

Information Letter for Organic Agriculture of Central and Eastern Europe

NO. 27

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Avalon

Promoting sustainable rural development in vulnerable agricultural areas

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Dear readers,

The area of organic farming and the market for organic products are continuously growing in most countries. Even in regions with a high share of organic farms – such as in Austria, the Czech Republic or Estonia – the organic area is expanding year by year. In step with organic farming, the industry for processing organic raw materials is developing too. In this Info Letter we show how in Latvia and Hungary organic food manufacturers contribute to the European organic market. We also explain and comment on the new EU label for organic products, which will certainly aid the development of the entire organic sector, but will also create new challenges for some market players. Today, many organic farmers and processors are concerned about the development of the market. Due to the drought in some areas of Europe and the excessive rainfall in July and August in others, below-average grain and potato yields and quality are expected. This may lead to further increases of the commodity prices, which recovered during the last weeks.

We hope you enjoy reading our articles.

Christoph Arndt, Katya Bykova & Linda Huisman

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**EKOconnect**
Organic Agriculture Moving East

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1. Still no EU regulation for organic wine

On 16 June 2010 the European Commission withdrew its proposal for regulating organic wine-making. There was no qualified majority of Member States to approve the Commission's proposal. Organic wine makers in Europe are split into two camps: Those who push for a drastic reduction of allowed sulphite levels in organic wines and those who plead for maintaining sulphites levels as they are while emphasizing the holistic approaches in organic wine-making.



Germany

While the Commissioner *Cioloş* wanted a 50 mg/l reduction of SO₂ compared to conventional wine and a labelling option "wine produced from organic grapes" in case of non-compliance, this was solidly opposed by the IFOAM EU Group as well as several countries of Central- and Eastern Europe in addition to Austria and Germany. Sulphites are added to grape juice and wine in order to protect against various oxidations causing the wine to turn brown and go bad. Sulphites improve the sensorial quality as they stabilise a fresh and fruity taste.

While the Southern wine-producing countries rather emphasise on purity and push for a drastic reduction of allowed sulphite levels in organic wines, the Central and Eastern European wine producers tend to emphasise the "terroir" of organic wines and thus plead for maintaining – or only slightly reducing – existing sulphite levels. "Terroir" denotes the special characteristics that [geography](#), especially soil and climate, bestowed upon particular wines. Under extreme weather conditions in Central Europe, including Germany, more than 50% of grapes may be attacked by Botrytis fungi. The sulphite-debate can be summarised with the following questions: Should organic wine only derive from climates with low fungus prevalence or should also those wine-growers in less favourable climates be allowed to turn organic? Secondly, should organic wine just be a wine with stricter SO₂-limits or should organic viticulture adopt a holistic approach recognising careful regional and traditional oenological practices?

Before the Commission's withdrawal, the IFOAM EU Group had urged the Commission to follow the French compromise to start with a 30 mg/l reduction of SO₂ and suggested to increase the reduction level after four years of implementing a monitoring programme. The advantage: The organic wine making rules would have started with a feasible level for all existing stakeholders in the market and thus would be widely accepted by the sector; and the evaluation of whether a further reduction is achievable and feasible would be based on sound evidence. The IFOAM EU Group demands that the European Commission should come back with a wine proposal in the near future instead of waiting for one to two years. An early organic wine regulation will have a clear added value for organic consumers in the frame of the new organic EU logo which would then also be applicable for organic wine.

Author: Christoph Arndt, EkoConnect

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2. The new organic EU Logo

Since July 1st 2010, the new EU organic logo for all goods produced in compliance with the EU organic regulation has become mandatory, and shall be introduced and established for the consumers during a 2-year-conversion period.

The new logo which can also be named as „organic leaf“ is only allowed for products which have been made in accordance with the EU organic regulation. The requirement for using the new logo is the same as before: at least 95% of all ingredients must have their origin in organic agriculture. The logo is a binding matter since July 1st, 2010 for all pre-packed goods which have been produced in an EU member state. Pre-packed foodstuffs are defined as foodstuffs which are partly or entirely wrapped in some kind of packaging, and whose contents cannot be changed without opening or changing the packaging. But the



logo can also be used optionally for labelling of unpacked, bulk products and for imported products from non EU member states. It must not be used for products in conversion to organic farming.

