

# Information Letter for Organic Agriculture of Central and Eastern Europe

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## Dear readers,

In the organic movement in Europe we will certainly remember the year 2009 as one of the milestone years which will hopefully have strong and positive effects on further development of organic farming. In January 2009 the new EU regulation on organic production and organic labelling came into force. Regulation on organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production came into force in August. In 2009 some very important steps towards a GMO-free Europe were achieved. After Austria and Hungary managed to keep the moratorium of cultivation of genetically modified plants, Luxemburg and Germany also introduced a ban on growing GMO maize. Poland is preparing a law which creates the mechanisms for farmers to set up and regulate GMO-free zones.

On the other hand the picture does not look so positive when it comes to the price of agricultural commodities. Having seen an exaggeration towards too high prices until the middle of 2008, we now see too little money for the farmer. We are facing a challenge to attain fair and sustainable conditions which both sides of the business can live with. Hopefully the year 2010 will bring some solutions in this aspect.

In closing, the EkoConnect e. V. and Avalon foundation team wishes you a Merry Christmas, a good farewell to 2009 and a successful start in the new year, 2010.

We hope you enjoy reading our articles.

Irena Fašalek & Dagmar Diener & Linda Huisman



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## 1. Bulgaria: The New Thracian Gold Project

The Eastern Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria are one of the rare biodiversity hotspots in Europe where wilderness and unspoiled nature can be enjoyed. The region is inhabited by friendly locals, known for their hospitality and delicious local cuisine. However, the area is facing poverty, leading the local people to abandon it. As a result, the spacious grasslands resulting from cattle herding traditions are the verge of being lost. This would be a serious blow to biodiversity. To reduce poverty, conserve biodiversity and strive for new welfare, the Avalon and Ark Foundations recently started a project in this region called: **The New Thracian Gold**.

The Eastern Rhodope Mountains are rich in many ways. Waving slopes alternate with steep rock cliffs above blue rivers which meander their way through the sparsely populated mountainous landscape. Gold can still be found in the river sand. Here, the temperate climate of central Europe and the Mediterranean climate meet, making the region a hot spot of biodiversity: 1.400 species of plants, 27 species of reptiles, 59 different mammals and 278 species of birds, including an incredible number of 37 species of birds of prey.

Local authorities, local farmers and interested persons from abroad are considering how the population of the Eastern Rhodope Mountains could reduce poverty in the region and strive for new livelihoods. A green development project contains three elements: wilderness restoration, organic farming and ecotourism. The current deplorable situation in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains can be changed for the better if the natural riches of the region are used in a viable, economic way.

Vladislav Popov of the Agricultural University of Plovdiv and manager of Avalon-Bulgaria regards organic farming as a sound alternative for the local rural population. Organic farming enhances nature protection and ecotourism perfectly. It does not harm biodiversity and organic food can provide farmers and rural households with extra income. The market for organic products is growing and the farmers will receive support to develop organic farming and to market their products.

Nico van der Werf of Avalon-the Netherlands emphasizes the cohesion of the three elements: 'The New Thracian Gold-project is all about the integration of wilderness restoration, organic farming and ecotourism.

This fall Avalon organised a series of events in Bulgaria, A field trip to the Rhodope Mountains was part of these events. This journey was reported by the Dutch journalist Meindert Brouwer. You can read his interesting travel report: '*They call it the wild Farm*' at: [www.avalon.nl](http://www.avalon.nl) (go to "Documents").

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## 2. Hungary: No more possibility to apply for subsidies under Agri-environment scheme until 2014

**New Hungary Rural Development Programme offers more short term support to the farmers**

Between 1997 and 2004, the number of organic farmers in Hungary has shown a significant, fivefold growth, after which the trend reversed and the number of organic farms started to decline. The experts see the reason for decline in the slow growth of domestic market on one side and in poor governmental support for organic farmers on the other side. Although a New Hungarian Rural Development Programme was introduced in 2009, here too the government has built in barriers for the farmers.

