
Dear ISOFAR - Members,

A happy, healthy, successful and overall peaceful year 2007 to all of you!

Up to now, Organic Agriculture research has been dominated by institutions in Central Europe, North America and Australia. For further development of scientifically based Organic Agriculture, the implementation of research projects and education in the Southern Hemisphere especially is necessary. The books presented with this newsletter cover these areas in outlining the global perspective of Organic Agriculture. What role might ISOFAR play regarding one of its main goals, the support of scientific work in the tropics and the subtropics? As mentioned in the last newsletter, personally I consider the scientific book series on OA in tropical and sub-tropical regions – the first volume is currently in planning – to be an important and necessary contribution to the successful development of OA in these countries.

Currently, the ISOFAR office is trying to record the expertise of all its active members. All members are invited to communicate their main research and fields of interest to the “headquarters”. This will enable us to assign inquiries about specific problems that arrive at the office to corresponding experts of our Society. In this way, suggestions can easily be reported to the inquirers. It goes without saying that this procedure is dependent on the willing contribution of the experts.

How will scientific work be developed from such a system? Basically there are two options.

i.: a solution for a specific problem is already available, but is not known to the inquirer. In that case an ordinary advisory letter, forwarded by the corresponding experts, is considered sufficient.

ii.: there is no solution for the problem in question and research is required. In that case relevant experts will be invited by ISOFAR to prepare a short expert report that includes proposals for a suitable research approach, an estimation of the chances for funding, and the records of potential donor organisations, if applicable. Based on this expertise, key persons interested in the research will have to do their job. *Nota bene*, draught horses are mainly those who are confronted with the problem and secondarily those potentially providing expertise and infrastructure.

Alternatively, if funding chances are considered low, internal calls within ISOFAR for benevolent support might be launched.

Clearly, for this course of action the relevant period of time is medium- to long-term, as with nearly all of ISOFAR`s activities.

With warm personal regards,

Ulrich Köpke

(President ISOFAR)

Report from ISOFAR Working Group activities

▪ Short report from the working group LTE, Long-term Experiments

In May 2006 ISOFAR published the 1st volume of its Scientific Series, entitled: Long-term Field Experiments in Organic Farming. The book describes 12 experiments conducted in Germany, the USA, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria and Israel. Most of the editors of this book and of the contributors are members of the LTE working group. Through the book a number of researchers in different countries became aware of the working group and joined it in the past several months. Today, the group has about 45 members representing 28 experiments and farm studies in 13 countries. A number of experiments are ready to be described and summarized in a second volume. In addition to publishing, the LTE group is busy with some tasks that were already planned last year, e.g. to demonstrate better the importance and benefits of long-term experiments for research, farming practice and politics, to document key papers of the experiments in the organic reprints database, and to evaluate better the present experiments by horizontal comparisons. In 2006, there were two group meetings as side-events of international conferences, in July at the 18th World Congress of Soil Science (Philadelphia) and in September at the AAB-Conference (Association of Applied Biologists) "What will organic farming deliver?" (Edinburgh). The meetings were very good for communicating easily, for a general exchange and for getting to know each other better. Nevertheless, in-person meetings are too infrequent and rather expensive. Hence, e-mail communication will remain the most important way of contact to carry on our tasks.

Contact: Dr. Joachim Raupp, IBDF Darmstadt (Germany), raupp@ibdf.de
See also: book review p. 11

▪ Report from the Section 5 (Soil Fertility - SOF):

During the Adelaide Conference, ISOFAR Section 5 (Soil Fertility - SOF) decided to organize an ISOFAR Conference on Soil Fertility Management in Nov 2007. Thanks to all participants of section 5 for the fruitful meeting and cooperative support.

Section Head, Prof. Dr. Sang Mok Sohn outlined the draft program and proposals for funding during the last ISOFAR Board Meeting held on June 1, 2006 in Odense / Denmark. The proposal was accepted by all ISOFAR Board Members.

Prof. Sohn is now undertaking an initiative to discuss the details of the ISOFAR Conference on Soil Fertility Management with three regional governments. A final decision on the conference location is expected within the next week.