National and private logos still can be used, but they should not be displayed in a way that dominates or influences the view on the new EU logo.

A new aspect is that the code number must be displayed together with the logo. The code number is composed as follows: The first two letters are the ISO-code of the country in which the last processing action has been inspected (this is mostly the packaging). The following three letters declare the indication of the organic production method, the name for organic which the corresponding member state has defined. Finally a reference number follows with maximum 3 digits declaring the inspection body. Example: DE – ÖKO – 013.

Also the place of production of the raw materials originating from agricultural production must be visible in the field of the logo up from the 1st of July. The correct denomination is „EU Agriculture“, or „non-EU-Agriculture“, or EU/non-EU Agriculture. If all raw materials have been produced in the same country it is also possible to declare this country. The indication of origin must be placed directly under the code number of the inspection body.

Example:



DE-ÖKO-013
EU-Landwirtschaft

The colour of reference – a light green - is exactly defined. Some deviations in colour are allowed. To visibly distinct the logo from the packaging background it is possible to outline the contours of the logo's field. The logo must comply with a certain minimum size and be placed well visibly on the product. Also the relation of height and width is exactly defined.

The transition period for conversion to the new logo accounts for two years. Products which have been produced and packed before the 1st of July, 2010 can still be sold and marketed. Packaging materials which have been produced before the 1st of July still are allowed to be employed until the 1st of July, 2010.

Link for further information: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/logo_de

Author: Annika Murrweiss, EkoConnect, translation from German: Inka Sachse, EkoConnect

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3. Organic food at schools: a way to educating tomorrow's consumers

Public and private initiatives to increase consciousness about healthy food produced in an environmentally friendly way may be especially effective when targeted at young people. Initiatives and projects have been introduced in many countries . Organic public catering should be part of education.

Young people are the future daily food shoppers. However, most children and their parents, as well as consumers in general, lack information and education about nutrition. There is no better place to start educating our future adults than at school. Organic public catering stresses the relation between health, education and nutrition by allowing more conscious choices. It is easily combined with educational concepts about organic and healthy food.



Source: ©BLE, Bonn/Photo: Thomas Stephan

Italy : In Italy School meals are deliberately utilised to create experiential and communicative situations about local culinary traditions and food quality. Political support is crucial: In Italy, the most important players in promoting the use of organic ingredients in school meals are on the political level, since organic ingredients are mentioned in laws (Nielsen/Christensen, Modena 2008).

http://orgprints.org/15203/1/OWC_Modena_2008_iPOPY_WS_proceedings_Strassner_et_al_CORE_series.pdf

Czech Republic: The Czech project Bioškoly (Organic Schools Project) is aimed at bringing more organic food into schools through the setting-up of a distribution network and the training of school management staff. Raising consciousness and showing that using organic food is feasible from an economical aspect are the main goals of the initiative focusing on 62 school cafeterias. Czech website: www.countrylife.cz/bioskoly

Britain: The Food for Life catering mark is a Soil Association accreditation scheme and aims at food education on top of just the use of organic ingredients: Firstly, holding cooking lessons at school; secondly, changing young consumers' perception and participation and fostering awareness of animal welfare issues by initiating visits to farms and showing where food comes from; finally, growing vegetables in the school garden or on educative farms. www.foodforlife.org.uk

Germany: The Fritz-Winter comprehensive school in Germany won the prize for health support and prevention out of 400 competitors for their sustainable concept: Offering social and sports possibilities and an organic school canteen buffet with free meal choice. Pupils are educated in social competencies like conflict mediation, communication and relaxation techniques, as well as about healthy nutrition. The 100% organic food and the Mensa concept is provided by an organic caterer. Studies of the effects of eating this kind of food in comparison to fast food showed a significant increase of concentration and memory ability in the afternoons. Pupils have regular shifts in helping with and surveying the daily activities in the canteen, which gives them a sense of responsibility and identification with the daily school meal. The project website in German language: www.bildung-isst-gut.de

Other initiative examples for increasing awareness and involving children and families in augmenting organic food in school meals: cooking lessons for children and parents, organic meals only with local products ("zero kilometres") (Italy), VIP Chefs teach primary school classes how to cook with organic ingredients (Germany). www.oekolandbau.de/verbraucher/erleben/bio-erleben-2010

Authors: Christoph Arndt and Inka Sachse, EkoConnect

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4. Pedagogical farms: more health and joy for children

The rapidly changing environment and western life style cause an increasing number of health diagnoses in children. Farms represent a pedagogical resource which can enhance health and nutrition and provide learning through direct hands-on experience.

