

New organic regulation: a milestone for organic production?

Brussels, 07/07/2008 – The IFOAM EU Group (1) welcomes the endorsement of the long awaited implementing rules for the new organic regulation (2) with mixed emotions. The endorsement of the implementing rules is a milestone in the revision of the organic regulation but the IFOAM EU Group remains concerned about the number of still untackled problems.

The IFOAM EU Group welcomes that the new regulation includes important definitions and clarifications, and appreciates that the Commission has taken on board a number of the issues pointed out by the IFOAM EU Group. These will facilitate the daily work for European organic farmers, processors and inspection bodies and ensure legal certainty for the organic operators.

“We acknowledge the step towards more transparency in the negotiations conducted by the Commission”, said Francis Blake, IFOAM EU Group president. “However, once again the needless pressure to complete the process within an unrealistic timescale made a sound stakeholder involvement impossible and has resulted in inconsistencies and impractical requirements that will haunt the sector into the future. We regret that we will have to start out with a set of rules that contains serious flaws already from the beginning. The very short time frame left for having the rules in place in the member states before January 2009 is of major concern for the sector.”

There is still work to be done on the more problematic areas such as poultry production, the reviewing of allowed inputs and the processing rules. “We find it a step backwards that the limits for manure input and stocking densities are less fixed now, with unclear consequences for the implementation on Member State level says Sabine Eigenschink, the IFOAM EU Group’s Regulation Expert.

In addition, the fiasco over the common EU logo remains a concern for the organic sector. The IFOAM EU Group deplores the confusion caused by the postponement of the articles relating to the implementation of the new logo. “The simplest and most popular approach would be for the Council to remove the mandatory obligation”, said Francis Blake.

The IFOAM EU will continue its close monitoring of the revision process and to contribute its expertise and the views of the sector. It will also continue to communicate on the topic to the European organic sector.



Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

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Notes

(1) The IFOAM EU Group represents the 330 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU, EFTA and the candidate countries. Member organisations include: consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.

(2) The Standing Committee on Organic Farming agreed on 2/07/2008 on the final implementing rules of the new organic regulation 834/2007. The implementing rules define in detail how to implement the new organic regulation 834/2007 which was decided last year by the Council after a long and controversial discussion.