Contact: Prof. Dr. Sang Mok Sohn, Dan Kook University, Cheonan (Rep. Of Korea), smsohn@dku.edu

▪ **Working group on 'International trade or local consumption'?**

Since the beginning of IFOAM, disagreement has existed within Organic Agriculture about the role of international trade/ domestic consumption. Calls about restricting international trade of organic products are heard especially from European countries. Some come from producers and researchers (see, for example, some of the papers presented at the Conference in Odense in May 2006, <http://www.organic-revision.org/dissim/con06/index.html#Anchor-Ho-34203>).

Others come in the form of policies designed to implement these notions, if not on a national level then on a private (supermarket) level. All this in the name of the principles of Organic Agriculture.

Others, mainly outside of Europe, see the principles of Organic Agriculture leading in a different direction, i.e. they would say that domestic consumption can lead to practices not optimal for the environment, and that international trade has a role to play in decreasing environmental problems caused by agriculture (see, for example, <http://www.elspl.com.au/abstracts/abstract-a15.htm>).

If there is an interest in having discussions about the role of international trade vs. domestic consumption, we could institute an ISO FAR working group or discussion group.

In the short-run, I for one would like to get some idea of people who are either working on these issues or have an interest in, and knowledge about them. In the longer run, we could perhaps put significant articles on the web and discuss their merits or demerits. I am not clear about what form such a discussion would take, but the level of interest would probably indicate how it could best be tackled.

For now, let me know of your interest, and what you see as a good way to proceed with this working group.

Contact: Dr. Els Wynen, Eco Landuse Systems Pty Ltd, PO Box 1121, Belconnen 2616, Canberra, ACT Australia, els.wynen@elspl.com.au

Events

▪ **20-23 March 2007, 9th Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture, University of Hohenheim, Germany.**

The 9th Scientific Conference of the German Speaking Countries "Wissenschaftstagung zum Ökologischen Landbau" will take place March 20-23, 2007. This conference is supported by ISO FAR.

The conference language is German. There will, however, be also sessions in English since many foreign students and researchers are working at the University of Hohenheim due to the new study program on Organic Food Chain Management and the university's emphasis on international research.

Conference Homepage www.wissenschaftstagung.de

- **20-23 March 2007, 3rd International QLIF Congress "Improving Sustainability in Organic and Low Input Food Production Systems" at the University of Hohenheim, Germany**

The 2007 congress is organised by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture - FiBL in cooperation with the University of Hohenheim. The Congress is supported by ISO FAR.

Congress Homepage www.qlif.org/congress2007

- **April 24, 2007: 2nd International Symposium on organic viticulture: „Regulations for organic enology“ in Stuttgart/Germany**

The German Organic Winegrowers Association (ECOVIN) and the German Winegrowers Association (DWV) are jointly organising the 2nd International Symposium on Organic Viticulture during the Intervitis Interfructa 2007.

Links:

Publications on Organic Wine in the Organic Eprints Archive

Contact:

Deutscher Weinbauverband e.V. (DWV) · Heussallee 26 · D-53113 Bonn · Germany, Clemens von Eltz (DWV), Fon +49 228 94 93 25-16, Fa: +49 228 94 93 25-23

- **26-29 June 2007. Seminar on " Challenges and limitations in Organic Farming", NJF 3rd Congress 2007:**

The seminar takes place in Copenhagen. The topic deals with some of the fundamental challenges in Organic Farming. The organic farming practices are governed by regulations for the specific country and by the growing conditions. The main aim in Organic Farming research is to improve the sustainability with respect to production, environmental effects, economy, and human and animal welfare. However, these intentions may counteract each other and the regulations may in some cases impede improvements of the sustainability. Therefore, all improvements within single disciplines must be evaluated in a whole-system and long-term context, and the weak links must be identified to improve the sustainability.

Keynote speakers: Christine Watson, Crop & Soil Group, Scottish Agricultural College, and Stephen Roderick, Organic Studies Centre, Duchy College, UK

Homepage: <http://www.njf2007.dk/>

Announcements

- **First announcement on the Conference “Plant Breeding for Organic and Low-Input Farming systems: dealing with genotype-environment interaction”**

The Eucarpia Working Group Organic Plant breeding will hold a conference in Wageningen, The Netherlands on November 7-9, 2007 on Plant Breeding for organic and low-input farming systems with special emphasis on how to deal with genotype-environment interactions. This conference will be jointly organized by COST SUSVAR: WP1 genetics, ECO-PB, ISOFAR Section Plant Breeding & Seed Production and the Graduate School Production Ecology & Resource Conservation (PE&RC) of the Wageningen University.