Both children and youth have increasingly sedentary lifestyles. Research done in Germany with 12 to 15 year olds confirms that between 2002 and 2005, there was a radical decrease in such activities as bicycling (from 71% to 52%), climbing trees (from 46% to 32%) and taking a walk (from 30% to 17%) (Brämer, 2006). This problem of reduced activity is not reversed with one additional lesson per week in physical education at school. Organic children farms promote an active lifestyle and develop healthy food habits.



Photo: Katya Bykova, Eco-village Auterwitz, Germany

Life on a working farm helps to open children's eyes to the wonders and possibilities of the natural world and their own potential. Usually one of the main missions is to show children where their food comes from and to educate them about ecology. Kids are taught the basics of caring for farm animals and organic gardening. They learn how a seed can sprout and grow into a nutritious and delicious vegetable; when and how to plant it. Children participate in farm chores such as weeding, composting, harvesting, collecting eggs, feeding the pigs, and planting seedlings. Working together, they gain experience from whole processes and feel themselves as important contributors to meaningful daily tasks. Through creative play and exploration, children develop a connection with the land and an appreciation for growing their own food. There is also an opportunity to try different forms of crafts and arts: singing, drawing, binding of wreaths, working with wood. Children can learn how to make corn stock dolls, nature journals, vegetable stamps, etc...

In some countries, farm-school projects are established. Their goal is that the activities on the farm become an integrated part of the life and learning at the school. They should not be in addition to the other things the pupils normally do. Through sowing, weeding and harvesting in the garden, learning about living organisms can make science lessons more relevant. Taking care of rabbits gives food for thought about cycles of life which can be a motivation factor in studying biology and the environment.

Pedagogical farms are getting more and more popular all around Europe. In Norway, the University of Life Sciences offers the course „The Farm as a Pedagogical Resource“ which is an essential part of the programme „Living Learning“. (www.livinglearning.org). In Germany, a number of farms host hundreds of children from different countries every year (www.auterwitz.de, www.godewin.de, www.lernerlebnis-bauernhof.de). This resource will help you to find a farm for your children in your region: www.lernenaufdembauernhof.de.

Author: Katya Bykova, EkoConnect

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5. Regulations regarding animal husbandry in organic agriculture – interim rules to be gradually phased out

The EU organic regulations which went into effect on January 1, 2009 include restrictions on animal husbandry practices and housing conditions. The following are the deadlines by which producers have to comply with the new laws:

Tethering Cattle in Organic Agriculture – The law prohibits tethering or isolation of livestock, except if justified for safety, welfare, or veterinary reasons. However, in stables that have been constructed before August 24, 2000, cattle are allowed to be kept tethered until December 31, 2013, only if there is an official approval of the competent authorities. Such approval will only be granted for reasons related to individual caretaking of the animals, and providing sufficient run and litter. Temporary tethering in “smallholdings” will also be allowed after 2013, for reasons related to providing summer pasture or a winter run for twice a week. The definition of “smallholding” is not defined by the EU law, but will be defined individually by each member state. Until January 1, 2011, a final fattening phase, in which the animals are kept indoors, is allowed for cattle, pigs and sheep. However, the animals may only be kept indoors for the greater of 1/5 of their lifetime duration, or 3 months. Beginning January 1st, 2011, this type of final fattening will be forbidden.



Photo: Lars Sundstrom. Sweden

Physical Interventions - Physical interventions on the animal have been further limited by the new regulation and are no longer allowed to be executed as a routine procedure. Interventions are subject to approval, and are only allowed in individual cases under the condition of anesthetization and/or other methods of painkilling, and if the animal is of the adequate age.

