



BCS International Organic NEWS

Your Bio-Certification-Service 1/2008

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Foto: Peter Grosch, founder and general manager of BCS since 18 years

The editor's introduction

Dear friends and clients,

One thing is for sure: the organic market is booming as never before, and my most important concern is: Where are we going? Many people are asking if this kind of organic agriculture that is spreading around the world nowadays, still has to do with the motives from which it was born.

On one hand, the terms BIO, Organic or ECO have never been defined more precisely than now - so from this point of view all should be clear. But in reality this is not so! What had been thought and initiated by the organic pioneers underlies quite different criteria today.

Organic producers in many countries around the globe do not receive any governmental subsidies, while in others, this support is the motive number one to go organic. As a consequence, of course, they give it up as fast as they started, as soon as the subsidies are cancelled.

Like this, organic agriculture seems to degenerate to be the economically most interesting specialisation, just for a while, and this is certainly one of the biggest contradictions with the basic idea of sustainability and a holistic approach...

But there are other modern errors, too, just repeating the old ones: When it is for sure that the presence or absence of chemical residues can present important aspects for the control system or regarding the fulfilment of the organic standards, on the other hand this has never been a sufficiently significant base for distinguishing organic and conventional. Of course, in these times, where the majority of consumers are asking where the big increase of new organic food may come from, steadily more cases of residues must be alarming; nevertheless, being conscious of the results of all scientific investigation concerning differences in quality of organically and conventionally produced food of the last 35 years we should never lose the new approach of the EU-Regulation 2092/91 to control and certify the production system as such, and not the products. It looks like the new 'train' of classifying organic products, just falls back to the position that was overcome in 1991...: It's definitely time to reconsider, as it is clearly a deviation and a loss of this important new approach.

It should also be considered much more, in which ways the organic community can protect honest producers and convince consumers better: When it is known and even documented that certain products from some countries are doubtful concerning their organic characteristics, and when they even show the same problems of residues every year again and permanently, nobody should continue to import and wait until the next detected residue comes up! In these cases the international control

community must act, installing a mechanism that bans the 'dirty' origins that evidently are not trustworthy, consequently before they have a chance to appear on the market.

It doesn't very much look like the new EU-Regulation 834/2007 that partly is already in force, will be a more consequent filter: It looks more like the opposite! Principles like 'flexibility', potentially reaching down to the acceptance of the use of chemicals, are really not appropriate to convince us of more quality and needed restrictions, when labelling organic...

But, in spite of all, there are so many positive signals that we will not ignore them: It is definitely the big merit and success of the organic movement that around the globe to go organic has become a truly viable alternative for so many hundreds of thousands of farmers! It is simply good news that so many more consumers want to have these products, and that they can get them! The small group of 'organic believers', later mixed with people who more joined for fashion motives, has definitely become a stable trend, and a solid element of the market.

We all know what organic agriculture means and want to do more than just growing healthy food, and as a matter of fact, this is the case: Going organic means environmental protection, it contributes to social justice and to equal distribution among the stakeholders. On this field, the holistic approach is not always met as well, but it continues to function.

We at BCS are dedicating to all the same values that we always were working for, and we think that we continue to grow a world level due to this credibility and continuity.

In case you would like to know more details, **we will be happy to welcome you at BIOFACH, hall 3, booth 112!**

Peter Grosch

Del editor

Estimados amigos y clientes,

Es cierto: Tenemos un BOOM en el mercado orgánico, y la pregunta más importante es, para donde vamos? Hay mucha gente que pregunta si este tipo actual de Agricultura Orgánica todavía tiene que ver con los mismos motivos de los cuales había surgido.

Por un lado, los términos ECO o BIO se definieron de la forma más precisa que nunca, así que de este punto de vista todo debería ser claro. Pero en realidad no lo es! Lo que ha sido iniciado según los pioneros del Orgánico hoy día sufre de nuevas características.

En muchos países del mundo, los productores orgánicos no reciben ningún aporte de parte del estado, en otros, las subvenciones estatales originan la motivación más importante para entrar a la producción orgánica. Existe también el fenómeno que salen igual de este sistema, así pronto los soportes estatales se paran. De esta forma, Agricultura Orgánica está degenerando como la especialización económicamente más interesante, por un rato, nada más -lo que lógicamente no tiene nada que ver con la idea básica de sostenibilidad y un acercamiento holístico...

Pero existen otros errores modernos también: Es cierto que la presencia o la ausencia de residuos químicos es un criterio importante para el control, y para la determinación del cumplimiento de las normas ecológicas. Cuando el régimen de control seguramente hoy, en tiempos del boom, donde la mayoría de los consumidores tienen la pregunta, de donde vienen tantos productos orgánicos de una vez, es más importante que nunca, la tendencia de una frecuencia elevada de residuos bien claramente indica que hay que tomarle en cuenta a este criterio.