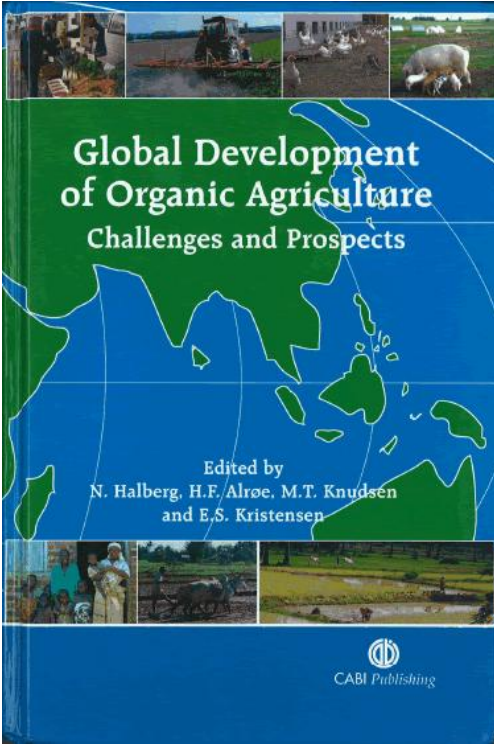
There will be a call for papers for oral and poster presentations. At the start of the conference an abstract book will be presented. Instead of proceedings the editors of Euphytica, a peer-reviewed journal on plant breeding, have offered the possibility of publishing a special issue on the outcome of this workshop and to publish 10-15 selected (peer-reviewed) papers in this issue.

Internet <http://www.eucarpia.org/> and <http://www.ecopb.org/>

Contact: Edith Lammerts van Bueren, Wageningen University & Research Centre, Plant Science Group, Room 2.178, P.O.Box 386, Droevendaalsesteeg 1, 6700 AJ Wageningen, The Netherlands: e.lammerts@louisbolk.nl

New Book Releases

▪



Main Description

Agriculture and food systems, including organic agriculture, are undergoing a technological and structural modernisation strongly influenced by growing globalisation. Organic agricultural movements can be seen as a tangible effort towards more sustainable development. However, there are large differences between, on the one hand, industrialised farming and consumption based on global food chains and, on the other, smallholder farmers and resource poor people primarily linked in local food markets in low-income countries.

This book provides an overview of the potential role of organic agriculture in a global perspective. The book discusses in-depth political ecology, ecological justice, ecological economics and free trade with new insights on the challenges for organic agriculture. This is followed by the potential role of organic agriculture for improving soil fertility, nutrient cycling and food security and reducing veterinary medicine use, together with discussions of research needs and the importance of non-certified organic agriculture.

Main Contents

- Global trends in agriculture and food systems, *M T Knudsen, N Halberg, J E Olesen, Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Denmark, J Byrne, I Venkatesh and N Toly, University of Delaware, USA*