Castrations of Piglets - Castration of piglets without anesthetization or painkillers will be prohibited after December 31, 2011. Studies show that castrations which are conducted with painkillers but without anesthetization can lead to stress and pain during the castration, and to pain, suffering, and behavioural disturbances after the intervention. Boar fattening can be an alternative to that. However, in many countries boar pork is difficult to market. Studies show that castrations which are conducted with painkillers but without anesthetization can lead to stress and pain during the castration, and to pain, suffering and behavioural disturbances after the intervention. Remains to hope that until the complete ban of castrations without anesthetisation in the end of 2011, practically applicable methods for the castration of piglets will be available, which are ethically and economically convincing and deliver the desired meat quality.

Other Interventions - Other interventions such as dehorning of cattle or clipping off teeth are only allowed in individual cases and only if there is official approval by the authorities, which would likely only be granted for health and safety reasons, or if the intervention serves the well-being or health improvement of the animal.

Feeding - Beginning January 1st, 2012, no conventional feedstuffs may be used for monogastric animals, which is currently the case for ruminants. Feeding monogastric animals 100% organic feedstock still is a considerable challenge for the ration planning and purchase of animal feed, as pigs or poultry need to be supplied with high quality protein compositions. To be able to cover current needs, certain protein feeds from conventional agriculture are necessary because there is not enough availability of such feeds from organic production. The cultivation of organic soybeans, organic oil seed press cake and milk powder extract offer alternatives.

Author: Annika Murrweiss, EkoConnect, translation from German: Inka Sachse, EkoConnect

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6. Hungary: expert for producing organic delicatessen

Hungarian food manufacturers have introduced a wide range of organic foods – often high-quality delicatessen which are mostly sold domestically, especially in health stores. However, there could be soon an increased demand in neighbouring European countries for Hungarian organic food products.

Hungarian food items have had a strong reputation in Europe for many years. They include sun-ripened vegetables such as peppers and tomatoes as well as pickled and spicy delicatessen. Hungarian wine also carries a good reputation for its quality. Even products of non-Hungarian origin make use of the wording 'Hungarian style' as a quality seal. This at least is the picture in the conventional food sector.



Photo: Christoph Arndt, EkoConnect

In the field of organic food, Hungary has the third largest market volume in Central and Eastern Europe – following the Czech Republic and Poland. With thousands of small health shops, wide assortments are often available and about half of the organic food sold in Hungary is imported. Do Hungarian organic products also find a market beyond borders? In the shelves of organic food stores shops in Germany, the brand Tarpa has already been present for a while. Tarpa, a manufacturer of jams and vegetable pastes, does most of its turnover on the German and the UK market. In addition, in recent years, several producers of organic vegetable and fruit products have emerged who successfully produce vegetarian organic food: BioBerta and Virágoskút (spices, vegetables pastes, jams, juices), Vitafood (pepper and tomato pastes), Sarkpont (chestnut products), Régimódi (jams), Rege and Vitamor (fruit preserves), Solio (exclusive oils such as pumpkin seed oil), Rédei (pastas) and BioHungaricum (frozen vegetables) – to name the major ones. However, most of these products have not been exported so far and supply only the Hungarian specialist health food sector. Only Virágoskút, Rédei and Vitafood market their products through conventional retail chains.

Hungarian organic products owe their high quality to the favourable climate with plenty of sunshine during growing season: fruit and vegetables from Hungary are sun-ripened and distinguished by an excellent taste. With improving the distribution logistics, many of these products will eventually find the demand they deserve also outside Hungary.

Author: Bianca Lieske, EkoConnect

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7. Organic starch – an opportunity for Baltic Potato farmers

Producing attractive, high-quality organic potatoes for consumption can be a big challenge for potato growers. Should they not have the best natural conditions, or the machinery for sorting and packing, as well as adequate storage, there is another solution: Organic potatoes for the starch industry are somewhat easier to produce and they do not need to be sorted or stored. A Latvian starch processor takes them directly from the field.

During the EkoConnect seminar “Organic potatoes, an opportunity for Eastern Europe”, in Latvia last July, all aspects of potato production and processing, from the field to the table, were discussed. For the Baltic countries the possibility to produce potatoes for the starch industry was especially interesting, because the Latvian processor “Aloja Starkelsen” (now owned by Swedish Culinar, which is part of Lyckeby Group) is looking for more organic producer. At the seminar the companies’ director, Mr. Andrejs Hansons and Mrs. Aiga Kraukle, leading Agronomist and marketing manager, showed the special requirements and possibilities of producing starch potatoes.