While in most countries of the European Union the areas under organic farming increased rapidly in recent years, in Hungary there has been no conversion increase in the past five years. After 2004, the number of organic farms declined by about 15% and the organic agricultural area by about 8% to 122,816 ha in 2008 (see Table 1). Yet from 1997 to 2004 there was a different situation: The number of organic farms increased fivefold from 281 to 1453 and the area under cultivation increased in this period by more than tenfold to 133,009 ha, representing 2.3% of total agricultural land in Hungary. Market experts give two reasons for the decline: 1. the lack of organisation of the internal market and 2. the lack of support for organic farmers through the National Rural Development Programme introduced in 2004. This program brought a stagnation period for organic agriculture: Between 2004 and July 2009 the farmers were not able to submit new requests for subsidies. Moreover, the subsidies for integrated

production were often higher than for organic cultivation (see Table 2). This discouraged further change to organic farming.

Although most of the organic farms are still focused on export, increased numbers of organic processors, from 217 in 2003 to 436 in 2008, shows that more and more entrepreneurs have an interest in further developing the local organic industry. Currently, however, over 80% of organic products, mostly raw materials, are exported to Western European markets. The main importers from Hungary are Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Goods that are mostly exported are cereals, oilseeds as well as some fruit and vegetables. In contrast, the processed products are imported back to Hungary.

For 2009 to 2014, Hungary has introduced a New Hungary Rural Development Programme. According to the data from Hungarian control bodies we can say that with government support the organic area has expanded again this year. On the other hand the government again re-installed incomprehensible hurdles for farmers. The farmers could apply for the subsidies until 25 July 2009, but after that deadline the farmers cannot enter the Agri-environment scheme to request subsidies for the next five years. New applications are no longer possible until the end of the program, which is 31 August 2014. So in the next five years there is no chance for government support for farmers deciding to change from conventional to organic or integrated farming.

Table 1: Development of Organic Agriculture in Hungary

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009*
<b>Organic area (ha)</b>	116.535	133.009	128.575	122.765	122.270	122.817	138.800
<b>Organic farms</b>	1.256	1.453	1.386	1.294	1.259	1.233	1.391

Source: Biokontroll, Hungaria Ökogarancia, \* estimations EkoConnect e. V.

Table 2: Subsidies for organic and integrated farming in Hungary

	Subsidies 2004 – 2009 (EUR/ha)			Subsidies 2009 – 2014 (EUR/ha)		
	Integrated farming	Area in conversion	Organic certified area	Integrated farming	Area in conversion	Organic certified area
<b>Arable land</b>	224	192	145	155	212	153
<b>Vegetables</b>	113	349	220	171	359	203
<b>Permanent crops</b>	420	435	322	341-625	757-900	365-631

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FVM) 2009

Authors: Irena Fašalek, EkoConnect e. V. & Stefan Simon

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### 3. Average organic farm in Slovakia has almost 400 ha

The average organic farm in Slovakia is much larger than in other EU countries. 7,02 % of agricultural land is cultivated according to organic standards and in 2008 the size of an average farm was 391 ha. The main Slovak organic product is traditionally grain which is mostly used for animal feed on local organic farms.

At the end of 2008 the Central Control and Testing Institute in Agriculture of Slovakia (CCTIA) registered 349 organic farms with a total organically farmed area of 159,281 ha (including 22.613 ha in conversion). While in 2001 the average size of an organic farm was still 746 ha, in 2008 the average farm size decreased to 391 ha. The decrease is the result of the increasing number of family farms which are converting to an organic production system. In any case, the largest organic farm still operates on 3,034 hectares (arable land 2,199 ha). Altogether, eight farms are larger than 1,500 ha.

Permanent grassland covers a bit less than 70 %, arable land about 30 %, orchards less than 1 % and vineyards some 0.1 % of the organic agricultural area. Organic farms are spread throughout the whole of Slovakia, although most are located in the east.

