

## **Organic certifiers and traders starts common approach to fight fraud at BioFach**

'Fraud in organic is alive nowadays, as it was in the past,' Georg Rösner, director of Georg Rösner Vertriebs-GMBH, opened his speech for 60 representatives of organic certifiers and trading companies, who came up to sign the code of conduct for organic. Both the certifiers and the trading and processing companies have worked out their Code of Conduct to assure organic integrity and quality throughout the whole chain. The Code of Conduct for certifiers, an initiative of the EOCC, is already signed by 20 certification bodies (16 in Europe, 2 in the USA, 1 in Argentina and 1 in Israel). The Code of Good Organic Practice for Trade and Processing is supported by the 500 members of Aoel (Germany), Organic-Finland, Probila (Belgium), Synabio (France) and VBP (Netherlands).

Georg Rösner, member of Aoel, was 30 years active in the trade of organic ingredients and experienced different fraud cases. 'The only way to exclude fraud fundamentally is sophisticated information exchange on a very detailed level between countries and certification bodies. And furthermore the responsibility of imported organic ingredients should be reconsidered. I am in favor of more responsibility for the exporting companies and the certifiers involved. In the actual situation all responsibility is on the side of the importing companies.'

Keith Ball (Soil Association) presented in name of the EOCC the 7 principles of the Code of Conduct for certification bodies: fairness, harmonization, management of clients, qualification, information, quality assurance and arbitration. The arbitration procedure will be set up the following months. The Code of Conduct can be signed by all certification bodies, not only the members of EOCC. Already different non-members of EOCC have signed the Code of Conduct.

Bavo van den Idsert (VBP Holland) presented in name of the EU Sector Group Organic Processing the 7 principles of the Code of Good Organic Practice for trade and processing:

1. **Social responsibility** and integrity throughout the whole chain
2. **Involvement** in their sector and development of organic projects
3. **Sustainable** pricing and relationships
4. **Transparency** throughout the entire chain of supply
5. **Open communication** in the chain and towards Certifying Bodies and Authorities
6. **Harmonization** of the organic system
7. **Quality Management** system to ensure the authenticity of organic products

He stressed that the objectives are only the start. 'The coming months the trading and processing associations from Belgium, Germany, France, Finland and The Netherlands will continue the process to establish a toolbox for each objective. And we invite the supporting companies to give input and ideas for the further elaboration of the Code. We want to present the complete Code with the practical toolboxes at the Sana fair in Bologna. At the same time we will continue the important dialogue with the Certifying Bodies, unifies in EOCC, and the authorities. From the point of view of many organic companies there can be a lot improved from the sides of the CB's and the authorities. We see important first steps taken, but it must continue.'

Chairman Bo van de Elzakker (Agro Eco Louis Bolk Institute) reminded that the Codes of Conduct are a result of the Anti Fraud Initiative which was taken by several stakeholders in 2006. 'The most important result is the dialogue that appeared between authorities, certifiers and trading companies to maintain organic quality and integrity. This process will continue and we probably again at the Sana in Bologna.'

*The results of the AFI are published on the website of Gfrs: [www.gfrs.de](http://www.gfrs.de)*

*For more info about EOCC and Code of Conduct for certifiers: [www.eocc.nu](http://www.eocc.nu)*

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