Sin embargo, todas las experiencias del pasado, incluyendo a las investigaciones científicas referente a diferencias de calidad entre productos BIO y convencionales han mostrado claramente que dichas diferencias ni pueden ser identificadas, ni definidas por este vehículo de residuos: Surgen errores en ambas direcciones. Sea que un productor convencional sabe manejar su sistema de fumigación de tal manera que en el momento del análisis ya no se encuentre nada, o sea que el productor orgánico inocentemente sufra de influencias de las fumigaciones de sus vecinos, siempre la clasificación como orgánico o no sería falsa.

Estos errores clásicos del pasado se habían eliminado por el acercamiento del Reglamento 2092/91, donde es el sistema de producción que cuenta, y no se trata de un proceso de certificación de productos, sino del proceso. Parece que este acercamiento sistemático se ha lavado en el río del olvido, y que ahora las autoridades y los compradores convencionales hechan el ojo en primer lugar a los residuos: Es la hora de reconsiderar de qué se trata...

Adicionalmente, muchas veces habría que coordinar mucho más en los lugares de origen, en vez de quedarse en los escritorios de los países de destinos: Cuando se sabe e incluso está comprobado, que en ciertos países surgen tremendos problemas de transparencia de los orígenes de frutas, así llamadas orgánicas, o cuando de un país todos los años aparecen los mismos residuos en los mismos productos, definitivamente no es la estrategia indicada quedarse esperando, y perseguir los productos así pronto que aparezcan los primeros residuos en el comercio! En estos casos la comunidad internacional necesita desarrollar un sistema de bloqueo de los orígenes 'sucios', no confiables, para pararlos ya antes de entrar al mercado. El nuevo Reglamento orgánico de la UE (834/2007) ya se ha presentado, y hay muchos en el movimiento orgánico que se preocupan al máximo, como esta obra no

se muestra como el último ejemplo de sabiduría y consecuencia! Terminos como 'flexibilidad', llegando hasta un uso potencial de agroquímicos, no son apropiados para convencernos de más calidad y seriedad.

Viendo todo esto, no quiero que perdamos la vista a la parte positiva - y es cierto que la misma existe también: Es simplemente el mérito y el éxito del movimiento mundial orgánico que para tantos productores en tantos países del mundo, el camino orgánico les ha creado un futuro, una perspectiva de sobrevivencia.

Es sumamente positivo que tantos consumidores quieren y pueden alimentarse de productos orgánicos: El grupito de creedores, aumentado por una gente que esta comprando BIO, más por la moda que por convicción, se ha establecido como un factor estable del mercado.

Sabemos todos que la Agricultura Orgánica quiere ser más que la producción de alimentos sanos, y de hecho lo es: Contribuye a la protección del Medio Ambiente, y establece un elemento fuerte para la justicia social y de la contribución justa de bienes. En esto, el acercamiento holístico sigue funcionando...

La BCS sigue dedicandose a los mismos valores, y por la misma credibilidad y continuidad, seguimos creciendo a nivel mundial. **Visitenos en la BIOFACH, Salon 3, stand 112! Bienvenidos!**

Peter Grosch

"Hot" news:

In January 2008 BCS got approved as auditor for Starbucks C.A.F.E. Practices! Noticias "calientes":

BCS ha sido aprobado en enero 2008 como verificador para el Programa de C.A.F.E. Practices de Starbucks!

BCS in Africa

One decade of BCS in South Africa, 1997–2007

By Ralph Peckover

Background :

Before 1997, from 1992-1996, the organic movement in South Africa was very small, there were around a half dozen producers of whom Meadowsweet Herbs was the first project to be certified according to the EEC Regulation 2092/91. At this stage all inspections had to be carried out with inspectors from the UK and France at great expense.

There were also one or two organic grape as well as an avocado producer certified at that time.

From 1997 however, the number of growers/processors has grown to around 200 and the products now being certified encompass dairy, field as well as many horticultural products.

The number of certifiers has also grown since 1997.

There are also two local certification agencies, Afrisco (linked to Ecocert) and BDOCA (linked to Debio) who do inspections according to the draft organic standards of South Africa. This local draft standard is based on the EU standard but needs some updating and promulgation.

Position of BCS in the local organic market:

As mentioned, a wide range of crops and dairy are certified for both local and export markets.

For local sales these are mostly through the large chain stores like Pick n' Pay, Woolworths and Spar as well as the local box schemes in the various towns.

