Welcome to the 7th European Workshop on Organic Seed Regulation in Brussels 2013

- Hosted by Flemish Government
- 54 participants from 16 different countries
- Two half days of intensive exchange and discussion
  → Roadmap for the harmonisation and increased usage of organic seed

Program 9th October 2013

14:10  Aim of the meeting and short update of the previous workshop (M. Messmer, S. Howlett)
14:30  Revision of the organic regulation process and its impact on organic seed (L’Her)
14:50  Country reports
  - Summary of online survey, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, France, Czech Republic, Italy, Greece, Spain
16:15  Coffee break
16:45  Perspective of seed and breeding companies
17:45  Perspective of organic farmers organisation
18:15  Plenary discussion
20:00  Dinner at Ethiopian restaurant KoKoB in city centre

Program 10th October 2013

8:30  IFOAM EU role related to seeds (E. Busacca)
9:30  Three case studies on production and use of organic seeds
  - Potato (J. van Hoogen, Agrico)
  - Cereals (E. Muehlhausen, KWS)
  - Vegetables (H. Halsma, Vitalis)
10:10  Coffee break
10:30  Discussion in supgroups
12:00  Presentation of outcome of group discussion
12:15  Plenary discussion & Development of roadmap
13:00  Light Lunch offered by Flemish Government

Why is ECO-PB active in organic seed

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Varieties for organic farming

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Strengthening organic farming by breeding varieties adapted to specific growing conditions
Guidelines for organic plant production
Bio Suisse 17.4.2013

- Organic plant breeding defined according to IFOAM
  - All steps performed under certified organic conditions
  - No technical intervention below cell level
  - Respects natural crossing barriers
  - Promotes fertility and natural reproduction of plants
  - Transparency of breeding methods
  - Refrains from patents on living organisms
- From 1.1.2014 on cultivars used for the production of Knospe products are preferably from organic plant breeding programs
  - This includes cultivars according to national seed legislation and UPOV regulation as well as population varieties, niche varieties, land races and farmer’s selections

Main Outcomes I

- Reporting on organic seed by member countries to the EU needs to be more harmonised.
  - Textual explanations of derogation
  - Info about why a derogation was issued
  - Availability of species/varieties on Category 1 (no derogation)
  - Reports should be structured by derogation category system
- SCOF requested more input from organic stakeholders regarding organic seed issues.
  - Main role of reports is to serve as policy instruments

Main outcomes II

- Differences and commonalities in the organisational structure of Expert Groups (EG) between countries were discussed.
  - NL: EG comprised of farmers, seed company reps, growers & researchers
  - DK: EG is the advisory service of Danish Organic Association & variety testing authority
  - FR: EG is responsibility of Ministry of Agriculture & there are two groups 1) organic seed database 2) derogations
  - EG groups are important to decide about suitability of organic seed available, to get support from farmers about decisions for Annex & increase production and use of organic seed

Main outcomes III

- The wider organic community needs to invest in seed databases
  - Currently no common European database
  - Some countries have no national databases
  - Suggestions made to harmonise existing national databases (e.g. Latin names, meaningful units for quantities…)
- To protect seed diversity the use of local varieties should not be hindered by seed regulation
  - Possibly allow a derogation for conservation varieties, even those in Category 1.
  - Include users of local varieties on EG discussions

General Conclusions

- The organic sector has improved in different ways in different countries over the past few years
  - Use of National Category 1 has increased
  - Seed companies reported rise in organic seed sales in some countries
- Potential players may lack a strong incentive for development because current regulations are not clear or not coordinated enough among countries.
- Still urgent need for further European harmonisation on organic seed regulation & derogation reports

Publications

Workshop outcomes summarised in paper: