

Press release / Media release

EU-CEE-OF^P

European Organic Farming Policy

Organic farming policies in Europe: What will the future hold?

Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and University of Wales jointly coordinate European Union project on "Further development of organic farming policies in Europe"

(Frick, Switzerland, 16.02.2004) Government support for organic agriculture has resulted in a steady increase since 1990 in the area of land farmed organically. But this growth trend has now slowed in many countries. Market growth has not kept pace with the expansion in production so organic farmers, like others, are having to cope with falling prices. Furthermore, political developments such as eastward European Union (EU) enlargement, negotiations on agriculture at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Luxembourg resolutions of the EU Council of Ministers are creating a fundamentally new agricultural policy environment. This presents major new challenges for organic agriculture.

What policies will enable the continued sustainable development of organic agriculture in the future? What policy instruments can be used to ensure balanced development of both supply and demand? How can social goals be integrated efficiently into organic farming policy?

These are the questions to be studied by scientists from Switzerland, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic taking part in the research project on "Further development of organic farming policies in Europe" (EU-CEE-OF^P). The project, supported by the EU Commission, is led by Dr. Matthias Stolze (FiBL Switzerland) and Dr. Nicolas Lampkin (University of Wales).

"A key strength of the project," according to Dr. Matthias Stolze of FiBL, "is that we do not confine ourselves to theory. Political actors at national and international level will be involved in the research work right from the outset." This coming spring, workshops on organic farming policy will be held in eleven European countries. Dr. Nicolas

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Lampkin emphasises: "This research project has come at exactly the right moment: Our findings can be applied directly to the drafting of the new EU Action Plan for organic agriculture."

Further information on the project and the project partners is available on the Internet at <http://www.irs.aber.ac.uk/EUCEEOF/>. The following project results will be published within the next 6 months:

- Documentation of organic agriculture policy in the EU and Switzerland
- Production and market data for the EU, Switzerland and the Central and Eastern European (CEE) accession countries
- Standards and certification in the CEE countries
- Development of the political institutions involved in organic farming policy.

For further information on the project contact:

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