Photo: Katva Bvkova.

For growing organic starch potatoes, the requirements to the soil and climate are quite similar to those for growing consumption potatoes. Light soil types with rather acid pH (5.5-6.5) are required, and the soil needs to be well-prepared, without stones and clusters. An average 17-18° C daily temperature, and medium moisture conditions or irrigation are necessary. With regards to fertilization, starch potatoes need more phosphor and less nitrogen than consumption potatoes. Late blight-resistant varieties with high starch content and high yields are needed, such as KURAS (Agrico, Netherlands), Ando (Estonia), Magnat (from the breeding company Norika), Imanta (Priekuli Institute, Latvia) and Maret (Jogeva, Estonia).

The quality requirements for starch potatoes are not quite as high as for consumption potatoes with regards to size, dirt content, green potatoes, and frost damage. 5 t of potatoes yield 1 t of starch, (by 17 % starch content). The potato harvest is contracted in advance and fetched from the field by the buyer. A sample of around 20 kg is taken from every truck for analysis of dirt and starch content. Potatoes contain about 20% starch and there is a long procedure of washing, rasping, centrifugation, juice separation, filtration and drying to obtain starch powder. Side-products of starch production are potato pulp, which can be used as animal feed with good storage conditions for winter time, and potato juice, which can be used as a fertilizer for meadows and pastures. Organic starch has a rather yellowish colour in comparison to conventional starch, because no bleaching methods can be applied.

The payment depends on the potato underwater weight (at least 5050 g of clean potato weighed under water, according to EU regulation Nr.2235/2003). Profitability starts from around 14 t/ha yield in organic agriculture. There is a bonus for organic products, which is 10 times as high as for conventional potato: 142 € in autumn and 167 € in spring per t of obtained starch. The amount of the bonus was a big discussion point among the participants of the seminar, but Mr. Hansons brought it to the point: “All you need to do is harvest. You don’t need to transport and to clean, store and pack the potatoes. We therefore think we can offer a good service and pay an appropriate bonus.”

Author: Inka Sachse, EkoConnect

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8. Building strong links between organic rural producers and urban centres through direct marketing

Nowadays producers have to decide how much money and work they can invest into the marketing of their products. Having their own organic farm shop is not everybody’s favourite solution, and delivering to bigger stores often means considerably less profit. So what opportunities does direct marketing offer?



Photo: Robert Linder

Sale to restaurants and cafés: highest quality products are needed for this clientele. Farmers should check in advance if they can meet these requirements. However, if the offered quality is convincing and the product is available on a regular basis, a stable relationship for a valuable price can be established.

Institutional catering such as school and university cafeterias, nurseries, and homes for elderly people offer a possibility of selling fresh products in large quantities. Once established, it is easy to communicate to the final customer that this product is local and organic.

Depending on the political support and school system, public catering can considerably enhance organic consumption, Italy is a prime example of this. In schools, organic food is easier to introduce if school meals for all children are guaranteed by national regulation, as is the case in Italy. This is more difficult if lunch boxes are common, or children go home for lunch.

Quite popular in cities of east and west are so-called box schemes: Customers can order their fresh fruit and veggies directly at the growers website, who will pack the box according to the customer's needs and deliver it once a week to their doors, or to a central meeting point in town. Box schemes often supplement their own offerings with exotic fruits or products from cooperating farmers to make their range more attractive.

A Latvian box scheme offered a community building incentive where members pay around 5 Ls (7 €) per week for the delivery service, and in addition help out on the farm for about two days per year. It was unclear if this really took work off the farmer, but it sure is fun and leads to a personal commitment of the customers to the delivering farm!

Due to their customers increased interest in fresh organic vegetables, a couple of organic growers from the Czech Republic are specializing in sending their products to customers in the entire country via surface post. A particular emphasis is given on customers who have some kind of special diet, and additional information like recipes and explanations of the nutritional aspects of the produce are added to each parcel.

