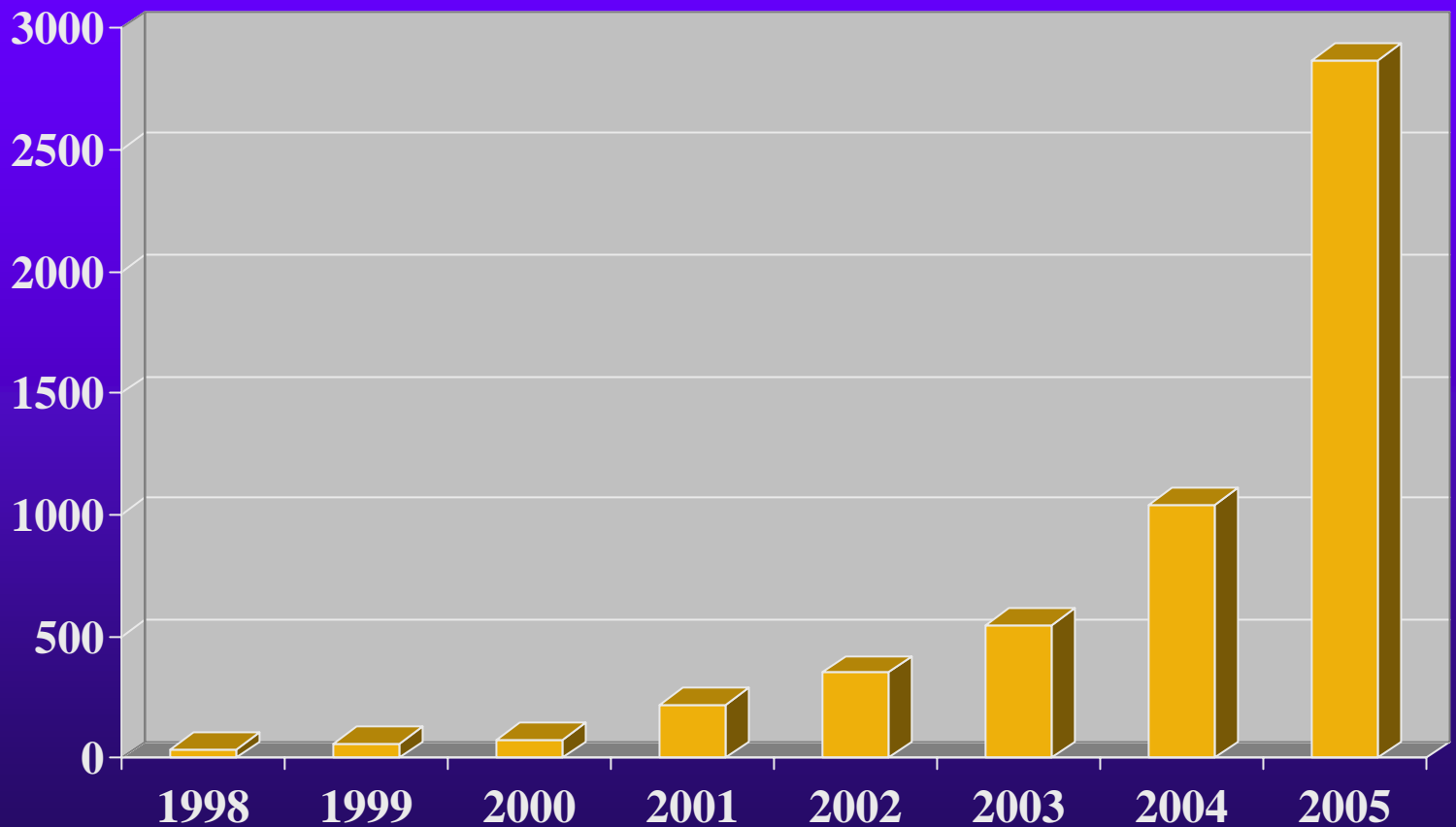


# Content of report

- ◆ Growth of organic sector in Latvia;
- ◆ Present situation of organic seed use in Latvia in contradistinction to old EU countries;
- ◆ Analysis of *Questionnaire* answered by Latvian organic farmers on seed use in their farms;
- ◆ Information availability on organic seed tender;
- ◆ Opinion of some companies involved in seed business about organic seed market in Latvia.
- ◆ Significance of education for understanding the importance of quality seed;
- ◆ Significance of research in organic seed sector;
- ◆ Opinion of LAOA and Control body SPPS for future - 2006



