

## ANNUAL REPORT OF ECO-PB ACTIVITIES

DECEMBER 2006-DECEMBER 2007

### Board meetings and General Assembly

ECO-PB's fifth General Assembly (GA) was held on the evening before the ECO-PB workshop on Different models to finance plant breeding in Frankfurt (FiBL-D) on 26 February 2007. During the GA the proposed board was re-elected, except a change of Hannah Jones – UK, replacing Lawrence Woodward. The ECO-PB board now consists of:

Edith Lammerts van Bueren/Louis Bolk Institute (NL) – president  
Hannah Jones /The Organic Research Centre – Elm Farm (UK) – treasurer  
Klaus-Peter Wilbois/ Forschungsinstitut Biologische Landbau (D) – secretary  
Francois lHopiteau/Institut Technique de l'Agriculture Biologique (F)  
Hanne Oestergaard/Risø National Laboratory (DK)  
Christine Arncken/Forschungsinstitut Biologische Landbau (CH).

We are very grateful to Lawrence Woodward who was one of the initiators of the founding of ECO-PB and served ECO-PB board for seven years! His strength was to push the policy issues forward to make sure that the voice of ECO-PB was heard.

### ECO-PB members

Attached is an updated list of all members of 2007.

### International meetings

ECO-PB has organised two important meetings in 2007:

- *ECO-PB Workshop on Different models to finance plant breeding in Frankfurt, 27 February 2007, Germany*

An issue that has been on the ECO-PB list for a long time has now finally been taken care of. On behalf of ECO-PB Aart Osman, Karl-Josef Mueller and Klaus Peter Wilbois have organised the international workshop on *Different models to finance plant breeding* especially for organic farming. The location for the workshop was the Ökohaus KA Eins in Frankfurt. In the workshop different examples and models of financing plant breeding activities were presented and discussed amongst participants in order to stimulate the development and progress of alternative ways of dividing breeding costs over the different stakeholders in the food production chain. Some 30 participants involved in the topic were present and the meeting was chaired by Lawrence Woodward. The proceedings of the workshop can be found under [http://www.eco-pb.org/09/proceedings\\_070227.pdf](http://www.eco-pb.org/09/proceedings_070227.pdf)

*- Eucarpia . - Symposium on 'Plant breeding for organic and sustainable, low-input agriculture: dealing with genotype-environment interaction'*

Much energy of several board members went into the organisation of this symposium of the Eucarpia Working Group Organic Plant breeding organised a first EUCARPIA Symposium on *Plant breeding for organic and sustainable, low-input agriculture: dealing with genotype-environment interactions*, which took place in Wageningen, The Netherlands from Nov. 7 to Nov. 9. This conference was jointly organized by COST SUSVAR: WP1 genetics, ECO-PB, ISOFAR and the Graduate School Production Ecology & Resource Conservation (PE&RC) of the Wageningen University. It was attended by more than 130 participants and was a big success, indicating the clear interest among breeders in the topic.

The topic areas of the symposium were: Genotype-Environment interaction, Breeding strategies, Selection criteria and Participatory approaches. At the start of the conference an abstract book was presented with all the abstracts of the oral and poster presentations see [http://www.eucarpia.org/new\\_section\\_organic.html](http://www.eucarpia.org/new_section_organic.html). Instead of a full proceedings the editors of *Euphytica*, a peer-reviewed journal on plant breeding, offered to release a special issue on the theme of this workshop and to publish 10-15 selected (peer-reviewed) papers in this issue before the end of 2008.

During the symposium the Eucarpia Working group was transformed into a new section of EUCARPIA named "Organic and low-input agriculture" was. Dr. Edith Lammerts van Bueren was elected unanimously as new chairperson of this new section and Dr. Hanne Oestergaard as vice-chairperson.

### **ECO-PB newsletter**

In 2007 three issues were published in February, October and December: There are about 700 subscribers registered in the mailing list.

### **Lobby actions**

#### *VCU testing for organic agriculture*

End of 2007 we started the preparation of the COST ACTION 860 – SUSVAR/ECO-PB workshop on Value for Cultivation and Use of Variety (VCU) testing for organic cereal production: What are the key issues? This workshop took place on the 28th and 29th February 2008 in Brussels, Belgium and gave interesting perspectives questioning the right to exist and the possible future of VCU.

#### *Protoplast fusion*

During ECO-PBs GA the representative of ABDP identified several organisations such as Demeter Germany, Naturland-De, Demeter-Netherlands that prohibit protoplast- and cytoplasm fusion (PPF/CPF) because this breeding technique is not in compliance with the principles of organic farming. The IFOAM EU-group was not able to put this issue on the agenda, so ECO-PB has written (February 2008) an amendment for the IFOAM GA where the standards will be discussed.

#### *Guidelines on Breeding*

No actions were taken in 2007 to further discuss ideas on guidelines on breeding. Actions are planned for 2008 to submit a motion on this issue for the IFOAM General Assembly 2008.

## Projects-

### *COST 860 project*

ECO-PB supports and cooperates with the network of the COST 860 project on *Sustainable low-input cereal production: Required varietal characteristics and crop diversity (SUSVAR)* coordinated by Hanne Østergård (DK). For further information see [www.cost860.dk](http://www.cost860.dk). This cooperation strengthens the power and network of ECO-PB and provides an opportunity for meetings and discussions. In 2007 a workshop on 'Varietal characteristics of cereals in different growing systems with special emphasis on below ground traits', took place from the 29 – 31 May 2007 in Velence, Hungary.

### *EU project Farm Seed Opportunities*

A new EU policy project, called *Opportunities for farm seed conservation, breeding and production*, (acronym: *Farm Seed Opportunities*), has been accepted and started in 2007 with 12 partners from six countries (Fr, IT, NL, ES, UK, CH). The coordination is in hands of Veronique Chable of INRA (Fr). Although the issue of conservation varieties is not limited to organic agriculture, most partners are involved in organics. Combining scientific competences and farmer knowledge will enable, in an approach of participatory innovation, the development of on-farm plant breeding and genetic resources management, see [www.farmseed.org](http://www.farmseed.org).

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## Members of ECO-PB

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### Full members

Institut Technik Agriculture Biologique, France  
Forschungsinstitut für Biologischen Landbau, Switzerland  
Forschungsinstitut für Biologischen Landbau, Germany  
Danisch Agricultural Center of Organic Farming, Denmark  
Organic Research Centre Elm Farm, United Kingdom  
Stichting Zaadgoed, The Netherlands  
Vitalis, The Netherlands  
Louis Bolk Institute, The Netherlands  
Institut Technik Agriculture Biologique, France

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### Associate members

Association Biologisch-Dynamischer Pflanzenzüchter, Germany  
Reseau Smences Paysannes, France  
Beat Boller, Agroscope FAL, Switzerland  
Dirk Reheul, University of Gent, Belgium  
Sharon Rempel, Canada  
Michaela Cerne, Slovenia  
Fred van de Crommet, Bejo, The Netherlands  
Marc Cool, Seeds of Change, USA  
Franziska Löschenberger, Saatzucht Donau, Austria  
Philipp Stefan, Keyserlingk-Institut, Germany  
Maria Finckh, University Kassel, Germany

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