The main Slovak organic products are traditionally cereals. Fruit production has not developed due to higher expense. Apples, plums and cherries are mostly processed, e.g. as dried fruit. Wild collection products are mostly exported. More than 75 % of the raw material is used for animal feeding purposes on local organic farms, since 68 % of organic farmers are also engaged in organic animal rearing. The producers sell the rest of the raw material, mostly in Slovakia but also to other EU Member States and Switzerland.

Almost 50 % of the organic production is still sold as non-organic, e.g. organic milk to conventional dairies, or organic animals/meat as conventional, mainly abroad. The greatest portion of Slovak organic raw cow milk is sold to two organic dairies in the Czech Republic. In the last two years a huge Slovak dairy started to process organic cow milk – organic milk, yogurt and white cheese is available to consumers via supermarket chains. Meat processing is not developed and there are no small slaughterers.

Organic food processing shows only a slowly increasing trend. It is not developing adequately to accommodate increasing organically farmed land. Local organic products are sold mainly in small health shops. It seems to be impossible for small producers to sell their products to supermarket chains. However, larger organic food producers sell their products, such as herbal tea, flour, pasta, cow milk, tofu and dairy products to local specialized shops and supermarket chains, as well as abroad. Organic wine is distributed by the largest organic wine producer to selected domestic market chains. An entire range of organic ice cream, pretzels and asparagus are produced for foreign markets, such as Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

Source: Juliana Schlosserová, Central Control and Testing Institute in Agriculture of Slovakia

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#### 4. European study shows higher nutritional value of organic foods

**Due to different production methods and the lack of agro-chemicals, organic products can have a positive effect on human health. In particular, the content of poly-unsaturated fatty acids, vitamins, carotenoids and antioxidants is higher in organic food.**

The largest EU-funded project so far on organic agriculture confirmed: Organic foods can have positive effects on human health. In line with consumers' expectations, they are of high quality and safe. Two main findings lead to these results: Compared to conventionally produced foods organic foods contain higher levels of nutritionally desirable compounds such as antioxidants or vitamins. Additionally, the level of nutritionally undesirable compounds such as mycotoxins, pesticide residues and glyco-alkaloids was lower in a range of crops and/or milk. This is primarily due to organic methods of soil fertility management. They strengthen the plants' defences and enhance their level of beneficial compounds. The non-use of chemosynthetic mineral fertilisers and pesticides further improved the nutritional composition in a range of crops.

For five years over thirty international European partners collaborated in the integrated project "Improving quality and safety and reduction of costs in the European organic and low input supply chains" (QLIF). The researchers focused on quality and safety of organic and low-input foods in the context of cost efficiency and sound environments. Their experiments showed the considerably higher quality of crops and livestock products from organic farms compared to conventional ones. Organic foods such as cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes and potatoes contained higher levels of phytochemicals as Dr. Urs Niggli (Institute for Ecological Agriculture/FiBL), academic co-ordinator of QLIF, summarized. In organic milk the amount of nutritionally desirable compounds was also much higher, especially in summer. The content of poly-unsaturated fatty acids such as CLA and omega-3 was up to 60 percent higher, that of vitamins, carotenoids and antioxidants between 30 and 70 percent. A roughage based feeding regime with a low amount of maize silage was the decisive factor for the quality. In this case low-input systems such as free-range grazing produced identical qualities to organic milk, despite their system otherwise mostly resembling conventional farming.

The higher amount of poly-unsaturated fatty acids is beneficial to human health. Phytochemicals such as antioxidants help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

The QLIF study is based on comprehensive analyses from scientific experiments, socio-economic data and complex modelling. It focused on current challenges and further ways of improving the quality of organic plant and animal foods. Among the experiments were two related to feeding which aimed at

improving milk and milk protein yields and intramuscular fat content (which affects the sensory quality of pork). The scientists also developed HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) protocols. These shall support producers to ensure high quality standards specific to organic products and food safety e.g. regarding manure use and processing. To meet the growing demand for highly processed organic products while maintaining the authenticity and naturalness of organic foods is a new challenge. Therefore the QLIF project proposed guiding processing standards in a code of practice.