# Growth of organic sector in Latvia — total number of certified farms (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> year transitional and certified organic)



# Growth of organic sector in Latvia – Total area of certified agricultural land (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> year transitional and certified organic)





# Present situation in Latvia

- ◆ Situation is different from the old EU countries.
- ◆ Latvian side considering the objective situation has overtaken derogation from EU (№ 2092/91) and EC (№ 1452/2003) Regulations up to January 1, 2006.
- ◆ Up to now it was still allowed to use untreated seeds and vegetative propagation material produced conventionally for organic farming.
- ◆ Derogation is fixed in so called “Pact of Joining to EU” (2004).
- ◆ Use of different origin seed brings different matter into the term ‘organic product’



# Used seed in organic agriculture in Latvia

- ◆ To trace back of used seed, questionnaire was spread among organic farmers (late 2004 and early 2005).
- ◆ Activity of farmers was not very high, but these questionnaires gave for us some information .
- ◆ 64 applicable questionnaires were fulfilled by farmers from 16 Latvian regions.
- ◆ Structure of respondents (totally-64):
  - 6 had not designated the current situation of farm,
  - 24 respondents were from certified organic farms,
  - 13 – from farms of 2nd transitional year,
  - 18 – from farms of 1st transitional year,
  - 3 – from mixed farms, i.e., part of farm is certified organic, but part – 1st year transitional and the like.

# Farm size of respondents

<b>Less than 5 ha</b>	<b>5.1 – 20.0 ha</b>	<b>20.1- 50.0 ha</b>	<b>50.1- 100.0 ha</b>	<b>More than 100 ha</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>






# Assortment of grown crops

◆ 64 different species belonging to following groups:

- small grain (6 species including buckwheat),
- tuberous plants (potato and Jerusalem artichoke),
- grasses, legumes and silage crops,
- vegetable crops (16 species mentioned),
- spice plants,
- nectar plants,
- vulnerary plants,
- fruit trees and berries,
- oilseed crops,
- annual flowers
- root-crops.



# What kind of seed do Latvian organic farmers use?

- ◆ Home-saved organic seed.
- ◆ Certified organic seed (double certified)
- ◆ Certified conventional.






# Use of home-saved seed

- ◆ 56 farms - home-saved seed for some crops;
  - Including 30 farms home-saved potato seed material;
- ◆ 57 % of home saved seed is of unknown quality;
- ◆ Only 25 % of respondents answered clearly that they have tested their home saved seed.
- ◆ Others gave mixed type answers:
  - seed quality of some crops they test,
  - some hoped to start testing with the year 2005 etc.





# Use of certified or other quality seed

- ◆ 38 farms have bought certified conventional seed for some crops,
  - including 11 farms which buy seed potato.
- ◆ **Only 18 farms from 64 (28 %) use double certified seed for some crops,**
  - Main mentioned crops are cereals, potato, grasses and some vegetables.
- ◆ In addition, 21 respondent bought organically produced seed of unknown quality from other organic farmers.



# Opinion of Latvian organic farmers on the date starting from which only organically produced seed should be used

in % from respondents

2004	2006	2008	2010	One does not know
3.13	68.75	20.30	4.69	3.13



# Conclusions from the questionnaire

- ◆ It is not said in regulations that used organic seed must be only double certified organic;
- ◆ Due to this, situation in Latvia seems not so bad in the terms of organic seed use;
- ◆ But - whatever seed must be of good quality;
- ◆ Questionnaire confirms conditions that home-saved seed is tested at unsatisfactory level, and it could affect ill results of organic production.



# Information availability on possibility to buy organic seed

- ◆ Up to 2005, - mainly as advertisements in the 'Bulletin of the Association of Latvian Biological Farming'.
- ◆ Since February, 2005 according to EC Regulation № 1452/2003 computerised database listing varieties for which certified organic seed are available is set into home page of State Plant Protection Service of Latvia:

[www.vaad.gov.lv/seklukontrole/biologiskosekludatubaze.](http://www.vaad.gov.lv/seklukontrole/biologiskosekludatubaze)



# Possibility to buy certified organic seed in Latvia

- ◆ Only 8 suppliers have sent information for inserting into data base up to February 28, 2005.
- ◆ None of suppliers **have sent information for inserting into database for autumn sowing season, 2005!!!**
- ◆ Four Latvian research institutions already produce or design to produce in future some amount of double certified seed:
  - cereals, grasses and legumes, potato, oil seed rape and lupine,
- ◆ amount will be really small: from some hundred kg to 20 (for potato) t per variety  
(data source: executives from mentioned above institutions).