A good example of BCS contribution to certification was a visit to a Woolworths store where products were noted.

In Woolworths, at a glance, the following products as organic were seen on the shelves and certifier was noted:

- ✓ Baby potatoes---BCS
- ✓ Baby plum tomatoes---BCS
- ✓ Bananas---BCS

- ✓ Brinjals---BCS
- ✓ Nectarines---BCS
- ✓ Blackberries---BCS
- ✓ Passion fruit---BCS
- ✓ Kiwi fruit---BCS
- ✓ Rosemary---BCS
- ✓ Sweetcorn---BCS
- ✓ Salad with peas, baby spinach and salad onions---BCS
- ✓ Salad with fine beans, carrots and baby spinach---BCS
 - Sliced beans—Ecocert
 - Green asparagus Ecocert

It is not difficult to see who is the major contributor to the certifications of the main local producers in South Africa.

A local newcomer to the organic sales scene is the largest supermarket chain store, Pick n' Pay.

Pick n' Pay has always had a small organic section but recently, in December 2007, a project called "The Organic Freedom Project" was launched with advertising on TV.

From information received, the project is actually to uplift previously disadvantaged groups of people in South Africa by training and marketing their organic products.

The largest supplier of organic produce in Cape Town and environs is a BCS certified group and shortly, another group near Vryheid in Kwa-zulu Natal, who are also BCS certified, will probably supply more than half the organic products to Pick n' Pay.

Position of BCS in the export market:

When one looks at the major crops and their products for export in volume terms, BCS is the forerunner for the following crops:

Avocados, table grapes, citrus, apples, stone fruit, mangoes!

Processed products exported with BCS certification and in volume terms are:

Honeybush tea, raisins, essential oils, avocado oil, coconut oil.

For the essential oils, more than 90% of the producers as well as the two major exporters are BCS certified.

Future expansion and the market growth:

With the concerted effort by Pick n' Pay for organics, this effort should further expand the local market in the short to medium term.

The export market always has its own challenges whereby increased airfreight charges put a lid on this type of transport and the future does not look rosy as fuel costs keep on rising.

The exchange rate also determines whether it is economical to export and can change in South Africa at any moment to the betterment or detriment of farmers.

The main limitation is probably the number of local consumers who would prefer to purchase the organic product at slightly higher cost to that of conventional products which is usually lower priced.

The number of farmers who can stand up to the challenges of organic farming is also a limitation in South Africa, as pests and diseases are often more severe than in Europe.

Over the last ten years the growth of BCS has been significant and hopefully this trend will continue in the future.

BCS in Asia

Organic agriculture and certification in China

By Beishu Fang

In April 2005 the China Organic Standard came into force. Until the end of 2006 around 2300 farms have been controlled by 31 Chinese control bodies. All control bodies that operate in China, local and international ones, have to be accredited by CNCA. Also BCS Öko-Garantie holds an accreditation since 2007 as one of the first international control bodies.

Around 2,1 million hectares are certified in China which produce 2,8 million tons of products. The main products are cereals, beans and seeds.

Most of the Chinese products are marketed in China via supermarkets in big cities. 1/3 of all organic products in China is sold in Beijing.

The internal market of organic products is growing faster than exports as taxes apply on exported goods to keep prices in China stable.

The China Organic Standard is not yet accepted as equivalent to EU regulation 2092/91, NOP or JAS.

Traditionally there have been existing a number of private standards in China as i.e. Green Food, Organic Tea, OFDC Organic etc., which were thought to be organic. They now have to fulfil the requirements of the China Organic Standard if products shall be labelled "organic".

Companies that want to export to China, have to be certified by a control body which is accredited with CNCA, even if their products are already certified according to EU, NOP or JAS.

BCS can provide you that service in co-operation with our Chinese partner!

BCS in Eastern Europe

Development of Organic Farming in Romania

By Dr. Alexandru Szabó

Out of a total of 14.82 million ha arable land less than 1 % is currently managed organically in Romania. From the first of January 2008 subsidies will be granted to agricultural operators who convert their farms to organic. Due to this the Ministry of Agriculture is expecting a considerable increase in organic land area. According to the estimations the percentage of organic land area will increase to 1,3 % of the total farm land in 2008 and at least to 5% in 2013.

In 2008 the export value is assumed to be over 100 million EUR. With this, Romania ranges at place 20 regarding exports of

organic products world-wide. More than 50% of Romanian organic exports comprise walnuts, wild fruits and medicinal plants, mushrooms and cereals.

BCS Öko-Garantie is the Number 1 certifier for wild products in Romania. Nearly 30 projects are certified by BCS. The number of farmers and/or collectors however is several thousands. BCS is keen to increase the number of clients in agriculture and especially in the Eastern part of the country in 2008.