There are also vegetable self-harvesting projects in which the farmers rent out readily prepared vegetable plots to customers who can harvest all season long. This can be easily combined with the sale of other fresh products, such as meat, such as seen in the outskirts of urban centres in Austria and Germany. You can find the details in our newsletter nr. 26 of May 2010 in the Article: "[Grow Your Own – Fresh organic vegetables throughout the season](#)".

If there are stable products like carrots, apples, potatoes or flowers on sale, in a rural location, it is possible to place a bag and a little cash box which cannot be easily removed on a self service desk at the street. It will not bring a lot of money but costs very little in labour.

Vending machines are another option for marketing Milk or other produce. The refrigeration machine can be placed anywhere in urban centres and contain local farmer's products, such as bottles with milk, containers with eggs, or potato bags. Customers use it like any other vending machine. An example can be found at www.brunimat.ch

Author: Inka Sachse, EkoConnect

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9. Annual report Avalon

We are happy to inform you that the annual report over 2009 is now available on the Avalon website.

In the foreword of this report we mention our positive attitude towards new alliances. These alliances have resulted in two beautiful projects: "The New Thracian Gold Project" in Bulgaria and the "Farming and Livelihood Improvement Programme" in Ghana. For both projects we have interviewed the people in these countries and asked about the effects of the project on their personal life. Curious? Go to our website (news section) and download the report.

Avalon members can also visit our website for more news: we have recently placed several interesting new articles on organic farming (in close cooperation with EkoConnect). Please go to www.avalon.nl >network > extranet and learn more about new insights on several topics related to organic farming

Author: Linda Huisman,

10. Open Conference Avalon: Greening the CAP

From 12 to 14 November 2010 Avalon will be organising an international event in Slovenia. This years theme will be: **How can we green the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)?**

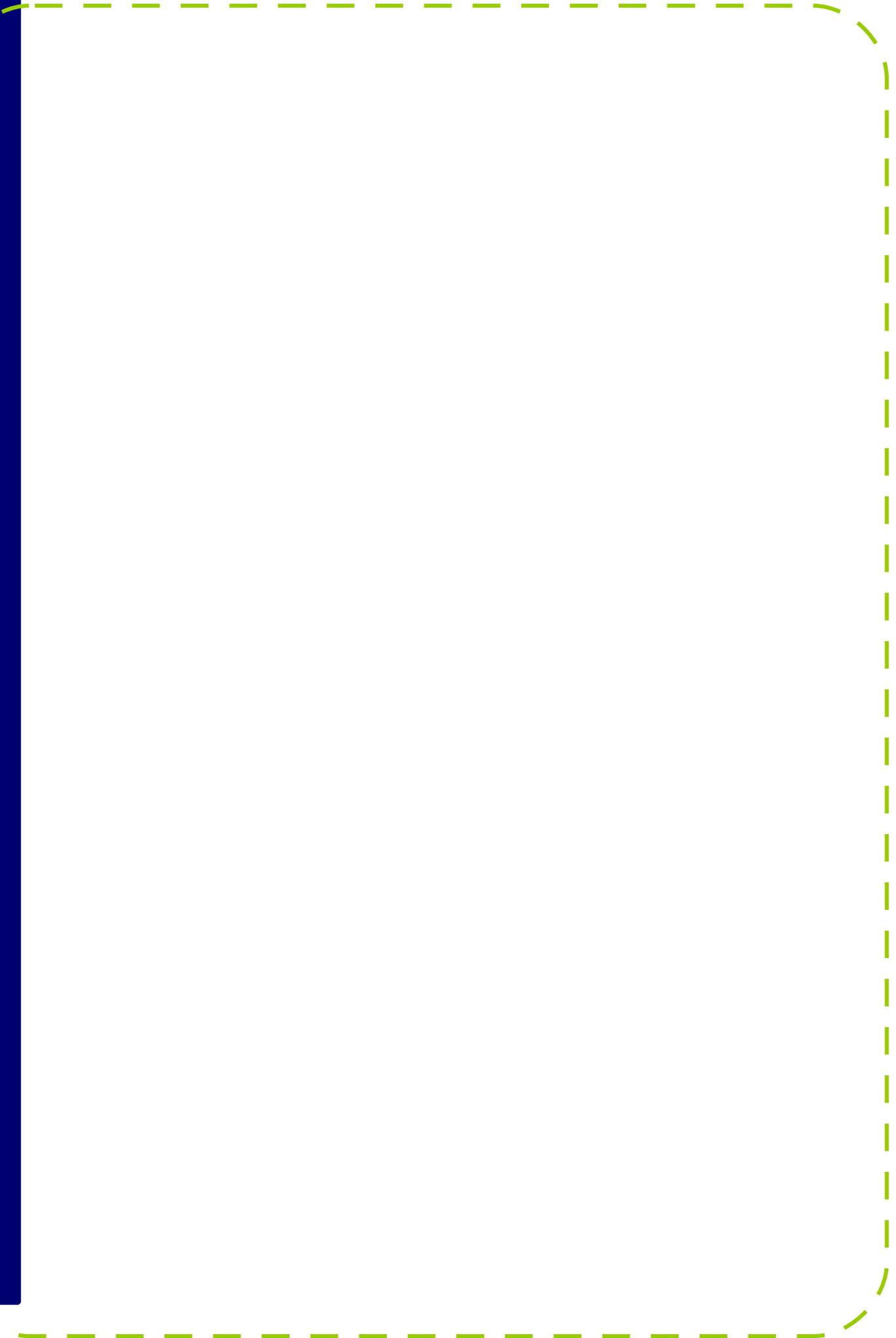
A contribution to the dialogue based on the views from the New Member States and countries aspiring to EU membership For various administrative, technical, environmental/ecological, historical and other reasons – the existing CAP measures and procedures aimed at greening European agriculture do not necessarily benefit the New Member States and their environment. This problem has been recognised at various occasions, but it doesn't seem to have been sufficiently addressed and discussed. The conference will therefore focus on the question: how to improve the existing efforts to green the CAP, and adjust it to the real needs of the New Member States and non-EU countries aspiring to EU membership. The issue will be discussed and analysed with the relevant GO, NGO, academia, business and other representatives from the Old and New Member States, as well as countries aspiring to EU membership.