# Opinion and future prospects of some companies involved in seed business.

## ◆ “Latvijas skirnes seklas” (“Latvian sorted seeds”),

- organic seed production in Latvia is only in initial stage,
- LSS will not offer organic seed for season 2005,
- LSS are starting to imagine need of organic seed for season 2006
- LSS will look for co-operation partners from our organic farmers as well as from organic seed companies abroad.
- Mainly the speech is about cereals and grasses and legumes,
- **Demand will determine offer .**

(data: Iveta Gutmane, “Latvian sorted seeds”).



## (2) A/S LATFOOD

Data source: Ilgvars Kruminis

- ◆ **A/S LATFOOD is not planning to start producing organic seed in nearest future due to following:**
  - seed business is unstable in Latvia for conventional seed; organic potato seed business is even more unstable as regards not only sales, but also production; LATFOOD is not sure about stable demand of reasonable quantities;
  - LATFOOD expects that organic seed could be more expensive than conventional.
- ◆ **Farmers in Latvia are not used to pay even for certified conventional seed, 95 % use just seed size ware potatoes for planting,**
  - they expect certified seed price also to be close of small size table potato price.
  - Seed certification also means variety protection and royalty payments...
- ◆ **A/S LATFOOD could be ready to import organic seed on customers' request.**



### **(3) Kemira Grow-How** (Aiva Kupfere)

**SW Mission in Latvia** (Dzintars Jaks)

**KESKOAGRO** (Inita Cera)

- ◆ They have not thought about organic seed offer due to no demand before.
- ◆ **Mainly demand creates offer.**
- ◆ A situation where not all farmers use organic seed of good quality and there is no demand, leads up to two conclusions:
  - organic farmers are insufficiently educated in terms of seed quality importance,
  - organic farmers are short in funds and can not buy double certified organic seed.






## **(4) Kemira Grow-How** (Aiva Kupfere)

### **SW Mission in Latvia** (Dzintars Jaks)

- ◆ **They see two possibilities in case of real seed demand:**
  - **import of foreign seed,**  
but - it could be disproportionate expensive way for our farmers;
  - **to import small quantities of B or C categories' seed**  
and activity of our organic farmers to go into seed multiplication business themselves and in co-operation with mentioned above companies to produce seed of suitable varieties.





## (5) “Kurzemes seklas” (“Seeds of Courland”)


Data source: Maris Grinvalds

- ◆ At present SC offers wide assortment of organic vegetable seed from “Bejo Zaden”, the Netherlands.
- ◆ Price of this seed is 150-200 % higher than that of conventional seed.
- ◆ Some amount from this seed is sold also in Lithuania.
- ◆ Seed has to be ordered before, but unfortunately - demand of Latvian organic farmers is of light-weight.




# Conclusion on interaction of organic seed supply and demand

- ◆ **Certified organic seed (double certified) supply is insufficient at present in Latvia.**
- ◆ **Companies both foreign as well as national are ready to do something for organic agriculture.**
- ◆ **Until clear demand has not appeared from organic farmers, process is ticking over.**
- ◆ **We can only be in one mind with Dick van der Zeijden (2004) that “Any important seed programme ... will fail if the organic chain is not soon closed by law and self regulations”.**



# Significance of education in organic agriculture


- ◆ Understanding of seed quality importance is question of farmers' education.
- ◆ There is no demand in Latvia that farm holders, involved in agricultural production, must have high school or university level education in agriculture.
- ◆ People starting organic farming usually would like to learn a lot, including questions of seed turnover.



# **(1) Possibilities for education in organic seed production and the seed turnover**

## **◆ Latvia University of Agriculture:**

- “Organic seed multiplication and seed turnover” - into voluntary study subject ‘Organic field crop production and gardening’ (Faculty of Agriculture),
- Since 2002, 20 full time and 94 part time students have got a taste in organic seed growing,
- Only some of them are actually included in organic farming.



## **(2) Possibilities for education in organic seed production and the seed turnover**

### **◆ Latvian Rural Advisory and Education Centre:**

- Licensed study course ‘Professional perfection education in organic agriculture’, **including organic seed production.**
- Since 2002, 516 farmers’ audience from 12 Latvian regions have finished this course, including chapter ‘Organic seed production’ getting certificates.

(Data: Gatis Kaimins, Latvian Rural Advisory Centre).

- Interest of farmers is great, and training at present is continued again in 12 regions.



