Seed and plants for organic farming in the context of EU policy frameworks

Laura Ullmann, IFOAM EU
Communications & Business Relations Manager

Revision of the Plant Reproductive Material Legislation
Revision of the Organic Regulation
Making use of other policies

IFOAM EU
Operations and organisation
160 members in all 28 EU member states, EFTA and EU candidate countries:
- Organic farming associations
- Organic food processors, retailers, traders
- Organic food and farming advisors and researchers
- Organic certifiers

IFOAM EU
Working and interest groups
General policy & regulation committee
Organic Regulation
- Organic Wine
- Greenhouses
- Poultry
- Aquaculture
- Flexibility
- Import & control
- Group certification

Policy
- CAP & rural development
- Seed
- GMO
- Water
- Labelling
- Plant protection products

Interest Groups
- Organic processing/trade
- Organic farming

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Strategic pillars
EU positioning and advocacy
- Shape organic regulations
- Influence key EU policies

Information platform
- Communicate and engage with the sector

Developing organics
- Direct sustainable food production methods
- Build organic capacity

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Plant Reproductive Material Legislation
Towards more crop diversity: IFOAM EU core demands

Adapting market rules for future food security, biodiversity and food culture
- Market access for niche varieties and populations on the basis of a simplified description procedure
- Adapted evaluation criteria (uniformity) for open pollinated varieties
- Adapted testing must be available for varieties targeted for organic farming or specific local conditions
- Registration of varieties and the control of the quality of seeds must remain a public service

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Organic regulation
Current situation concerning seed
Commission Regulation 834/2007

Article 17:
"...only organically produced seed and propagating material shall be used.""  

Article 22:
"Exceptions [...] shall be kept to a minimum and, where appropriate, limited in time,..."  

"[...] where it is necessary in order to ensure access to feed, seed and vegetative propagating material, live animals and other farm inputs, where such inputs are not available on the market in organic form."

Commission Regulation 889/2008

Article 65:
"[...] Member States may authorise the use of non-organic seed or vegetative propagating material if not available from organic production."

Organic regulation
Derogations: yes or no?
Things to consider
- Where the problem lies: implementation vs. regulation
- Access:
  - "New" markets (e.g. new member states)
  - Small farmers / unit area / availability of information
  - Language and price barriers
- Sustainability: Transport of organic vs. use of conventional untreated seeds
- Biodiversity: Locally adapted seed preference, rare species or varieties
- Removing derogations could mean excluding many (smaller!) players from the organic markets
- Permanent derogations could halt efforts to improve
- Evolution of derogations can help show progress

Organic regulation
Current review process: IFOAM EU core demands

We need to develop the sector and encourage sustainable growth along the organic principles
- Better implementation of derogation/exemption rules
- Increase efficiency of controls
- Introduce environmental performance requirements in processing
- Harmonise organic regulations with horizontal legislation (fertilisers, plant protection products, food information, origin labelling)
- Harmonise pesticide residue management
- Facilitate international trade
- Extend the protection of the term organic to other new areas (textile, cosmetics, mass catering)
- Encourage organic pioneers (private labels, member states that go for stricter requirements)
Organic regulation & Plant Reproductive Material Legislation

- Organic seed only in organic = end to exchange?
- "Diversity" seed, non-registered varieties
- Exchange and direct sale by farmers, gardeners and conservation networks

Other policy opportunities
European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) for Agriculture

Horizon 2020 (EU research framework 2014-2020)
Multi-actor projects: favours practitioner – researcher cooperation
Apply for European projects
Rural Development Programmes (CAP, Pillar 2)
Operational Groups: different actors along food chain work together
Article 29: "Support may be provided for the conservation and for the sustainable use and development of genetic resources in agriculture"
Ask your member states and Regions to apply the EIP measure and put a focus on progress towards agro-ecology

Other policy opportunities
New organic action plan

Needed for consistent policy approach to support organic farming, incl. regulation, CAP, research, ....
- Use organic as tool to reach EU objectives
  - Biodiversity
  - Soil
  - Animal welfare
  - Development of rural areas & local food chains
  - Multifunctional agriculture
  - Long term food security
- Profile the long standing certified organic label against other food systems & labels
- Expand organic area and market by 20% in 2020

Organic is too good to be left to the market alone!

Thank you and
See you in Brussels on 6-8 November!

www.ifoam-eu.org  info@ifoam-eu.org  @IFOAMEU