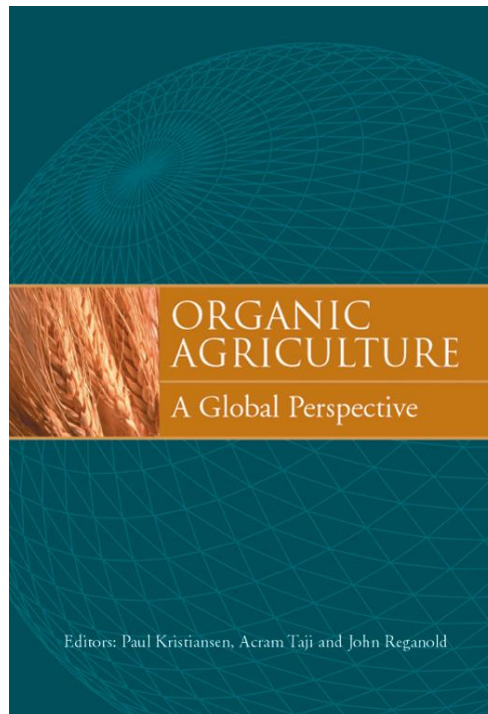
- Globalisation and sustainable development: a potential ecology strategy to realize ecological justice, *J Byrne, L Glover, University of Delaware, USA, and H F Alrøe*
- Organic agriculture and ecological justice: Ethics and practice, *H F Alrøe, J Byrne, and L Glover*
- Ecological Economics and organic farming, *P R Kledal, Danish Research Institute of Food Economics, C Kjeldsen, Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences, and K Refsgaard and P Söderbaum, Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Norway*
- Organic farming in a world of free trade, *C F Bach, Vejgaard, Denmark*
- Certified and non-certified Organic Farming in the developing world, *N Parrott, University of Wageningen, The Netherlands, J E Olesen, and H Høgh-Jensen, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Denmark*
- Possibilities for closing the urban rural nutrient cycles, *K Refsgaard, P D Jenssen, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway, and J Magid, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Denmark*
- Soil Fertility Depletion Sub-Saharan Africa: What is the Role of Organic Agriculture, *J Pender, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA, and O Mertz, University of Copenhagen, Denmark*
- Sustainable veterinary medical practices in organic farming: a global perspective, *M Vaarst, Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences, S Roderick, Duchy College, Cornwall, UK, D K Byarugaba, Makerere University, Uganda, S Kobayashi, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Denmark, C Rubaire-Akiiki, Makerere University, Uganda, and H Karreman, Pen Dutch Cow Care, USA*
- The impact of organic farming on food security in a regional and global perspective, *N Halberg, T B Sulser, IFPRI, USA, H Høgh-Jensen, M W Rosegrant, IFPRI, USA, and M T Knudsen*
- Towards a global research programme for organic food and farming, *H Egelyng, Danish Institute for International Studies, and H Høgh-Jensen*
- Synthesis: The potential of organic farming in a globalised world, *N Halberg*

Available at:

<http://www.cabi-publishing.org/Bookshop>

Global Development of Organic Agriculture: Challenges and Prospects by N Halberg, H F Alrøe, M T Knudsen, E S Kristensen April 2006

Hardback 9781845930783, £55.00 / \$100.00



Main Description

The book is a unique and timely science-based international work documenting current practices in Organic Agriculture and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses. For more than two decades, research into organic methods by mainstream researchers has generated a large body of information that can now be integrated and used for assessing the actual impacts of organic farming in a wide range of disciplines. The knowledge of selected international experts has been combined in one volume, providing a comprehensive review of Organic Farming globally.

All major aspects of organic agriculture are explored including: historical background and underlying principles, soil fertility management, crop and animal production, breeding strategies, crop protection, economics and marketing, standards and certification, environmental impacts and social responsibility, research, education and extension.

Researchers, teachers, extensionists, students, primary producers and others around the world who are interested in low-input, sustainable agriculture will find this book to be a valuable and reliable resource.

Features

- Presents a scientific analysis of organic farming practices
- Integrates production, economic and social issues
- Features an international team of contributors

Authors

Dr Paul Kristiansen currently teaches and researches agricultural systems at the University of New England, and has 15 years experience in organic farming in Australia. Professor Acram Taji has been involved in tertiary teaching and research in Australia, South Pacific, Sri Lanka, Japan and the USA and currently teaches plant sciences at the University of New England. Professor John Reganold has worked at Washington State University since 1983. He teaches soil science, organic agriculture and land use, and conducts research on the effects of organic and conventional farming systems on soil quality, productivity, crop performance, energy efficiency and environmental quality.

Available at:

<http://www.cabi-publishing.org/Bookshop>

Organic Agriculture A Global Perspective by P Kristiansen, A Taji, J Reganold July 2006

Hardback 9781845931698, £75.00 / \$120.00

New Journal launched

▪ Congratulations: Journal of Organic Systems (JOS) meets ISO FAR

Greeting of the President

International Society of Organic Agriculture Research , ISO FAR

Organic Federation of Australia, Annual Conference Dinner, Sydney, 22 July 2006

When being informed on the launch of JOS by ISO FAR board member Els Wynen during our last ISO FAR board meeting in Odense, Denmark in June this year, my spontaneous reaction was clear: on behalf of ISO FAR I would like to cordially congratulate JOS with the commencement of publishing articles on Organic Agriculture in Australia, Asia and the Pacific.