# Conclusion

about education possibilities on  
quality organic seed production

- ◆ Possibility to get feeling about importance of quality seed and ways how to produce it is given,
- ◆ But - at the same time this is a topic that needs yet more work in near future.



# Significance of research in organic seed sector

- ◆ Research is crucial point of practical organic seed production (nutrition, disease control etc.)
- ◆ Lack of research up to now is noted mainly due to financial problems.
- ◆ 6th Framework Programme – ENVIRFOOD seminar FP-2003-SSA-1-007003 ‘Environmental friendly food production system: requirements for plant breeding and seed production’:


[www.ecopb.org/publications](http://www.ecopb.org/publications)

[www.orgprints.org/5190/01/ENVIRFOOD\\_2005.pdf](http://www.orgprints.org/5190/01/ENVIRFOOD_2005.pdf)

[www.stendeselekcija.lv/ENVIRFOOD](http://www.stendeselekcija.lv/ENVIRFOOD)







# Declaration of the international ENVIRFOOD seminar

- ◆ Organic seed production in the Baltic States is now in the stage of development.
- ◆ Current situation in seed market indicates that even in January 1, 2006, organic seed supply will be insufficient.
- ◆ Data base is established, but it is nearly empty...
- ◆ Education possibilities for farmers are provided and should be improved in future.
- ◆ State granted support is needed as the seed production is a resource-demanding branch.



# **(1) Opinion of LAOA and SPPS for near future – after January 1, 2006**

- ◆ **One possibility is – to ask European Commission to prolong the general derogation period for next 2 – 3 years.**
- ◆ **But...**
- ◆ **Organic farming must use organic seed. If there will be derogations, especially general, farmers will care for these derogations for ever.**



## **(2) Opinion of LAOA and SPPS for near future – after January 1, 2006**

- ◆ **Latvia will work according to Regulation 1452/2003:**
- ◆ **As the database is established, farmers will need to ask derogation to use conventional seed from SPPS according to our legislation;**
- ◆ **This will help us to get official information about**
  - **Crops grown;**
  - **Amount of seed needed.**



### **(3) Opinion of LAOA and SPPS for near future – after January 1, 2006**

- ◆ **Farmers will need to ask derogation in written form;**
- ◆ **Deadline of application**
  - for spring season- April 15
  - For autumn season - September 15.
- ◆ **There is possibility to reject application**
  - If there is information on available organic seed in database;
  - If application is not submitted in time;
  - If any misstatement is recognized;
  - If there will be information on seed availability in neighbours' (or regional) databases – Estonia, Lithuania;



## **Position of IFOAM is:**

*Organic product must start with the organic seed.*

**That must be enacted in Latvia, and organic seed production must be put into practice**



**Thank you for your attention!**

## **France. Database : [www.semences-biologiques.org](http://www.semences-biologiques.org)**

*Source:* GNIS - Groupement National Interprofessionnel des Semences et Plants

In France, a simple, accessible database, offering supplies of organic seed varieties has been operational since January 2004.

It has greatly enhanced the use of organic seed compared to 2003.

During year 2004, 67 suppliers registered more than 850 varieties in 100 different species. 17.500 derogation requests were submitted to the certification bodies, directly on line.

A point of concern is that certification bodies often have difficulties to assess whether requests are justified.

### *Plans for 2005*

French seed companies would like to see the following crops listed on a national annex : Maize, potato, sunflower, soya, and 11 vegetables. As for maize, more than half of the supply is unsold stock. Seed companies threaten to cut off investments in organic seed production if their supplies are not sold.

Farmers worry about the future of old, native varieties, which are still grown in France. They fear that the cultivation of these varieties will become restricted in the future, as they are not listed on the database. Until this is clarified, they do not support the introduction of an annex.

Expert meetings were held. As it turned out, farmers' support for a national annex was far from overwhelming.

The government therefore proposed a more stringent derogation system instead. A list of so-called "pre-annex crops" will be drawn up for the crops proposed by the seed companies and agreed by the farmers. Growers submitting derogation requests for pre-annex crops will be referred back to the database. If, after that, derogation is still being requested, a farmer is to substantiate the request, and the certification body will check whether the request is fully justified. Furthermore, grounds for derogations will be kept on record, to better harmonise supply and demand.

This new derogation system will be evaluated by the experts groups.

All the partners agreed on the necessity to continue the meeting between farmers and seed firms. Internet website will not solve all the technical and economical difficulties, but it is a tool for transparency.