Author: Linda Huisman, Avalon

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11. Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Place	Topic	Link/Contact
29.09.- 02.10. 2010	BioBalkan Expo Fair	Belgrade, Serbia	International Organic Foods Pro- cessing Machinery and Equipment Trade Fair	www.alexpo.co.rs/bio10.htm
07.10.- 10.10. 2010	41st Nature- Health Fair	Ljubljana, Slovenia	Thems of the Fair are: nutrition, wellness and exercise, eco-home, environment	en.gr-sejem.si/fairs/calendar-of-fairs/nature-health/
13.10.- 19.10. 2010	Seminar: "Direct marketing of organic products"	Dresden, Germany	Seminar on topics of direct market- ing in organic farming. Seminar with farm visits and visit of organic fair in Hannover – booked out.	www.ekoconnect.org
15.10.- 17.10. 2010	Natura Food	Lodz, Poland	The fair will be accompanied by con- ferences, presentations, seminars (including the nature B2B), culinary demonstrations and competitions	www.naturafood.pl
12.11.- 14.11. 2010	Avalon Open Con- ference	Slovenia	The theme of the conference will be "How can we green the Common Agricultural Policy?"	http://avalon.nl/data/asp/pagina.asp?volgnr=377&subject=agenda&land=uk
22.11.- 23.11. 2010	Organic Romania	Romania, Sibiu	High professional meeting for traders, processors, famers and or- ganisations who work with organic food, non-food and commodities.	http://www.ekoconnect.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=110&lang=english
18.05.- 20.05. 2010	Confer- ence "Or- ganic Food Quality and Health Research"	Prague, Czech Republic	The first International Conference will focus on quality and safety of or- ganic plant and animal products, im- pact of organic food on humans and animals, health concepts, etc.	www.fqh2011.org



Did you enjoy this information letter?

If yes, please be sure to recommend it to your friends and colleagues. But if you have any comments, critics or other ideas for improvement please send an email to: Linda.huisman@avalon.nl

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

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). 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



In Partnership with Avalon under the Network programme 2010 financed by DG Environment Life +