The QLIF results refute the findings of a recently published study by the English Food Standard Agency (FSA). This controversial study could not find any nutritional difference between organically and conventionally produced foods. While presenting the QLIF results in Berlin the secretary general of the DNR (German League for Nature and Environment), Helmut Röscheisen, strongly criticized the FSA study. He accused it of purposefully excluding studies which proved a higher content of phytochemicals in organic fruits. Problematic residues of e.g. heavy metals or pesticides were not even considered although their negative effects on infants are well-known, according to the DNR.

Further information can be found on the QLIF website <http://www qlif.org>. It also leads to the open access database Organic Eprints, where more than 100 QLIF publications are available.

Authors: Bianca Borowski & Stefan Simon, agrarian journalist

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## 5. Origin known: From farm to fork

**A group of German farmers has started to establish its own brand. The group sells its non-perishables to wholesalers and health food stores. A success story worth copying.**

Organic farmers often sell their fresh products, such as potatoes, vegetables, fruits, eggs or meat to regional health food shops. In most cases, the range of processed dry goods does not come directly from the farm, even though the farmers produce the raw material, such as grain or meat.

In the summer of 2008, the two farmers' producer groups "Kornbauern" and "Kornkreis" took a new direction. 70 farmers from the south-western German states Baden-Württemberg, Saarland and Rheinland-Pfalz are jointly producing non-perishables such as porridge oats, emmer (triticum diccicum) pasta, mustard and preserved canned sausages.

The idea behind the products is to offer "natural food with a face". The packaging of each product has a photograph of one of the farmers whose raw material is processed, hence consumers obtain some knowledge of the people who produce their food. The assortment now includes 30 non-perishables, and is still growing: next to follow are organic oil and jam. All of the products have a best before date of at least eight months.

The harvest is processed nearby, e.g. the mustard seed from Markus Comtesse's farm in Wadgassen is ground only 30 km down the Saar River at the small mustard mill "Mettlacher Abtei Senfmühle".

Thorsten Neubauer, executive director of the producer group "Kornbauern", sees much potential in product development, as organic farmers and processors are very creative. "Thanks to cooperation, batch sizes are growing; this is interesting for all involved stakeholders", he says.

The two producer groups sell their products mainly to organic wholesalers in the south-east of Germany and directly to health food shops all over Germany. "Kornkreis" is responsible for customer service in the south and east of the republic, and "Kornbauern" in the north and west. Sales representatives visit the shops to present the products. "The owners of the health food shops love our products. Especially the idea to print the picture of the producer on the packaging appeals to them", says Eva-Maria Esslinger from "Kornkreis" and she completes: "Some shopkeepers were apparently waiting for our products".

At the moment the two producer groups are promoting the acquisition of new health food shops to assure their distribution. In the meantime they are extending their range.

Further information: [www.kornbauern.de](http://www.kornbauern.de), [www.kornkreis.name](http://www.kornkreis.name)

Author: Dipl. Ing. agr. Stefan Simon, agrarian journalist

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## 6. Organic farming can help to protect the climate

**Scientific studies show that organic agriculture has a better carbon footprint than conventional farming. One main advantage is totally different soil fertility management: Low-impact methods, high percentages of grassland and crops that boost soil fertility help to enrich the humus content of the soil, which is a CO<sub>2</sub> sink.**

As the decisive climate conference in Copenhagen approaches, strategies and measures to reduce global warming are discussed forcefully. Agriculture appears as a main actor on both sides of the fence, as causer and sufferer: On the one hand it produces a considerable amount of greenhouse gases. On the other hand farming will be affected immensely e.g. by the change of the amount and duration of rainfall or the possible spread of diseases and vermin.

Therefore a shift to a more climate friendly and resilient farming is needed urgently. Can organic farming be an answer to this problem and help to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases?