As we could experience with the first International Conference of ISOFAR held in Adelaide in September last year, there is still a strong dominance of European researchers representing more than 75 % of all papers. This fact reflects the history of Organic Agriculture research and underlines the necessity of one of ISOFAR's key aims, i.e to bring more scientists from other parts of the globe to the job. Thus, I very much hope that JOS will play a key role in increasing the generation and transmittance of knowledge on the fields of Organic Agriculture on the Southern hemisphere.

Specific sites and regions need individual solutions. Applied research arises out of the regional structures, focusing on on-site solutions, and is characterized by inter-, multi- and transdisciplinarity. The participation of all relevant stakeholders in the genesis of knowledge for the solutions of problems is indispensable. I very much hope that with the help of JOS we stepwise understand the systems approach of Organic Agriculture better and that JOS will deliver empirical knowledge, i.e. examples of applied practices how to handle the organic systems. Beyond and derived from that, improved worldwide scientific dialogue will enable researchers to apply a more holistic view on Agriculture. Promoting Organic Agriculture in the context of research cooperation between Southern and Northern countries is crucial for ISOFAR. The interdisciplinary approach will consequently be followed by participatory research, on-farm observations and stakeholder dialogue also in other parts of our globe.

Consequently, ISOFAR very much appreciates the aims of the new Journal. These aims fit to our own approach to orient scientific work more site specific and locally adapted. I personally consider JOS to become an important and necessary contribution to the successful development of Organic Agriculture worldwide. I'm sure that JOS can bring new scientific excellence into organic farming research while maintaining the roots of the organic idea and thus confirming ISOFAR's own aims.

Why should the editors not use the approved term 'supported by ISOFAR' ?

ISOFAR wishes the Journal of Organic systems all the best in its endeavours!

Ulrich Köpke

Membership services

▪ New payment modalities

Dear ISOFAR members,

Concerning the payment of ISOFAR membership fees, we would like to inform you about the following new option. In order to reduce the bank transfer costs for non-European members it has been decided that membership fees can be accumulated for three [two] years and be paid *ex post*:

three years for ISOFAR members of developing countries (15,-€ per year x 3 years = 45,- €) and

two years for ISOFAR members of countries in transition (50,- € per year x 2 years = 100,- €)

Of course, this change in procedure is not compulsory. If you wish you can continue to pay the membership fees every year.

Many thanks for supporting ISOFAR,

Christin Streichardt

(ISOFAR Office)

▪ Book review of ISOFAR Scientific Series, No. 1 - Long Term Field Experiments in Organic Farming

Excerpt from “Pflanzenbauwissenschaften”, 2/2006 (Volume 10), p. 91,

Author: Prof. Dr. O. Christen, University of Halle, Germany

“... Since the first such experiments have been established more than 160 years ago at Rothamsted Experimental Station in England the focus has shifted from simple comparisons between different fertilizer treatments to often very complex designs including e.g. crop rotations or tillage treatments. Recent surveys have revealed that in Germany alone currently more than 200 long-term field experiments are run by universities and various research institutions. Despite such a large number only very few experiments are dealing with Organic Agriculture, which is somewhat astonishing, since organic agriculture depends to a great extent on the maintenance of high soil fertility. ...”

“... In this collection some of the well known and good documented experiments like the DOK-trial in Switzerland as well as Rodales Farming Systems Trial in the US are included. Other chapters focus on much less known field trials or long-term monitoring approaches in organic farming. Some experiments have just been started and, however, do not qualify as long-term experiments at the moment, but might yield interesting results in the future. Given the financial constraints which often jeopardise the continuation of long-term field experiments it is extremely important to stress the importance for agronomy and soil

science. Given such a background the publication of ISO FAR is of relevance for all scientists interested in organic farming, agronomy, soil science and related environmental sciences. ...”

Citation

Raupp, Joachim, Carola Pekrun, Meike Oltmanns, Ulrich Köpke (Eds.)(2006): Long Term Field Experiments in Organic Farming. ISO FAR Scientific Series No 1. Verlag Dr. Köster, Berlin, Germany. ISBN-Nr. 3-89574-590-1

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