

Press Release

Improving the Scope and Quality of Organic Market Data

Final recommendations of the European EISfOM project now available

(Aberystwyth, September 4, 2006) The European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming addresses the need for better market data on organic farming. Recommendations related to the collection of such data have now been published by the EU-funded European Information System for Organic Markets (EISfOM) project.

The European market for organic products is developing fast, with more and more farmland being converted to organic production. Organic farming statistics are, however, poorly developed or non-existent in many countries. There is only limited international collaboration and harmonisation. Detailed and reliable market information is urgently needed as a decision tool, for example by producers to assess the costs of conversion, by market actors to achieve transparent price setting, by control bodies and authorities to estimate output levels for fraud prevention, by policy-makers to set levels for financial support and by researchers to project future trends.

The EISfOM project has addressed the needs of all these groups covering issues related to data collection at production, trade and consumer levels. It also reviewed the state of organic data collection in 32 countries, identified harmonisation opportunities and evaluated innovative national level pilot projects.

"We found that the level of investment in statistics and market information does not reflect the size of this growing sector", says project coordinator Nicolas Lampkin from the University of Wales. "Currently more than six million hectares are managed organically, thus representing four percent of the European Union's agricultural land. European Consumers are spending up to €15 billion on organic food

European Information System
for Organic Markets (EISfOM)

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per year, and demand is growing up to ten per cent annually. This is equivalent to the output of some of the smaller EU member states, but the investment in organic market data does not come close to matching the food and agriculture statistics efforts of these countries. There is a need for increased investment at EU and national government level, but also by the private sector companies with an interest in developing the organic market.”

Among the EISfOM recommendations are that relevant bodies of the European Commission like Eurostat - the EU's statistical office - should play a central role in this data collection process, and that there should be a close cooperation between the European Commission and national official agencies, researchers and stakeholders of the organic sector.

The recommendations are based on the work of the project group who consulted the European organic sector extensively during the project's lifetime. Two European seminars in Berlin and Brussels provided opportunities for intensive dialogue. Both seminars are documented in published proceedings. The final recommendations of the project have now also been made available. All publications can be downloaded from the EISfOM internet site which provides also access to the latest statistical data on organic farming in Europe.

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Publications

Rippin, Markus; Vitulano, Susanna; Zanolli, Raffaele and Lampkin, Nicolas (2006) Synthesis and final recommendations on the development of a European Information System for Organic Markets. = Deliverable D6 of the European Project EISfOM QLK5-2002-02400. Report, Institute of Rural Sciences, University of Wales

Rippin, Markus; Willer, Helga; Lampkin, Nicolas and Vaughan, Alison, Eds. (2006) Towards a European Framework for Organic Market Information. Proceedings of the

Second EISfOM European Seminar, Brussels, November 10 & 11, 2005.
Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, Frick, Switzerland.

The publications can be downloaded at the EISfOM website at
<http://www.eisfom.org/publications/index.html>.

A printed version of the proceedings can be ordered from the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, Ackerstrasse, CH-5070 Frick, Tel. +41 62 865 7272, Fax +41 62 865 7273 or from the FiBL-Shop at a cost of 20 Euro. The order number is 1339.

Links

Homepage of the EISfOM project
www.eisfom.org

Publications of the EISfOM project
<http://www.eisfom.org/publications/index.html>.and
<http://orgprints.org/view/projects/eu-eisfom.html>

Eurostat Homepage
<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>

European Commission
Homepage European Action Plan for Organic Food and Farming
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/organic/plan/index_en.htm

Editorial Note

EISFOM is an EU-funded Concerted Action whose aim is to develop a framework for reporting valid and reliable production and market data on the European organic sector, in order to meet the needs of policy makers, farmers, processors, wholesalers and other actors involved in organic markets. It has been formed by a network of researchers from universities, research institutes and market data collection agencies in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, Switzerland, who have been researching and publishing organic farming statistics for many years. The project is co-ordinated by the University of Wales in Aberystwyth and will run from 2003 to 2005. Further information on the partnership and objectives of the project can be found at www.eisfom.org. Interested individuals can request to be registered as members enabling access to working documents and other unpublished project outputs.

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