In fact, among all its other benefits, organic farming also has higher energy efficiency and a better carbon footprint than conventional farming, as several studies show. One main advantage is totally different soil fertility management. The disuse of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides saves a lot of energy and avoids emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide and the even more destructive nitrous oxide which would arise from their production and use. The effect of nitrous oxide is around 300 times stronger on the climate than CO<sub>2</sub>. Furthermore organic farmers help to reduce atmospheric concentrations of these greenhouse gases by creating a carbon sink. Low-impact methods, high percentages of grassland (for roughage and pasture) and many crops (e.g. legume) that boost soil fertility help to enrich the humus content of the soil. Additionally, the percentage of humus draining crops such as maize is much lower on organic farms. On the contrary the soil on many conventional farms proves to be a carbon source due to humus draining crops, crop rotation and intensive management.

Feeding livestock with mainly roughage and a few crops from self-owned farms or at least regional sources also protects the climate in another way. It minimises emissions from transport. In contrast, conventional farmers import immense amounts of concentrated feed (in Germany around one third) from overseas. What is worse, to gain acreage for the ever growing demand for soy, vast parts of precious rain forest are destroyed each year. Regarding its invaluable importance – not only but especially for the world climate – this leads to incalculable consequences.

Livestock production in general is responsible for more than two thirds of the agricultural greenhouse emissions, mainly due to the destructive manner of feed production. Therefore organic livestock production causes fewer emissions. Organic farms also keep much fewer animals per hectare which reduces the direct emissions of methane. This gas is generated during the digestion of ruminants and is around 23 times more damaging to the climate than CO<sub>2</sub>. Moreover, organic cows live and produce milk longer which means fewer cows have to be raised (which do not produce milk during their upbringing). This improves the climate footprint of organic milk production even when calculated per litre milk.

One common accusation is that the benefits of organic farming dissolve if calculated per kg or litre instead of per land area. Looking at the carbon footprint studies have shown that the differences are indeed smaller but that organic products still prove to be better.

Nevertheless this is one of the main challenges for organic farming. Although it already is a more climate-friendly way to produce food, improvement is still possible and necessary. How to increase productivity in a sustainable and animal-friendly way is one of the key questions to further enhance its potential to protect the climate, e.g. by breeding improvement or strengthening of health and vitality of plants and animals. Further research is needed to help farmers with this process. Other measures could be ploughing less (deep) or not at all, as well as using emission reducing techniques in soil fertility management. Organic as well as conventional farmers should refrain from using boggy soils which are a major source of greenhouse gases if drained.

Authors: Bianca Borowski & Stefan Simon, agrarian journalist

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## 7. Protect grain storages from fungi and pest beetles

**The correct storage of grain is one of the challenges to secure high quality. Drying, cleaning, cooling and ventilation are the main factors. In warm years many farmers have problems with**

**corn weevils (*Sitophilus granaries*). Especially in April 2009, populations exploded in granaries all over Europe as high temperatures support corn weevil breeding. This reduces the grain's quality.**

Even in organic farming there are enough possibilities to fight the bugs. First of all, the grain has to be clean before storing and storage must be cool enough. In addition, organic farmers should use traps and prophylactically introduce the Store chalcid *Lariophagus distinguendus* to the storages. This endoparasite looks like a small wasp and is a natural enemy for the biological control of corn weevils. To protect the storage prophylactically, you need 40 wasps (10,25 Euros) for about 100 m<sup>2</sup> or 15 tons of grain. You can use the braconid wasp *Habrobracon hebetor* (25 animals for approx. 15 m<sup>2</sup> cost 3,90 Euros) to fight meal moths in your grainary.

If you have an invasion of corn weevils, you must remove all the grain from the granary and put it into a special machine which kills the pests by high pressure. The empty storehouse should be cleaned with Silico Sec, a special natural mineral powder for killing pest beetles. You will require approximately 20 mg of the product (which costs 8 Euros per kg.) per square meter. You can even use Silico Sec curatively directly in the grain (2 kg per ton), however, you cannot sell the grain later for baking, only for animal feeding purposes! The high pressure method and Silico Sec are both used in organic farming. However, as Silico Sec is not explicitly mentioned in EU regulation 889/2008 for storage treatment, please contact your control body before applying Silico Sec.