BCS in Latin America

BCS Öko Garantie, cumpliendo con las Reglamentaciones de Producción Orgánica en algunos países de América del Sur

De Hansjörg Götz

La regularización de las actividades productivas orgánicas en los últimos años ha tomado auge en muchos países a nivel mundial, y como era de esperarse varios países en América del Sur han ido elaborando sus propios reglamentos en pos de legislar, regularizar y controlar la Producción Orgánica que se practica en sus territorios. No por nada el hemisferio sur viene a ser el más grande proveedor de toda clase de productos agrícolas, ganaderos y acuícolas, convencionales y orgánicos del hemisferio norte.

Países como: Argentina, Brasil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Perú y Uruguay en los últimos años han elaborado legislaciones que incluyen procesos jurídicos, normativos y de certificación para la producción de alimentos orgánicos, que en algunos casos a más de establecer las normas técnicas de la producción tienen como finalidad la promoción y control por parte del Estado.

BCS ÖKO Garantie, respetando las disposiciones propias de cada estado y en pos de ofrecer a sus clientes un marco de acción más fuerte, competitivo y confi-

able, en el 2007 con gran inversión tanto económica como técnica ha logrado establecer dos nuevas oficinas en las capitales de dos países muy importantes de Sur América como son **Paraguay y Perú**, países en los cuales se inició ya el registro de BCS ante el Servicio Nacional de Calidad y Sanidad Vegetal y de Semillas (SENAVE) y el Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agraria (SENASA) quienes son los entes de control en éstos países respectivamente.

En **Ecuador** por otro lado nos es grato informar que somos la primera Agencia Certificadora registrada y acreditada ante el Servicio Ecuatoriano de Sanidad Agropecuaria (SESA) y el Organismo de Acreditación Ecuatoriano (OAE) respectivamente y que hasta el momento somos el único ente de certificación que tiene proyectos certificados bajo Norma Nacional.

En **Uruguay**, se estableció un Acuerdo Interinstitucional con la Cámara de Comercio Uruguayo-Alemana, acuerdo que permite tener una representación constante en dicho país y que ofrece además a nuestros clientes establecer de alguna manera relaciones comerciales directas con una de las grandes puertas al continente europeo.

Noticias desde Chile

De Luis Melendez

Ley N° 20089

Nueva etapa para la agricultura orgánica
A más de un año de su publicación en el diario oficial, la ley n° 20089, que crea el Sistema Nacional de Certificación de Productos Orgánicos Agrícolas esta pronta a regir en su totalidad, de la mano de su reglamento y la norma técnica comenzara su aplicación regulando un sector que se potencia próspero y con mayores resguardos.

Nuevo Panorama:

Si bien la ley N° 20089 representa un gran cambio para el sector orgánico de nuestro país, apunta a mejorar sustancialmente una actividad que adquiere cada vez

mayor demanda, ya que los consumidores han tomado conciencia de todo lo que involucra el tema orgánico, entendiendo su filosofía ligada a la sustentabilidad y el respeto por nuestras tradiciones.

Esta nueva herramienta legal, que nació principalmente de la demanda de los productores, agricultores y certificadores pertenecientes a la agrupación de agricultura orgánica de Chile (AAOCH), entidad que desde el año 2002 realizó múltiples gestiones para hacer ver a la autoridad la necesidad de una normativa aplicada al sector orgánico cuya proyección denotaba una prosperidad y crecimiento evidente, tanto fuera como dentro del territorio nacional. Así, AAOCH fue la única instancia del sector privado que se involucró en las gestiones que llevaron a la aprobación de la Ley por el Parlamento.

La Ley orgánica, promete su aplicación íntegra, incluyendo su normativa complementaria para fines del 2007, entregando seguridades, respaldos y defensas al sector orgánico, frenando la competencia desleal, de manos de una autoridad con una capacidad instalada y con experiencia en supervisión y certificación internacional. Elementos claves que presagian buenos augurios para el sector y eleva el tema orgánico a la agenda pública del país.

Por ello, autoridades a cargo llaman al sector orgánico a no temerle al cambio que se avecina, que confíen en su éxito y que se informen respecto de las experiencias exitosas en otros países donde se ha legislado, “hay que visualizarlo como una gran oportunidad, si la aprovechan bien, por añadidura se van a abrir otras puertas, consolidando y potenciando a todo el mundo orgánico presente en el país”.