When we talk about grain quality, experts from trade organisations and procurement managers from organic mills say: The after-harvest management is the most important, as the baking quality of the grain is mostly very good. Real problems occur if the grain is badly stored. Ernst Weidenhöfer, procurement manager at the German organic mill and bakery Bohlsener Mühle, says: "I see quality deficits more in stockkeeping than in crop growing. There are bigger challenges to cope with and a backlog."

For farmers, that means that not only growing the crop is important, but especially the "following step". Therefore you should take the following expert tips into account:

- **Thresh dry and ventilate the harvest:**

The best is to thresh with 14 percent residual moisture content (oats and spelt with 13 percent). If it is not possible, you have to dry the grain. Please note: If you thresh with 16 percent residual moisture it is nearly impossible to reach 14 percent only by drying in the storage later! You must use professional dryers.

If the grain is too moist, mycotoxins develop in the stock. This is a big risk in flat storages if you cannot vent correctly. If you cannot dry the crop by yourself, take it to a professional dryer. Even with 15 percent residual moisture you might risk a mycotoxin contamination.

- **Harvest cleanly and aspirate:**

Clean threshing helps to vent the grain later. In addition you should clean the grain of small particles and weed seeds. Then it is ready for venting. If there is too much fine material in the heap, air cannot go through, as the fine pores are blocked.

- **Cool the granary down:**

The corn weevil loves warm temperatures and a high air moisture content. Below 7 °C, corn weevils and other pest beetles hibernate. Use this knowledge and cool the product down, because there will nearly always be a few corn weevils in the warehouse. However, they are harmless if it is cold. An insider tip: use the cold winter air to vent the granary!

- **Remove from stock early:**

If you cannot adhere to the above mentioned point by 100 percent, you should remove the grain from stock to a professional granary by October at the latest. The chance of reaching better product quality the following year in comparison to a semi-professional granary is then much higher.

If you want traders to buy your grain and not refuse it, make sure it is clean. Pay attention that neither mycotoxins nor corn weevils spread in the granary. Even for cats, it is out of bounds!

For more information on this topic, you can find under:

- Silico Sec at Biofa AG, Rudolf-Diesel-Str. 2, D-72525 Münsingen, Tel.: +49 (0) 7381/ 93 54 14, E-Mail: [contact@biofa-profi.de](mailto:contact@biofa-profi.de) (German and English speaking)
- Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren Herstellung und Handel e.V.

[http://www.n-bnn.de/html/img/pool/Leitfaden\\_Schdlingsbekmpfung.pdf](http://www.n-bnn.de/html/img/pool/Leitfaden_Schdlingsbekmpfung.pdf)

- Store chalcid *Lariophagus distinguendus* and braconid wasp *Habrobracon hebetor* at [www.biologische-beratung.de](http://www.biologische-beratung.de) (German and English speaking)

Author: Dipl. Ing. agr. Stefan Simon, agrarian journalist

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## 8. Avalon Conferences

In September and October Avalon organized several events in Bulgaria. The main goal was to connect people and share knowledge and experiences about organic farming. The events started with the Avalon Network Meeting, followed by an International Conference on Climate Change. 120 participants from CEE, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia attended this conference as well as the adjoining International Conference on Biodiversity in the same venue. A small group of participants joined the field trip to the Rhodope Mountains (see also the article in this newsletter titled The New Thracian Gold).

Speakers from all over the world presented new insights about serious environmental topics related to Organic Farming: Professor Rattan Lal from the USA about soil carbon sequestration, and Dr. Mark Redman from the UK about biodiversity in transition countries. The Avalon directors Martien Lankester and Nico van der Werf concluded it was a fruitful event; new contacts were made and current network members have been able to catch up their relationships and expertise.

All presentations of speakers and more information about the programme can be found on the conference website: [www.avalon-conference.org](http://www.avalon-conference.org)

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## 9. "Romanian Organic Forum" exceeds expectations

### **Gute Atmosphäre unter den Teilnehmern des Forums für Handel mit ökologischen Produkten in Bukarest**

"Many new ideas and contacts" and "We should repeat this event next year" are the main conclusions stated by the participants of the Romanian Organic Forum. The Romanian Organic Forum is an international conference on the marketing of organic products, which took place on October 22 and 23, 2009 in the Bucharest expo building "Romexpo". About 160 participants - farmers, processors, traders and representatives of organisations and institutions - came to this conference, which had a special focus on enlarging the organic domestic market and the organic export capacities in Romania.

„The number of participants exceeded our expectations" said Mr. Bernhard Jansen, chairman of EkoConnect –International Centre for Organic Agriculture of Central and Eastern Europe e.V., one of the four organising institutions. "In addition, the atmosphere among the organic business people was great and new companies got interested in the organic market", he added.

In particular, presentations regarding the prospects of the organic retail trade in Western Europe, the development of the Romanian organic market as well as the strategies for exporting organic were greeted with much interest. Another highlight was the speech of the Canadian farmer and "Alternative Nobel Prize" Laureate, Percy Schmeiser, who illustrated the bad experiences of Canadian farmers with genetically modified crops.

The Romanian Organic Forum was organised by four partners: the Romanian organic association Bio-Romania, the Ministry for Small and Medium Enterprises, Trade and Business Environment of Romania, the Geneva-based International Trade Centre (ITC) and EkoConnect, which is also the organizer of the well known yearly Organic Marketing Forum in Warsaw. Supporting partners were, among others, the Ministry for Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development of Romania and the Dutch Avalon Foundation.

For further information and pictures also see: [www.organicforum.ro](http://www.organicforum.ro)

10. Invitation: 5<sup>th</sup> Organic Marketing Forum in Warsaw registration now open



**5<sup>th</sup> International Meeting  
on Processing and Marketing  
Organic Products and Raw Materials**

**6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> May 2010  
Warsaw, Poland**



**Key Contacts**

meeting of business partners and organizations from more than 30 countries



**Conference**

with updated information from national and international experts



**Exhibition**

of organic products and services



**Excursion**

to organic companies in the Warsaw

**Organizer: EkoConnect e.V.**

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[www.organic-marketing-forum.org](http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org)

## 11. Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Place	Topic	Link/Contact
15.01.- 24.01.2010	International Green Week Berlin	Berlin, Germany	The world's biggest fair for food, agriculture and horticulture	<a href="http://www.gruenewoche.de">www.gruenewoche.de</a>
03.02.- 05.02.2010	Fruit Logistica	Berlin, Germany	The World's Leading Trade Fair for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Business.	<a href="http://www.fruitlogistica.de">www.fruitlogistica.de</a>
08.02.- 12.02.2010	Nutra Bioorganic	Moscow, Russia	The first Russian trade fair on organic food	<a href="http://www.bioorganic.ru">www.bioorganic.ru</a>
17.02.- 20.02.2010	BioFach	Nuremberg, Germany	World Organic Trade Fair	<a href="http://www.biofach.de">www.biofach.de</a>
22.02.- 24.02.2010	The Ecofruit Conference	Stuttgart- Hohenheim, Germany	14th International Conference on Organic Fruit Growing	<a href="http://www.ecofruit.net">www.ecofruit.net</a>
09.04.- 11.04.2010	BIOSTYL	Prague, Czech Republic	International sales trade fair of healthy nutrition, ecology and healthy lifestyle.	<a href="http://www.biostyl.cz">www.biostyl.cz</a>
<b>06.05 - 07.05.2010</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Organic Marketing Forum</b>	<b>Warsaw, Poland</b>	<b>International conference for European organic food, natural raw materials and merchandise trade</b>	<a href="http://www.organic-marketing-forum.org">www.organic-marketing- forum.org</a>
18.05.- 20.05.2010	FOOD INGREDIENTS CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE	Warsaw, Poland	Professional food ingredients trade show.	<a href="http://www.fi-events.com">www.fi-events.com</a>
26.05.- 28.05.2010	HEALTH LIFE	Moscow, Russia	Health Life is the event for companies working in the field of manufacture and promotion of Natural and ECO-production.	<a href="http://www.life-expo.ru/eng">www.life-expo.ru/eng</a>
27.05.- 29.05.2010	BIOFACH CHINA	Shanghai, China	BioFach China is first and foremost an exhibition for traders.	<a href="http://www.biofach-china.com">www.biofach-china.com</a>
17.07.- 18.07.2010	Oekologika	Blaubeuren, Germany	Trade and Consumers Fair for Organic, Health, Nutrition, Environment Protection, Clean Energy and Future	<a href="http://www.oekologika.com">www.oekologika.com</a>