Special topic:

How to combat the wireworm (Elateridae) in organic agriculture

By Dr. Alexandru Szabó

Many species of Elateridae, spread all over the continents, are met in different types of soil: loosened or compact, acid, neutral, basic, richer or poorer in organic matter but with a high moisture-degree. Having a phytophage diet, the wireworms produce considerable damages on crops, such as corn, wheat, potato and generally all cultivated plants, especially when sowing in virgin soil.

Rational and efficient plant protection of cultivated plants against wireworms is only possible by identifying exactly the pest-species, determining their density, and knowing their bio-ecology. Based on this information all measures of control must be applied: agro-phyto-technical, physical, mechanical and biological.

By the strict application of these measures, one can practice an ecological control system without breaking the rules of the EU Regulation 2092/91.

The temperature and moisture have great influence on larvae's life and movement within the soil. Larvae's density is greater where soil-moisture is higher and constant. The species of *Agriotes obscurus* L. and *Agriotes lineatus* L. adapt well to soil-moisture and resist long time under the inappropriate ventilation conditions. This is how their survival in flooded or irrigated fields is explained. Positive correlation between the percentage of organic matter and the number of larvae in the soil has been found.

The Elateridae, which develop in arable soils, are part of the most common species and are the most important from the practical point of view.

Some of these are: *Agriotes sputator* L. and *Limonium aeruginosus*. The larvae of Elateridae are larger in number in Lucerne crops in the second and third years of vegetation. This is also the case in vegetable and perennial cereal crops and in fields where cereals have been cultivated without rotation.

The maximum number of wireworms can be found in acid soils. The *Agriotes obscurus* L. species is also found in neutral and sometimes in alkaline soils.

The larvae of Elateridae have a polyphage diet. The majority feeds on various plants, cultivated and non-cultivated, so this makes them pests in many crops.

Crop rotation has a great importance in the control of soil-pests and wireworms.

Autumn ploughing and weed-control are basic agro-phyto-technical measures which contribute to the destruction of wireworms.

By deep ploughing with returned furrow, the insects from the soil surface get into the ground and this puts them in inappropriate conditions regarding air, temperature and moisture. At their turn the insects from the interior get on the surface, being exposed to the sun-rays, dehydration and destruction by the predators.

The cropping-system of sowing directly on the stubble field (direct drilling) has shown that the chances of contamination with wireworms increase threefold; while sowing after ploughing reduces wireworm-populations. Crops with lower sensitivity to wireworm-infestation include lupines, beans, peas, rape, mustard, buckwheat, flex etc.

Draining of water-logged fields has a negative effect on the development of wireworms. Soil treatments with CaCO₃ reduce wireworms as some species of larvae prefer acid soils.

Sowing cereals at proper time influences the damage-degree of seeds. So, generally the crops which are sowed in early or medium period are more seriously attacked than those which are sowed later. Fields which are seriously infested (more than 10 larvae/m²) should therefore be sowed late with spring cereals.

Repeated weeding has negative effects on the development of larvae in the soil. It is recommended to introduce some root crops into the crop-rotation (beet, potato) which create inappropriate conditions for the development of the larvae, although these plants are sensitive to wireworm-attacks.

Soil disking is one of the current mechanical measures of wireworm-destruction in seriously contaminated fields especially when cultivating virgin soil or ploughing up of perennial grasses such as *Lolium perenne*, *Bromus* spp. and *Dactylis glomerata*.

The Elateridae larvae are often **infected with different micro-organisms** which cause epizootic death (virotic, bacterial and micotic diseases).

Incorporation of some bio-preparations into the soil based on fungi (*Beauveria* spp.) lead to the infection and destruction of a large number of larvae and pupas (60-70%), especially when the soil-moisture is high.

Some roundworms (Nemertidae) represented by the genus *Complexomermis* and *Hexameris* can contaminate in high moisture soils a great number of larvae and insects of *Agriotes obscurus*, *Agriotes lineatus* and *Agriotes sputator*. The *Heptogaster cylindrical* (Asilidae) is one of the *Agriotes obscurus* larvae's predators.

The populations of Elateridae can be reduced to a great extent by the *Neoaplectana bibionis* species, by the use of a dilution of 2.5x10⁵.

Among ticks (arachnoids) those of the genus *Tyroglyphus* (Acaridae) are usually found attacking the larvae of *Agriotes*, *Selatosomus aeneus* L. and *Cidnopus aeruginosus* Oliv. Among the most important natural enemies, predators are different species of Carabidae and Staphilinidae (Coleoptera).

Among the enemies of Elateridae the following must be mentioned: moles, scorpions and several species of birds feed with larvae.

Intensive experiments on pheromone-testing in wireworm - control have led to the conclusion that males of several wireworm species are captured efficiently by pheromone traps.