Did you enjoy this information letter?

If yes, please be sure to recommend it to your friends and colleagues.

This information letter is a joint project of EkoConnect and Avalon and this year it replaces the “EkoConnect – Information letter on Organic Agriculture of Central and Eastern Europe” and the “Avalon Network Newsletter”. If this information letter was forwarded to you and you would like to receive it directly, please send a short e-mail with the subject ‘Subscribe Information Letter’ to [redaktion@ekoconnect.org](mailto:redaktion@ekoconnect.org)

If you do not wish to receive the newsletter any longer, please send us an e-mail with ‘Unsubscribe EkoConnect Information Letter’ as a subject.

Best regards,

Your Editorial Team

**Avalon** is an international, non-profit organisation, based in the Netherlands and active in promoting organic agriculture. Avalon supports rural communities in the Central and Eastern European region and beyond in building sustainable rural societies. In this way we support nature and environment, social conditions and local economy, always in close cooperation with local organisations such as communities, farmers, governments, etc.

#### **Avalon Network**

One of our main goals is to **connect organisations, governments, universities, and associated experts by informing and discussing about organic agriculture and nature conservation**. Knowledge and capacity building as well as market and chain development play an important role in agro-environmental policy programmes. Activities include seminars, training of trainers, demonstration farms, institution development and capacity building projects.

Bringing together all stakeholders results in a vast network of more than 150 actors in the field of organic agriculture, nature conservation, biodiversity and sustainable rural development. This network links people who are active in Avalon projects with each other and with professionals on EU and international level. Avalon facilitates this network by providing communication and capacity building tools.

#### **Membership registration**

Do you want to become a **network member**? Please fill out the application form on our website ([www.avalon.nl/network](http://www.avalon.nl/network)). Already a member? Then please invite co-workers, friends or other stakeholders to become a network member.

**EkoConnect** is a not-for-profit organisation based in Germany which enforces and supports the exchange of information, knowledge and experience in the field of organic agriculture. The organisation serves as a network for people and organisations involved in the organic sector in Western and Eastern Europe in order to meet and interact with each other.

Our primary focus is to **support activities and actors involved with sustainable development and organic agriculture within the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries**. EkoConnect also promotes rural development and the availability of organic products and foods in those markets. Activities include: being a centralized source of information, knowledge transfer between actors and organizations, networking opportunities and continuing education opportunities such as seminars and field trips and supporting private and public facilities implementing structures for the organic agriculture. EkoConnect and its activities are overseen by an Advisory Board that guides the organization in terms of technical and strategic issues.

#### **Membership registration**

EkoConnect members include experts and organisations from all over Europe with years of experience in implementing organic agricultural structures, but also non-experts who are interested in learning or supporting the organic idea. You can help support our work by becoming a “**supporting member**” or as an “**ordinary member**”. Please fill out the application form on our website (<http://www.ekoconnect.org/membership.html>). Already a member? Then please invite co-workers, friends or other stakeholders to become a EkoConnect member